

GERMAN

Paper 9717/01

Speaking

Key Messages

- The key messages are similar from year to year, and are already followed by nearly all Centres.
- Presentations (**Section 1**) should be firmly rooted within the contemporary society or cultural heritage of a country where German is spoken. Candidates who make no reference to such a country will have their marks for Content halved, or, if there is very little reference, reduced. Native speakers of German should not assume a listener realises that they are speaking about their homeland and should also give specific details and references. It is not acceptable to make a presentation about the country of domicile, unless this occurs as part of a comparison, where information about the German-speaking country should still predominate.
- Both in the Topic Conversation (**Section 2**) and in the General Conversation (**Section 3**) candidates must engage in a dialogue with the Examiner and ask him or her some questions. It is not acceptable to include these questions in the Presentation, except perhaps one at the very end to introduce the Topic Conversation, nor is it acceptable to ask a large number of questions at the very end of **section 3**, having previously asked none at all. If no questions are asked within either of these sections, no marks may be awarded for Seeking Information for that section. To obtain a mark of 4 out of 5 in a section at least two questions must be asked. The maximum mark is three if there is only one question.
- Please adhere to the timings specified for this examination. This appears to be a worsening problem. Presentations should not be allowed to be too long. If they are, they cannot be considered to be “well organised”, and should not receive a mark from the top box for Content. An Examiner should interrupt with a question after about four minutes, and three and a half minutes would be a more appropriate length. **Section 2** and **Section 3** conversations should be of approximately equal length, say around eight minutes. It is difficult to achieve a high mark for Providing Information or Responsiveness if one section is cut too short. There is no point in allowing the examination to last more than 20 minutes in total, as no extra marks can be gained and a candidate might tire after this length of time. All examinations are expected to be conducted within a limited period of time, and this should equally apply to speaking tests.
- A quiet and perhaps relatively small room should be chosen to conduct the examination in. If machinery is operating, or if there is loud traffic or people talking in the background, or even an echo in a large space, candidates will not have optimum conditions. For preference record onto CD rather than tape, as sound quality is notably better, and please place the microphone or recording equipment where both Examiner and candidate are audible to a listener.

General Comments

Most Centres had a relatively small entry, often just two or three candidates, but nearly all were correctly entered at this level. Recording quality was extremely good for the most part, and nearly all Centres are now recording onto CD. The labelling and general admin surrounding the recordings was also excellent. Most Centres included the correct paperwork. The standard of marking was generally very good, though sometimes a little optimistic with regard to the mark scheme. Some Centres with native speakers of German were again a little harsh on them with regard to their feel for the language, their accuracy and their ability to provide information. It should be remembered that the mark scheme refers predominantly to non-native speakers, and that the majority of native speakers will, therefore, score nearly maximum marks on these criteria. However, this will not necessarily be the case at all with regard to Content in their presentations, nor to Seeking Information and Opinions, or even Responsiveness, if they are not challenged. Particular vigilance should, therefore, be exercised when marking on these criteria.

Specific Comments on the sections of the examination

Section 1 (Presentation)

- The manner of delivery of the presentation should be taken into account. Only award nine or ten marks for Content if the delivery is lively and confident rather than stilted and hesitant, in addition to including the ideas and opinions stated in the mark scheme.
- If a presentation is far too long, as already mentioned, it should not receive nine or ten marks for content, as it cannot be considered to be “well organised” as in the published criteria.
- For a mark of five for Pronunciation a candidate does not have to be a native speaker. “Hesitation”, though mentioned in the mark scheme, should not really figure highly when considering Pronunciation, but perhaps more so when considering delivery of the presentation or the Language mark.
- A well-prepared presentation by a correctly entered candidate should be able to access at least 4 marks for Language, as the criteria mention a “reasonable range” of structures and (topic-specific) vocabulary, delivered “fairly fluently”, and provided there is no ambiguity of meaning.
- There was a good range of interesting presentation topics, of which the following are just a selection:

Islam in der Schweiz; der Atomausstieg; medizinische Forschung; Dr Hamer und seine “germanische Medizin”; der Nordsee-Beifang; die Bevölkerungspyramide; homosexuelle Ehe; Mario

Götze; Michael Schuhmacher; Einfluss der deutschen Politiker; Englischlehrer in Deutschland.

Section 2 (Topic Conversation)

- The important issues surrounding the marking criterion “Seeking Information”, the marking of native-speakers and non-native speakers, and timing of this section are mentioned above
- The questions a candidate puts to the Examiner to “seek information”, should be varied in order for a high mark to be awarded, in other words not always “Was denken Sie?” or “Was ist Ihre Meinung?”
- If a candidate has memorised his material entirely or predominantly, a mark from the “Satisfactory” box should be awarded as a maximum, as it cannot really be claimed that he or she is responding to “unexpected questions”.
- Similarly a mark from this box should be awarded if the candidate can deal with basic situations and concepts, but not more complicated ones.

Section 3 (General Conversation)

- This section should be completely distinct from **Section 2**. The Examiner should make an announcement for the benefit of the candidate and the recording: “Jetzt kommen wir zum dritten Teil der Prüfung”, or similar, and there should be a complete change of topic. For example, if the topic in section two has concerned a candidate’s visit to Germany, section three should not really begin with the general topic of “Reisen”.
- Personal details such as the candidate’s future and his or her interests should feature briefly but should not necessarily form the main element of this discussion. It is better to move fairly swiftly on to more complex or wider issues to enable the candidate to access the higher marks for “Comprehension and Responsiveness” or “Providing Information and Opinions”.
- Open questions by the Examiner are more effective in drawing the required kind of response from a candidate than closed ones. Brief questions, such as *Warum?* or *Inwiefern?* can be particularly useful in this regard. It should not be expected that the candidate will know any specific information on an unexpected topic chosen by the Examiner, perhaps a topic of current affairs, or even necessarily have an opinion about it. If this is the case, it would be better to switch quickly to a different topic.

GERMAN

Paper 9717/21
Reading and Writing

Key Messages

- For **Questions 3 and 4** it is very important that candidates use their own words in their responses, as this paper is designed to test Writing as well as Reading comprehension. The guidance ***ohne längere Satzteile direkt vom Text abzuschreiben*** is highlighted in the instructions to **Questions 3 and 4**. Major lifting of textual material, including the mere re-arrangement of words in key phrases, cannot receive credit for comprehension. In particular, where imagery, idioms and key vocabulary are used to convey ideas in the texts, candidates are expected to show their understanding of these in their own words.
- The paragraph indicators given at the end of each sub-question, indicate where the answer material is to be sought, thus helping candidates to follow the progression of the text concerned. Candidates need therefore to demonstrate their understanding of the new question in context and how it relates to the new paragraph detail. This is all the more important where the same paragraph is indicated for successive questions.
- Some answers to **Question 5 (a)** were again too long, and candidates did not heed the word-limit stated. The response to parts **(a)** and **(b)** of this question should together not exceed 140 words. (See further guidance below). This is an exercise in summary skills, which demands some ability to select, interpret and relate main points. Time management for this paper should therefore take account of the need to organise and plan an answer to this final question. It should be noted that this question asks for a summary and personal opinion, not just a personal statement. Many candidates felt very strongly about the topic (lack of career women) that they either did not deliver a summary at all or just a very brief one before giving their personal opinion.

General comments

Both texts this year on the theme of lack of women in high positions in business in Germany were clearly accessible to the considerable majority of candidates. Whilst the range of marks achieved was again wide, a good number of papers showed excellent comprehension and were of a high standard linguistically.

Candidates should be advised to write clearly and legibly, and ideally to leave a line between answers within **Questions 3 and 4**, as well some distinctive space between these Question sets. It is helpful if a candidate's answer sheets are properly fastened together; without using poly pockets.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1 (Erster Teil)

Question 1 (Vocabulary substitution)

Most candidates coped well with this exercise. In some cases, candidates were unable to find a substitute for *zunehmend* and did not find (*immer*) *mehr* in the text. Some candidates tried to guess synonyms that were not in the text; although the instructions clearly state that all words can be found between lines 1-6.

Question 2 (Grammatical manipulation)

Again, most candidates coped well with this exercise and managed to manipulate the sentences correctly. There is however a noticeable trend of not using the accusative, even with very strong candidates. (Die vielen Chefs finden *den* Frauenmangel peinlich).

The grammatical manipulation task requires a sound knowledge of German grammar and structures. In order to prepare candidates successfully; teaching should focus on subject/verb accord, passive and active voice, tenses, conjugation of verbs, separable verbs and sub-clauses with *dass*, *weil* etc.

Question 3

Many candidates were able to manipulate the language of the text effectively and successfully produced 'own language' answers. Others were reluctant to move away from key language items and text sequencing. As stated above, the simple reproduction of a section of the text by way of an answer does not confirm comprehension and hence cannot receive credit.

- (a) This was answered correctly by the majority of candidates; however some candidates lost marks by only including the statistics for one year (2015), but not mentioning the prognosis for 2020.
- (b) Some candidates lost marks because they did not understand that there should be at least 3 women on a team of 10 (not 10 **plus** 3).
- (c) The majority of candidates managed to answer this question correctly and scored 2 marks, However, some candidates were unsure how to answer **Questions (c) and (d)** and gave nearly identical answers to both questions.
- (d) See comment for (c)
- (e) Most candidates earned three marks for listing the three problems that women face in the workplace.
- (f) Most candidates were able to earn full marks available here. Again there was some over-reliance on the text.

Section 2 (Zweiter Teil)

Question 4

This question set, as should be expected, was a little more demanding. Some candidates coped equally well, and occasionally better, with it. Again there were some problems with over-reliance on the text. This was especially evident in **Question (b)**, where many candidates copied mit *Babys und Staubsauger* directly from the text without putting it in their own words or explaining the idea that according to the statement women are better at looking after children and the household.

Question 5

In their responses to this task candidates are required to summarise the main issues and arguments presented in the two texts in the form of continuous prose. A list of bullet points is not an appropriate format. It is clearly important to consider the question carefully for its direction. Both texts should be referred to, and candidates should expect to present an organised overview of the relevant elements, and how they relate to each other, extracting the main points from the detail. This year the question was asking who is to blame for Germany's lack of career women.

It should be made very clear to candidates in preparation for this Paper that the word limit of 140 encompasses both parts of the question, and that therefore the conciseness and effectiveness of their writing is likely to have a bearing on achievement. Some candidates wasted words initially by re-stating the outline of the task, without moving forward. Candidates who wrote at considerable length, without apparent regard for any word limit, invariably forfeited marks for the 'personal response' part of their answer, because they left this too late. The marking of this exercise must cease at the end of the sentence after 140 words, with an absolute limit set at 150 words, and teachers are advised to ensure that candidates are aware of this.

As a general point, candidates benefit considerably from advance practice in the skills of summary, which involve selection and analysis. It is recommended that candidates draft a plan before writing up their answer, which will help them to organise their delivery, and minimise the need for untidy crossings-out. It is good practice and helpful also to provide a word-count. This is checked, and is expected to be accurate.

There were a good number of points to be made again this year, and many candidates were able to earn some five or six of the ten marks available for this summary part of the question. Candidates should aim to

strike a good balance of selected textual points, drawn from the different approaches of the two texts for their overall relevance to the question. Some answers explored too much of the detail, some were too generalised or superficial and made little reference to textual points and some were personal opinion without any foundation in the texts.

Candidates' clearly preferred option is to address **Question 5** in two distinct parts, indicating **(a)** and **(b)** in their response. However, if they should choose to write a 'combination' essay, thus covering both parts of the question in the one sequence, it is essential that personal views and ideas be made completely clear as such, and distinguishable from points adduced from the texts.

Language:

The remaining five marks in **Question 5** are for the Quality of the Language, and for most candidates marks here were broadly comparable with those awarded for **Question sets 3 and 4**, as might reasonably be expected. Where responses fall significantly short of 140 words, the language mark must be restricted.

Persistent errors were seen in the non-distinction of *dass* and *das*, and also in gender and prepositional use. Overall, candidates experience the greatest difficulty with text language adaptation, which may then lead them to various sorts of error. At the same time, there were again a good many candidates who were able to write both fluently and impressively, and their responses frequently made excellent and interesting reading.

GERMAN

Paper 9717/22
Reading and Writing

Key Messages

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- The paragraph indicators given at the end of each sub-question, indicate where the answer material is to be sought, thus helping candidates to follow the progression of the text concerned. Candidates need therefore to demonstrate their understanding of the new question in context and how it relates to the new paragraph detail. This is all the more important where the same paragraph is indicated for successive questions.
- Some answers to **Question 5 (a)** were again too long, and candidates did not heed the word-limit stated. The response to parts **(a)** and **(b)** of this question should together not exceed 140 words. (See further guidance below). This is an exercise in summary skills, which demands some ability to select, interpret and relate main points. Time management for this paper should therefore take account of the need to organise and plan an answer to this final question. It should be noted that this question asks for a summary and personal opinion, not just a personal statement. Many candidates felt very strongly about the topic (lack of career women) that they either did not deliver a summary at all or just a very brief one before giving their personal opinion.

General comments

Both texts this year on the theme of lack of women in high positions in business in Germany were clearly accessible to the considerable majority of candidates. Whilst the range of marks achieved was again wide, a good number of papers showed excellent comprehension and were of a high standard linguistically.

Candidates should be advised to write clearly and legibly, and ideally to leave a line between answers within **Questions 3 and 4**, as well some distinctive space between these Question sets. It is helpful if a candidate's answer sheets are properly fastened together; without using poly pockets.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1 (Erster Teil)

Question 1 (Vocabulary substitution)

Most candidates coped well with this exercise. In some cases, candidates were unable to find a substitute for *zunehmend* and did not find (*immer*) *mehr* in the text. Some candidates tried to guess synonyms that were not in the text; although the instructions clearly state that all words can be found between lines 1-6.

Question 2 (Grammatical manipulation)

Again, most candidates coped well with this exercise and managed to manipulate the sentences correctly. There is however a noticeable trend of not using the accusative, even with very strong candidates. (Die vielen Chefs finden *den* Frauenmangel peinlich).

The grammatical manipulation task requires a sound knowledge of German grammar and structures. In order to prepare candidates successfully; teaching should focus on subject/verb accord, passive and active voice, tenses, conjugation of verbs, separable verbs and sub-clauses with *dass*, *weil* etc.

Question 3

Many candidates were able to manipulate the language of the text effectively and successfully produced 'own language' answers. Others were reluctant to move away from key language items and text sequencing. As stated above, the simple reproduction of a section of the text by way of an answer does not confirm comprehension and hence cannot receive credit.

- (a) This was answered correctly by the majority of candidates; however some candidates lost marks by only including the statistics for one year (2015), but not mentioning the prognosis for 2020.
- (b) Some candidates lost marks because they did not understand that there should be at least 3 women on a team of 10 (not 10 **plus** 3).
- (c) The majority of candidates managed to answer this question correctly and scored 2 marks. However, some candidates were unsure how to answer **Questions (c) and (d)** and gave nearly identical answers to both questions.
- (d) See comment for (c)
- (e) Most candidates earned three marks for listing the three problems that women face in the workplace.
- (f) Most candidates were able to earn full marks available here. Again there was some over-reliance on the text.

Section 2 (Zweiter Teil)

Question 4

This question set, as should be expected, was a little more demanding. Some candidates coped equally well, and occasionally better, with it. Again there were some problems with over-reliance on the text. This was especially evident in **Question (b)**, where many candidates copied mit *Babys und Staubsauger* directly from the text without putting it in their own words or explaining the idea that according to the statement women are better at looking after children and the household.

Question 5

In their responses to this task candidates are required to summarise the main issues and arguments presented in the two texts in the form of continuous prose. A list of bullet points is not an appropriate format. It is clearly important to consider the question carefully for its direction. Both texts should be referred to, and candidates should expect to present an organised overview of the relevant elements, and how they relate to each other, extracting the main points from the detail. This year the question was asking who is to blame for Germany's lack of career women.

It should be made very clear to candidates in preparation for this Paper that the word limit of 140 encompasses both parts of the question, and that therefore the conciseness and effectiveness of their writing is likely to have a bearing on achievement. Some candidates wasted words initially by re-stating the outline of the task, without moving forward. Candidates who wrote at considerable length, without apparent regard for any word limit, invariably forfeited marks for the 'personal response' part of their answer, because they left this too late. The marking of this exercise must cease at the end of the sentence after 140 words, with an absolute limit set at 150 words, and teachers are advised to ensure that candidates are aware of this.

As a general point, candidates benefit considerably from advance practice in the skills of summary, which involve selection and analysis. It is recommended that candidates draft a plan before writing up their answer, which will help them to organise their delivery, and minimise the need for untidy crossings-out. It is good practice and helpful also to provide a word-count. This is checked, and is expected to be accurate.

There were a good number of points to be made again this year, and many candidates were able to earn some five or six of the ten marks available for this summary part of the question. Candidates should aim to

strike a good balance of selected textual points, drawn from the different approaches of the two texts for their overall relevance to the question. Some answers explored too much of the detail, some were too generalised or superficial and made little reference to textual points and some were personal opinion without any foundation in the texts.

Candidates' clearly preferred option is to address **Question 5** in two distinct parts, indicating **(a)** and **(b)** in their response. However, if they should choose to write a 'combination' essay, thus covering both parts of the question in the one sequence, it is essential that personal views and ideas be made completely clear as such, and distinguishable from points adduced from the texts.

Language:

The remaining five marks in **Question 5** are for the Quality of the Language, and for most candidates marks here were broadly comparable with those awarded for **Question sets 3 and 4**, as might reasonably be expected. Where responses fall significantly short of 140 words, the language mark must be restricted.

Persistent errors were seen in the non-distinction of *dass* and *das*, and also in gender and prepositional use. Overall, candidates experience the greatest difficulty with text language adaptation, which may then lead them to various sorts of error. At the same time, there were again a good many candidates who were able to write both fluently and impressively, and their responses frequently made excellent and interesting reading.

GERMAN

Paper 9717/23
Reading and Writing

Key Messages

- For **Questions 3 and 4** it is very important that candidates use their own words in their responses, as this paper is designed to test Writing as well as Reading comprehension. The guidance ***ohne längere Satzteile direkt vom Text abzuschreiben*** is highlighted in the instructions to **Questions 3 and 4**. Major lifting of textual material, including the mere re-arrangement of words in key phrases, cannot receive credit for comprehension. In particular, where imagery, idioms and key vocabulary are used to convey ideas in the texts, candidates are expected to show their understanding of these in their own words.
- The paragraph indicators given at the end of each sub-question, indicate where the answer material is to be sought, thus helping candidates to follow the progression of the text concerned. Candidates need therefore to demonstrate their understanding of the new question in context and how it relates to the new paragraph detail. This is all the more important where the same paragraph is indicated for successive questions.
- Some answers to **Question 5 (a)** were again too long, and candidates did not heed the word-limit stated. The response to parts **(a)** and **(b)** of this question should together not exceed 140 words. (See further guidance below). This is an exercise in summary skills, which demands some ability to select, interpret and relate main points. Time management for this paper should therefore take account of the need to organise and plan an answer to this final question.

General comments

Both texts this year on the theme of car sharing were clearly accessible to the considerable majority of candidates. Whilst the range of marks achieved was again wide, a good number of papers showed excellent comprehension and were of a high standard linguistically.

There was some evidence that weaker candidates did not always understand the questions, tending to focus on particular words within questions and then moving directly to the paragraph indicated. Even though the textual paragraphs were short, some answers were then long in the attempt to include every detail.

Candidates should be advised to write clearly and legibly, and ideally to leave a line between answers within **Questions 3 and 4**, as well some distinctive space between these Question sets. It is helpful if a candidate's answer sheets are properly fastened together, without using poly pockets.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1 (Erster Teil)

Question 1 (Vocabulary substitution)

- (a) This was mostly answered correctly. Very occasionally CO₂ was suggested.
- (b) This was usually answered correctly, but incorrect answers included *überreden*.
- (c) This was mostly answered correctly.
- (d) This was mostly answered correctly.

- (e) This was mostly answered correctly.

Question 2 (*Grammatical manipulation*)

This exercise was found more challenging by weaker candidates.

- (a) This was mostly answered correctly. However, the passive construction was not always known.
- (b) This was usually answered correctly. However, the comparative was not always correct.
- (c) This was usually answered correctly. A change of tense was not awarded.
- (d) This was usually answered correctly.
- (e) This was usually answered correctly. There was occasional difficulty with the gender of *Mitgliedschaft*.

Question 3

Many candidates were able to manipulate the language of the text effectively and successfully producing 'own language' answers. Others were reluctant to move away from key language items and text sequencing. As stated above, the simple reproduction of a section of the text by way of an answer does not confirm comprehension and hence cannot receive credit.

- (a) Most candidates were able to earn two marks here. However, the text statements on *Kilometergeld* and *Kosten pro Stunde* were quite often reproduced in their entirety.
- (b) There was some tendency to focus only on one point; either on only needing to fill up on petrol when the tank is empty or on getting the money back at the end of the month. Some candidates copied the entirety of the last two sentences of the paragraph.
- (c) Most candidates were able to earn at least two of the three marks available here. Again there was some over-reliance on the text.
- (d) Many candidates were not able to see the bigger picture here and did not understand the concept of loss of personal freedom. Even though the question was asking for disadvantages, candidates tended to list items that you **can** leave in your own car.
- (e) Most candidates earned three marks for listing three categories of people who would benefit from car sharing. Very occasionally, candidates misunderstood the concept of a car as a status symbol and said that people who hold their cars in high esteem would benefit from car sharing. Others relied rather too heavily and closely on the long text sequence *Für Leute, die täglich.....*
- (f) Most candidates were able to earn at least two of the three marks available here. Again there was some over-reliance on the text.

Section 2 (*Zweiter Teil*)

Question 4

This question set, as should be expected, was a little more demanding. Some candidates coped equally well, and occasionally better, with it. Again there were some problems with over-reliance on the text.

- (a) Most candidates were able to identify the problem of only one occupant per car, but did not make the connection to unnecessary trips in general.
- (b) Most candidates earned the full 3 marks here, explaining Daniela's difficulties with her first car sharing experience.
- (c) This 3 mark question was generally accessible, and a good number of candidates were able to earn at least 2 marks. Some candidates only mentioned one inconvenience, either the length of time or the inflexible dropping-off arrangements.

- (d) Weaker candidates experienced difficulty here in relating the question to the material in the paragraph, and simply copied the whole paragraph without any attempt at rephrasing. The mention of the spoilt weekend was superfluous, as it is only a consequence of the problems with the car. However, it did not invalidate candidates' answers.
- (e) Most candidates were able to earn at least two of the three marks available here.

Question 5

In their responses to this task candidates are required to summarise the main issues and arguments presented in the two texts in the form of continuous prose. A list of bullet points is not an appropriate format. It is clearly important to consider the question carefully for its direction. Both texts should be referred to, and candidates should expect to present an organised overview of the relevant elements, and how they relate to each other, extracting the main points from the detail. This year a summary, as presented in the texts, of the advantages and disadvantages of car sharing was required.

It should be made very clear to candidates in preparation for this Paper that the word limit of 140 encompasses both parts of the question, and that therefore the conciseness and effectiveness of their writing is likely to have a bearing on achievement. Some candidates wasted words initially by re-stating the outline of the task, without moving forward. Candidates who wrote at considerable length, without apparent regard for any word limit, invariably forfeited marks for the 'personal response' part of their answer, because they left this too late. The marking of this exercise must cease at the end of the sentence after 140 words, with an absolute limit set at 150 words, and teachers are advised to ensure that candidates are aware of this.

As a general point, candidates benefit considerably from advance practice in the skills of summary, which involve selection and analysis. It is recommended that candidates draft a plan before writing up their answer, which will help them to organise their delivery.

There were a good number of points to be made again this year, and many candidates were able to earn some six or seven of the ten marks available for this summary part of the question. Candidates should aim to strike a good balance of selected textual points, drawn from the different approaches of the two texts for their overall relevance to the question. Some answers explored too much of the detail and failed to see the bigger picture (stating that *car sharing cars are always dirty and always smell of tobacco*), some were too generalised or superficial and made little reference to textual points.

Candidates' clearly preferred option is to address **Question 5** in two distinct parts, indicating **(a)** and **(b)** in their response. However, if they should choose to write a 'combination' essay, thus covering both parts of the question in the one sequence, it is essential that personal views and ideas be made completely clear as such, and distinguishable from points adduced from the texts. In part **(b)** answers this year there were some original and interesting references to meeting new people while car sharing and reference to the situation in the candidate's home country or own experience. Other candidates restricted themselves to simple personal opinions of the textual content, and this often tended to limit their achievement here.

Language:

The remaining five marks in **Question 5** are for the Quality of the Language, and for most candidates marks here were broadly comparable with those awarded for **Question sets 3 and 4**, as might reasonably be expected. Where responses fall significantly short of 140 words, the language mark must be restricted.

Persistent errors were seen in the non-distinction of *dass* and *das*, and also in gender and prepositional use. Overall, candidates experience the greatest difficulty with text language adaptation, which may then lead them to various sorts of error. At the same time, there were again a good many candidates who were able to write both fluently and impressively, and their responses frequently made excellent reading.

GERMAN

Paper 9717/31

Essay

General Comments:

This series the essays were quite well distributed between the topics. There was a wide range of responses: from thoughtful, well-structured essays to those where the candidate struggled for ideas and wandered away from the title they were supposed to be addressing. It is important that candidates study the essay question carefully so that they are clear about what they are being asked to discuss.

Nearly all candidates attempt to provide an introduction and a conclusion and organise their points into paragraphs. There are still a number of candidates who write a general essay on the topic area and do not address the specific title. The content of these essays cannot be considered to be satisfactory. Many candidates head their essay with the topic title rather than the essay title which, although shorter, is no help to the candidate in keeping the essay on track. It is pleasing to note that many candidates take time to plan and organise their ideas before starting to write.

Some candidates have an excellent command of German and achieve marks for Language in the Very Good category. They have an impressive array of vocabulary at their disposal, both general and topic-specific and are ambitious in their use of structure. Some of these are semi-native speakers whose errors are generally of a phonetic nature. There are also candidates who have a wide ranging vocabulary but still have difficulties with rudimentary grammar and make basic errors. If possible, it is a good idea to leave some time at the end of the examination to check for careless language errors.

Common errors:

- interference from English tempts some candidates to use *Sie* instead of *man*
- confusion between *man / Mann* and *das, dass*
- confusion between *wenn, wann, als*
- confusion between *vorher, bevor, vor*
- confusion between *um* and *damit*
- word order after subordinating conjunctions
- nouns without articles

Question 1

Inwiefern sollte die Regierung beeinflussen, was wir essen und trinken, damit wir gesund bleiben?

This was quite a popular title producing a wide range of opinions from those advocating significant government intervention in our eating habits to those who considered it would be an infringement of human rights to do so. Weaker candidates tended to focus on the healthy eating side of the question at the expense of the government role.

Question 2

Wie sieht die Zukunft für Entwicklungsländer aus? Sind Sie optimistisch oder pessimistisch? Begründen Sie Ihre Antwort.

A minority of candidates chose this title but the responses were mostly thoughtful even though they reached quite different conclusions. Many appeared to have direct experience of the issues they raised in their essays.

Question 3

„Gruppenreisen sind keine gute Erfahrung. Nur wenn man allein reist, kann man ein fremdes Land wirklich kennenlernen.“ Wie stehen Sie zu dieser Aussage?

This was a popular title, which was within the experience of all candidates and did not require extensive topic-specific vocabulary. The balance between those favouring group travel and those who prefer to travel solo was fairly even but some concentrated too much on this aspect of the title to the exclusion of the "getting to know a foreign country" element. It is important to keep referring to the title during the examination to check that what is being written is fully relevant.

Question 4

„Generationskonflikte gibt es in vielen Kulturen.“ Stimmt das Ihrer Meinung nach?

A number of candidates chose this title and were quite well versed in the problems that can occur between the generations but the references to other cultures were often limited.

Question 5

Haben arme Kinder die gleichen Chancen in der Schule wie Kinder aus reichen Familien? Was meinen Sie?

Many candidates chose this title and enthusiastically explored the difference in opportunities afforded to rich and poor children in school. Most concluded that there was little equality and that the situation varied in different parts of the world.

GERMAN

Paper 9717/32

Essay

General Comments:

This series the essays were quite well distributed between the topics. There was a wide range of responses: from thoughtful, well-structured essays to those where the candidate struggled for ideas and wandered away from the title they were supposed to be addressing. It is important that candidates study the essay question carefully so that they are clear about what they are being asked to discuss.

Nearly all candidates attempt to provide an introduction and a conclusion and organise their points into paragraphs. There are still a number of candidates who write a general essay on the topic area and do not address the specific title. The content of these essays cannot be considered to be satisfactory. Many candidates head their essay with the topic title rather than the essay title which, although shorter, is no help to the candidate in keeping the essay on track. It is pleasing to note that many candidates take time to plan and organise their ideas before starting to write.

Some candidates have an excellent command of German and achieve marks for Language in the Very Good category. They have an impressive array of vocabulary at their disposal, both general and topic-specific and are ambitious in their use of structure. Some of these are semi-native speakers whose errors are generally of a phonetic nature. There are also candidates who have a wide ranging vocabulary but still have difficulties with rudimentary grammar and make basic errors. If possible, it is a good idea to leave some time at the end of the examination to check for careless language errors.

Common errors:

- interference from English tempts some candidates to use *Sie* instead of *man*
- confusion between *man / Mann* and *das, dass*
- confusion between *wenn, wann, als*
- confusion between *vorher, bevor, vor*
- confusion between *um* and *damit*
- word order after subordinating conjunctions
- nouns without articles

Question 1

Inwiefern sollte die Regierung beeinflussen, was wir essen und trinken, damit wir gesund bleiben?

This was quite a popular title producing a wide range of opinions from those advocating significant government intervention in our eating habits to those who considered it would be an infringement of human rights to do so. Weaker candidates tended to focus on the healthy eating side of the question at the expense of the government role.

Question 2

Wie sieht die Zukunft für Entwicklungsländer aus? Sind Sie optimistisch oder pessimistisch? Begründen Sie Ihre Antwort.

A minority of candidates chose this title but the responses were mostly thoughtful even though they reached quite different conclusions. Many appeared to have direct experience of the issues they raised in their essays.

Question 3

„Gruppenreisen sind keine gute Erfahrung. Nur wenn man allein reist, kann man ein fremdes Land wirklich kennenlernen.“ Wie stehen Sie zu dieser Aussage?

This was a popular title, which was within the experience of all candidates and did not require extensive topic-specific vocabulary. The balance between those favouring group travel and those who prefer to travel solo was fairly even but some concentrated too much on this aspect of the title to the exclusion of the "getting to know a foreign country" element. It is important to keep referring to the title during the examination to check that what is being written is fully relevant.

Question 4

„Generationskonflikte gibt es in vielen Kulturen.“ Stimmt das Ihrer Meinung nach?

A number of candidates chose this title and were quite well versed in the problems that can occur between the generations but the references to other cultures were often limited.

Question 5

Haben arme Kinder die gleichen Chancen in der Schule wie Kinder aus reichen Familien? Was meinen Sie?

Many candidates chose this title and enthusiastically explored the difference in opportunities afforded to rich and poor children in school. Most concluded that there was little equality and that the situation varied in different parts of the world.

GERMAN

Paper 9717/33

Essay

General Comments:

Few candidates tackled the essay on *The Developing World* but otherwise the essays were quite evenly distributed between the topics. As always there was the complete range of responses: from thoughtful, well-structured essays to those where the candidate struggled both for ideas and the means to express them.

Most candidates produced an essay of an appropriate length. Nearly all candidates are aware of the need to provide an introduction and a conclusion and to organise their material into paragraphs. Although it is only a small minority who write a general essay on the topic and ignore the title, there are very many candidates who start off with the title very much in mind and then wander off-course (possibly reproducing material from a practice essay) and draw a conclusion that has no relevance either to the title or to their own introduction. It would be helpful if the candidates copied out the question rather than the topic to remind them of the direction their essay should be taking. Judging by the number of candidates who write their essay more than once on the answer sheet, the time allotted for the topic essay should be sufficient to allow for some thought before writing and thorough checking after writing.

Some candidates have an excellent command of German and achieve marks for Language in the Very Good category. They have an impressive array of vocabulary at their disposal, both general and topic-specific and are ambitious in their use of structure. Some of these are semi-native speakers whose errors are generally of a phonetic nature. There are many candidates who have a wide ranging vocabulary but still have difficulties with rudimentary grammar and make basic errors.

Common errors:

- interference from English tempts some candidates to use *Sie* instead of *man*
- confusion between *man / Mann* and *das, dass*
- confusion between *ob* and *wenn, wann* and *als*
- confusion between *bevor, vorher* and *vor*
- confusion between *um* and *damit*
- plural forms of nouns, for example an extra *-n* added to *Kinder* and *Länder*
- nouns without articles
- agreement in number between verb and subject: singular subject with plural verb and vice versa

Question 1

„Wir essen alle zu viel Fleisch.“ Was halten Sie von diesem Standpunkt?

The health benefits and drawbacks of eating meat may be relevant but they are not the only issues to consider when responding to this title. The most successful essays also addressed the implications for the environment from the increasing consumption of meat. The word *alle* could also be explored and again the better candidates pointed out, not only that vegetarianism is quite widespread but that many people in the world have insufficient food and probably eat very little meat.

Question 2

Was könnten Ihrer Meinung nach die industrialisierten Länder von den Entwicklungsländern lernen?

Very few candidates attempted this title and the resulting essays were rarely successful, either because they misunderstood the question or because they wrote generally on the topic and failed to address the title.

Question 3

„Der Tourismus zerstört was die Touristen sehen wollen.“ Wie stehen Sie zu dieser Aussage?

This title provided an opportunity to discuss the tensions between tourism and the environment and the effect of tourism on a country's cultural heritage. Many candidates rose to the challenge and produced relevant and well illustrated arguments which led them to different but equally valid conclusions. There were, however, a number of weaker candidates who lapsed into a descriptive account of tourism and failed to address the issues mentioned above.

Question 4

Die Kluft zwischen den Generationen ist am größten im Bereich der Kommunikationstechnologie. Was meinen Sie?

There were some thoughtful essays on this topic which referred to other generational differences as well as the attitude to modern technology. Some candidates concentrated almost exclusively on the communication technology aspect of the title and lost sight of the generation gap.

Question 5

Haben Frauen die gleichen Chancen in der Sportwelt wie Männer?

This title produced some interesting ideas on the position of women in sport and most candidates focused on the difference in physical strength between the sexes. Surprisingly the financial aspect was rarely explored and more use could have been made of specific examples to illustrate the points made.

GERMAN LITERATURE

Paper 9717/41

Texts

General Comments

In this section of the examination candidates are expected both to demonstrate knowledge of the texts and an understanding of how the texts work. Candidates who did well were able to show good knowledge of the text, choosing good examples to illustrate points made and structuring their argument well. The majority of the candidates had good knowledge of the texts and many were able to marshal their thoughts into coherent, relevant essays.

A number of the difficulties encountered by candidates were similar to those highlighted every year: relevance to the question and an ability to organise their essays coherently in the appropriate language were crucial.

Layout and Labelling: Most of the candidates labelled their work conclusively, but it would have helped greatly if both, overall question and sub-questions, were clearly recognisable for all three chosen essays, so that no errors occur.

Clear labelling of individual essays with clear paragraphing throughout the essays themselves seemed to be linked to a more organised and structured approach.

Following Instructions: A small minority of candidates only wrote two essays rather than the three pieces demanded for this paper. One can only assume that in their case the title page of the paper has been read incorrectly.

When candidates chose **section 1** essays and opt for **(a)**, both sub-questions have to be answered, not just **(i)** or **(ii)**.

It is not allowed to answer two questions on the same text, three different books have to be covered, one from each big section and one of free choice.

Candidates also need to check that they have answered one question from each main section before they answer the third question, which can be from a section of their choice, but not on any of the books chosen already.

All three essays should have a length of about 500 words each to allow candidates to make a variety of points pertaining to the question of their choice. Quite a few answers were significantly shorter and therefore candidates penalised themselves by not mentioning enough detail to access the higher marks.

Focus on the terms of the question: The essay titles are very carefully worded and candidates' first task when tackling an essay must be to decide what is expected of them. A generic, pre-learnt essay or an accumulation of knowledge listed in the answer does not constitute a good essay, however accurate the knowledge may be. It would be helpful to candidates to copy down the question and clearly label their own work to focus on their topic of choice and they can then refer back to the question in order to ask themselves whether each point they are making is relevant for the correct answer.

Structuring the essay: An essay should be seen as an argument. The writer is seeking to persuade the reader of the validity of the argument he/she is putting forward. An argument must be properly structured, introducing the theme, presenting evidence and leading to a conclusion. Some candidates omitted the introduction or started their essay with what would effectively be their conclusion. Other candidates did not come to any conclusion, partially because they seemed to have run out of time.

Clear paragraphing also helps to structure a coherent argument. Candidates should use one paragraph for each main point they wish to make. Some candidates wrote whole essays without any paragraphing at all

which made it more difficult to discern between individual ideas. Often this also led to unnecessary repetitions and as no new ideas were introduced, no extra credit could be earned. Good candidates made relevant points in paragraphs, supported those with relevant examples and evaluated or analysed what they had read well.

Language: The majority of candidates were able to produce the level of language required to write good essays that could be followed easily. The expressions and idioms used to convey ideas were often well thought through, but it was noticeable that even candidates with a very secure grasp of vocabulary and grammar made an array of spelling mistakes not expected at this level.

Good Practice for candidates:

- Chose one question from each section first, then decide on the third question
- Make sure you read the question carefully and know the focus of it
- Divide your time into three equal chunks and start working on the first essay
- Label each essay with the section and question number, do not forget sub-questions
- Think about paragraphs: one main idea and some supporting evidence per paragraph would be good
- Evidence does not have to be a precise quote, but should show that you have read the text in detail, not just a summary of the plot (or watched the film, if available).
- Make sure you have an introduction, main part and conclusion in your essay.
- Throughout each essay make sure that your language is formal: *herunter*, not *runter*, *nichts* not *nix*, *etwas können* instead of *was drauf haben* etc. are examples for this.
- At the end, read through each essay and make sure spelling mistakes are eliminated as far as possible. Spell names of characters correctly and make sure they belong to the text you are referring to!

Examples of particular weaknesses:

- *ß* and *ss*, the former still required after long vowels and diphthong, the latter after short vowels
- *das* and *dass* got confused a lot
- meanings of words sometimes not clear: *ihre Hände sind verbunden* instead of the correct *gebunden*
- genders and cases were confused: *eine gute Abitur* instead of *ein gutes Abitur*, *was dem Essen bezieht* should read *was sich auf das Essen bezieht*, *in einem anderen Menschen verwandeln* should be *in einen anderen Menschen verwandeln*
- Wrong possessive pronouns: *wie sein Bruder* (her brother) should be *wie ihr Bruder*
- Register/style: the language is sometimes too informal. There is a definite issue to be addressed here, relating to candidates not being able to differentiate between spoken/colloquial and written/formal language. (*rum* instead of *herum*; *drauf haben* instead of *etwas können*, *nix* instead of *nicht*)
- Anglicisms: often candidates who had weaknesses in their vocabulary used English phrases and translated them into German on a one to one basis: *“In meiner Meinung”* instead of *“Meiner Meinung nach”*, *“Werden wir gezeigt”* instead of *“wird uns gezeigt”*
- Words misspelt and invented: *wiedersprechen* should be *widersprechen*, *Neuichkeit* should be *Neuigkeit*, *Personalität* should be *Persönlichkeit*, *Pflichtbewusstigkeit* should be *Pflichtbewusstsein*

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Timm – *Die Entdeckung der Currywurst*

The majority of candidates who wrote on this question chose the first one:

- (a) (i) Good answers contained a mention of Frau Brücker’s interrogation about Holzinger and her refusal to stay quiet and this was linked to her fish order when Grün appears in order to speak to people. Good candidates worked out that both actions did not conform to the behaviour the Nazis would have liked to see.

- (ii) The better candidates started off with a definition of “*plichtbewusst*” and then mentioned how Holzinger and Brücker subvert the system. A lot of candidates referred to Holzinger’s transfer and that he had attracted attention already, but only a few added that Frau Brücker hides a soldier, a deed punishable by death under the Nazi regime.
- (b) The best candidates were able to link Holzinger’s transfer, his poisoning of the food and Frau Brücker’s food orders to the fact that this undermined the propaganda spreading that the Nazis had planned. The majority of candidates understood that the general population did not believe in the propaganda anymore and that very few people were prepared to follow the NS-instructions to the letter during the end phase of the war.

Question 2

König – *Ich fühl mich so fifty-fifty*

Again, the majority of the candidates chose the first question on the book.

- (a) (i) The first part question asked the candidate to look at Sabine’s School career. The better candidates realised that Herr Dehnert’s comment is sarcastic and he is criticising the regime with his remark about the good *Abitur* grades. Sabine’s parents support her wish to study languages and psychology, but to no avail. The state plans Sabine’s career and all protest, including illness, is futile.
- (ii) The second part was superbly answered by a couple of candidates who extracted from other characters in the book what Sabine’s life would look like under a GDR regime: studying for a teaching degree, becoming a teacher who has to fall in line with party politics, marriage and maybe children, then early retirement and eventually the possibility to travel for a limited number of weeks per year.
- (b) In the second question candidates were asked how Sabine imagined her future and how her experiences with school influenced her decision to flee. Most candidates saw school as one factor in her decision, but thought that Mario and the mum fleeing had a bigger impact. Some mentioned friends leaving and Thomas’ grandparents as additional factors for her flight, but nearly all candidates thought that the lack of freedom and self-determination was a crucial point when Sabine decided to flee.

Question 3

Kafka – *Die Verwandlung*

About 40 candidates wrote about this book, the majority having chosen the first question.

- (a) (i) Most candidates accurately depicted the series of events in the room, but failed to highlight that the sister gives Gregor food leftovers which the family does not want anymore and treats him like an animal as she does neither touch his drink vessel nor his food or indeed him. Her reason to close and lock the door is to keep him in, not to give him peace and quiet.
- (ii) Gregor’s relationship to food changes in that he enjoys non-human food first of all, then eats less and less, then refuses to eat and finally food is used to kill him. He decides to forego food in order to do his family a favour and dies when they have decided to get rid of him. One very good candidate stated that he used to like milk, connected this with the first food humans get when they are born and then he refuses this first link to humanity and prefers water, a drink that all animals are partial to.
- (b) The second question was answered well by the majority of candidates who chose it. Candidates clearly grasped that Gregor was still thinking like a human being, but had difficulties acting like one because of his transformation. This was made clear with the help of the food he gets served in the course of the story: he would like the milk and bread in his mind and tries to eat it, but is repulsed, then he finds out he likes leftovers, but has clear recollections that the cheese in particular was something he used to abhor and in the end he decides to forego food completely after a period of just tasting food and spitting it out again. Very good candidates linked this process of decreasing importance to the worsening relationship with his family and the increased lack of communication with him. The failure to care adequately for Gregor is symbolised by the food he gets given and how he gets treated with it (the apple throwing incident).

Section 2

Question 4

Och – Das Salz der Erde und das dumme Schaf

Approximately 20 essays were written about this text, with an equal split between the two questions.

- (a) Jana learns in the children's home that she is adopted and that none of the outrageous stories her granddad has told her are true. She decides not to tell him what she has found out, because she realises that it makes no difference to her relationship to him and that he would be mortified by the revelations. Most candidates clearly established that Jana and the granddad were close and that their relationship did not need any official confirmation and that his need for extravagant stories would better not be curbed.
- (b) Some candidates thought that the ending of the story was solely positive as Jana and her granddad were reunited after their stint in the different homes, but the better candidates realised that the granddad's answer right at the end was indicating that he was getting older and had lost some of his belief in his ability to look after Jana. She herself realises that her granddad is mortal and might leave her one day and that they had challenges to face with regards to how other people might perceive the two of them.

Question 5

Brecht – Der Gute Mensch von Sezuan

Approximately 40 essays were produced on this text, about two thirds on the first question.

- (a) Good candidates mentioned the different episodes where the cousin is needed; for defending the shop, in connection with the police, when the husband-to-be is examined and finally when the Gods reappear and Shen Te asks to "keep" him. Some candidates stated that the cousin was just one side of Shen Te and she could have shown her harder side without the dressing up charade, but better candidates saw that this created an extra layer of distance between the play and the spectators/readers and that the cousin was the sign of the coin needed in order to survive capitalism.
- (b) Some candidates only wrote about the superficial information the play provides: poverty, dishonesty, pressure to help, but not enough means to do so. They then linked this to conditions in the world nowadays and decided that the play was relevant because conditions were the same or had worsened, even. The more insightful candidates linked the answer to Brecht's socialist intentions and the fact that he tried to show the flaws in a capitalist society, which could only be eliminated by creating a socialist society where things get shared more evenly from the outset.

Question 6

Borchert – Kurzgeschichten

Approximately 20 essays were produced on this text, the majority about the first question.

- (a) The better candidates related their answers to two stories or even three and showed what they would expect normal juveniles to experience and then contrasted this to Borchert's stories where young people deal with loss of loved ones, destruction and devastation. They have experiences which are not typical for young people in general: death, murder and homelessness owing to war. Children and young people have to grow up faster and take over roles of adults or carers and take on responsibilities which normally parents would have.
- (b) The candidates who chose this question highlighted that women had different roles in Borchert's stories. Some were caring and sacrificed themselves at least partially for their husbands or children and were symbols of comfort, but some women (the younger ones) represented the lack of ability to connect to another human being on an equal level because of the war experiences the men/boys had had. In some instances the similes and metaphors in the stories were misunderstood and taken literally, so that things were taken at face value when they had a different meaning. This was especially pertinent for candidates who chose "Bleib doch, Giraffe" to exemplify their arguments.

GERMAN LITERATURE

Paper 9717/42

Texts

General Comments

In this section of the examination candidates are expected both to demonstrate knowledge of the texts and an understanding of how the texts work. Candidates who did well were able to show good knowledge of the text, choosing good examples to illustrate points made and structuring their argument well. The majority of the candidates had good knowledge of the texts and many were able to marshal their thoughts into coherent, relevant essays.

A number of the difficulties encountered by candidates were similar to those highlighted every year: relevance to the question and an ability to organise their essays coherently in the appropriate language were crucial.

Layout and Labelling: Most of the candidates labelled their work conclusively, but it would have helped greatly if both, overall question and sub-questions, were clearly recognisable for all three chosen essays, so that no errors occur.

Clear labelling of individual essays with clear paragraphing throughout the essays themselves seemed to be linked to a more organised and structured approach.

Following Instructions: A small minority of candidates only wrote two essays rather than the three pieces demanded for this paper. One can only assume that in their case the title page of the paper has been read incorrectly.

When candidates chose **section 1** essays and opt for **(a)**, both sub-questions have to be answered, not just **(i)** or **(ii)**.

It is not allowed to answer two questions on the same text, three different books have to be covered, one from each big section and one of free choice.

Candidates also need to check that they have answered one question from each main section before they answer the third question, which can be from a section of their choice, but not on any of the books chosen already.

All three essays should have a length of about 500 words each to allow candidates to make a variety of points pertaining to the question of their choice. Quite a few answers were significantly shorter and therefore candidates penalised themselves by not mentioning enough detail to access the higher marks.

Focus on the terms of the question: The essay titles are very carefully worded and candidates' first task when tackling an essay must be to decide what is expected of them. A generic, pre-learnt essay or an accumulation of knowledge listed in the answer does not constitute a good essay, however accurate the knowledge may be. It would be helpful to candidates to copy down the question and clearly label their own work to focus on their topic of choice and they can then refer back to the question in order to ask themselves whether each point they are making is relevant for the correct answer.

Structuring the essay: An essay should be seen as an argument. The writer is seeking to persuade the reader of the validity of the argument he/she is putting forward. An argument must be properly structured, introducing the theme, presenting evidence and leading to a conclusion. Some candidates omitted the introduction or started their essay with what would effectively be their conclusion. Other candidates did not come to any conclusion, partially because they seemed to have run out of time.

Clear paragraphing also helps to structure a coherent argument. Candidates should use one paragraph for each main point they wish to make. Some candidates wrote whole essays without any paragraphing at all

which made it more difficult to discern between individual ideas. Often this also led to unnecessary repetitions and as no new ideas were introduced, no extra credit could be earned. Good candidates made relevant points in paragraphs, supported those with relevant examples and evaluated or analysed what they had read well.

Language: The majority of candidates were able to produce the level of language required to write good essays that could be followed easily. The expressions and idioms used to convey ideas were often well thought through, but it was noticeable that even candidates with a very secure grasp of vocabulary and grammar made an array of spelling mistakes not expected at this level.

Good Practice for candidates:

- Chose one question from each section first, then decide on the third question
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- Throughout each essay make sure that your language is formal: *herunter*, not *runter*, *nichts* not *nix*, *etwas können* instead of *was drauf haben* etc. are examples for this.
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Examples of particular weaknesses:

- *ß* and *ss*, the former still required after long vowels and diphthong, the latter after short vowels
- *das* and *dass* got confused a lot
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- Anglicisms: often candidates who had weaknesses in their vocabulary used English phrases and translated them into German on a one to one basis: *“In meiner Meinung”* instead of *“Meiner Meinung nach”*, *“Werden wir gezeigt”* instead of *“wird uns gezeigt”*
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Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

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Question 2

König – *Ich fühl mich so fifty-fifty*

Again, the majority of the candidates chose the first question on the book.

- (a) (i) The first part question asked the candidate to look at Sabine’s School career. The better candidates realised that Herr Dehnert’s comment is sarcastic and he is criticising the regime with his remark about the good *Abitur* grades. Sabine’s parents support her wish to study languages and psychology, but to no avail. The state plans Sabine’s career and all protest, including illness, is futile.
- (ii) The second part was superbly answered by a couple of candidates who extracted from other characters in the book what Sabine’s life would look like under a GDR regime: studying for a teaching degree, becoming a teacher who has to fall in line with party politics, marriage and maybe children, then early retirement and eventually the possibility to travel for a limited number of weeks per year.
- (b) In the second question candidates were asked how Sabine imagined her future and how her experiences with school influenced her decision to flee. Most candidates saw school as one factor in her decision, but thought that Mario and the mum fleeing had a bigger impact. Some mentioned friends leaving and Thomas’ grandparents as additional factors for her flight, but nearly all candidates thought that the lack of freedom and self-determination was a crucial point when Sabine decided to flee.

Question 3

Kafka – *Die Verwandlung*

About 40 candidates wrote about this book, the majority having chosen the first question.

- (a) (i) Most candidates accurately depicted the series of events in the room, but failed to highlight that the sister gives Gregor food leftovers which the family does not want anymore and treats him like an animal as she does neither touch his drink vessel nor his food or indeed him. Her reason to close and lock the door is to keep him in, not to give him peace and quiet.
- (ii) Gregor’s relationship to food changes in that he enjoys non-human food first of all, then eats less and less, then refuses to eat and finally food is used to kill him. He decides to forego food in order to do his family a favour and dies when they have decided to get rid of him. One very good candidate stated that he used to like milk, connected this with the first food humans get when they are born and then he refuses this first link to humanity and prefers water, a drink that all animals are partial to.
- (b) The second question was answered well by the majority of candidates who chose it. Candidates clearly grasped that Gregor was still thinking like a human being, but had difficulties acting like one because of his transformation. This was made clear with the help of the food he gets served in the course of the story: he would like the milk and bread in his mind and tries to eat it, but is repulsed, then he finds out he likes leftovers, but has clear recollections that the cheese in particular was something he used to abhor and in the end he decides to forego food completely after a period of just tasting food and spitting it out again. Very good candidates linked this process of decreasing importance to the worsening relationship with his family and the increased lack of communication with him. The failure to care adequately for Gregor is symbolised by the food he gets given and how he gets treated with it (the apple throwing incident).

Section 2

Question 4

Och – Das Salz der Erde und das dumme Schaf

Approximately 20 essays were written about this text, with an equal split between the two questions.

- (a) Jana learns in the children's home that she is adopted and that none of the outrageous stories her granddad has told her are true. She decides not to tell him what she has found out, because she realises that it makes no difference to her relationship to him and that he would be mortified by the revelations. Most candidates clearly established that Jana and the granddad were close and that their relationship did not need any official confirmation and that his need for extravagant stories would better not be curbed.
- (b) Some candidates thought that the ending of the story was solely positive as Jana and her granddad were reunited after their stint in the different homes, but the better candidates realised that the granddad's answer right at the end was indicating that he was getting older and had lost some of his belief in his ability to look after Jana. She herself realises that her granddad is mortal and might leave her one day and that they had challenges to face with regards to how other people might perceive the two of them.

Question 5

Brecht – Der Gute Mensch von Sezuan

Approximately 40 essays were produced on this text, about two thirds on the first question.

- (a) Good candidates mentioned the different episodes where the cousin is needed; for defending the shop, in connection with the police, when the husband-to-be is examined and finally when the Gods reappear and Shen Te asks to "keep" him. Some candidates stated that the cousin was just one side of Shen Te and she could have shown her harder side without the dressing up charade, but better candidates saw that this created an extra layer of distance between the play and the spectators/readers and that the cousin was the sign of the coin needed in order to survive capitalism.
- (b) Some candidates only wrote about the superficial information the play provides: poverty, dishonesty, pressure to help, but not enough means to do so. They then linked this to conditions in the world nowadays and decided that the play was relevant because conditions were the same or had worsened, even. The more insightful candidates linked the answer to Brecht's socialist intentions and the fact that he tried to show the flaws in a capitalist society, which could only be eliminated by creating a socialist society where things get shared more evenly from the outset.

Question 6

Borchert – Kurzgeschichten

Approximately 20 essays were produced on this text, the majority about the first question.

- (a) The better candidates related their answers to two stories or even three and showed what they would expect normal juveniles to experience and then contrasted this to Borchert's stories where young people deal with loss of loved ones, destruction and devastation. They have experiences which are not typical for young people in general: death, murder and homelessness owing to war. Children and young people have to grow up faster and take over roles of adults or carers and take on responsibilities which normally parents would have.
- (b) The candidates who chose this question highlighted that women had different roles in Borchert's stories. Some were caring and sacrificed themselves at least partially for their husbands or children and were symbols of comfort, but some women (the younger ones) represented the lack of ability to connect to another human being on an equal level because of the war experiences the men/boys had had. In some instances the similes and metaphors in the stories were misunderstood and taken literally, so that things were taken at face value when they had a different meaning. This was especially pertinent for candidates who chose "Bleib doch, Giraffe" to exemplify their arguments.

GERMAN LITERATURE AND GERMAN

Paper 9717/43

Texts

General Comments

In this section of the examination candidates are expected both to demonstrate knowledge of the texts and an understanding of how the texts work. Candidates who did well were able to show good knowledge of the text, choosing good examples to illustrate points made and structuring their argument well. The majority of the candidates had good knowledge of the texts and many were able to marshal their thoughts into coherent, relevant essays.

A number of the difficulties encountered by candidates were similar to those highlighted every year: relevance to the question and an ability to organise their essays coherently in the appropriate language were crucial.

Layout and Labelling: Most of the candidates labelled their work conclusively, but it would have helped greatly if both, overall question and sub-questions, were clearly recognisable for all three chosen essays, so that no errors occur.

Clear labelling of individual essays with clear paragraphing throughout the essays themselves seemed to be linked to a more organised and structured approach.

Following Instructions: A small minority of candidates only wrote two essays rather than the three pieces demanded for this paper. One can only assume that in their case the title page of the paper has been read incorrectly.

When candidates chose **section 1** essays and opt for **(a)**, both sub-questions have to be answered, not just **(i)** or **(ii)**.

It is not allowed to answer two questions on the same text, three different books have to be covered, one from each big section and one of free choice.

Candidates also need to check that they have answered one question from each main section before they answer the third question, which can be from a section of their choice, but not on any of the books chosen already.

All three essays should have a length of about 500 words each to allow candidates to make a variety of points pertaining to the question of their choice. Quite a few answers were significantly shorter and therefore candidates penalised themselves by not mentioning enough detail to access the higher marks.

Focus on the terms of the question: The essay titles are very carefully worded and candidates' first task when tackling an essay must be to decide what is expected of them. A generic, pre-learnt essay or an accumulation of knowledge listed in the answer does not constitute a good essay, however accurate the knowledge may be. It would be helpful to candidates to copy down the question and clearly label their own work to focus on their topic of choice and they can then refer back to the question in order to ask themselves whether each point they are making is relevant for the correct answer.

Structuring the essay: An essay should be seen as an argument. The writer is seeking to persuade the reader of the validity of the argument he/she is putting forward. An argument must be properly structured, introducing the theme, presenting evidence and leading to a conclusion. Some candidates omitted the introduction or started their essay with what would effectively be their conclusion. Other candidates did not come to any conclusion, partially because they seemed to have run out of time.

Clear paragraphing also helps to structure a coherent argument. Candidates should use one paragraph for each main point they wish to make. Some candidates wrote whole essays without any paragraphing at all

which made it more difficult to discern between individual ideas. Often this also led to unnecessary repetitions and as no new ideas were introduced, no extra credit could be earned. Good candidates made relevant points in paragraphs, supported those with relevant examples and evaluated or analysed what they had read well.

Language: The majority of candidates were able to produce the level of language required to write good essays that could be followed easily. The expressions and idioms used to convey ideas were often well thought through, but it was noticeable that even candidates with a very secure grasp of vocabulary and grammar made an array of spelling mistakes not expected at this level.

Good Practice for candidates:

- Chose one question from each section first, then decide on the third question
- Make sure you read the question carefully and know the focus of it
- Divide your time into three equal chunks and start working on the first essay
- Label each essay with the section and question number, do not forget sub-questions
- Think about paragraphs: one main idea and some supporting evidence per paragraph would be good
- Evidence does not have to be a precise quote, but should show that you have read the text in detail, not just a summary of the plot (or watched the film, if available).
- Make sure you have an introduction, main part and conclusion in your essay.
- Throughout each essay make sure that your language is formal: *herunter* not *runter*, *nichts* not *nix*, *etwas können* instead of *was drauf haben* etc. are examples for this.
- At the end, read through each essay and make sure spelling mistakes are eliminated as far as possible. Spell names of characters correctly and make sure they belong to the text you are referring to!

Examples of particular weaknesses:

Invented words: *Western* instead of *Westen*, *Fru* instead of *Frau*, *vollsichtig* instead of *vorsichtig*,
Wrong spellings: *wiederspiegeln* instead of *widerspiegeln*, *Familien Drama* instead of *Familiendrama*,
Aufendhalt instead of *Aufenthalt*
Capital letters omitted (*lage*)
Incorrect cases: *der Aufwand musste Gregor alleine tragen* instead of *den, in eine gute wirtschaftliche Lage* should read *in einer guten wirtschaftlichen Lage*

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Timm – Die Entdeckung der Currywurst

- (a) (i) Good answers mentioned that Bremer was hidden in the cupboard and was seeing Lammers through the keyhole and how both he and Frau Brücker were worried about getting discovered. Frau Brücker's noises in the night are explained by her as anxiety because of the threat of invasion and Lammers tries to turn this into a trap for her to criticise the regime. In the end she accuses him of doubting the success of the Nazis and tells him to not be unreasonable in his demands for fire security. Lammers thinks she is protecting her son, so is quite close to the truth that she is hiding someone.
- (ii) Lammers is an example for a conscientious follower of the regime who obeys orders and believes in the ideology he got given. He does not ask questions and follows the party line and the official reports. Frau Brücker helps people who need her and is good at organising and surviving in a chaotic world. She boycotts some measures the Nazis take (fish ordering to make Grün ill, telling Holzinger that she was interrogated about him) and helps Bremer. She represents a practical, unimportant citizen who does not officially resist, but lives by her own moral standards.

- (b) Lammers is the correct executer of any order he gets given. He takes his job as Blockwart seriously and checks the houses to make sure all regulations are adhered to. When someone is suspected of telling the Nazis that a neighbour has made unwise utterances, he is suspected, but later on it turns out that it was not him. When the Nazis lose the war, he kills himself as he cannot adjust to the new world around him. Lena Brücker is the exact opposite: she adjusts to the circumstances she finds herself in and learns to cook with very few ingredients and to organise food for the canteen in an efficient manner. In her private life she makes decisions according to her own moral standards without listening to authorities or political figures.

Question 2

König – *Ich fühl mich so fifty-fifty*

- (a) (i) The first part question asked the candidate to look at Mario's escape. The better candidates realised that Sabine's assumptions are correct. Mario had organised his flight with the help of the aunt, but the initiative had been his, not the aunt's. His intention had been to stay in the West from the start and he had no intention of staying with his aunt just for a visit.
- (ii) Whereas the mum worries about Mario and wonders how he arranged his flight and which role the aunt played, Herr Dehnert just withdraws further into himself and appears to become less and less hopeful that they will see Mario again. Frau Dehnert worries about the practical aspects of Mario's life and does not think that he will cope on his own in the West which is one of her main motives for fleeing herself later on in the story.
- (b) In the second question candidates were asked why Sabine's mother finds the flight of her son so difficult to deal with. In this story Frau Dehnert is a typical mum. She worries how Mario has managed to arrange his escape from East Germany and does not credit him with the ability to cope in the West without any help. She misses him as a member of the family, but seems closer to him than to Sabine or her husband when she makes the decision to join Mario in the West after her early retirement. Once she gets to the West she can clearly see that Mario does not want her mothering and can survive without her – all things she doubts while she is still in Eastern Germany and Mario is gone already.

Question 3

Kafka – *Die Verwandlung*

- (a) (i) Gregor had assumed that when his father went bankrupt no money was left, but lack of conversation had meant he never found out the details. He had taken over the role as main earner and had provided for everyone, which initially had made the family feel grateful towards him, but then had turned into indifference at least from his parents whereas the sister had stayed slightly closer to him.
- (ii) Gregor's relationship with the sister is closer than with the other family members and he values her more. Whilst Gregor does not particularly like music, his sister does, and he enjoys it when she plays the violin. He has decided to send her to a conservatorium despite the fact that this will be very expensive, so he knows he has to earn extra money by working even harder than he does at the moment. This will cause him more stress, but he is willing to expose himself to this as he loves his sister so much.
- (b) The second question asks whether or not the book is still relevant today. As the story has no specific historical backdrop it could be transferred to any time period. Gregor's transformation into a beetle or other creature can be seen as a metaphor for illness, breakdown or just lack of communication between the family members. The failure to understand one another in this family and the ensuing developments could be valid nowadays even if some of the language of the book makes it appear old-fashioned to some candidates.

Section 2

Question 4

Och – *Das Salz der Erde und das dumme Schaf*

- (a) Too few answers to make a comment appropriate
- (b) Some candidates thought that the age of the people who would read the book would have to be taken into consideration, a point well made. Younger people would find the antics of the granddad funny and would identify more with Jana and Jirka and their developing romance. Most people would find the situation that the granddad and Jana are in sufficiently different from their own lives to compare and contrast. Although most candidates saw the ending as being positive, the last saying will provide more food for thought in yet another funny way. It was interesting to note that candidates appreciated the lack of violence in the book and thought it made a pleasant change.

Question 5

Brecht – *Der Gute Mensch von Sezuan*

- (a) Too few answers to make a comment appropriate
- (b) The Gods can just watch and not interfere, but they decide to give Shen Te money and so influence the rest of the story: Shen Te buys the shop and needs to survive in order to do the good deeds demanded by the Gods of a good person. They have the power to put Shen Te into this position, but seem to be unable or unwilling to help her out as much as she needs at the end. Shen Te can have her alter ego, the cousin, but not as often as she likes, so the Gods limit “his” power and leave Shen Te on her own with the problems other people have created for her. Their power might be limitless, but Brecht shows that reliance on Gods does not help and humans have to sort out their own problems

Question 6

Borchert – *Kurzgeschichten*

Too few answers to make a comment appropriate