

GERMAN

Paper 9717/01
Speaking

Key messages

- The Speaking Test begins with an uninterrupted presentation from the candidate. The content of the presentation must clearly relate to the culture or society of a German-speaking country, whilst also reflecting the candidate's personal interests.
- Presentations should last for around three minutes, up to a maximum of four minutes; no questions should be included in the content of presentations, unless they are rhetorical.
- Candidates should ask the examiner at least two questions in both the topic conversation and the general conversation, ideally spontaneously; the examiner should prompt them to do so if necessary.
- No marks may be awarded for Seeking Information if no questions are asked.
- The two conversations should be of approximately equal length, at around eight minutes each, and the whole test should be completed within twenty minutes.

General comments

Presentation topics mostly referred to issues in a German speaking society and many were interesting and informative. On the other hand, some presentations referred only briefly to Germany, Austria or Switzerland, which was not sufficient to achieve a high mark for Content. Some specific detail is expected, with ideas and opinions, as well as factual points. A number of centres had not ensured that their candidates' presentations mentioned a German speaking country at all, and marks for Content should have been lower to reflect this.

It was again evident, despite this being a key message after every session, that not all candidates were aware that they should ask the examiner a minimum of two questions per conversation. Nor were all examiners aware that they should prompt them to do so if necessary. It was sometimes the case that candidates did not ask any questions spontaneously, and if they were not prompted to do so by the examiner, they were unable to access the marks available for Seeking Information. Some examiners did prompt their candidates but only at the very end of a conversation: questions should if possible be integrated and arise naturally, during the discussion. There were again some centres that awarded marks for Seeking Information even though no questions had been asked.

Candidates were mostly responsive and spontaneous. If candidates rely mainly on prepared material, they should be placed no higher than in the 'Satisfactory' box for Comprehension and Responsiveness. Apart from some incorrectly awarded marks for Seeking Information, most centres used the mark-scheme correctly and accurately. Some marks for the Content of the Presentation were pitched slightly too highly, as the presentation had perhaps lacked ideas and had contained more facts than opinions, but the criteria for marking the linguistic categories were usually interpreted reasonably correctly. Some centres allowed the tests to last too long: twenty minutes should be the maximum duration of a test. Recording quality was less good than usual. At some centres either the examiner or more usually the candidate was less audible, owing to incorrect placement or use of the recording equipment, whereas more recordings than usual suffered from an overall low recording volume having been set, making some conversations difficult to follow.

Specific comments on the sections of the examination

Section 1 (Presentation)

- If the presentation contains ideas and opinions, refers in reasonable detail to the culture or society of a German-speaking country and is delivered in a fluent and confident fashion, nine or ten marks may be awarded for content.
- If there are only brief references to a German-speaking country a lower mark for content should be considered.
- Presentations that are far too long, even if confidently delivered, should not receive nine or ten marks for content, as they cannot be considered to have been ‘well organised’, as in the mark-scheme.
- For a mark of five for pronunciation a candidate does not have to be a native speaker.
- A well-prepared candidate should be able to access at least 4 marks for Language. What is required is a ‘reasonable range’ of structures and (topic-specific) vocabulary, delivered ‘fairly fluently’, and without ambiguity of meaning.
- There was an especially wide-ranging list of interesting and informative presentation topics in this series, including:

Porsche; Diabetes; künstliche Intelligenz; Schönheitswettbewerbe; soziale Aspekte der Familie; die Mode der 30er und 40er Jahre; Veganismus; Lufthansa; ‘Burnout’; Streikgesetze: Unis; Sport in der Schweiz; Krieg und Handel; sexuelle Diskriminierung; Gründung der DDR; Immobilienpreise; Einwanderung aus der Türkei; Johannes Brahms; ‘Glücksunterricht’ in der Schule; Sebastian Vettel; Boris Becker; and das Berliner Opernhaus.

Section 2 (Topic Conversation)

- In this conversation issues raised in the presentation should be followed up and discussed.
- Candidates should be able to defend any ideas and opinions already expressed and ought also to have prepared some additional points; however, examiners should not expect them to know any specific factual information over and above what has been presented.
- Any issues more suitable for the General Conversation should be raised later in **Section 3**.
- The issues covered in the Topic Conversation should not be returned to.
- The questions a candidate puts to the examiner to ‘seek information’, should be as varied as possible. ‘Was ist Ihre Meinung darüber?’ is a useful question to move the conversation along, but something more specific is expected for the highest marks. In this particular case an examiner could prompt the candidate to give more detail with the response: ‘Über was genau?’
- If a candidate asks only one question during a conversation the maximum mark for Seeking Information is three; if no questions are asked, even after prompting, the mark should be zero.
- A maximum mark of three should be awarded for Providing Information if the candidate can deal with basic situations and concepts, but finds more complex ones difficult.

Section 3 (General Conversation)

- This section should be distinct from **Section 2**. It should not be shorter, but of a similar length to the Topic Conversation at around eight minutes.
- The examiner should clearly inform the candidate that the Topic Conversation is over, and should introduce a completely different topic for the General Conversation. At least two different topics should be covered in reasonable depth in this section.
- Examiners should not put a series of questions requiring relatively short responses, or at least not until after two main topics have been thoroughly discussed.
- Mainly complex issues should be discussed in order to allow candidates to access the higher marks available for Comprehension and Responsiveness or Providing Information and Opinions.
- Questions, such as *Warum?* or *Inwiefern?* are particularly useful in prompting in depth discussion.
- It should not be expected that candidates will know specific information on a topic chosen by the examiner. If a candidate is clearly unhappy with any topic suggested, the examiner should quickly suggest a different area of discussion.

GERMAN

Paper 9717/02
Reading & Writing

Key messages

In this paper, candidates read two texts with a common theme (*fast fashion*).

They then answered vocabulary questions for **Question 1** and grammar questions for **Question 2**.

In **Questions 3 and 4** candidates answered comprehension questions about the two texts. In **Question 5** candidates were asked to summarise the two texts with reference to **(a)** the problems caused by fast fashion and **(b)** what consumers can do to combat this. They then briefly gave their own opinion on the topic.

General comments

The majority of candidates coped well with the demands of the paper, and their answers to **Questions 3–5** demonstrated a good understanding of the two texts. The quality of language varied considerably. Some candidates wrote confidently using their own words, but others restricted themselves to copying large chunks of the original text without attempting to rephrase ideas and opinions. This could not be credited. **Questions 1** and **2** also presented problems for candidates who did not have sufficient command of vocabulary and grammar for this level and simply guessed the answers.

In **Question 5** candidates should be reminded to keep the summary task in mind and not just rephrase the texts without reference to the task. Simply copying sentences from the text does not gain marks as it does not demonstrate summary skills.

Comments on specific questions

Part 1

Question 1

- (a)** Some candidates struggled with this question as they did not understand the original word that they were given in the question and were therefore unable to find a synonym in the text. It is important to note that some synonyms contain more than one word; the answers given by candidates need to be a complete match to the words given in the questions.
- (b)** The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.
- (c)** Most candidates answered this question correctly.
- (d)** Many candidates answered this question correctly. However, it is important to note that spelling needs to be correct, including capital letters and differentiation between *ss* and *ß*.
- (e)** Many candidates answered this question correctly.

Question 2

- (a)** Many candidates were able to construct a suitable sentence here.
- (b)** Some candidates answered well. Others struggled to produce correct word order after *denn*.

- (c) Many candidates answered this question correctly. Some candidates used the wrong verb *fordern* (without umlaut) or did not realise that *Preise* required a verb in the plural.
- (d) Most candidates answered this question well. Some candidates struggled with the correct spelling (*umzustellen* as one word).
- (e) Many candidates provided a suitable answer and used the correct case ending. In some cases, poor handwriting rendered the answer unintelligible or caused doubt about what the candidate had written, and in such cases the mark could not be awarded.

Question 3

- (a) This was a straightforward question, but some candidates struggled here. They did not give enough detail for the number elements of the answer (e.g. double in the last 15 years).
- (b) Many candidates answered this question correctly and were awarded full marks. Some candidates did not give enough detail (e.g. many people not able to sew on a button; not just 'repairing clothes').
- (c) Most candidates did well here, with the majority scoring at least two out of the three available marks.
- (d) Most candidates answered this question well.
- (e) Many candidates gave the three required pieces of information here. Some candidates copied random bits of information from the text, which did not demonstrate understanding; this could not be credited.
- (f) Most candidates scored either one or both of the marks available for this question.

Part 2

Question 4

- (a) Many candidates were able to identify the three necessary points here.
- (b) Many candidates coped well with this question and mentioned at least two out of the three required details.
- (c) The majority of candidates gained at least two out of the three marks available for this question and were able to describe some of Charlotte's criticism about clothes nowadays.
- (d) Most candidates identified at least two out of three details with regards to the environmental effect of fast fashion.
- (e) The majority of candidates coped well with this question. Most scored either two or three marks here.

Question 5

The majority of candidates coped well with this task and were able to identify many problems associated with fast fashion, as well as mentioning things that consumers can do to alleviate these problems. However, some candidates did not read the second part of **Question 5(a)** carefully enough and instead wrote about things that companies and the government could do instead of what the consumer could do. Occasionally, poor quality of language made it difficult to understand some summaries.

Candidates should be reminded to adhere to the word limit as any points made after the word limit will not be credited. The aim of this question is to produce a concise summary; candidates should be discouraged from copying sentences verbatim from the texts and should instead summarise the points briefly and succinctly.

In **Question 5(b)** most candidates were able to give a well-founded opinion on the topic and supported their view with valid reasons, often drawing on their own experience. Very few candidates restricted themselves to

writing short general statements without giving personal opinion. This approach is to be discouraged as it does not demonstrate that candidates have understood and engaged with the texts.

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Paper 9717/03
Essay

Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- select the title that they feel most confident about answering
- write a response that is clearly relevant, structured coherently and well informed, supported with examples
- use accurate German at an advanced level, demonstrating good use of idiom and appropriate topic-specific vocabulary
- use sentence structures that show complexity, but which are still easy to follow.

General comments

Most essays were argued coherently. Many essays began with a clear statement of intent in the introduction and ended with an attempt to draw the ideas together in a conclusion. Most essays were of an appropriate length. The strongest essays showed a mature understanding of the topics that they addressed, with balanced arguments and appropriate evidence.

The overall standard was high. Many candidates had an excellent command of German with strong command of idiomatic language, and therefore achieved language marks in the Very Good category. Many candidates showed an impressive range of vocabulary and grammar. Occasionally, candidates focused on writing generally about the topic area rather than answering the specific question that had been asked.

Common errors included:

- lack of punctuation
- lack of capitalisation of nouns
- errors in using the dative plural
- word-order errors
- gender errors
- influence of first language on word choice or idiomatic expressions
- errors with the genitive case.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1: *Das Leben in der Stadt und auf dem Land*

„Ohne Städte könnte unsere Gesellschaft nicht funktionieren, aber ohne die Natur könnten wir auch nicht existieren.“ (Hannah, 25 Jahre). Was halten Sie von Hannahs Meinung?

Most essays demonstrated a good balance between recognising the essential role of cities in providing jobs (along with cultural and social exchange) and highlighting the important role of the countryside in providing vital resources, such as food from agriculture, to sustain a country (along with the benefits of getting away from the city and experiencing nature first hand). Candidates could have taken the opportunity to reflect on Hannah's age and whether older generations might take a different view.

Question 2: *Essen und Trinken*

Um zu leben, muss der Mensch essen und trinken, aber wenn wir uns falsch ernähren, schaden wir unserer Gesundheit. Warum gibt es heutzutage so viel Diskussion um die richtige Ernährung?

Many essays showed a good understanding of what constitutes healthy and unhealthy eating and why convenience and unreliable online influencers can sometimes cause us to make unhealthy choices. Stronger essays often highlighted that the vast quantity of information available online can make it difficult to make good decisions regarding diet. This idea of too many voices advocating different wonder diets was a common response to the key question about why there is so much discussion on this topic. Some candidates did not address the specific question that had been asked, and instead simply provided examples of healthy and unhealthy diets.

Question 3: Sport

Auch für ältere Menschen ist es wichtig Sport zu treiben – nicht nur für den einzelnen Menschen, sondern auch für die Gesellschaft. Was halten Sie von diesem Standpunkt?

Many essays showed good awareness of the benefits for older people of doing exercise. Both physical and mental health were considered, along with the social benefits of maintaining contact with others. Stronger essays also reflected on the wider benefits for society in terms of how an active lifestyle can help to delay the onset of health problems associated with old age, thus saving money on hospital treatments. However, some candidates argued that older people might be more likely to injure themselves and would therefore place a burden on society as a whole while having treatment.

Question 4: Kulturelles Erbe

„Geschichte ist unwichtig! Sie hat keine Bedeutung für unsere Gegenwart.“ (Josef, 30 Jahre). Was denken Sie über Josefs Meinung?

Most candidates expressed disagreement with Josef's opinion by highlighting how we can learn from history and/or by explaining that we are in danger of repeating the same mistakes of the past if we ignore the lessons that history can teach us. Some argued that technological advancement was more relevant than learning about the distant past, although even in these cases most candidates explained that past technological discoveries have led us to where we are now. Candidates could have taken the opportunity to reflect on Josef's age and whether his view might or might not reflect the general view across his generation.

Question 5: Krieg und Frieden

Wenn alle Regierungen enger zusammenarbeiten würden, würde es keine Kriege geben. Wie stehen Sie zu dieser Aussage?

Many essays demonstrated a good balance between providing examples of how countries that actively decide to work together are less likely to go to war – with France and Germany post World War 2 being a frequent example – and recognising that individual countries will always have their own agendas and that an attempt to realise these ideas may eventually result in use of force. Some candidates argued that certain countries remain so ideologically at odds with each other that conflict is inevitable.

GERMAN

Paper 9717/04

Texts

Key messages

Candidates should be able to demonstrate that they can discuss the texts in the context of the time they were written in and show some understanding of the author's intentions and effect of the text on the audience.

Most candidates were able to show in depth knowledge of the text, chose good examples to illustrate their arguments and structured their answers well.

Most candidates' command of German was good to very good, sometimes with evidence of native speaker background. On the other hand, there was a small number of candidates where the command of German was very poor which in turn had an influence on how well they were able to bring their point across (lack of vocabulary, poor grammar knowledge, spelling errors).

There was also a handful of candidates who did not fulfil the rubrics of the paper, i.e., answering two questions on one text or not answering three questions. To avoid this, candidates should be reminded to read the instructions very carefully.

When writing their answers candidates should focus on a clear structure of their argument/essay. There should be an introduction: introducing the theme; main part: presenting evidence and a clearly structured argument leading to a conclusion. Candidates should use one paragraph for each main point they wish to make, avoid repetition, and use relevant examples from the text to illustrate their point. Proper paragraphing, organisation and linking of arguments and a structured approach in writing always results in a better analysis/answer/essay. This approach should be encouraged. Good planning makes for a better essay.

Summary of good practice for candidates:

- Choose one question from each section first, then decide on a third question.
- The third question must not be on a text which one question has already been answered on.
- Make sure to read each question carefully and identify what is required.
- Divide your time into three equal parts.
- Label each essay with the section and question number.
- Plan your essay before you start writing.
- Think about paragraphs: present one main idea and supporting evidence per paragraph.
- Make sure to have an introduction, main part, and conclusion to each essay.
- Make sure all you are writing is relevant to the question and avoid repetition.
- Watch your spelling, grammatical accuracy, and use of vocabulary.
- When you have finished writing, read through each essay and check for grammatical or spelling mistakes and make sure names of characters/authors are spelled correctly.
- Ensure all handwriting is legible.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

The most popular text in this section of the exam was *Zweiter Ohne. Professor Unrat und Ansichten eines Clowns* received about a similar small number of responses. Mostly candidates answered questions well with some candidates relying too much on narration or not focusing enough on the question in hand. If the question includes a text passage, many candidates engaged well with the text passage. However, as in previous years, there are also many candidates that do not engage well enough with the passage with too

many candidates simply recounting the events of the passage again in their own words. The skills of close reading and what it means to analyse a text passage need to be practised more.

Where candidates could also improve is to look more beyond the text itself and consider the author's intentions and the time a text was conceived. They should be encouraged to gain a deeper understanding of the texts.

Question 1

(a) (i) and (ii) The few candidates who chose to answer questions on *Professor Unrat* coped very well with it, placing the scene within the plot and being able to see the scene in the context of the whole play. Candidates needed to demonstrate good knowledge of both characters: Professor Unrat and Künstlerin Fröhlich and their different views on life. Some answers were not balanced where candidates focused too much just on one of the characters. The better candidates were able to give relevant examples from the whole text for the characters' views and motivations being able to draw out changes throughout the book and focusing on the characters' relationship and development.

(b) This question was chosen by very few candidates. This question did require the candidates to have an understanding of the time the text was conceived; it is set in the author's intentions. By and large this seems to be something that candidates find rather difficult, so answers here tended to be too superficial.

Question 2

(a) (i) and (ii) For most candidates answering this part of the question, it was straightforward. They were able to place the scene within the narrative of the book. Candidates were able to connect the analysis of the scene with characteristics of Hans Schnier; his thoughts and observations, what he does, how he is described.

(b) There were a few good responses demonstrating a good understanding of the question and also a good knowledge of the text and the characters. At times answers remained superficial and focused too much on narrating events. Most candidates however did pick up on important themes like differences in the value system and religious beliefs of both characters as well as their respective family backgrounds and desires. Again, relevant examples from the whole book helped to strengthen a good line of argument.

Question 3

(a) (i) and (ii) A close reading of the given text extract was paramount for achieving a high mark here. It was the most popular book in this section of the exam.

It was clear, that generally candidates knew the book very well and were able to answer this question successfully, describing both Johann and Ludwig in good detail. Most did also go on to describe changes in their relationship and it was clear that many understood the complexities of the boys' relationship; even beyond Ludwig's death.

(b) This question was picked less often than a). Most candidates had a good understanding of the role of the Ich-Erzähler and what effects this has in a book and on the reader, like only seeing events from one perspective. Not all picked up on the fact that the story is told retrospectively.

Section 2

By far the most popular text was *Als Hitler das rosa Kaninchen stahl*. Weaker candidates tended to retell too much of the story whichever question they chose on the text.

Question 4

(a) Here candidates needed to demonstrate that they understood how and why Anna and Max experienced the time in exile differently. Things like age, gender, understanding of what was happening at the time needed to be picked upon and backed up with good relevant examples from the texts in terms of events, things either character said or did.

(b) Once more, weaker candidates simply described events around Anna's departure of Germany and arrival in Switzerland, France and England. Stronger candidates were able to link event to feelings, effects, reasons etc.; loss of innocence, growing understanding of events at the time and the family's changing circumstances, reasons for having to leave a country, reasons for being treated a certain way by others etc.

Question 5

(a) and (b) Not many candidates picked this book. The more popular question of the two was **(b)**. It was clear that candidates who did write on *Demian* were mostly able to answer the question well having a good understanding of the parents' influence on Emil Sinclairs development.

Question 6

(a) and (b) There were some very good answers on these questions with candidates demonstrating how well they understood the moral dilemma at the centre of this play. There were some very interesting lines of argument, candidates giving reasons for their line of argument and linking it all to current events, the events referred to in the play, the character himself, his background, reasons, possible motivations. Very good candidates saw the whole play within the wider context of our time and also looked at the possible motivations of the author.