

GERMAN

Paper 8683/01
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 8683/02
Reading & Writing

Key messages

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

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

In **Questions 3 and 4**, candidates answer comprehension questions about the two texts. In **Question 5**, candidates are 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 give their own opinion on the topic.

General comments

The majority of candidates coped well with the demands of this exam and showed a good understanding of the two texts as demonstrated by the answers to **Questions 3 – 5**. The quality of language varied from excellent to very poor. Whilst some candidates wrote confidently using their own words, others restricted themselves to copying large chunks of the original text without attempting to rephrase ideas and opinions. This cannot be credited. **Questions 1** and **2** also presented a difficulty for candidates who did not have a sufficient command of vocabulary and grammar for this level and simply guessed an answer.

In **Question 5**, candidates should be reminded to keep the summary task in mind and not just rephrasing both 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

Question 1

- (a) Some candidates struggled with this question as they did not understand the original word they were given and were thus unable to find a synonym in the text. It is important to note some synonyms contain more than one word; they have to be a complete match to the original word.
- (b) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.
- (c) The majority of 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 answered this question correctly and were able to construct the sentence correctly.
- (b) Some candidates coped well with this question and answered correctly; however some candidates struggled with the correct word order after 'denn'.

- (c) Many candidates answered this question correctly, but some candidates used the wrong verb 'fordern' (without Umlaut) or did not realise that 'Preise' required the verb in the plural.
- (d) This question was mostly answered correctly, but some candidates struggled with the correct spelling (umzustellen as one word).
- (e) Many candidates answered this question correctly and used the correct case ending. It is important to note that poor handwriting can lead to a point not being given if there is doubt as to correct spelling of the word.

Question 3

- (a) A question that presented difficulties for some candidates. 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 – however, some candidates did not give enough detail (e.g. many people not able to sew on a button; not just 'repairing clothes').
- (c) This question presented no difficulty for the majority of candidates and they were awarded at least two out of three marks.
- (d) This question was mostly answered correctly.
- (e) The question presented only a minor difficulty, and many candidates referred to three required pieces of information. Sometimes, candidates copied random bits of information from the text without showing understanding; this can not be credited.
- (f) This question presented no difficulty for the majority of candidates and they were awarded at least one out of two marks.

Question 4

- (a) Many candidates were able to identify the three necessary points for the answer.
- (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 three marks 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 final question and were able to score at least two out of three points.

Question 5

The majority of candidates coped well with this task and were able to identify many problems associated with fast fashion and then mentioned things that consumers can do to alleviate these problems. However, some candidates neglected the second part of the question; instead giving things that companies and the government could do (instead of the consumer).

Occasionally, the poor quality of language made it difficult to understand some candidates' summaries.

Candidates should be reminded to adhere to the word limit – any points after the 150-word cut-off 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 text; instead, they should summarize points briefly and succinctly.

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

Cambridge International Advanced Subsidiary Level
8683 German June 2024
Principal Examiner Report for Teachers

restricted themselves to writing short general platitudes without giving personal opinion – this is to be discouraged as it does not demonstrate that the candidates has understood and engaged with the text.

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Paper 8683/03
Essay

Key messages

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

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

General comments

Most essays were coherently argued. Many candidates began with a clear statement of intent in their introduction and an attempt to draw their ideas together in a conclusion. Most essays were of the appropriate length. The strongest candidates showed a mature understanding of the topics 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 so achieved language marks in the Very Good category. Many candidates showed an impressive command of vocabulary and grammar and so their essays were a pleasure to read. Occasionally, candidates focused on writing about their pre-conceived ideas on the topic rather than answering the question.

Common errors included:

- lack of punctuation
- lack of capitalisation of nouns
- errors in using the dative plural
- word order errors
- gender errors
- anglicisms in word choice or expression
- errors with the genitive case.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates struck the right balance between recognising the essential role of cities in providing jobs along with cultural and social exchange and highlighting the role of the countryside in, for example, providing the vital resources (such as food from agriculture) to sustain a country along with the benefits of getting away from the city and seeing nature first hand. Candidates might have reflected on Hannah's age and whether older generations might view the topic differently.

Question 2

Many candidates 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. With the stronger candidates, there was a strong sense of the ubiquity of information online making it difficult to make

the right decisions around diet. This idea of too many voices advocating different wonder diets was the common response to the key question about why there is so much discussion on this topic. Some candidates failed to address this question at all, simply providing examples of healthy and unhealthy diets.

Question 3

Many candidates' responses reflected a good awareness of the benefits of taking exercise for older generations. Both physical and mental health were considered along with the social benefits of maintaining contact with the outside world. Stronger candidates also reflected on the wider benefits for society in terms of how an active life can 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 so incur a cost on society as a whole for their treatment.

Question 4

Most candidates articulated their disagreement with Josef's opinion by highlighting how we learn from history or how we are in danger of repeating the same mistakes if we ignore the lessons of history. In terms of technological advancement, some argued that this was more relevant than learning about the distant past, though even here candidates explained how past technological discoveries have led us to where we are now. More might have been made of Josef's age and whether his dismissive view may or may not reflect a wider view across his generation.

Question 5

Many candidates achieved the right balance between providing examples of how countries that actively decide to work together are less likely to make war – with France and Germany post-WW2 being a notable example – and recognising that individual countries will always have their own agendas that will eventually seek to realise by use of force. Some candidates were able to argue that certain neighbouring countries remain so ideologically at odds with their neighbours that conflict was inevitable.