

FIRST LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0505/01
Reading and Directed Writing

Key messages

To do well in this paper candidates should:

- take care to read the sub-questions in **Question 1** and **Question 2** carefully and consider the number of marks available for each
- produce a structured response to **Question 3** that covers the relevant points from the texts in an appropriate style.

General comments

In this paper, candidates read three texts. Text A was a literary text and Text B and C were on a common theme – this year the advantages and disadvantages of social media.

Questions 1 and **2** related to the literary text. Candidates answered comprehension questions for **Question 1**. In **Question 2**, candidates are asked to answer questions with regards to author's use of language.

In **Question 3**, candidates summarized Texts B and C with reference to the positive and negative aspects of using social media and had to convince listeners of the advantages of having a healthy balance when using social media. This year, this summary had to be written as a script for a podcast.

Many candidates coped well with the demands of this exam. They showed good understanding of Text A as demonstrated by their answers to **Questions 1(a) – (g)**.

The quality of language varied from excellent to weak. 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.

Handwriting remains an issue and appears to have deteriorated, sometimes making it impossible to read what has been written. Many candidates had trouble formulating answers based on the text. Expression was sometimes either poor and/or consisted of complete lifts from the text in response to questions. There were also examples of incorrect register and colloquialisms in answering **Question 1** and **2**.

Questions 2(a) – (e) presented a challenge and many candidates struggled to answer the questions on style and literary technique as they did not use the text to find the evidence for their responses.

In **Question 3**, candidates should be reminded to keep the summative aspect of the task in mind and not rephrase both texts without reference to the question. Simply copying sentences from the text will not gain marks.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a) A straightforward warm-up question with many candidates achieving full marks. Some candidates even identified the difference of opinion between Judith and her sister.

(b) The majority of candidates coped well with this question and scored full marks.

- (c) Candidates coped well with this question and were able to gain the one mark.
- (d) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly and were able to identify at least part of the girls' attitude towards Claudia during the holidays. Some candidates misunderstood the text and claimed that Xane and Judith were lying to Claudia.
- (e) Many candidates scored at least one out of three possible points and mentioned that the girls were ashamed of their attitude during the summer. Some also stated that the girls accepted Claudia back as their friend. Very few candidates however achieved an acceptable explanation for the third mark.
- (f) This question was answered successfully by some candidates. Many candidates scored a mark for 'Sie dulden Claudia um mehr Zeit mit der Mutter zu verbringen', but only a few understood the fact that Lizzie was different to other mothers.
- (g) Many candidates scored one mark for the first bullet point, mentioning that Lizzie treated Claudia like a small child. However, many candidates misunderstood the text and thought that it was the mother that suffered from 'Begriffsstutzigkeit'.

Question 2

Some candidates struggled with this exercise and were unable to answer many of the questions correctly.

- (a) Most candidates scored one mark but very few understood the text well enough to achieve the second mark. A significant number of candidates said the father was a builder and/or lazy.
- (b) This question was challenging and only a few candidates achieved both marks. Some candidates scored one mark by referring to how long the holidays felt.
- (c) Most candidates scored both marks (there was a choice of two from three possible answers). However, candidates did not always understand the concept of an 'Amazonenduo'.
- (d) Few candidates were able to convey that Claudia was similar, yet different from her mother. Many candidates only rephrased the question, which could not be credited.
- (e) Many candidates achieved the first mark but were then unable to provide an explanation for the second mark.

Questions 3

The majority of candidates coped very well with this question and were able to identify many relevant positive and negative aspects of social media based on both texts. Furthermore, they were able to write a good script for a podcast (with well organised ideas and good linkage of paragraphs) to convince listeners to adopt a healthy and balanced approach to using social media.

The quality of language was mostly good. However, sometimes poor quality of language and/or choice of inappropriate register made it difficult to understand some answers. There was some interference from mainly English in some answers.

The aim of this question is to produce a concise summary. Candidates should therefore be discouraged from copying sentences verbatim from the text. Instead, they should try to summarize points briefly and succinctly in their own words while adhering to rules of punctuation, spelling and grammar.

FIRST LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0505/02

Writing

Key messages

To do well on this paper, candidates should:

- write accurately
- use a wide range of vocabulary and structures
- provide a range of well-developed ideas
- make sure their essays are relevant to the chosen topic, well organised and coherent.

General comments

The strongest essays were carefully planned. This led to well-structured discursive or persuasive arguments, effective storytelling and engaging descriptive essays with precise and convincing detail. Effective planning also had a positive influence on legibility. It is advisable to only use every other line in the exam booklet for clarity. Successful essays adhered closely the requirements of the respective essay-types.

Some essays displayed fluent, varied and sophisticated syntax and vocabulary as well as large number of spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes. The number of scripts containing colloquialisms has also increased. Candidates are reminded that everyday words and idioms such as *Klamotten*, *rein*, *raus* and *cool* are classified as *Umgangssprache* and as such not appropriate for use in discursive and argumentative essays, unless they are part of a quote.

Errors in punctuation were common, especially with relative clauses. Neglecting to capitalise nouns also featured in a large number of scripts. Candidates are encouraged to make use of the full range of punctuation marks to enrich their work and improve the flow and readability, not just full stops and commas.

An increasing number of anglicisms and false friends was noticed. Examples include:

- *sozialisieren*
- *spenden* in the sense of 'to spend'
- *Geld machen*
- *Freunde machen*
- *sind beides schädlich und nicht schädlich*
- *Gesicht zu Gesicht*
- *Endlich* where *zuletzt* was meant
- *nächstens* in the sense of 'next' (i.e. instead of *als Nächstes*)
- 'Sale' instead of *Schlussverkauf*

Candidates should avoid using anglicisms and develop an awareness of false friends. Getting into the habit of finding German equivalents for English words and using them regularly in written work is the best way to avoid such pitfalls.

In preparation for the exam, candidates are advised to revise the rules of grammar carefully, including use of cases after prepositions, irregular verbs and the use of pronouns (especially consolidating the difference between *deren* and *ihrer*). The prevalent use of *wo* instead of a suitable relative pronoun should also be avoided.

Marks scored for content and structure were usually higher than for style and accuracy. Examiners reported a majority of well-structured essays. Many good points and arguments were used in **Section 1**, and most essays included an introduction as well as a conclusion. Some candidates did not appear to be aware of the

distinction between an argumentative essay focusing on single view on/approach to a given topic (*Erörterung – linear*) and a balanced, two-sided discursive essay (*Diskussion – dialektisch*). This often led to vagueness, contradiction and repetitiveness. Candidates are reminded to read the essay question carefully as this will indicate the type of response required.

The most successful essays in **Section 2** demonstrated an excellent understanding of apposite stylistic features, such as inversion, direct and indirect speech and, additionally for the narrative task, language that effectively conveyed tension and surprise. Such essays also made use of a wide range of well-chosen vocabulary, and spelling was usually accurate.

Most candidates made an essay plan before they started writing. It was good, for instance, to see that story arcs had been incorporated in several narrative essay plans, and this generally had a very positive impact on the quality of the stories. The best descriptive essays not only supplied detailed sensory perception but also gave insight into the writer's thoughts and feelings. Many narrative essays had a tight plot structure that often captivated the reader's interest from the start with imaginative storylines and interesting dialogues.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

This task invited candidates to debate the merits and demerits of traditional board games versus online games, and was chosen by the majority of candidates in **Section 1**. Most essays thoughtfully discussed the social aspects of families or friends spending time together over a traditional board game, as well as the financial reasons why traditional board games may be preferable to online games. The advantages of online games were also often usefully discussed, as were the disadvantages of both types of games. Many essays were concerned with the mental and physical health of the players in either format, warning against addiction to online gaming on the one hand and the risk of arguments that might disrupt family relationships in the course of a board game on the other. Many high-scoring essays touched on educational advantages, e.g. meeting people from different cultures in online communities, acquiring IT and decision-making skills, as well as developing interpersonal and communication skills while playing board game sessions '*mit echten Menschen*'. Particularly successful essays related every point back to the well-being aspect of the question. Many candidates offered pertinent examples and justifications and convincingly contrasted advantages and disadvantages. Less successful essays were overly biased towards one type of game and struggled to consider alternative viewpoints or offered little in the way of justification for their personal preference for either traditional or online games.

Question 2

This topic, inviting candidates to challenge or rally behind the stance that 'fashion is nothing but a consumer lie', was chosen by fewer candidates than **Question 1** but evidently captured the imagination. Almost all scripts featured interesting and inspired responses. Candidates considered financial, practical, ecological and personal reasons for fashion choices, including the pressures to 'overconsume', and many demonstrated good awareness of the associated ethical challenges and principles. Many essays advocated for fashion as a means of expressing a person's true self, as a form of art and as a sphere where they could be fully creative. Detailed insights, not only into clothing, but also into other aspects of fashion and styling, including hairstyles and make-up, were marshalled as evidence for allowing people to retain what many viewed as an essential freedom. From a different viewpoint, other essays highlighted the dangers of *Fast Fashion* and consumer susceptibility to manipulation by social media. The strongest essays showed an awareness of counterarguments but focused on providing persuasive arguments based on the stance taken by the writer.

Section 2

Question 3

This question was the more popular of the two questions in **Section 2**. Many candidates made strong attempts to evoke the mood and atmosphere of a visit to a Christmas market, with most describing a popular Christmas market in their hometown. They often described the colours, lighting, smells, tastes, sounds and weather conditions to create atmosphere. Several scripts added further vivid details, such as snippets of conversation overheard in the market, descriptions of specific Christmas trees, stalls and stallholders.

Increased use was made of changes in perspective this session, mostly to good effect, e.g. looking at the market from a bench, from high up on a Ferris wheel or through the reflection in a Christmas bauble. Some candidates made good use of interior monologues and direct speech, often giving room for poignant memories of lost childhood joys or family members no longer with them. Most essays drew a positive picture of the visit, revelling in the wintry (or summery, when viewed from the Southern Hemisphere) conditions, quoting Christmas song lyrics and the overarching message of peace on earth. Others gave their essay a different, often entertainingly negative or darkly humorous spin. The strongest essays exhibited and strong structural control over the sense impressions described and the order in which they were presented in an authentic voice. Less compelling descriptive essays tended to list the sense impressions and events encountered at the market rather haphazardly, often leading to repetition.

Question 4

Only a small number of candidates opted for the story on a tempting offer but produced some of the most successful responses in the paper. Examiners reported evidence of careful planning which helped with developing a successful plot. Several promising job offers and prospects of successful careers at famous football clubs were mentioned. The most successful essays managed to establish a captivating dilemma: e.g. is the offer too good to refuse, even considering the hurt or disappointment that will be caused to others if the offer is accepted? Many candidates chose to end on a cliffhanger, thus reinforcing the moral predicament they managed to create in their stories.