

# GERMAN

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<p><b>Paper 9717/01</b> <b>Speaking</b></p>
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## Key messages

- The presentation topic should clearly relate to the culture or society of a German-speaking country but should also reflect the candidate's personal interests.
- A presentation should last no longer than a maximum of three and a half minutes and should include opinions as well as facts.
- Candidates should spontaneously ask the Examiner at least two questions in both the Topic Conversation and the General Conversation, and they should be prompted by the Examiner to ask some questions if this has not occurred.
- The test should be completed within twenty minutes, and the two conversations should be of approximately equal length, at around eight minutes each.
- Candidate and Examiner should be equally on the recording, and the recording equipment should be tested beforehand and placed accordingly.
- Natural interchange between candidate and Examiner in the conversations is preferable to prepared responses.

## General comments

Most candidates were appropriately entered at this level and the majority were well aware of the requirements of the Speaking test. However, at some centres, candidates did not ask the Examiner a minimum of two questions in each conversation and were not always prompted to do so. They were therefore unable to access the full ten marks available for Seeking Information. Nearly all candidates were responsive and most were spontaneous, with very few relying on prepared responses. Many Centres had just one or two candidates, but there were a few larger entries. Most Examiners used the mark-scheme correctly and largely accurately. Some however allowed the tests to last far too long, which is not helpful to candidates. Recording quality was usually very good, but at some Centres either the candidate or the Examiner was less audible, owing to poor placement of the recording equipment, and there was sometimes external noise.

## Comments on specific tasks

### **Section 1: Presentation**

- If the ideas and opinions required by the mark-scheme are evident, and the delivery of the Presentation is lively and confident, nine or ten marks may be awarded for content.
- Presentations that are too long, however confidently delivered, should not receive nine or ten marks, as they cannot be considered to have been 'well organised' (see 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 four 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 very good range of interesting, particularly up-to-date or relevant topics, including the following:

*Die Homo-Ehe, Extremsport, Bio-Wein, die Bundestagswahlen 2017, Immigration, menschliche Beziehungen, künstliche Intelligenz, die Juden in Deutschland, gesellschaftliche Probleme.*

### **Section 2: Topic Conversation**

- This conversation should deal solely with the candidate's presented topic, and issues raised in the presentation should be followed up and discussed.
- A candidate should not be expected to know any specific factual information over and above what has been presented to the Examiner, but should have plenty of additional general ideas and be able to defend any points of view already expressed.
- Any issues more suitable for the General Conversation should be raised later in **Section 3** provided that the main issues of the Topic Conversation are not returned to in that section.
- The questions a candidate puts to the Examiner to 'seek information', should be as varied as possible. „Was denken Sie?“ or „Was ist Ihre Meinung?“ are useful questions, as they can be used to move the conversation along, but a wider range is expected for a maximum mark of five.
- If a candidate asks only one question during a conversation the maximum mark is three for Seeking Information.
- Similarly, a maximum mark of three should be awarded for Providing Information if the candidate can deal with basic situations and concepts, but not more complicated ones.

### **Section 3: General Conversation**

- This section should be clearly distinct from **Section 2** and should be of a similar length to the Topic Conversation.
- The switch to General Conversation should be announced by the Examiner and there should be a complete change of topic. At least two different topics should be covered in this section.
- Personal details, such as the candidate's future and interests, could feature briefly but should not form the main element of this section. It is better to move fairly swiftly on to more complex or wider issues, in order to allow the candidate access to the full range marks available for Comprehension and Responsiveness, or Providing Information and Opinions.
- Open questions by the Examiner are more effective than closed ones. Brief questions, such as *Warum?* or *Inwiefern?* are particularly useful in this respect.
- It should not be expected that the candidate will know any specific information on an unexpected topic chosen by the Examiner, particularly in current affairs. If a candidate is clearly unhappy with, or uninformed about, the original topic suggested, it is good practice to switch quickly to a different topic.

# GERMAN

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<p><b>Paper 9717/22</b> <b>Reading and Writing</b></p>
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## Key messages

This paper consists of 2 texts and 5 questions.

- **Question 1:** seek a word (or words) that fit(s) perfectly in the place of the one from the text/question.
- **Question 2:** start/complete the sentence with the prompt provided and be careful to make the necessary grammatical changes in the new sentence.
- **Questions 3 and 4:** candidates should formulate answers in their own words and try not to copy directly from the text.
- **Question 5:** respect the word limit. In part **(b)** candidates should express their own ideas (instead of copying ideas from the text).

## General comments

Scripts were clearly presented, and response to the two texts was generally good.

However, candidates should make sure they label all questions clearly and make sure that later additions are clearly marked with asterisks or numbers, corresponding with asterisks or numbers in the main body of the text.

Candidates must read the instructions given for each question carefully, paying particular attention to the words in bold (specific details and examples are listed in the next section). The number of marks allocated for each question serves as a clear indicator of how many separate ideas need to be included in the answer in order to gain full marks.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Question 1**

The purpose of this exercise is to find a word (or words) that fit(s) perfectly in the place of the one from the text/question. On the whole this question was completed quite successfully by candidates. Care should be taken to spell correctly, as incorrectly spelled words cannot be credited.

- (a) This was answered correctly.
- (b) This was mostly answered correctly, although some candidates used the verb *transportieren*.
- (c) This was usually answered correctly.
- (d) This was often answered correctly.
- (e) This was mostly answered correctly; however some candidates missed out the word *von*.

### **Question 2**

The purpose of this exercise is to change a sentence grammatically, with the help of a prompt. On the whole this question was completed to a good standard by most candidates. However, more care needs to be taken with spelling.

- (a) This sentence was mostly completed correctly, although some candidates struggled with the correct adjective *hoch* and used incorrect versions like *hoher*.
- (b) Most candidates answered this question correctly.
- (c) Almost all candidates answered this question correctly.
- (d) Most candidates answered this question correctly.
- (e) Very few candidates answered this question correctly; there were many variations of the noun *Bereitschaft*.

### Question 3

In **Questions 3 and 4**, to show clear evidence of understanding, candidates are expected to rephrase the text to express their answers in their own words. Comprehension of the text was generally good, however some candidates still restricted themselves to copying the relevant section from the text. This cannot gain marks for either content or language and has to be avoided.

- (a) Many candidates gained the available three marks here.
- (b) Many candidates did not understand the absurdity: that it is cheaper to transport food to Morocco to be processed and then back to Germany to be sold, even though oil prices are rising. Some candidates did not understand the meaning of the word *Subventionen* and just copied the passage from the text.
- (c) Most candidates coped well with this question.
- (d) Most candidates answered part of this question correctly and gained 2 marks – however, many were not able to mention that *Deutsche achten mehr auf Bio* and only mentioned that they are willing to spend more money on regional food.
- (e) Most candidates managed to answer this question well.

### Question 4

Again, comprehension of the text was generally good and most candidates managed to back up this comprehension by good grammatical and lexical knowledge in the production of their answers.

- (a) The majority of candidates managed to answer this question correctly.
- (b) Many candidates answered this question correctly.
- (c) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.
- (d) The majority of candidates managed to answer part of this question correctly – however some did not mention the reason why perishable, exotic goods are transported by plane, ie consumer demand.
- (e) Most candidates answered this question correctly.
- (f) Again, most candidates answered this question correctly.

### Question 5

This question required the candidates to summarise the discussion about food miles in part **(a)** (advantages of regional products and possible problems), and then give their own opinion on the subject in part **(b)**.

- (a) Most candidates managed to summarise at least some of the points drawn from the 2 texts. A minority of candidates however did not attempt a summary and only quoted individual sentences directly from the text.

- (b) The majority of candidates managed to express their opinion on the topic (regional or imported food), backing it up with a variety of reasons and drawing from their personal experience.

### **Quality of Language**

The quality of language ranged from excellent to very basic, with some candidates finding it very difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form.

When preparing for the examination, candidates should in particular revise adjective and case endings, tenses and verb endings as well as word order, prepositions and separable verbs. They should also practise answering Reading Comprehension and Summary questions in their own words.

# GERMAN

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<p><b>Paper 9717/23</b> <b>Reading and Writing</b></p>
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## Key messages

This paper consists of 2 texts and 5 questions.

- **Question 1:** seek a word (or words) that fit(s) perfectly in the place of the one from the text/question.
- **Question 2:** start or complete the sentence with the prompt provided. Be careful to make any necessary grammatical changes in the new sentence.
- **Questions 3 and 4:** candidates should formulate the answers in their own words, and try not to copy from the text.
- **Question 5:** respect the word limit. In part **(b)** candidates should express their own ideas (instead of copying ideas from the text).

## General comments

All scripts were very clearly presented, and response to the two texts was generally good.

However, candidates should make sure they label all questions clearly and make sure that later additions are clearly marked with asterisks or numbers, corresponding to asterisks or numbers in the main body of the text.

Candidates must read the instructions given for each question carefully, paying particular attention to the words in bold (specific details and examples are listed in the next section). The number of marks allocated for each question serves as a clear indicator of how many separate ideas need to be included in the answer in order to gain full marks.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

The purpose of this exercise is to find a word (or words) that fit(s) perfectly in the place of the one from the text/question. On the whole this question was completed quite successfully by candidates. Care should be taken to spell correctly, as incorrectly spelled words cannot be credited.

- (a) This was usually answered correctly.
- (b) This was often answered incorrectly; some candidates left out the word *als* in their answers.
- (c) This was usually answered correctly.
- (d) This was answered correctly
- (e) This was often answered incorrectly; some candidates did not understand the word and replaced it with an incorrect word from the text.

### Question 2

The purpose of this exercise was to change a sentence grammatically, with the help of a prompt. On the whole this question was not completed to a good standard by many candidates and the answer was often lacking in grammatical accuracy. More care also needs to be taken with spelling.

- (a) This sentence was mostly completed correctly.
- (b) Most candidates answered this question correctly.
- (c) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.
- (d) A number of candidates struggled with the right case ending in this question.
- (e) Many candidates answered this question incorrectly and left out the word *zu* in front of the infinitive.

### Question 3

In **Questions 3 and 4**, to show clear evidence of understanding, candidates are expected to rephrase the text to express their answers in their own words. Comprehension of the text was generally good, however some candidates still restricted themselves to copying the relevant section from the text. This cannot gain marks for either content or language and has to be avoided.

- (a) Many candidates only gained 2 marks because they did not mention that a quota is no longer needed.
- (b) Most candidates coped well with this question, but many did not mention enough detail to gain full marks.
- (c) Most candidates coped relatively well with this question.
- (d) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.
- (e) Some candidates managed to answer part of this question well; however many candidates restricted themselves to copying out a section of the original text, without showing understanding.

### Question 4

Again, comprehension of the text was generally good and a number of candidates managed to back up this comprehension by good grammatical and lexical knowledge in the production of the answers.

- (a) Many candidates managed to answer part of this question correctly; however too many copied the relevant section. without showing understanding.
- (b) Many candidates answered this question correctly.
- (c) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.
- (d) The majority of candidates struggled to give sufficient detail to answer this question correctly.
- (e) Most candidates answered this question correctly.

### Question 5

This question required the candidates to summarise the texts on the development of German language music and the reasons for its success in part **(a)**, and then give their own opinion on the subject in part **(b)**.

- (a) Most candidates managed to summarise at least some of the points drawn from the 2 texts. Some candidates however did not attempt a summary and just quoted individual sentences directly from the text which cannot gain content or quality of language marks.
- (b) The majority of candidates managed to express their opinion with regards to German music, backing it up with a variety of reasons and sometimes drawing from their personal experience.

### **Quality of language**

The quality of language ranged from excellent to very basic, with some candidates finding it very difficult to express their ideas in a comprehensible form.

When preparing for the examination, candidates should in particular revise adjective and case endings, tenses and verb endings, as well as word order, prepositions and separable verbs. They should also practise answering Reading Comprehension and Summary questions in their own words.

# GERMAN LANGUAGE

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<p><b>Paper 9717/32</b> <b>Essay</b></p>
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## Key messages

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

- select the title with which they feel most comfortable;
- write a response that is clearly relevant, well-illustrated, coherently structured and well informed;
- use German which is accurate and of a suitably advanced nature, as well as demonstrate a good use of idiom and appropriate topic-related vocabulary;
- use sentence patterns which show some evidence of complexity in a style which is easy to follow.

## General comments

Most essays had a clear structure with an introduction and a conclusion. Some candidates, however, had not developed their ideas fully before they started to write. As always, the best essays demonstrated insight, and opinions were backed up with well-chosen evidence.

Many candidates had an excellent command of German and achieved marks for Language in the Very Good category. They had an impressive array of vocabulary at their disposal, both general and topic-specific, and produced essays which were fluent and of an appropriate register. There are a number of candidates who form their letters so indistinctly that many words are difficult to decipher.

Common errors included:

- lack of punctuation;
- lack of capitalisation of nouns;
- incorrect but phonetic spelling.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Question 1**

*In 50 Jahren werden wir ganz andere Sachen essen und trinken. Teilen Sie diese Meinung?*

Many candidates concluded that the situation will not be hugely different in the future after looking back over the past 50 years. Some thought there would be more choice. The best essays widened out the discussion to the environment and the pressures of feeding an increasing population.

### **Question 2**

*Frauen und Männer werden am Arbeitsplatz nie gleichberechtigt sein.  
Wie stehen Sie zu dieser Aussage?*

Some candidates reluctantly agreed with this statement but others considered the progress that has already been made and were more optimistic.

### Question 3

*„Sport soll gut für die Gesundheit sein. Meiner Meinung nach kann er aber auch schädlich sein“ Michael, 17 Jahre alt.  
Finden Sie das auch?*

This was a popular title and gave scope to candidates who had prepared themselves to write about the health benefits of sport. The damaging effects of sport tended to be the effects of over-exertion, rather than performance-enhancing drugs and inherently dangerous sports. Most candidates concluded, however, that the positives outweighed the negatives.

### Question 4

*Welche Voraussetzungen sind am wichtigsten, damit ein Land sich erfolgreich entwickeln kann?  
Begründen Sie Ihre Antwort.*

Candidates who chose this title gave the question some thought and came up with a variety of preconditions for successful development: the economy, education and politics were common themes.

### Question 5

*Holz ist ein veralteter Brennstoff – wir brauchen deshalb Bäume und Wälder nicht mehr zu schützen.  
Was halten Sie von diesem Standpunkt?*

Candidates were unanimous in rejecting this point of view on the grounds that there were far more uses for wood than as fuel, and far more reasons for protecting forests.

# GERMAN LANGUAGE

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<p>Paper 9717/33 Essay</p>
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## Key messages

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

- select the title with which they feel most comfortable;
- write a response that is clearly relevant, well-illustrated, coherently structured and well informed;
- use German which is accurate and of a suitably advanced nature, as well as demonstrate a good use of idiom and appropriate topic-related vocabulary;
- use sentence patterns which show some evidence of complexity in a style which is easy to follow.

## General comments

It is pleasing that most candidates are aware of the need to have an outline plan before starting to write and organise their ideas into paragraphs with an introduction and conclusion. When writing a conclusion all candidates need to check that they are still addressing the demands of the title and that the summary of their evidence has not become too general. The best essays demonstrated insight and candidates backed up their opinions with well-chosen evidence. In less successful essays, candidates did not manage to integrate the material which had been prepared on the topic into an essay which addressed the actual title given.

Many candidates produced essays demonstrating an impressive topic-specific vocabulary and ambitious structures. Sometimes communication was impeded because German grammatical structure was not well mastered. Candidates should note that the references to *idiom* in the *Language* section of the Mark Scheme do not refer to sayings or proverbs, but to fluent use of the language. Candidates of all abilities are advised to leave some time at the end of the examination to check for avoidable language errors: agreement of subject and verb, consistency of gender, word order, for example.

Common errors included:

- confusion between *man*, *Mann* and *das*, *dass*;
- nouns without articles;
- singular subjects with plural verbs and vice versa;
- use of *Mann* / *Männer* to mean *Mensch* / *Menschen*;
- confusion between *eigene* and *einige*;
- lack of punctuation;
- incorrect word order after subordinating conjunctions;
- use of *mehr* with an adjective to create a comparative.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

„Ich muss nicht kochen lernen. Man kann fast jedes Gericht im Laden oder im Restaurant bekommen und das spart viel Zeit.“ Katja, 17 Jahre alt. Finden Sie das auch?

Generally candidates disagreed with Katja that it is unnecessary to learn to cook. The quality of food in restaurants, especially fast food restaurants, led into the health consequences of a bad diet. Few touched on the social aspects by pointing out that cooking is a basic life skill. Very few candidates considered the age and gender of Katja in relation to her opinions.

## Question 2

*Die Lebenschancen einer Person hängen direkt von der Schule ab. Teilen Sie diese Meinung?*

Most candidates came to the conclusion that although school is important in determining one's life chances, there are other factors to consider. Some wrote very thoughtful essays, others went into rather too much school detail at the expense of the other factors.

## Question 3

*Um ein erfolgreicher Sportler oder eine erfolgreiche Sportlerin zu werden, muss man auch aggressiv sein. Was halten Sie von diesem Standpunkt?*

There was a lack of clarity in the definition of aggressive in this context: whether it applied to the personality of the sportsperson or their attitude towards their sport. Either interpretation was acceptable as long as the candidate could express their ideas and gave relevant examples to illustrate their points.

## Question 4

*Das Klima spielt die wichtigste Rolle bei der Entwicklung eines Landes. Wie stehen Sie zu dieser Aussage?*

There were no responses to this title.

## Question 5

*Was ist Ihrer Meinung nach am meisten gefährdet: Wälder, Gebirge, Wüste, Flüsse oder Meere? Begründen Sie Ihre Antwort.*

The candidates who chose this title had prepared themselves to write about the environment and used good topic-specific vocabulary. There were different ways of approaching this essay: to go through the dangers to all the features mentioned or state one's opinion in the introduction and concentrate on one feature. Most candidates chose the latter approach so that they could address the issues in sufficient detail and, in general, the essays were well-informed and relevant.

# GERMAN

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<p><b>Paper 9717/42</b> <b>Texts</b></p>
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## General comments

In this paper 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. They also linked the points made back to the question of the essay title. The majority of the candidates had good knowledge of the texts and many were able to marshal their thoughts into coherent, relevant essays.

**Layout and Labelling:** The majority of the candidates labelled their work correctly; a few wrote down the wrong letter for the sub-question.

Clear paragraphing throughout the essays was linked to an organised and structured approach in the writing.

**Following Instructions:** A small minority of candidates only wrote two essays instead of three pieces.

It is not permitted to answer two questions on the same text, three different books have to be covered, one from each of the two big sections and a third book from either of these sections.

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 including 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.

**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, either because they seemed to have run out of time, or because the essay was poorly structured or argued throughout.

Clear paragraphing is crucial for 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 identify individual ideas and often led to unnecessary repetition. Good candidates made relevant points in separate paragraphs, supported with detailed examples which evaluated or analysed what they had read and said.

**Language:** Many candidates were able to produce the level of language required to write fluent essays. Others struggled with grammar and word usage, and a small number of essays were grammatically and linguistically so poor that it was difficult to make out what the candidate was saying.

## **Good Practice for Candidates:**

- Choose one question from each section first, then decide on the third question.
- Make sure you read the question carefully and know what is actually being asked.
- Divide your time into three equal parts and start working on the first essay.
- Label each essay with the section and question number, do not forget sub-questions.
- Think about paragraphs: present one main idea and supporting evidence per paragraph.
- Evidence does not have to be a precise quotation, but should show that you have read the text in detail.

- Make sure you have an introduction, a main part and a conclusion in your essay.
- Throughout each essay make sure that your language is formal: eg *herunter*, not 'runter' or *etwas können* instead of 'was drauf haben'.
- Capitalise all nouns.
- At the end, read through each essay and make sure to eliminate spelling mistakes 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
- meanings of words sometimes not clear: „dementierter Vater“ instead of *dementer Vater*; „das Gedächtnis verstehen“ instead of *das Denken verstehen*, „compromisse beschäftigen“ instead of *Kompromisse eingehen*
- ä and e get confused as in „Probläme“ instead of *Probleme*
- wrong pronoun endings or verb forms: „sorgen für sein Sohn“ (correct: *seinen Sohn*); „hat jemandem, der er liebt, verloren“ (*hat jemanden, den er liebt, verloren*); „ein mutig Frau, die in der Öffentlichkeit gegen den NS stehen“ (*eine mutige Frau, die sich in der Öffentlichkeit gegen den Nationalsozialismus stellt*); nouns not always capitalised
- apostrophe s applied, such as in „Faber's Charakter“ (instead of *Fabers Charakter*)
- Register/style: the language is sometimes too informal
- 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*; „in 1931“ instead of just *1931*; „sie lassen“ instead of *sie verlassen*; „es handelt über“ instead of *es handelt von*; „hören über“ instead of *hören von*; „einen Freund machen“ instead of *einen Freund gewinnen*; „compromise beschäftigen“ instead of *Kompromisse eingehen*
- Words invented or made up from the English meaning: „stressvoll“ should be *gestresst*, „künstlich“ should be *künstlerisch*, „abstößlich“ should be *abstoßend*, „erstaunend“ should be *erstaunlich*, „Begebnis“ should be *Ereignis*; „relaxiert“ should be *entspannt*; „Objektiv“ should be *Ziel*; „influenzen“ should be *beeinflussen*.

#### Comments on specific questions

##### Section 1

##### Question 1

##### **Timm – Die Entdeckung der Currywurst**

This was a popular book. The majority of candidates who chose it answered the second question.

- (a) (i) Good candidates went beyond merely describing the text passage. They realised that the young soldier had escaped his regiment, and they interpreted the meaning of the glance that was exchanged between Bremer and the young soldier. That sentence could be read as the soldier's memory of Bremer being extinguished for ever after his execution, or to the death of the young soldier. Poor answers completely misread the situation, either not realising that the soldier was being executed, or thinking that the German army had such severe rules that soldiers were being executed for not wearing their uniforms properly and for not having combed their hair.
- (ii) Some good answers argued counterintuitively and succeeded in explaining why the execution Bremer witnessed did not influence his decision to stay with Frau Brücker. Many gave good explanations of how the event of the text passage as well as thoughts about the great danger of his next mission – blowing up tanks – had an impact on Bremer's decision to stay. Poor answers had not understood circumstances correctly, for example suggesting wrongly that spending the night with Frau Brücker had already been illegal and that therefore Bremer could not lose by staying with Frau Brücker.

- (b) This question was very popular. Some good essays argued that, although actions performed by individuals in the book such as poisoning soup or criticising the regime, not to mention hiding Bremer, clearly went against the war, the book was primarily a romantic story. It affirmed how love or romance can flourish even in times of great distress. Other good essays emphasised the emancipation of Frau Brücker through the war and saw the book as a commentary on the new-gained confidence of women. Most took the obvious and perfectly legitimate route of demonstrating, with appropriate examples of anti-war actions, how the book can be understood as a text against the war.

## Question 2

### Lenz – *Fundbüro*

More candidates answered the first question.

- (a) (i) The first part of the question asked the candidates to look at Lagutin's encounter with the bikers. Good answers commented on Henry's attitude changing from a previous detachment and passivity in the face of the harassment by the bikers to being politicised through the violent racist attack on his friend. They also drew attention to the different kind of hatred demonstrated by the bikers in the text excerpt – that it had changed from a 'general aggression' to a more specific 'aggression against a Cossack.'
- (ii) This question required candidates to be imaginative and speculative, as the text does not offer obvious answers. Many candidates were able to give convincing reasons why Henry picked up a piece of broken glass from the shattered pane. Others invented reasons e.g. suggesting Henry wanted to give the piece of glass to his sister as a present.
- (b) The majority of candidates quoted the text excerpt of (a) as a turning point in the book. It is indeed a crucial moment as Henry learns that, when people's behaviour harms those we care for, a different attitude needs to be developed. Other candidates suggested as a turning point the racist remarks towards Lagutin when Lagutin dances with Henry's sister, or when Henry's older colleague gets fired and Henry is offered his job. All incidents contribute to Henry maturing into a person who takes responsibility and invests time and effort to help people who matter to him.

## Question 3

### Frisch – *Homo Faber*

This was by far the most popular text with the majority of students choosing the first question.

- (a) (i) Virtually all students were able to outline various characteristics that clearly set Faber apart from others such as his cold, analytical approach and seemingly emotional detachment from events and the people around him. They related these to his sober response to the desert after the crash-landing. Some good essays went further and suggested Faber's denial of fear and imagination was an expression of his insecurity and vulnerability.
- (ii) Good essays offered numerous examples that went beyond the text passage to illustrate Faber's purported revulsion at anything natural, uncontrollable and inexplicable. Some of these discussed how Faber's character evolved as a result of the encounter with his daughter, from one dominated by technology and rational analysis to one open to imagination and emotion. A few excellent answers successfully argued that Faber's initial insistence on rationality and detachment as the only acceptable approaches to life was his way of managing his highly emotional personality. Some poor essays failed to mention the linchpin of the book – Faber's profession as engineer and its significance for his character portrait.
- (b) Good answers compared Faber's character at the beginning with that at the end of the book. A popular motive seized upon was nature and how Faber's quest to explain and control it ultimately fails when he is consumed by cancer. Similarly his refusal to see anything in nature or natural phenomena other than what can be explained is, towards the end, forgotten when he sees images in moonlit paths, black mountains and cypresses, the dawn, the breeze, the surf of the sea.

## Section 2

### Question 4

#### Kehlmann – *Die Vermessung der Welt*

Both questions were equally chosen.

- (a) Some candidates offered a summary of Humboldt's adventures during his travels without attempting an analysis of what interested Humboldt most. Others described the differences in character between Humboldt and his travelling companion Bonpland: learnt material which did not answer the question. Better essays were able to make a case for the significance of particular events, or argued on a more abstract level that Humboldt's obsession with science and measuring made everything fascinating to him. A few candidates suggested that fame was the only thing which interested Humboldt.
- (b) Some essays in this section contained elements of the answer above, as what was particularly fascinating to Humboldt could easily be considered a climax for the reader. Various candidates identified moments that could have been considered a climax, but were not then able to argue in any convincing way. For example, some said that the meeting between Humboldt and Gauß was definitely a climax because both were Germany's greatest scientists at the time and very different, but did not then go on to add further details in support of their case.

### Question 5

#### Klüger – *weiter leben*

Very few essays were written about this book.

- (a) Not a popular question.
- (b) There were not many successful answers to this question. With careful reading, candidates could have identified key concerns with portrayals of the Third Reich, particularly in relation to concentration camps. Klüger's critique included the generally superficial and undifferentiated approach towards describing the camps when, indeed, Klüger felt that life in her first camp – Theresienstadt – was better than the life she had had in Vienna before her deportation. She also criticises that many overlook the fact that those who perished in the camps cannot recount the horrors they experienced, and that survivors' accounts cannot fully reflect what went on.

### Question 6

#### Schlink – *Liebesfluchten*

Not a particularly popular choice. The most popular stories were 'Das Mädchen mit der Eidechse' and 'Die Beschneidung.'

- (a) 'Das Mädchen mit der Eidechse' and 'Die Beschneidung' were particularly suited to answering this question as their common strand is the impact of the Second World War on the post-war generation. The stories suggest that this generation cannot be free of the burden of its history, and that its lives and actions are shaped by it. Successful candidates illustrated the most important themes in well-structured essays; less successful students just summarised two stories without establishing links between them.
- (b) This question made it easier to draw on more stories in the collection. Most candidates argued for unexpected endings in the stories they discussed. Discussions were in part based on candidates' intuitive responses to the endings; better answers were grounded in an analysis of the content and were therefore more convincing. Good answers also placed the stories into their political or cultural context, resulting in a richer discussion of the texts.

# GERMAN

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**Paper 9717/43**  
**Texts**

## General comments

In this paper 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. They also linked the points made back to the question of the essay title. The majority of the candidates had good knowledge of the texts and many were able to marshal their thoughts into coherent, relevant essays.

**Layout and Labelling:** The majority of the candidates labelled their work correctly; a few wrote down the wrong letter for the sub-question.

Clear paragraphing throughout the essays was linked to an organised and structured approach in the writing.

**Following Instructions:** A small minority of candidates only wrote two essays instead of three pieces.

It is not permitted to answer two questions on the same text, three different books have to be covered, one from each of the two big sections and a third book from either of these sections.

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 including 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.

**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, either because they seemed to have run out of time, or because the essay was poorly structured or argued throughout.

Clear paragraphing is crucial for 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 identify individual ideas and often led to unnecessary repetition. Good candidates made relevant points in separate paragraphs, supported with detailed examples which evaluated or analysed what they had read and said.

**Language:** Many candidates were able to produce the level of language required to write fluent essays. Others struggled with grammar and word usage, and a small number of essays were grammatically and linguistically so poor that it was difficult to make out what the candidate was saying.

## **Good Practice for Candidates:**

- Choose one question from each section first, then decide on the third question.
- Make sure you read the question carefully and know what is actually being asked.
- Divide your time into three equal parts and start working on the first essay.
- Label each essay with the section and question number, do not forget sub-questions.
- Think about paragraphs: present one main idea and supporting evidence per paragraph.
- Evidence does not have to be a precise quotation, but should show that you have read the text in detail.

- Make sure you have an introduction, a main part and a conclusion in your essay.
- Throughout each essay make sure that your language is formal: eg *herunter*, not 'runter' or *etwas können* instead of 'was drauf haben'.
- Capitalise all nouns.
- At the end, read through each essay and make sure to eliminate spelling mistakes 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
- meanings of words sometimes not clear: „dementierter Vater“ instead of *dementer Vater*; „das Gedächtnis verstehen“ instead of *das Denken verstehen*, „compromisse beschäftigen“ instead of *Kompromisse eingehen*
- ä and e get confused as in „Probläme“ instead of *Probleme*
- wrong pronoun endings or verb forms: „sorgen für sein Sohn“ (correct: *seinen Sohn*); „hat jemandem, der er liebt, verloren“ (*hat jemanden, den er liebt, verloren*); „ein mutig Frau, die in der Öffentlichkeit gegen den NS stehen“ (*eine mutige Frau, die sich in der Öffentlichkeit gegen den Nationalsozialismus stellt*); nouns not always capitalised
- apostrophe s applied, such as in „Faber's Charakter“ (instead of *Fabers Charakter*)
- Register/style: the language is sometimes too informal
- 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*; „in 1931“ instead of just *1931*; „sie lassen“ instead of *sie verlassen*; „es handelt über“ instead of *es handelt von*; „hören über“ instead of *hören von*; „einen Freund machen“ instead of *einen Freund gewinnen*; „compromise beschäftigen“ instead of *Kompromisse eingehen*
- Words invented or made up from the English meaning: „stressvoll“ should be *gestresst*, „künstlich“ should be *künstlerisch*, „abstößlich“ should be *abstoßend*, „erstaunend“ should be *erstaunlich*, „Begebnis“ should be *Ereignis*; „relaxiert“ should be *entspannt*; „Objektiv“ should be *Ziel*; „influenzen“ should be *beeinflussen*.

#### Comments on specific questions

##### Section 1

##### Question 1

##### **Timm – Die Entdeckung der Currywurst**

This was a popular book. The majority of candidates who chose it answered the second question.

- (a) (i) Good candidates went beyond merely describing the text passage. They realised that the young soldier had escaped his regiment, and they interpreted the meaning of the glance that was exchanged between Bremer and the young soldier. That sentence could be read as the soldier's memory of Bremer being extinguished for ever after his execution, or to the death of the young soldier. Poor answers completely misread the situation, either not realising that the soldier was being executed, or thinking that the German army had such severe rules that soldiers were being executed for not wearing their uniforms properly and for not having combed their hair.
- (ii) Some good answers argued counterintuitively and succeeded in explaining why the execution Bremer witnessed did not influence his decision to stay with Frau Brücker. Many gave good explanations of how the event of the text passage as well as thoughts about the great danger of his next mission – blowing up tanks – had an impact on Bremer's decision to stay. Poor answers had not understood circumstances correctly, for example suggesting wrongly that spending the night with Frau Brücker had already been illegal and that therefore Bremer could not lose by staying with Frau Brücker.

- (b) This question was very popular. Some good essays argued that, although actions performed by individuals in the book such as poisoning soup or criticising the regime, not to mention hiding Bremer, clearly went against the war, the book was primarily a romantic story. It affirmed how love or romance can flourish even in times of great distress. Other good essays emphasised the emancipation of Frau Brücker through the war and saw the book as a commentary on the new-gained confidence of women. Most took the obvious and perfectly legitimate route of demonstrating, with appropriate examples of anti-war actions, how the book can be understood as a text against the war.

## Question 2

### Lenz – *Fundbüro*

More candidates answered the first question.

- (a) (i) The first part of the question asked the candidates to look at Lagutin's encounter with the bikers. Good answers commented on Henry's attitude changing from a previous detachment and passivity in the face of the harassment by the bikers to being politicised through the violent racist attack on his friend. They also drew attention to the different kind of hatred demonstrated by the bikers in the text excerpt – that it had changed from a 'general aggression' to a more specific 'aggression against a Cossack.'
- (ii) This question required candidates to be imaginative and speculative, as the text does not offer obvious answers. Many candidates were able to give convincing reasons why Henry picked up a piece of broken glass from the shattered pane. Others invented reasons e.g. suggesting Henry wanted to give the piece of glass to his sister as a present.
- (b) The majority of candidates quoted the text excerpt of (a) as a turning point in the book. It is indeed a crucial moment as Henry learns that, when people's behaviour harms those we care for, a different attitude needs to be developed. Other candidates suggested as a turning point the racist remarks towards Lagutin when Lagutin dances with Henry's sister, or when Henry's older colleague gets fired and Henry is offered his job. All incidents contribute to Henry maturing into a person who takes responsibility and invests time and effort to help people who matter to him.

## Question 3

### Frisch – *Homo Faber*

This was by far the most popular text with the majority of students choosing the first question.

- (a) (i) Virtually all students were able to outline various characteristics that clearly set Faber apart from others such as his cold, analytical approach and seemingly emotional detachment from events and the people around him. They related these to his sober response to the desert after the crash-landing. Some good essays went further and suggested Faber's denial of fear and imagination was an expression of his insecurity and vulnerability.
- (ii) Good essays offered numerous examples that went beyond the text passage to illustrate Faber's purported revulsion at anything natural, uncontrollable and inexplicable. Some of these discussed how Faber's character evolved as a result of the encounter with his daughter, from one dominated by technology and rational analysis to one open to imagination and emotion. A few excellent answers successfully argued that Faber's initial insistence on rationality and detachment as the only acceptable approaches to life was his way of managing his highly emotional personality. Some poor essays failed to mention the linchpin of the book – Faber's profession as engineer and its significance for his character portrait.
- (b) Good answers compared Faber's character at the beginning with that at the end of the book. A popular motive seized upon was nature and how Faber's quest to explain and control it ultimately fails when he is consumed by cancer. Similarly his refusal to see anything in nature or natural phenomena other than what can be explained is, towards the end, forgotten when he sees images in moonlit paths, black mountains and cypresses, the dawn, the breeze, the surf of the sea.

## Section 2

### Question 4

#### Kehlmann – *Die Vermessung der Welt*

Both questions were equally chosen.

- (a) Some candidates offered a summary of Humboldt's adventures during his travels without attempting an analysis of what interested Humboldt most. Others described the differences in character between Humboldt and his travelling companion Bonpland: learnt material which did not answer the question. Better essays were able to make a case for the significance of particular events, or argued on a more abstract level that Humboldt's obsession with science and measuring made everything fascinating to him. A few candidates suggested that fame was the only thing which interested Humboldt.
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