

GERMAN

<p>Paper 9717/01 Speaking</p>

Key messages

- The presentation must clearly relate to and give details of the culture or society of a German-speaking country, whilst also reflecting the candidate's personal interests.
- Candidates should aim to speak for around three minutes uninterrupted, up to a maximum of four minutes.
- They should ask the examiner at least two questions in both the topic conversation and the general conversation, ideally spontaneously. However, the examiner should prompt them to do so if necessary.
- No marks may be awarded for Seeking Information if no questions are asked.
- The whole test should be completed within twenty minutes and the two conversations should be of approximately equal length, at around eight minutes each.
- The candidate and the examiner should be equally audible to anyone listening to the recording, and the recording equipment should be tested beforehand and placed accordingly.

General comments

Nearly all candidates were appropriately entered and were aware of the requirements. Presentation topics mostly referred to issues in a German-speaking society and were usually interesting and informative. However, some presentations referred only briefly to Germany, Austria or Switzerland which was not really sufficient to achieve a high mark for Content. Some specific detail is expected, with ideas and opinions as well as factual points.

Not all candidates were aware that they must 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, which is not good practice as questions should be integrated and should arise naturally during the discussion. Some examiners incorrectly awarded marks for Seeking Information even though no questions had been asked, thus resulting in the centre's marks for that candidate being scaled down by the moderator.

Candidates were usually very responsive and nearly all were spontaneous, with very few relying on prepared responses. If a candidate does rely mainly on prepared material, they should be placed no higher than in the 'satisfactory' box for Comprehension and Responsiveness. Apart from the above-mentioned issue with awarding marks for Seeking Information, most centres used the mark scheme correctly and fairly accurately. Some marks for the Content of the Presentation were too high, but the criteria for marking the linguistic categories were usually interpreted correctly. Some centres allowed the tests to last too long, thus risking tiring the candidates. Twenty minutes should be the maximum duration of a test. Recording quality was usually very good, but at some centres either the candidate or the examiner was less audible owing to incorrect placement of the recording equipment.

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. A 'reasonable range' of structures and (topic-specific) vocabulary is required, delivered fairly fluently, and without ambiguity of meaning.
- There was a very good range of interesting, up-to-date or relevant presentation topics, including the following:

Veganer-Ernährung, Häuser auf Rädern, Roboter, die Corona-Pandemie und Arbeitslosigkeit, Online-Schule, Vergleich zwei deutschsprachiger Länder, technologische Innovation, multi-kulturelle Gesellschaften, NS-Propaganda, soziale Medien/Sucht und Depressionen, Krieg und Frieden.

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 plenty of 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**, provided that the main issues of the Topic Conversation are not returned to.
- The questions a candidate asks the examiner to seek information, should be as varied as possible. *Was denken Sie?* or *Sind Sie der gleichen Meinung?* are useful questions to move the conversation along, but a wider range is expected for marks of four or five.
- 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 is 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 this section.
- It is essential to cover mainly complex issues to allow candidates access to 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, even a significant topic such as the Corona virus pandemic. If a candidate is clearly unhappy with any topic suggested, the examiner should quickly suggest a different area of discussion.



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<p>Paper 9717/02 Reading & Writing</p>
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Key message

- Candidates should be reminded to read the full summary question before attempting the summary.

General comments

In this paper, candidates answer synonym and grammar questions in **Question 1** and **2**. They then answer comprehension questions on **Text 1** in **Question 3** and comprehension questions on **Text 2** in **Question 4**. Finally, candidates write a short summary of **Text 1** and **2** with a focus on particular aspects of both texts and briefly give their own opinion on the subject, while adhering to the word limit of 140 words.

Many candidates performed very well and were adequately prepared for the tasks. The general level of language was excellent with many candidates showing a good understanding of German grammar and vocabulary.

Candidates mostly attempted to use their own words to avoid direct lifting from the texts.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

In this part of the paper, candidates are given five synonyms for words from the text and then have to find the matching word(s) in the text. All synonyms can be found in the first paragraph of the first text.

The majority of candidates coped well with this exercise. **Questions (a)** (anstelle/anstatt) and **(e)** (Sehenswürdigkeiten/touristische Attraktionen) were the most challenging.

Question 2

In this part of the paper, candidates are required to rephrase sentences from Text 1, and test their grammatical knowledge. Most candidates coped well with this exercise, but many found **Question (c)** challenging (case endings on both missing words).

Question 3

In this part of the paper, candidates have to answer comprehension questions based on the first text. 15 marks are awarded for Content and 5 marks are available for Quality of Language. It is important that candidates do not lift passages directly from the text but answer in their own words in order to demonstrate understanding.

- (a)** Most candidates answered this well and gained both marks.
- (b)** This was also answered well and the majority of candidates achieved full marks.
- (c)** This question was slightly more complex, and some candidates only scored one out of two marks as they did not mention the fact that Luisa keeps an eye on her spending/only spends money on food.



- (d) This question was more challenging for some candidates who only scored one of the two available marks as they did not include enough information to be awarded both marks.
- (e) The majority of candidates scored at least two out of three available marks in this question. Many candidates did not include all the relevant information required to be awarded full marks.
- (f) This was a challenging question but stronger candidates answered well while other candidates lifted the correct part from the text without explaining it further.

Question 4

In this part of the paper, candidates have to answer comprehension questions based on the second text. Again, 15 marks are awarded for Content and 5 marks are available for Quality of Language. It is important that candidates do not lift passages directly from the text but answer in their own words in order to demonstrate understanding.

- (a) The majority of candidates scored at least two out of three available marks.
- (b) Most candidates achieved full marks.
- (c) This question required more information and some candidates only scored two out of three marks as they did not mention one of the required pieces of information.
- (d) Again, this question proved more challenging, and some candidates did not include enough information to be awarded both marks.
- (e) The majority of candidates scored full marks in this question.
- (f) This was a more challenging question but stronger candidates answered well. Many candidates did not understand the comparison between hiking in America and Germany and wrote things like 'There are more supermarkets in the woods and fewer bears'. This did not show understanding and could not be credited.

Question 5

Some candidates used up to 50 words for their introduction, explaining what they are going to do in the following summary. This was not necessary as it inevitably means that candidates went over the word limit. Any points made after the word limit could not be credited.

Candidates should be reminded to read the question to the end. It is not just a summary of both texts, and candidates were asked to focus on certain aspects. In this year's paper, the focus was on similarities and differences between the two travellers. General understanding of both texts was good and many candidates were able to give a structured and succinct summary. However, many candidates gave too much detail for a short summary e. g. when stating that Luisa is cycling and Frau Thürmer is walking, they went into great detail explain their statement.

All candidates finished by giving their own opinion about travelling and this included many interesting and personal statements.

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<p>Paper 9717/03 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

Most essays were coherently argued with a suitable introduction and conclusion and of an appropriate length. 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. Most had an impressive array of vocabulary at their disposal, both general and topic-specific. Their language was almost always fluent and idiomatic but occasionally lacked precision. An effort to write legibly would be appreciated.

Common errors included:

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

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Man sollte jemandem, der auf der Straße um Geld bittet, auch Geld geben. Was meinen Sie?

This title provoked quite a strong response. Most were sympathetic to the plight of those asking for money but questioned the nature of their needs.

Question 2

„Produkte, die viel Zucker enthalten, sind zu billig. Die Regierung sollte die Preise für diese Produkte erhöhen.“ Claudia, 42 Jahre alt. Stimmen Sie diese Aussage zu?

Those candidates who chose this title explored the problems caused by the over-consumption of sugar and ways of tackling them. They rarely agreed with Claudia that raising prices was an effective solution.

Question 3

Teilzeitarbeit für alle ist die einzige effective Lösung, um die Arbeitslosigkeit zu bekämpfen. Teilen Sie diese Meinung?

This was the least popular title. The issues of part-time working were mainly restricted to money.

Question 4

Inwiefern ist die Globalisierung eine positive Entwicklung? Begründen Sie Ihre Antwort.

This title attracted a good number of responses. Candidates discussed the advantages and disadvantages of globalisation and often, despite the evidence they presented, came out on the positive side. They were generally well-informed on the subject.

Question 5

Die Wissenschaftler werden sicher bald eine Lösung für die drohende Klimakatastrophe finden. Sind Sie auch so optimistisch?

Candidates who chose this title were well-informed and argued their case convincingly. It attracted more candidates than usual to the environment topic. Nearly all concluded that scientists have come up with potential solutions but they need to be implemented.

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<p>Paper 9717/04 Texts</p>

Key messages

- Candidates should be reminded to read the instructions carefully to ensure they answer the required number of questions.
- Candidates should plan their essays to ensure they can structure them with clear paragraphing and relevant examples taken from the texts.

General comments

Candidates are expected to demonstrate knowledge of the texts in this paper. To achieve a very good result, candidates need to be able to show that they can see the texts in the context of the time they were written and display some understanding of the authors' intentions and effect on the audience.

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

Most candidates' command of German was good. However, some weaker candidates did not have the necessary control of language to show their understanding of the texts and made errors with vocabulary, structure, spelling and punctuation.

Summary of good practice for candidates:

- Choose one question from each section first, then decide on a third question.
- Make sure to read each question carefully and identify what is required.
- Divide your time into three equal parts and start working on the first essay.
- Label each essay with the section and question number.
- Plan your essay before you start to write.
- 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 everything you are writing is relevant to the question and avoid repetition.
- Throughout your essay, make sure your language is formal: *herunter* instead of *runter*, *etwas können* instead of *was drauf haben*, *bekommen* instead of *kriegen*, etc.
- Check 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.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

The most popular texts in this section of the exam were *Die Physiker* and *Tschick*. Only a small number of candidates picked *Homo faber*. Most candidates answered questions well, but some candidates relied too much on narration and did not focus enough on the question as it had been set. These candidates often wrote everything they had learned rather than answering the question in a focused manner. Most candidates engaged well with questions which included a text passage. Weaker candidates would have benefited from practice in close reading for these questions.

Candidates would benefit from thinking beyond the text itself and considering the authors' possible intentions in the context of the time a text was written. They should be encouraged to look at secondary literature more in order to investigate texts more deeply.

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 for both (a) and (b). Stronger candidates did better in exploring the characters, compared their experiences well; considered the historical context and were able to draw clear conclusions.

