

GERMAN LANGUAGE

Paper 8683/01
Speaking

Key messages

To do well in the test:

- the presentation topic should reflect the candidate's personal interests and should clearly refer to the culture or society of a German-speaking country;
- the presentation should last no longer than 3½ minutes and include both facts and opinions;
- candidates should ask the Examiner at least two questions in both the Topic Conversation and the General Conversation and should be prompted by the Examiner if they do not ask questions;
- the conversation sections should be lively and spontaneous and candidates should not produce chunks of pre-learned material.

General comments

Most candidates were well prepared and appeared to be aware of the requirements of the Speaking test. Some candidates did not ask the Examiner sufficient questions and were not always prompted to do so. Nearly all candidates were responsive and most were spontaneous, though some relied at times on prepared responses.

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. Centres are reminded to test recording equipment in advance of the examining window.

Comments on specific sections

Section 1: Presentation

There was again a good range of interesting and often up-to-date presentation topics, including the following: *Die Flüchtlingskrise; der VW-Skandal; die Energiedebatte; das Judentum und andere Religionen; die Fernsehserie 'Hausmeister Krause'; Tierschutz; Fettleibigkeit; Krieg und Frieden; technische Innovation; soziale Beziehungen; die Medien and Gentechnik.*

The best presentations were lively and confident, rather than stilted and hesitant, and included a range of ideas and opinions as well as factual points. Some presentations lasted longer than the allowed 3½ minutes, and were not as well organised as those which adhered to the time limit. Well-prepared candidates were able to access the higher marks for Language by ensuring that they included a wide range of structures and topic-specific vocabulary, delivered fairly fluently, provided there was no ambiguity of meaning.

Section 2: Topic Conversation

The whole of this conversation should deal with the candidate's presented topic, and the issues raised in the presentation should be discussed in more detail. Candidates should be prepared to supply additional factual information if required. Issues more suitable for the General Conversation should not be raised until **Section 3**.

The questions a candidate puts to the Examiner to 'seek information', should be varied in order for maximum marks to be awarded. *Was denken Sie?* or *Was ist Ihre Meinung?* are useful additional questions, as they can be used to move the conversation along, but a wider range of questions is expected. If a candidate asks only one question during the conversation the maximum mark that can be awarded is three.

When responding to questions asked by the Examiner, if a candidate has memorised his or her material entirely or predominantly, a mark from the 'Satisfactory' box should be awarded as a maximum, as it cannot be claimed that he or she is responding to unexpected questions. Similarly a mark from this box should be awarded 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**. The start of this section should be clearly announced by the Examiner and there should be a complete change of topic.

Personal details such as the candidate's future and his or her interests should feature briefly but should not dominate this part of the test. It is better to move on fairly swiftly to more complex or wider issues to enable the candidate to access the higher marks for 'Comprehension & Responsiveness' or 'Providing Information and Opinions'.

Examiners are encouraged to ask open questions as these are more effective than closed ones in drawing the required kind of response from a candidate. Brief questions, such as *Warum?* or *Inwiefern?* are particularly useful.

Examiners should not expect candidates to know any specific information on an unexpected topic, perhaps a topic of current affairs. If a candidate is clearly unhappy with or uninformed about a particular topic Examiners should move on to discuss something else.

GERMAN LANGUAGE

Paper 8683/21
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- **Question 1:** seek a word (or words) in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question.
- **Question 2:** start the sentence with the prompt provided and be careful with the grammatical changes in the new sentence.
- **Questions 3 and 4:** candidates should formulate answers with their own words and refrain from copying any part of the text.
- **Question 5:** respect the word limit. In part **(b)** candidates should express their own ideas (instead of copying ideas from the text) in a concise way.

General comments

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

Candidates should label all questions clearly and make sure that later additions are clearly marked with asterisks or numbers, which correspond to asterisks or numbers in the main body of the answer.

Candidates must read the instructions given for each question carefully, paying particular attention to the words in bold. 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.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The purpose of this exercise was to find a word (or words) in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question. On the whole this question was completed quite successfully by most candidates.

Question 2

The purpose of this exercise was to change a sentence grammatically, with the help of a prompt. Generally, this question was completed to a good standard by most candidates.

- (a) Word order was sometimes a problem here as some candidates did not put *ist* at the end of the sentence.
- (b) Most candidates answered this question correctly. However, some included *nach dem Willen* in their answer and thus did not show full understanding of the sentence.
- (c) Most candidates answered this question correctly; there were many different correct answers.
- (d) Many candidates did not use the correct endings for *von einem Sozialpsychologen*.
- (e) Most candidates answered this question correctly; there were many different correct answers.

Question 3

In **Questions 3 and 4**, to show clear evidence of understanding, it is expected that candidates will rephrase the text to express their answers in their own words. Comprehension of the text was generally good, although some candidates copied the relevant section from the text which affected marks for both Content and Quality of Language.

Most candidates coped well with **Questions (a) to (d)**. The majority were able to answer part of **Question (e)** well, but many did not mention the fact that people like the idea of *Feierabend*.

Question 4

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

- (a) Many candidates mentioned too many insignificant details in their answer, for example, the fact that the supermarket has an illuminated sign for their underground car park.
- (b) Many candidates answered this question correctly although a number copied the relevant section verbatim from the text with no attempt to use their own words and therefore could not score any marks for Content. This in turn had a knock-on effect on the mark awarded for Quality of Language.
- (c) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.
- (d) The majority of candidates responded to this question correctly. Some did not mention the important fact that Herr Scharfe lost his bank job and instead gave too much detail about his supermarket job.
- (e) Most candidates answered this question correctly. Many candidates mentioned the fact that there is free coffee as one of the reasons for going shopping at night – this could not be credited with a mark.

Question 5

Part **(a)** of this question required candidates to summarise the discussion about flexible working hours in Germany, with a particular focus on shops, and then give their own opinion in part **(b)**.

- (a) Most candidates managed to summarise at least some of the points drawn from the two texts. Some did not attempt a summary and only quoted sentences directly from the text which affected the Quality of Language mark. Many candidates wrote a general summary without specific reference to the focus on shops which was required by the question, and therefore could not access all of the available marks.
- (b) The majority of candidates expressed their opinion regarding flexible working hours, backing it up with a variety of reasons and often 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 exam candidates should revise adjective endings, tenses and verb endings as well as word order, prepositions and separable verbs.

GERMAN LANGUAGE

Paper 8683/22
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- **Question 1:** seek a word (or words) in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question.
- **Question 2:** start the sentence with the prompt provided and be careful with the grammatical changes in the new sentence.
- **Questions 3 and 4:** candidates should formulate answers with their own words and refrain from copying any part of the text.
- **Question 5:** respect the word limit. In part **(b)** candidates should express their own ideas (instead of copying ideas from the text) in a concise way.

General comments

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

Candidates should label all questions clearly and make sure that later additions are clearly marked with asterisks or numbers, which correspond to asterisks or numbers in the main body of the answer.

Candidates must read the instructions given for each question carefully, paying particular attention to the words in bold. 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.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The purpose of this exercise was to find a word (or words) in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question. On the whole this question was completed quite successfully by most candidates.

Question 2

The purpose of this exercise was to change a sentence grammatically, with the help of a prompt. Generally, this question was completed to a good standard by most candidates.

- (a) Word order was sometimes a problem here as some candidates did not put *ist* at the end of the sentence.
- (b) Most candidates answered this question correctly. However, some included *nach dem Willen* in their answer and thus did not show full understanding of the sentence.
- (c) Most candidates answered this question correctly; there were many different correct answers.
- (d) Many candidates did not use the correct endings for *von einem Sozialpsychologen*.
- (e) Most candidates answered this question correctly; there were many different correct answers.

Question 3

In **Questions 3 and 4**, to show clear evidence of understanding, it is expected that candidates will rephrase the text to express their answers in their own words. Comprehension of the text was generally good, although some candidates copied the relevant section from the text which affected marks for both Content and Quality of Language.

Most candidates coped well with **Questions (a) to (d)**. The majority were able to answer part of **Question (e)** well, but many did not mention the fact that people like the idea of *Feierabend*.

Question 4

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

- (a) Many candidates mentioned too many insignificant details in their answer, for example, the fact that the supermarket has an illuminated sign for their underground car park.
- (b) Many candidates answered this question correctly although a number copied the relevant section verbatim from the text with no attempt to use their own words and therefore could not score any marks for Content. This in turn had a knock-on effect on the mark awarded for Quality of Language.
- (c) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.
- (d) The majority of candidates responded to this question correctly. Some did not mention the important fact that Herr Scharfe lost his bank job and instead gave too much detail about his supermarket job.
- (e) Most candidates answered this question correctly. Many candidates mentioned the fact that there is free coffee as one of the reasons for going shopping at night – this could not be credited with a mark.

Question 5

Part **(a)** of this question required candidates to summarise the discussion about flexible working hours in Germany, with a particular focus on shops, and then give their own opinion in part **(b)**.

- (a) Most candidates managed to summarise at least some of the points drawn from the two texts. Some did not attempt a summary and only quoted sentences directly from the text which affected the Quality of Language mark. Many candidates wrote a general summary without specific reference to the focus on shops which was required by the question, and therefore could not access all of the available marks.
- (b) The majority of candidates expressed their opinion regarding flexible working hours, backing it up with a variety of reasons and often 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 exam candidates should revise adjective endings, tenses and verb endings as well as word order, prepositions and separable verbs.

GERMAN LANGUAGE

Paper 8683/23
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- **Question 1:** seek a word (or words) in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question.
- **Question 2:** start the sentence with the prompt provided and be careful with the grammatical changes in the new sentence.
- **Questions 3 and 4:** candidates should formulate answers with their own words and refrain from copying any part of the text.
- **Question 5:** respect the word limit. In part **(b)** candidates should express their own ideas (instead of copying ideas from the text) in a concise way.

General comments

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

Candidates should label all questions clearly and make sure that later additions are clearly marked with asterisks or numbers, which correspond to asterisks or numbers in the main body of the answer.

Candidates must read the instructions given for each question carefully, paying particular attention to the words in bold. 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.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The purpose of this exercise was to find a word (or words) in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question. On the whole, most candidates found this exercise challenging and often guessed at a word from the text if they did not understand the original word.

Question (a) was answered correctly by most candidates. Not many candidates answered **Question (b)** correctly and incorrect answers included *Wahlalter*. Few candidates responded successfully to **Questions (c), (d) and (e)** – in **(e)** incorrect answers included *vorgestellten*.

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 completed to a satisfactory standard by some candidates, but many misunderstood the meaning of the original sentence and therefore found it challenging to manipulate the sentence correctly. Many candidates did not have the grammatical knowledge to change the sentences successfully.

- (a) The infinitive with *zu* was a problem here, and many candidates left out the word *zu*.
- (b) Many candidates found this question challenging and were unable to change this sentence into the passive voice.
- (c) The separable verb *teilnehmen* presented a difficulty for the majority of candidates.
- (d) Many candidates answered this question incorrectly as they did not use the correct word order after *wie*.

- (e) Not many candidates answered this question correctly by using the impersonal *man* construction.

Question 3

In **Questions 3** and **4**, to show clear evidence of understanding, it is expected that candidates will rephrase the text to express their answers in their own words. Comprehension of the texts was generally adequate, although in some cases poor grammatical and lexical knowledge resulted in very low marks for Quality of Language. Often, not enough detail was given to access the full range of marks available for Content.

- (a) Many candidates did not mention the fact that politicians' actions do not reach children and young people in Germany.
- (b) Many candidates coped well with the first part of this question but did not answer the second part.
- (c) The majority of candidates coped well with this question, but did not give enough detail to be awarded full marks.
- (d) Most candidates managed to answer this question well.
- (e) Most candidates answered this question successfully.

Question 4

- (a) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.
- (b) Many candidates did not understand Simon's role as student representative and did not include the topic of the debate that the two friends organised.
- (c) Many candidates left out the fact that the two boys have a theory that they want to prove.
- (d) Only very few candidates answered this question correctly.
- (e) The majority of candidates answered part of this question correctly.
- (f) The majority of candidates answered part of this question correctly.
- (g) Not many candidates answered the first part of this question correctly as they did not understand that, for Lena, voting at 18 means living under a government that she has not elected. Very few candidates mentioned the second point; namely that only very few people of Lena's age are represented in politics.

Question 5

This question required candidates to summarise the advantages and disadvantages of voting at 16 in part (a) and then give their own opinion in part (b).

- (a) Most candidates managed to mention at least some advantages and disadvantages drawn from the two texts. Some responses were very generalised which resulted in too much irrelevant detail being given.
- (b) The majority of candidates managed to express their opinion with regards to lowering the voting age, backing it up with a variety of reasons and drawing from their personal experience.

Quality of Language

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

GERMAN LANGUAGE

Paper 8683/31
Essay

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

Many candidates took time to plan and organise their ideas before starting to write. Almost all candidates attempted to provide an introduction and a conclusion and organise their points into paragraphs. The best essays demonstrated insight, and backed up opinions with well-chosen evidence. Less successful essays addressed the general topic area rather than the actual title set. Candidates should study the essay question carefully so that they are clear about what they are being asked to discuss.

Some 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 were ambitious in their use of structure. Others demonstrated adequate vocabulary but insufficient grammatical knowledge impeded effective communication of all but the simplest ideas. Candidates of all abilities are advised to leave some time at the end of the examination to check for avoidable language errors.

Common errors included:

- confusion between *man, Mann* and *das, dass*;
- confusion between *wenn, wann, als*;
- confusion between possessives;
- confusion between *mehr, mehrere* and *viele*;
- lack of capitalisation of nouns;
- incorrect word order after subordinating conjunctions;
- confusion between *als* and *wie* in comparative constructions;
- use of *mehr* with an adjective to create a comparative.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

„Ich lebe schon seit 5 Jahren mit meinem Freund zusammen. Wir haben keine Lust zu heiraten – wir finden das unnötig heutzutage.“ Antje, 28 Jahre alt. Finden Sie das auch?

Most candidates could find plenty of arguments in support of and against Antje's point of view. There was the expense of a marriage ceremony, the prospect of divorce and the complications of children. The role of religion did not feature widely.

Question 2

Die Polizei ist in Film und Fernsehen beliebter als in der Realität. Stimmen Sie mit diesem Standpunkt überein?

Most candidates did in the end agree with the statement but the essays were quite diverse in their line of argument. There were some interesting examples of varying attitudes to the police around the world. The material that candidates chose to illustrate their opinions was also wide-ranging.

Question 3

„Ich bin 85 Jahre alt und noch fit, aber ich fürchte, dass die heutige Jugend infolge ihres Lebensstils nicht so lange leben wird wie ich.“ Ilse Grün. Was halten Sie von dieser Aussage?

This was the most frequently chosen title. The unhealthy aspects of the life led by modern youth were obvious to all candidates (although they generally excluded themselves from this) but many made the point that young people do not lead identical lifestyles. The best essays gave some consideration to what Ilse's life might have been like in comparison to theirs, as well as to the possible effects of the advances in medicine on life expectancy.

Question 4

Jedes Land sollte seine Arbeitslosen finanziell unterstützen. Finden Sie das auch?

This title produced some interesting essays from candidates whose international perspective provided a variety of examples to illustrate their point of view. Candidates found it impossible to come to a clear conclusion but, with some reservations, generally agreed with the statement.

Question 5

Durch Gentechnik wird es in der Zukunft möglich sein, alle menschlichen Krankheiten abzuschaffen. Was meinen Sie?

This title was chosen by a small minority of candidates. They clearly had an interest in this topic area and commanded sufficient topic-specific vocabulary to argue and illustrate their case.

GERMAN LANGUAGE

Paper 8683/32
Essay

Key messages

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

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- 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

Many candidates took time to plan and organise their ideas before starting to write. Almost all candidates attempted to provide an introduction and a conclusion and organise their points into paragraphs. The best essays demonstrated insight, and backed up opinions with well-chosen evidence. Less successful essays addressed the general topic area rather than the actual title set. Candidates should study the essay question carefully so that they are clear about what they are being asked to discuss.

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- confusion between *mehr, mehrere* and *viele*;
- lack of capitalisation of nouns;
- incorrect word order after subordinating conjunctions;
- confusion between *als* and *wie* in comparative constructions;
- use of *mehr* with an adjective to create a comparative.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

„Ich lebe schon seit 5 Jahren mit meinem Freund zusammen. Wir haben keine Lust zu heiraten – wir finden das unnötig heutzutage.“ Antje, 28 Jahre alt. Finden Sie das auch?

Most candidates could find plenty of arguments in support of and against Antje's point of view. There was the expense of a marriage ceremony, the prospect of divorce and the complications of children. The role of religion did not feature widely.

Question 2

Die Polizei ist in Film und Fernsehen beliebter als in der Realität. Stimmen Sie mit diesem Standpunkt überein?

Most candidates did in the end agree with the statement but the essays were quite diverse in their line of argument. There were some interesting examples of varying attitudes to the police around the world. The material that candidates chose to illustrate their opinions was also wide-ranging.

Question 3

„Ich bin 85 Jahre alt und noch fit, aber ich fürchte, dass die heutige Jugend infolge ihres Lebensstils nicht so lange leben wird wie ich.“ Ilse Grün. Was halten Sie von dieser Aussage?

This was the most frequently chosen title. The unhealthy aspects of the life led by modern youth were obvious to all candidates (although they generally excluded themselves from this) but many made the point that young people do not lead identical lifestyles. The best essays gave some consideration to what Ilse's life might have been like in comparison to theirs, as well as to the possible effects of the advances in medicine on life expectancy.

Question 4

Jedes Land sollte seine Arbeitslosen finanziell unterstützen. Finden Sie das auch?

This title produced some interesting essays from candidates whose international perspective provided a variety of examples to illustrate their point of view. Candidates found it impossible to come to a clear conclusion but, with some reservations, generally agreed with the statement.

Question 5

Durch Gentechnik wird es in der Zukunft möglich sein, alle menschlichen Krankheiten abzuschaffen. Was meinen Sie?

This title was chosen by a small minority of candidates. They clearly had an interest in this topic area and commanded sufficient topic-specific vocabulary to argue and illustrate their case.

GERMAN LANGUAGE

Paper 8683/33

Essay

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- nouns without articles;
- confusion between *wenn, wann, als*;
- confusion between *vorher, bevor, vor*;
- confusion between *mehr, mehrere, viele*;
- confusion between *jemand, jeder*;
- confusion between *ob, obwohl, wenn*;
- incorrect word order after subordinating conjunctions;
- confusion between *als* and *wie* in comparative constructions.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Das tägliche Leben ohne Smartphone kann man sich heutzutage schwer vorstellen. Stimmt das Ihrer Meinung nach?

This was by far the most popular title. The smartphone is clearly an object of great interest and utility to young people and only a small minority could envisage life without one. There were some thoughtful and coherently argued essays. The best essays started by defining exactly what a smartphone is and to what extent it is different from other telephones. A large number of candidates focused on the title at the beginning of their essay but then drifted into listing the negative effects of smartphone usage. This led them to a conclusion where they weighed the advantages against the disadvantages, which was clearly not a response to the title.

Question 2

Wir reduzieren die Kriminalität in der Gesellschaft nicht, indem wir Verbrecher ins Gefängnis schicken. Wie stehen Sie zu dieser Aussage?

No candidates chose to write an essay on this title.

Question 3

In der heutigen Gesellschaft interessiert man sich nur dafür, Geld mit unserer Gesundheit zu verdienen, statt unsere Gesundheit wirklich zu verbessern. Was meinen Sie?

A minority of candidates chose this title but many misinterpreted it. Instead of discussing the issues surrounding making money out of people's health, candidates deliberated whether money/work was more important than health or, more commonly, wrote an essay on how to keep healthy which responded to the topic area but not the title. If the content of an essay does not respond to the specific title, it cannot be fully credited for Content.

Question 4

Die Tage der körperlichen Arbeit sind vorbei. In der Zukunft wird der Mensch nur noch mit dem Kopf arbeiten. Was halten Sie von diesem Standpunkt?

This title was also chosen by a minority, who generally agreed with the statement. Although the essays were satisfactorily structured and the content was mostly relevant to the title, the notion was not explored in much depth. It might have helped candidates to define exactly what they understood by the term *körperliche Arbeit* because this aspect of the title tended to be neglected.

Question 5

Wissenschaftliche Forschung, die den Zweck hat, Leute auf den Mars zu schicken, nützt der Menschheit gar nichts. Teilen Sie diese Meinung?

This topic area is probably only attractive to those who are scientifically interested and who know the topic-specific vocabulary required to illustrate points made. Candidates were divided about the utility of space research but generally wrote coherently on the subject.