

# FIRST LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0505/01

Reading

## General comments

This is the second session of the revised IGCSE First Language syllabus. Paper 1, the Reading paper, consists of two extended passages. Candidates answer comprehension questions on the first passage, and then both passages are summarised in **Question 2** of the paper.

On the whole, candidates did well on this paper. Most responded to both parts of the Examination with extensive, well-written answers and, particularly on **Question 1**, there was no evidence of haste and of incomplete responses. Indeed, almost all candidates answered all the questions fully. Presentation was satisfactory generally, although some candidates' handwriting was difficult to decipher.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

- (a) A straightforward, warm up question, which everybody answered correctly
- (b) Very few candidates failed to realise that they had to mention **two** details, and most candidates scored the respective two marks: a downhill track, the straw bales at the bottom of the hill and the fact that the track was 610 m long were among the details mentioned to describe it.
- (c) Aspects of the cars that might be altered were: the colour, the seat, the wheels and the steering, so four possible points were given in the text and mentioned by the majority of candidates. A few candidates referred to aspects that could **not** be altered, such as the actual body of the car, an answer which could not be awarded any marks, as this was not the point of the question.
- (d) From the marks allocated for this question, candidates could deduce that two details had to be provided, relating to participants and their reactions to other drivers' misfortunes on the track. Reactions covered the spectrum from *Schadenfreude*, when people's Bobby-Cars went wrong, to the helpful attitude that fellow racers could demonstrate. The majority of candidates were able to score one mark although a number were unable to pick up the second detail.
- (e) Answers that were accepted to the question about safety measures that needed to be put in place included: wearing a helmet, decent shoes, any body part protection and the straw bales at the bottom of the road. Candidates thus had a choice of answers to gain the marks allocated and most scored full marks.
- (f) This question required candidates to read between the lines and interpret the text and proved to be the most difficult on the paper for candidates. Marina's brother was upset because his **younger** sister had beaten him in the race and referred disparagingly to her victory as being due to the fact that she had only just left Kindergarten. This was of course not the case as she was 13 years of age and so heavily ironic. Most candidates gained one mark though few were able to score two.
- (g) A number of candidates had problems with this question because they appeared to have misread it. The question asked candidates to identify the similarities between the drivers of the Bobby-Cars and real car drivers, not the similarities between vehicles or between the races as most candidates did. Marks were awarded for washing and polishing cars or for any mention of the cars being seen as status symbols or being lovingly altered by their owners. Owners being proud of their vehicles and looking after them were the common denominators here.

- (h) This question, on drivers' motives for taking part in the race, proved to be an easy one for two marks, but a harder one for three:

Most candidates mentioned fun as a reason for taking part, and the *guten Zweck*. Some mentioned wanting to win as a motivation, but only one or two candidates mentioned the fact that families worked together on the cars and spent time together, which was also a possible answer.

- (i) The majority of candidates listed quite a few words to do with speed in this question.

Most answers were awarded the full three marks available. A few candidates failed to list three items. Candidates are reminded of the need to pay close attention to the marks allocated to each question.

It was pleasing to see candidates label the questions properly and generally present their work in a legible fashion. The level of language used when answering the questions was good or very good in the majority of cases, the only constant mistake in most candidates' work was the omission of capital letters for nouns.

## Question 2

Overall, the quality of the summaries this year was better than last year. Candidates focused on the content of the texts and most summaries were well-structured.

Some very concise summaries produced a result that was too general and did not include the detailed information which would have scored more marks: for example *Die Rennstrecken werden beschrieben* is undoubtedly correct, but could score only one mark whereas mentioning the length differences, the gradient and the ramps would have scored more individual marks.

A number of candidates continued to include their opinions about their preferred text and referred to personal interests. This was not part of the summary and in some cases made for a weak conclusion compared with a good beginning and middle part.

Some candidates quoted extensively from the texts. This is not necessary in a summary and can result in a lower language mark than would otherwise have been gained as not enough own language has been produced.

It was encouraging to see that nearly all candidates had sufficient time to complete the summary and the work did not appear to be rushed. In a couple of cases candidates had taken too long drafting the summary in detail and then did not have enough time to copy out the whole draft. Time management is something all candidates need to take into consideration.

At the opposite end of the scale were candidates who wrote substantially more than 250 words and repeated themselves. This made their summary appear less structured than it could have been and the candidates scored lower on the structure mark than they would have done with a more concise version.

The marks awarded for language were higher than in previous years with all candidates able to express themselves. Most candidates wrote in fluent, mostly idiomatically correct German and handled the questions and the summary appropriately. Attention is, however, drawn to two areas that could benefit from candidates' attention in a First Language examination. Hyphenated words seem to have become very popular, e.g. *Renn-Strecke* which should have been simply *Rennstrecke*, and capital letters seem almost to have disappeared: *Die kleinen flitze; das zum zweiten mal stattfindende rennen*. Candidates used to texting and emailing without the use of capitals, are advised to remember to use them in examination circumstances.

# FIRST LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0505/02

Writing

## General Comments

This was the second year of the revised syllabus and it was pleasing to see that almost all candidates completed two essays as required. As last year some candidates proved to be more comfortable with creative topics than factual topics and vice versa. A few candidates seemed to have misinterpreted the rubric which specifies that **each** essay should total 350-500 words and wrote a total of 350 – 500 words overall. This resulted in a second essay in particular that was far too short.

On the revised syllabus candidates need to be able to demonstrate their ability in both creative and factual styles of writing. It is more than ever important that candidates take sufficient time to study all the titles on the question paper and ensure they choose the two, one from each section, that best match their skills and knowledge. Some of the candidates produced plans; this tends to lead to a better structured, more coherent result. It is helpful to candidates to write out in full the essay title they have chosen as a means of focusing their mind on it. Some candidates failed to give any indication of their chosen titles.

All responses to the titles in both sections were expected to be at a level of sophistication in terms of content consistent with 16/17 year olds prepared for the First Language German examination. The goal of a discursive essay, for example, is to persuade the audience of a conclusion. It is thus important for candidates to be clear about what their conclusion is. They need to give their argument a logical structure, setting out the advantages and the drawbacks of a particular position, leading up to a convincing finish.

On the language side, it is recommended that candidates build a good standard vocabulary in their first language, correctly spelled and appropriately used, rather than attempting to be over-sophisticated. Such attempts can lead to inaccuracies in spelling and to use of language that may not be fully understood.

Use of "Denglish" again provided examples of the above:

*kommunikazieren, Katastroffon, involvieren, quixotisch, infestiziert, Brojeure, fokusiert.*

At the same time, candidates are credited for varied, appropriate and interesting use of language and are encouraged to extend their range and develop a good style once a sound base is in place.

## Comments on specific questions

### Erster Teil

#### **Question 1**

- (a) *Alle Menschen auf der Welt sollten als erste Fremdsprache Englisch lernen! Wie denken Sie darüber?*

This was the most popular title in this section with around half of candidates choosing it.

Most candidates proved able to express their opinions concisely and relevantly. Some candidates showed better understanding of the issues involved in the title and were more successful in putting their views across than others.

Example: *...Das Allerwichtigste jedoch ist nicht die Theorie sondern in diesem Fall besonders die Praxis, denn wer eine Sprache nicht übt und einsetzt, vergisst den gewissen Wortschatz oder die Aufbauregeln schon nach kurzer Zeit.*

The imperfect tense caused problems for a number of candidates:

Examples: *brachte, fieng an, rufte, bietete, steigte, verlierte, schlägte.*

Some essays were quite basic in form, lacking complex structures and correct verb order.

Examples: *das erstere tut es bis heute, bloß mit anderen Methoden  
die Weltsprache ist zwar nicht zwischendurch und überall, aber die meisten und fast überall  
sprechen kann  
obwohl es würde nicht so leicht sein*

**(b)** *„Zu viel Fernsehen macht offenbar doch aggressiv“. Zu diesem Schluss kam eine neue Studie.  
Sind Sie derselben Meinung?*

This was a reasonably popular title, on which strong candidates were able to demonstrate good command of the subject matter.

Example: *...beim Fernsehen, der Kiste, bleibt das Vermögen zu riechen, zu fühlen, zu hören oder sich zu bewegen, defizitär. Stattdessen entsteht eine körperliche Abhängigkeit von den Hormonen, die beim Schauen von Gewaltszenen oder auch bei aggressiven Computerspielen ausgeschüttet werden.*

Weaker candidates, on the other hand, produced essays that were poorly constructed with a good deal of misspelling.

Examples: *vieleicht, Fehrsehen, Physick, Opermädchen, giebt, anstappst.  
Nach durchgehen aller dieser folgenden fakten und überlegungen bin ich zum folgenden Urteil gekommen. Fernsehen an sich fördert die aggrisivität nicht nein das gegenteil sogar is der fall.*

**(c)** *Gibt es Kaufsucht nur bei Frauen oder sind Männer auch davon betroffen? Gibt es eine Erklärung für dieses Verhalten?*

A small number of candidates chose this essay.

Stronger candidates developed a clear argument and a few were able to produce fluent and polished language that had benefited from planning the essay and checking for accuracy.

Example: *...Wenn man von der Kaufsucht spricht, dann denken viele Menschen zuerst an die Frauen, aber entgegen einem weit verbreiteten Irrglauben, leiden fast genau so viele Männer unter der krankhaften Kaufsucht wie Frauen.*

Weaker candidates tended to ramble and fail to get to the point. Spelling and grammar mistakes had a clear impact on the overall mark for style and accuracy.

Example: *Das gefühl das wir dadurch bekommen wollen wir – wie bei einer droge – wider haben und deswegen kaufen wir uns auch machnmal sachen die für unser alltägliches leben überhaupt nicht relewant sind.*

**(d)** *Ist die Gesundheit am wichtigsten im Leben? Was meinen Sie dazu?*

This was another reasonably popular title. Better candidates expressed very strong views and were able to construct a convincing argument around them.

Example: *Das Leben wird nicht in Gesundheit oder Länge gemessen, sondern was man in der Zeit, in der man gelebt hat, geschaffen hat.*

Weaker candidates produced quite basic essays, lacking complex structures and sometimes failing to get to the point, with misspellings.

Examples: *man kann kein Geld haben aber gesund sein aber man ist trotzdem glücklich vor dem Tot...; die Angst ist weck...*

## Zweiter Teil

### Question 2

**(a)** *Viel Lärm um nichts! Beschreiben Sie eine Situation, die zu diesem Ausdruck paßt.*

This was a reasonably popular title. Very good candidates provided essays that were fun to read, clearly presented and demonstrated real creativity.

Example: *Der Geruch von gerösteten Mandeln und zuckerigen Gebäck provozierte meine Nase als ich langsam durch den Rummel des Volksfestes schlenderte. Hier und da höre ich das Pruzzeln der Würste und das Anzapfen eines frischen Bieres....*

Weaker candidates produced essays in which spelling and grammar mistakes had a clear impact on the overall mark for style and accuracy.

Examples: *fersuchen, endscheidung, deteis (meaning: details), Qualität (meaning: Qualität), Privatsfähre, er hat geplärt ...bis einer von den Nachbarn ausziehen tut..., das Geburtstagsprozederer.... abärmlich kalt.*

**(b)** *Beschreiben Sie ein Buch, das Eindruck auf Sie gemacht hat. Erzählen Sie darüber.*

This was another relatively popular title.

Stronger candidates started with plenty of specific descriptive detail. Their work was well organised and structured, adding to its effect.

Example: *In dem Buch wird ein Stück Unabänderlichkeit bewusst gemacht. Somit verschenkt die Mutter Toms neue Schuhe, da dieser sie ja nicht mehr braucht. Pete und die anderen überlegen sich gemeinsam wo Tom nun ist. „Im Himmel“? Aber wo und was ist der Himmel? Dass es nicht der blaue Himmel über uns ist, weiß Pete.*

The work of weaker candidates was again characterised by spelling and grammatical mistakes.

Examples: *los wierd, schranck, Schnäpschin, veratten (meaning: verraten), habben, traditinälen.*

**(c)** *Wie ich einmal fürchterlich erschrocken bin.*

This was a popular title. Stronger candidates were able to demonstrate accurate manipulation of the language and real creativity in a clear and individual way.

Example: *...mittlerweile hatte ich aber so heftige Angst bekommen, dass ich nicht mehr weg kann, dass ich ihn ziemlich fest in den rechten Arm und ihre rechte Hand gebissen habe, wobei das linke Handgelenk auch noch ein bißchen was abbekommen hat. Mir war vor lauter Angst nicht mal richtig bewußt was eigentlich geschah.*

Some weaker candidates appeared not to have the imagination needed to respond effectively to this question and some candidates tended to ramble throughout their essay.

**(d)** *Noch einmal gut gegangen...Erzählen Sie davon.*

This was the most popular title in this category.

Stronger candidates produced essays that were interesting and fun to read. Their work was clearly presented and showed accurate manipulation of the language and real creativity.

Example: „Bis später“. Wieder zu Hause angekommen mache ich mir einen Riesenteller Salat und gehe anschließend duschen. Ich ziehe mir eine saubere Jeans und ein frisches T-Shirt an und putze sogar meine Schuhe, was ich noch nie getan habe und denke mir: Noch ein Tag ist vergangen!

The work of weaker candidates included some examples of unusual phrasing, and many basic spelling and grammatical errors.

Examples: *eine totrote Sonne hinunterschlürfen sah...  
und kürzlich danach kam die Polizei...  
jemanden sehr doll verletzen  
traffen, betrieg (meaning: betrug), kammern (meaning: kamen), wahren, Lenkrahd, Presidänd,  
Spielfelt, schwehr, abschräkende Schuhlen.*

The *das/dass* problem of recent years has improved considerably, although some weaker candidates still have difficulties deciding which to use.