

FIRST LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0505/01

Reading

General Comments

Paper 1, the Reading paper of this First Language syllabus, consists of two extended passages. One passage invites candidates to answer comprehension questions and then both passages are summarised in Question 2 of the paper.

Overall, candidates did very well on this paper. Most responded to both parts of the examination with extensive, well-written answers and, particularly on the first question, there were almost no examples of an incomplete response – all candidates gave a full answer to most of the questions. Presentation was generally satisfactory, but candidates should make sure they label all questions clearly, as a couple of candidates missed out on answering a particular question just because their labelling had gone wrong.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) A straightforward warm-up question, which the vast majority of candidates answered correctly. One or two candidates did not mention examples, but mentioned 'fatty or sweet products' in a more generic sense.
- (b) All candidates managed to convey that advertising was emphasising the healthy aspects of the products and made the parents believe the products were beneficial to their children.
- (c) One minor problem with this question was that some candidates thought that diabetes was a separate illness from "Zuckerkrankheit", which in fact is one and the same, so that only one point could be awarded.
- (d) Candidates who answered this question wrongly were confused between "Ursachen" and "Auswirkungen". Instead of listing wrong eating habits, they mentioned "Fettsucht" and a variety of illnesses again. The majority of candidates scored the two available points, however.
- (e) All candidates scored the one mark awarded here for mentioning that food was always available.
- (f) Again, this question posed no problem for the candidates: Stress, boredom, anxiety or dealing with their feelings by eating rather than addressing the root of their problems were answers found by all candidates.
- (g) Although most candidates successfully worked out that the eating habits of the whole family were involved and that not eating together as a family might lead to the wrong habits, some candidates thought that the children ate as much as a whole table full of food or their problems were as big as a whole table.
- (h) This question again required a balanced answer from candidates: Sweets are OK as long as not eaten in vast quantities (*in Maßen*, not *in Massen!*) and as long as you are healthy, and not all sweet things are bad. Some candidates were taking healthy living to its extreme and condemned all sweets at all times, an answer which gained no credit in this case.

- (i) This question proved more challenging than some the earlier ones: most candidates extracted up to three points from the text without difficulty, but a lot of candidates did not reach a total of five points. Candidates often explained the one point they made (e.g. if you eat too many sweets you get diabetes and other health problems), but did not list enough points to gain the marks. Possible answers here were: more sports, less time in front of TV, fewer videos/computer games, meals with the whole family, healthy food, regular eating habits, no eating when frustrated, fewer sweets, no ready made meals.

Overall, it was pleasing to see that most candidates had labelled the questions properly and presented 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. Some candidates did quote at length from the text rather than using their own words – this is not necessary and tends to waste time, which could be spent on proofreading work and eliminating mistakes.

Question 2

Most candidates structured their summaries effectively and there were fewer instances at this session of linguistic analysis and interpretation of the texts, which are not part of a summary. Some candidates nonetheless continued to include their opinion as to their preferred text and gave their personal opinions about the topic. This likewise is not part of a summary and could not be credited.

A number of summaries were over-general and suffered from lengthy introductions. A short statement that both texts dealt with overweight children would have been sufficient. These summaries did not include the level of detail that would have scored marks under the mark scheme. Especially the second text was often shortened to remarks about “children need more sports and eat the wrong things” and “parents are to blame for obesity” and only a minority of candidates picked out the health costs for thinner people and the point that people should not be judged by appearance alone.

Some candidates quoted from the texts, at length in some cases. Again, this is not necessary in a summary and can lower the language mark if not enough own language is produced overall.

It was encouraging to see that all candidates finished the summary exercise and the work did not appear to have been rushed. In a very small number of cases candidates had taken a long time to produce a detailed draft of their summary and did not have time to mention all the points they had made in their drafts. Some summaries were slightly shorter than the allocated word count – candidates should make use of their allocation to avoid the risk of missing points out. Candidates who wrote much more than the word limit often repeated themselves unnecessarily and scored lower marks for structure than candidates who were more succinct.

Candidates scored well on the language side. Most candidates wrote in fluent, mostly idiomatically correct German and handled their responses to **Question 1** and the summary appropriately. However, two negative trends are worthy of note: Verbs were often spelt in the English way: *vermarkted*, *belasted*, *bedeuted* instead of *vermarktet*, *belastet* and *bedeutet* and capital letters seemed almost to have disappeared from nouns in some instances. Adjectives would not infrequently have a capital and the following noun a small letter: e.g. *Die Englischen eltern*; *Ungesunde essgewohnheiten*, *Steigendes risiko*. Candidates are reminded of the importance of consistent application of these rules of more formal written German in the examination context. One habit candidates should avoid in this context is the use of informal abbreviated words like *was* when *etwas* and *raus/rein*, when *heraus/herein* is meant. There should be a clear distinction between written and spoken German.

Some general language mistakes from both parts of the paper:

- *dass* and *das* confusion; *in Maßen* and *in Massen*
- nouns in the incorrect form or spelling: *Übergewichtigkeit* instead of *Übergewicht*; *Anerung* instead of *Ernährung*; *Uhrsachen* instead of *Ursachen*
- Umlaute had a random distribution principle applied: *Ernährung* instead of *Ernährung*; *Übergewicht*, but then *ubergewichtig*
- prepositions: *konzentrieren an* instead of *auf*; *handeln sich von*, instead of *es handelt sich um*, or *der Text handelt von*;
- quite often candidates found it difficult to carry the right verb form into the subsidiary clause: *die Probleme der Kinder, die von den Eltern verursacht ist* instead of *werden*

- the Akkusativ case seemed to disappear at times: *Kinder haben kein Hunger* instead of *den Hunger*
- some genders caused confusion: *dem Wachstum fördern* instead of *das Wachstum fördern*

FIRST LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0505/02

Writing

General comments

Most of this year's candidates acquitted themselves very well and there were very few candidates who performed poorly. There were many outstanding good pieces of writing in which candidates handled German syntax and lexis very well. Candidates used language that included sophisticated complex sentences, consistently using appropriately, ambitious words with a high level of accuracy and only a few errors, which were of a minor nature.

Expressions were sufficiently varied and mature to convey effectively their thoughts and argument. The information, concepts and opinions were clearly communicated and it was apparent, that those candidates who thoroughly prepared their chosen topic have achieved highly and wrote lively and interesting presentations. Again, time spent on a chosen title, which matched the candidate's ability, was well spent.

A small number of candidates were inconsistent in their use of common structured sentences, have shown a limited capacity to express and justify points of view and displayed fundamental spelling and grammar errors.

Some candidates were still confused between *man* and *mann*, and *das* and *dass* and had difficulties selecting the correct tense e.g. *comunizjern*, *süße Foten* for *süße Pfoten*, *grinselte* for *grinste*, *gesthollen* for *gestohlen*; with some invented words, e.g. *Strahling*, *kommitabel*, *dehydrite*, *so gestallt*, *introduziert*. If a candidate is not sure of a word, it is always much better to choose an alternative that is spelt correctly and is definitely in the dictionary.

It is very positive and reassuring to see that Centres generally are taking on board the comments made in the past. This is particularly seen in the higher quality of presentation as well as essays being kept to within the maximum word count. Candidates need to take notice of word limits given: they must not use less than 350 words, and 500 words are strictly enforced as the limit.

Providing a conclusion to the essay proved difficult for some candidates.

On the whole, the language used in the essays was encouragingly idiomatic and showed a very good grasp of sayings.

Comments on specific questions

Erster Teil - Diskussion and Argumentation

Question 1

(a) *Hat es der Sport heute schwerer, Jugendliche zu begeistern Wie denken Sie darüber?*

Arguments were mostly clear and concise, e.g. *...Jedoch haben nicht alle Jugendlichen die Möglichkeit bereits im frühen Alter zu beginnen und daher sprechen viele Argumente dafür, dass der Sport es heute schwerer hat, Jugendliche zu begeistern.*

Some of the common mistakes involved accuracy and occasionally incorrect word order, e.g. *... Ich selber spiele Basketball und mache Leistatletik und es werden immer weniger die kommen.*

- (b) *Eine sehr heiÙe oder kalte Jahreszeit kann die Gesundheit stark belasten. Wie sind Sie sich von der Einstellung eingestellt?*

This title proved the least favourite and only a small number of candidates chose to tackle it.

Candidates generally showed a high standard of language use, with varied range of structures and only minor errors.

- (c) *Das Internet: nützlich oder Zeitverschwendung? Was meinen Sie dazu?*

This topic proved to be the most popular. The essays discussed quite passionately the advantages and disadvantages of the Internet. Most candidates were able to evaluate both sides of the argument very well. The disadvantages and advantages were argued with unbiased opinion, drawing together their own personal beliefs in the conclusion. In arguing their case, some candidates were so passionate about their language, that unfortunately, correct punctuation was forgotten.

Many essays were outstanding, breaking the barriers of conventional writing, producing unique and sophisticated analysis, e.g. *...Wie schon erwähnt bietet das Internet nicht nur wertvolle Information, es bietet auch Analysen über meist alle literarischen Werke in jeglichen Sprachen, Bücher-Geschäften und Internet-Seiten wie Wikipedia, die manches Lernen um ein Vielfaches vereinfachen, and ... ein weiterer Aspekt der das Internet als nützlich erweist ist dass man es benutzen kann für die eigene Firma zu Werben, oder dass man mit Freunden überall auf der Welt billig komunizieren kann.*

It is worth for candidates to remember that pre-planning is essential.

- (d) *Bereitet der Urlaub Freude oder nur Stress? Was denken Sie darüber?*

On the whole, all candidates who attempted this title tackled it very well.

The focus on the importance of joy and/or stress during holidays seems to be a very real topic in today's life. Some of the candidates have shown a very decisive opinion with regards to the standards of holidays.

A number of fundamental grammatical errors occurred relatively frequently, e.g. *...an solch welchen Tagen...; ...letzte Woche war die Sonne geschienen...; ...das schlimmste Tag der Woche...*

Zweiter Teil - Beschreibung und Schilderung

Question 2

- (a) *Ehrlich währt am längsten! Beschreiben Sie eine Situation, die zu diesem Ausdruck passt.*

This essay title stimulates imagination, allowing candidates to interpret the literary quotation on a personal level. Candidates who attempted this question endeavoured to form as wide an opinion as possible, with each of the candidates relating 'ehrlich währt am längsten' to something unique. All of the candidates tried to create an open-minded view.

(b) *Ein Tier im Haus hält jedermanns Leib und Seele zusammen! Welches Tier passt zu Ihnen?*

All candidates who chose this title had insightful and clear ideas and established good points of view. Quite a few candidates wrote creatively, inspirationally and also successfully about their ideal pets. Good grammar and a wide range of vocabulary were used, showing a thorough understanding and complete control of language.

Only a couple of essays were lacking lustre, style and imagination, e.g. *...den wenn ich ein Tier habe dann will ich ein Tier das sich an mich bindet und ich mich an es, and...der Hund das ideale Tier für mich das mich in meinem Leben ideal begleiten würde und perfekt zu mir passt.*

(c) *Es gibt Tage, da geht einfach alles schief! Erzählen Sie davon.*

This title proved fairly popular.

The title provided easy access to narrate a great story; however, many candidates ventured too far from the title, letting their minds wander, and falling into the trap of creating a mundane, unstructured essay.

However, there were also some excellent answers which seemed to break the mould of stereotypical essays and allowed the reader to become part of the candidates' fantasy e.g. *...ich flitzte unter die Dusche, riss danach wahllos Sachen aus meinem Kleiderschrank und nahm mein Frühstück mit auf dem Weg zur S-Bahn, and... ich rief zu meinem Bruder: „Der wievielte ist heute?“ Er erwiderte: „, Freitag, der dreizehnte!“*

(d) *Ich hatte mich so auf das Treffen gefreut, aber ... erzählen Sie weiter.*

This title provided an excellent jumpstart, giving the opportunity for candidates to display their linguistic strengths and creativity.

There were a number of good essays, with examples of positive and negative situations and followed up by opinions. A few essays would have benefited from more concrete ideas, expressing feelings in a more detailed way and developing thoughts and opinions more convincingly.