

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 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 good, but candidates should make sure they label all questions clearly and make sure that later additions are clearly marked with asterisks or numbers, which correspond to numbers or asterisks in the main body of the text. Sometimes asterisks could be found, but the added information expected did not materialise.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) A straightforward warm up question, which the vast majority of candidates answered correctly. Any famous name or indeed the mention of stars gave candidates the mark.
- (b) Most candidates gained the two points awarded here by mentioning the good deeds and the good looks of the collection.
- (c) Most candidates answered this question correctly by mentioning pesticides and fertiliser.
- (d) The majority of candidates scored the two marks awarded. One mark only was given if the candidate got the main gist of the question and answered in the negative, two marks were given for mentioning 300 tons instead of the hoped for 1000, or 300 out of a total of 25 million tons. Some candidates did say that a lot of organic cotton was produced already, which was incorrect.
- (e) Again, this question posed few problems for the candidates: Most candidates wrote that customers wanted a synthetic component in their clothing.
- (f) This question presented some difficulties. A lot of candidates used figures in their answer and quoted the text at length instead of summarising it. Other candidates forgot to mention that the figures were there to prove something to the customer and that Kuyichi did not only have the figures, but published them to market their success.
- (g) Most candidates managed to gain at least three out of four points, but all possible points are listed below: Dov Charney has several attention-attracting features, he pays his employees a fair wage, he wears his own products, he has had a lot of success in a short time span and he is not afraid of scandals or provocative behaviour.
- (h) Most candidates gave good definitions of a “Lifestyle-Öko”: a person who buys organic produce and has sustainability on his/her mind and makes decisions about what is ethical to purchase or not. Some candidates mentioned that a “Lifestyle-Öko” was “ein Lebensstil”, because they had not realised that a person was talked about.
- (i) This question presented very few problems. Most candidates clearly grasped that people were willing to pay more and wanted a good conscience or had increased their awareness of the environment, so the one mark available was scored easily.

- (j) The last question was answered correctly by most candidates, if only in parts. For fair wages, fair pay, no child labour and donations, for organically produced fashion the candidates mentioned that there were fewer pesticides, less fertiliser and environment friendly production or sustainable resources. Two points for each part were needed, but some candidates interpreted the texts and went on to mention that you felt like a star when wearing organically produced T-shirts and that the LOHAS label was important.

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 better 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 proof reading work and eliminating mistakes. In some cases language constructions in the answers did not make sense, such as:

*Merkmale wie Dov Charney
Lifestyle-Öko ist ein Lebensstil
Er ist Kultstatus
Ein Großteil der Baumwolle stammt aus synthetischen Betrieben*

As a rule of thumb the following applies: ***If the Examiner has to do the thinking to work out what the answer means that the candidate has given, the candidate needs to strive for greater clarity.***

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 about fair fashion and organic production. This likewise is not part of a summary and could not be credited.

Some summaries did not include the level of detail that would have scored marks under the mark scheme. Especially the first text was often so broadly summarised that almost all points disappeared, whereas the second text then got summarised well and quite a few points were awarded. This scenario often occurred when candidates had written just about 200-220 words or even less, so an extra 30 odd words might have added a few more ticks!

On the opposite end of the scale were candidates who wrote 350 to 500 words (250 words per individual text was not envisaged) and used their word count to quote the texts at length, did not summarise the figures and repeated themselves unnecessarily. In those cases the style and organisation of the summary suffered and in a very limited amount of cases work appeared to be unfinished.

However, it was encouraging to see that nearly all candidates finished the summary exercise and the work in general did not appear to have been rushed. In a 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.

Candidates scored well on the language side. Most candidates wrote in fluent, correct German and handled their responses to **Question 1** and the summary appropriately. Two trends in particular are worthy of note: Capital letters seemed almost to have disappeared from nouns in some instances e.g. *bilanz*, *lebensstil*, *gesundheit*, but adjectives then were spelt with capitals instead, particularly in front of nouns (*Gesunder lebensstil*, *Grüne mode*). Candidates are reminded of the importance of consistent application of spelling rules. Candidates should use an appropriate register and be aware of the more formal language required in an examination. The use of informal abbreviated words like *was* when *etwas* and *rangehen*, when *herangehen* is meant should be avoided. A clear distinction should be made between written and spoken German.

Some general language mistakes picked up in both parts of the paper:

- *dass* and *das* confusion
- Umlaute were sometimes omitted or incorrect vowels were used: *eusehrst erstrebenswehrt* instead of *äußerst erstrebenswert*, *angaschieren* instead of *engagieren*
- endings of adjectives were sometimes incorrect: *für potentiellen Käufer*
- prepositions; *handeln sich von*, instead of *es handelt sich um*, or *der Text handelt von*

- some parts of sentences were turning into nonsense on closer inspection:
Verschiedenheiten und Einsamkeiten instead of *Gemeinsamkeiten*
Ansprüche der Kunden enthalten Beimischungen
Trendforscher sprechen von „Lifestyle-Ökos“ indem man sie ethisch und ökologisch konsumiert. Without the *sie* the sentence would still have been grammatically incorrect, but would at least not have implied that the wrong thing got eaten.
Er ist Kultstatus instead of *er hat Kultstatus*

The last point seems to be an increasing trend – candidates should make sure they read their own work and not just use phrases they think sound impressive. Overall the work needs to make sense!

This having been said, there was a lot of correct and sophisticated German used by candidates:
“Die Firma strebt an, den Leser dieser Bilanz mit der ökologischen Korrektheit ihrer Produktion und ihrem Erfolg zu überzeugen.” A perfect answer to **Question 1 (f)**!

FIRST LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0505/02

Writing

General comments

Candidates choose 2 out of 8 essay topics from each category:

- 1) Argumentation/Discursive Tasks
- 2) Description/Narrative Tasks

The vast majority of this year's candidates acquitted themselves very well and there were very few weak candidates. There were many outstandingly good pieces of writing in which candidates handled German syntax and lexis well, and used language that included sophisticated complex sentences using appropriate, ambitious vocabulary with a high level of accuracy. Expressions were sufficiently varied and mature to convey effectively their thoughts and argument. The information, concepts and opinions were clearly communicated and it was shown that those candidates have thoroughly prepared their chosen topic and have written an interesting presentation.

Some weaker candidates were patchy and inconsistent in their use of common structured sentences, spelling and grammar, including some very basic errors and faulty genders. Those candidates had difficulties selecting the correct tenses to use. Others have shown a limited capacity to express and justify points of view.

Many candidates were still confused between *das* and *dass* and *man* and *Mann*. A few candidates were unable to put *verbs* into the correct past tense. Some candidates had a tendency to use English words because they were unable to remember the appropriate German word. If a candidate is not sure of a word, it is always much better to choose a German alternative that is definitely in the dictionary!

Centres are reminded that essays have to be kept 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.

In some cases candidates produced the wrong number of essays. Centres are reminded that candidates should be aware of the instructions on the front cover and that candidates should be made aware of the requirements of the examination prior to sitting the exam.

In addition it needs to be pointed out that legible handwriting is a distinct way of avoiding unnecessary loss of marks, with endings being legible for example.

On the whole, candidates' performances were good, with many candidates able to cope very well with the demands of the paper.

Comments on Specific Questions

Argumentation/Discursive Tasks:

1 (a) Der Sport ist heutzutage vor allem nur eines, nämlich ein Geschäft. Wie denken Sie darüber?

This essay inspired candidates to submit a strong opinion, as well as being linguistically accurate. Most arguments were clear and concise with good follow-up paragraphs, using several ideas with high quality comments that add meaning and associations to words.

In principle, most scripts were all fairly evenly balanced between the two questions and candidates do need to allocate their time evenly between the two to have a chance of doing well on the paper.

Only a few candidates' range of language and ability to develop this title were inadequate to the variable accuracy and occasionally incorrect word order.

1 (b) Zu viel Fernsehen und Computerspiele schaden, aber sie spenden oft Trost! Was ist Ihre Einstellung dazu?

Most candidates were able to write relevant and sensible answers, showing competence in vocabulary and selecting innovative ideas.

Some candidates showed a sophisticated development of ideas, producing confident argumentation in well-structured essays. Weaker candidates' essays in general showed a lack of accuracy.

Only very few candidates submitted very weak essays containing many spelling and grammar mistakes (e.g. *das Gefahr, das Zukunft, eine große Prozent von Eltern...*) with little relevant material.

1 (c) Brauchen Jugendliche Vorbilder? Was meinen Sie dazu?

The candidates' linguistic capabilities shone brightly. Thoughts and ideas demonstrated very good control of vocabulary, showing a thorough understanding in some of the more complex grammatical issues and syntax. The essays were clearly presented and organised.

Again, sometimes grammatical inaccuracy with some candidates' essays lead to weaker marks, e.g. gender, sentence structure and spelling mistakes.

1 (d) Handy, Spielzeug oder Notwendigkeit? Begründen Sie Ihre Ansicht.

This title saw a wide range of candidates' performance and was the most popular essay title within the category Argumentation/Discursive tasks.

The vast majority of candidates showed very good command of German generally interpreting negative and positive accounts of using *Handys*. Some weaker candidates made mistakes of a quite basic nature, e.g. *nehmllich, gehören, vielles, weil; kommonizieren, ferbringen, zeitverschwindlich*, meaning *zeitverschwendend*.

When candidates forgot that the essay should not exceed the requisite number of words this was to their disadvantage.

Some candidates confused expressions, e.g. *...durch das Spielen sie somit die Menschen untastbar, was dazu fügt, sozial Ausgegrenzt zu sein in seinem Umfeld*.

Stronger candidates submitted a linguistically highly developed essay on this title and with well developed endings.

Description/Narrative Tasks:

2 (a) Sie sitzen in der Flughalle in Frankfurt am Main: Beschreiben Sie die Atmosphäre.

This proved to be the most popular title within the Description and Narrative Tasks. The title provided an excellent jump start giving candidates the opportunity to display their linguistic strengths and creative capabilities. A few candidates made careless errors, scoring weaker marks, e.g. *treumt, meaning träumt; kurtz, sas, meaning saß; eltere, meaning ältere*.

Some candidates also missed the opportunities for appropriate development of their ideas and were marked accordingly.

2 (b) Mit dem Rucksack durch ein Traumland. Was sehen und empfinden Sie dabei?

Candidates who submitted this essay demonstrated a good command of German, although grammatical inaccurate endings, many spelling mistakes and elementary errors led to a lower mark with a few weaker candidates. Some candidates had recurring problems with *das/dass* and *man/(M) mann*.

2 (c) Einmal Millardär/in sein. Wer wünscht sich das nicht?

Only few candidates submitted essays on this topic.

The essays inspired by this title either revealed huge aptitude or simply lacked lustre and inspiration, with thin contents, and many grammatical errors, e.g. *...ich würde nie etwas von nicht Designer gemachte Klamotten tragen, immer teure Sachen anziehen; ...ein chilliger Abend; Miljarden, meaning Milliarden; in jedem Eck der Welt...; denn sie sein sehr verführerisch*; spelling mistakes were consistent throughout, e.g. *ferbringen, persönlich, verrügt, meaning verrückt; virtuell and lehben, meaning leben*.

2 (d) Rascheln - dumpfes Klopfen - Schritte! Erzählen Sie eine lebendige und spannende Geschichte, in der diese Wörter eine wichtige Rolle spielen.

This essay title allowed candidates to explore their imagination and create a genuine story writing attempt. Stronger candidates submitted a very good essay that was linguistically highly developed and consistent within the story. These were pleasant to read and were presented with clarity. Weaker candidates made too many basic mistakes even when dealing with simple written language. Some of the candidates' handwriting appeared very sloppy and hard to read.