

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 good, but candidates should make sure they label all questions clearly and ensure that later additions are clearly marked with asterisks or numbers, which correspond to numbers or asterisks in the main body of the text.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) A straightforward warm up question which the vast majority of candidates answered correctly. Only a few candidates gave *helicopter* instead of *plane* as later on in the text there is talk about helicopter flights.
- (b) Most candidates scored the marks here; only a few missed out one part of the information.
- (c) Most candidates answered this question correctly.
- (d) The majority of candidates scored the available one mark here.
- (e) This question posed few problems for the candidates: Most candidates explained that someone had taken the car in order to escape a polar bear. However, some candidates interpreted the question and claimed that a thief had taken the car.
- (f) This question presented no difficulty whatsoever; the majority of candidates scored three marks by listing the three things that German tourists have.
- (g) Again, most candidates managed to score two points here, explaining how polar bears react to the buggies. Some candidates misunderstood the word “tappen” and translated it as “to tap”. This led to an incorrect German transitive instead of intransitive usage of the verb, thus invalidating the answer.
- (h) In order to score three marks, the candidates needed to list three things that change in October and most candidates were able to take this information from the text.
- (i) Most candidates answered this question correctly.
- (j) Most candidates answered this question very well and managed to score either 3 or 4 marks by describing the problems that polar bears face due to climate change.

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 proofreading work and eliminating mistakes.

Question 2

Most candidates structured their summaries effectively and there were few instances of linguistic analysis and interpretation of the texts, which are not part of a summary. Some candidates nonetheless continued to include their opinion about climate change and/or polar bears. 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 marking scheme.

Especially the first text was often so broadly summarised that many points disappeared, whereas the second text then got summarised very well and quite a few points were awarded. It helped that the second text was very factual and candidates seemed to get on very well summarising all the facts about polar bears.

It was encouraging to see that nearly all candidates finished the summary exercise and that 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:

Many candidates adopt English spelling rules for German and have stopped using capital letters for nouns.

Numerous candidates used too colloquial a register for the summary. Candidates need to be made aware of the more formal language required in an examination. The use of informal abbreviated words should be avoided and 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
- endings of adjectives were often incorrect or even missing.
- for unusual or difficult words, candidates often use phonetic spelling which makes understanding very difficult; it is important to spell words correctly.

FIRST LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0505/02

Writing

Key Messages

Good argumentative essays demonstrated a wide range of structures and were the results of careful planning of relevant arguments, including pros and cons, in candidates' essay plans. Better descriptive essays showed feelings and emotions with a focus on details including descriptions of the setting. Engaging well with the chosen topic and narrating the experience and its meaning made candidates' narrative essays very effective.

General Comments

Candidates write two essays on this paper in a period of two hours. They write one discursive and one descriptive or narrative essay and have a choice of one out of four essays in each of these categories. Both essays carry equal marks and it is important that candidates allocate their time evenly between the two and that they take time to choose carefully the title that is best suited to the knowledge and language they have available to them.

It is pleasing that most Centres have followed advice given in previous years and prepared their candidates very well. Candidates made their choices fairly evenly across the range of essay titles available. The majority of candidates acquitted themselves well, handling a wide and varied range of syntax and using fluent and idiomatic German. The overall control of structure and presentation was generally of a high standard and the majority of errors were of a minor nature.

It should be highlighted to candidates that a good introduction and an effective summary at the end are both equally important. A good style, making good use of paragraphs, is equally important. The marking criteria for Style and Accuracy includes the correct use of grammar, the correct use of vocabulary as well as correct spelling and punctuation. Only candidates who demonstrate an assured use of grammar, punctuation and spelling can score highly for Style and Accuracy.

Within the candidate's arguments words of 'foreign' origin were often not clear to them, e.g. *physisch* - *physicalisch*, *geistig* - *geistlich* and *impressionant*. Sometimes it made the meaning unclear and candidates would have been better off avoiding such words.

The most common problems were word order, the use of colloquial language, trying to 'Germanise' English words, incorrect verb endings, missing capital letters on nouns as well as the confusion of *man* and *mann*; *das* and *dass*. Very few candidates were rather erratic on the gender of nouns.

Some candidates who scored lower marks sometimes limited their own potential by offering an incomplete submission on both parts. On the other hand, excessive length does continue to be a problem with some candidates. The quality of work in long pieces rarely improves as they expand, tending to become repetitive in use of structure and opinions.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) **Ein richtiger Freund geht mit dir durch dick und dünn. Sind Sie derselben Meinung?**
All candidates, on the whole, tackled this title very well. The focus on the importance of joy or stress with a true friend seems to be a very real topic in today's life. Many of the candidates gave a very decisive opinion with regards to the standards of accepting a loyal true friend.

- (b) **Muss man vor dem Erwachsen werden Angst haben? Was meinen Sie dazu?**
There were very good essays on this topic with candidates showing competence in vocabulary and selecting good ideas.

On the whole, these essays were a mixture of very good and weaker content, some with complex German language and excellent use of grammar and punctuation whilst others were in need of further development and inspiration.

- (c) **Nach spannenden Fußballspielen kommt es manchmal zu Krawallen, bei denen Menschen verletzt werden. Helfen oder wegschauen? Was ist Ihre Einstellung dazu?**
This title was answered well by many candidates and many established a link between alcohol consumption and its impact on football matches leading to emergency calls and police action. The more able candidates tried to make connections between hooliganism and underlying social problems, though some essays developed the tendency to stray from the topic of football and became quite generic. The need for a personal response enabled the better candidates to use subjunctive, which when used correctly, added to the style.

The vast majority of candidates showed good command of German, interpreting negative and positive accounts of football situations.

- (d) **Kleine Ideen machen den großen Unterschied für die Umwelt und jeder kann etwas dazu beitragen. Stimmen Sie zu?**
This essay title is one which should be quite easily accessible. It provoked ideas of advantages and disadvantages as well as more creative writing. Candidates who chose this title showed a strong opinion.

Arguments were mostly clear and concise, e.g. ...*'leider haben viele Entwicklungsländer nicht die nötigen Ressourcen für effektive Umweltschutzmaßnahmen'* and ...*'allerdings vergessen wir dabei oft, dass schon kleine Taten eines ganz ungewöhnlichen Bürgers ein grosser Schritt auf dem Weg in eine grüne Zukunft ist'*.*'und auch wird argumentiert, dass globale Umweltschäden im wesentlichen auf Aktivitäten der Industrien zurückzuführen sind'*.

Section B

Question 2

- (a) **Der erste Tag in der Sekundärschule. Wie haben Sie sich gefühlt?**
Most candidates who chose this title produced a wide range of work, from the slightly irrelevant to the insightful, while others took a rather limited approach to this topic and did not take the opportunity to broaden it. Some candidates' work was characterised by real colloquial language, e.g. ...*'das wochenlange planen und vorbereiten hat ein Ende, denn jetzt lassen wir die Sau raus'*

Common misspellings were for example *abwegen* or *abwiegen* meaning *Abwägen*, *mann* and *das* instead of *man* and *dass*.

- (b) **Beschreiben Sie einen Ort, den Sie besonders mögen und was Sie sehen und wie Sie dort sind.**

The strongest candidates had a very good command of the relevant descriptive vocabulary. They described their perceptions and the atmosphere of their favourite places (such as seeing a sunset, hearing a song, smelling flowers, tasting a pie or feeling the touch of a hand) with a range of details. Most candidates structured their work effectively with convincing introductions and conclusions.

Present tense is required in this descriptive task which should be highlighted to candidates. A few candidates wrote part of their essay in the past tense, switching to present tense and back to past tense again, which was incorrect, e.g. *...die letzten paar Sonnenstrahlen badeten den Ort in purpur-rotem Schein und die Dächer leuchten. Man spürt die Ruhe und den Frieden dieses abgelegenen Dorfes, man konnte sich hier niederlassen.*

- (c) **Nur noch diese Woche! ... Erzählen Sie von einer Situation, die zu diesem Ausdruck passt.**

This title was popular and elicited numerous imaginative responses. Many candidates wrote essays about school in general and exam times.

Only a few essays were lacking a build-up of tension and the necessary climax.

- (d) **Wie wir einmal einen Riesenspaß hatten. Erzählen Sie.**

Essays about this title were mostly relevant. A small number of candidates spent too much time scene-setting rather than developing the story. Good essays often showed an emotional connection with the chosen topic. The past tense is required in this narrative task, though a few candidates wrote part of their essay in the present tense.