

GERMAN

<p>Paper 9717/01 Speaking</p>

Key messages

- The presentation should last between three and four minutes and must clearly relate to the culture or society of a German-speaking country, whilst also reflecting the candidate's personal interests.
- Candidates should ask the examiner at least two questions in the topic conversation and two questions in the general conversation. These should ideally be spontaneous, but, if necessary, candidates should be prompted to ask them.
- No marks can be awarded for Seeking Information if no questions are asked.
- It is recommended that the candidate's two questions in each conversation should be asked within the allotted time and integrated into the discussions. They should ideally not be left to the end.
- The whole test should be completed within twenty minutes and the two conversations should be of approximately equal length, at around eight minutes each.
- The candidate and the examiner should be equally audible to anyone listening to the recording, and the recording equipment should be tested beforehand and placed accordingly.

General comments

Most centres had small numbers of candidates for the speaking test, but nearly all were appropriately entered and were aware of the requirements. Presentation topics mostly referred to issues in a German speaking society, and were often very interesting and informative. However, it was evident that not all candidates are aware that they must ask the examiner a minimum of two questions per conversation. It was often the case that candidates did not ask any questions spontaneously. If they were not prompted to do so by the examiner, they were unable to access the marks available for Seeking Information. Some examiners did prompt their candidates but only at the very end of a conversation, which is not good practice as questions should be integrated and arise naturally during the discussion. Candidates were on the whole very responsive and nearly all were spontaneous, with very few relying on prepared responses. Most centres used the mark scheme correctly and fairly accurately. Some centres allowed the tests to last too long, thus risking tiring the candidates. Twenty minutes should be the maximum duration of a test. Recording quality was usually very good, but at some centres either the candidate or the examiner was less audible owing to incorrect placement of the recording equipment.

Specific Comments on the sections of the examination

Section 1 (Presentation)

- If the presentation contains ideas and opinions, refers to the culture or society of a German-speaking country, and is delivered in a fluent and confident fashion, nine or ten marks may be awarded for content.
- However, presentations that are far too long, even if confidently delivered, should not receive nine or ten marks for content as they cannot be considered to have been 'well organised', as indicated in the mark scheme.
- For a mark of five for pronunciation a candidate does not have to be a native speaker.
- A well-prepared candidate should be able to access at least 4 marks for Language. A 'reasonable range' of structures and (topic-specific) vocabulary is required, delivered 'fairly fluently', and without ambiguity of meaning.
- There was a very good range of interesting, up-to-date or relevant presentation topics, including the following:

Datenschutz, Cern – der Large Hadron Collider, Heidi Klum – TV-Sendung, technischer Fortschritt in der deutschen Geschichte, 5G, die Autorin Kerstin Gier, die Corona-Epidemie, 'Made in Germany', Hamburg/München/mein Deutschlandbesuch, and der literarische Wettbewerb 'Poetry-Slam'.

Section 2 (Topic Conversation)

- In this conversation, issues raised in the presentation should be followed up and discussed.
- Candidates should be able to defend any ideas and opinions already expressed and ought also to have prepared plenty of additional points. However, examiners should not expect them to know any specific factual information over and above what has been presented.
- Any issues more suitable for the General Conversation should be raised later in **Section 3**, provided that the main issues of the Topic Conversation are not returned to.
- The questions a candidate puts to the examiner to 'seek information', should be as varied as possible. „Was denken Sie?“ or „Sind Sie der gleichen Meinung?“ are useful questions to move the conversation along, but a wider range is expected for marks of four or five.
- If a candidate asks only one question during a conversation the maximum mark for Seeking Information is three. If no questions are asked, even after prompting, the mark is zero.
- A maximum mark of three should be awarded for Providing Information if the candidate can deal with basic situations and concepts, but finds more complex ones difficult.

Section 3 (General Conversation)

- This section should be distinct from **Section 2**. It should not be shorter, but of a similar length to the Topic Conversation at around eight minutes.
- The examiner should clearly inform the candidate that the Topic Conversation is over, and should introduce a completely different topic for the General Conversation. At least two different topics should be covered in this section.
- It is essential to cover mainly complex issues in order to allow candidates access to the higher marks available for Comprehension and Responsiveness or Providing Information and Opinions.
- Questions, such as *Warum?* or *Inwiefern?* are particularly useful in prompting in depth discussion.
- It should not be expected that candidates will know any specific information on an unexpected topic chosen by the examiner, even a current topic such as the Corona virus pandemic, although they may well be expected to have their own opinions and suggestions. If a candidate is clearly unhappy with the topic suggested, the examiner should quickly suggest a different area of discussion.

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<p>Paper 9717/22 Reading and Writing</p>
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Key messages

In this paper, candidates read two texts with a common theme (*Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr*; young people volunteering in the social sector).

They must then answer vocabulary questions for **Question 1** and grammar questions for **Question 2**. In **Questions 3** and **4**, candidates answer comprehension questions about the two texts. In **Question 5**, candidates are asked to summarise the two texts with reference to the advantages and disadvantages of the *Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr* and then briefly give their own opinion.

General comments

The majority of candidates coped well with the demands of this exam and showed a good understanding of the two texts as demonstrated by the answers to **Questions 3 – 5**. The quality of language varied from excellent to very poor. Whilst some candidates wrote confidently using their own words, others restricted themselves to copying large chunks of the original text without attempting to rephrase ideas and opinions. This could not be credited. **Questions 1** and **2** also presented a difficulty for candidates who did not have a sufficient command of vocabulary and grammar for this level.

In **Question 5**, candidates should be reminded to keep the summary task in mind and not just rephrase both texts without reference to the task. Simply copying sentences from the text does not gain marks as it does not demonstrate summary skills.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Some candidates coped well with this question, but many struggled to find the synonym in the text.
- (b) Many candidates coped well with this question.
- (c) Some candidates struggled with this question as they did not understand the original word they were given and were thus unable to find a synonym in the text.
- (d) Most candidates coped well with this question.
- (e) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.

Question 2

- (a) Some candidates coped well with this question and answered correctly. However, many candidates used the wrong tense in their answer.
- (b) Many candidates answered this question correctly. However, the position of the word *leider* sometimes presented a problem.
- (c) This question was usually answered correctly and candidates recognised the required structure.
- (d) A significant number of candidates answered this question correctly and used the correct endings.

- (e) Many candidates did not answer this question correctly and used a wrong, often colloquial, sentence structure.

Question 3

- (a) This question did not present any difficulties for most candidates.
- (b) Many candidates answered this question correctly and were awarded full marks. Some candidates only referenced one statistical fact and were awarded one mark.
- (c) This question presented a difficulty for many candidates and they were unable to give the required details. Many candidates restricted themselves to simply copying large chunks from the text, hoping the right answer might be included.
- (d) Most candidates scored full marks in this question.
- (e) This question was generally answered correctly. However, some candidates only gave one piece of the required information.
- (f) The question presented no difficulty and most candidates referred to all three required pieces of information.

Question 4

- (a) Many candidates did not compare life before and now and simply restricted themselves to describing either the current or the former life. This could not be credited with marks.
- (b) Candidates often struggled with this question with many only gaining one mark out of three. They did not understand the volunteer's thoughts about his childhood compared to that of the children in the children's home.
- (c) Most candidates identified two out of three details but were unable to describe the different emotions experienced by the children in their own words.
- (d) Many candidates were able to identify the three necessary points for the answer.
- (e) A significant number of candidates coped well with this question and gained full marks.

Question 5

Some candidates coped well with this task and were able to identify many advantages and disadvantages of the *Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr* scheme. However, there was often a very poor quality of language which made it very difficult to understand some candidates' summaries.

Candidates should be reminded to adhere to the word limit. Any points after the 150-word cut-off will not be credited. The aim of this question is to produce a concise summary and candidates should be discouraged from copying sentences directly from the text. Instead, they should summarise points briefly and succinctly.

In **Question 5b**, some candidates were able to give a relevant opinion on the topic and supported their opinion with valid reasons, often drawing on their own experience. However, the majority of candidates restricted themselves to writing in general without giving personal opinion or simply repeating sentences from **Question 5a**. This is to be discouraged as it does not demonstrate that the candidates has understood and engaged with the text

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<p>Paper 9717/32 Essay</p>
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Key messages

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

- select the title which they feel most confident about answering;
- write a response that is clearly relevant, supported with examples, coherently structured and well informed;
- use German which is accurate and of a suitably advanced nature, as well as demonstrating 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

Most essays were coherently argued with a suitable introduction and conclusion and of an appropriate length. As always, the strongest essays demonstrated insight, and opinions were supported with well-chosen evidence.

Many candidates had an excellent command of German and achieved marks for Language in the Very Good category. Most used an impressive range of vocabulary, both general and topic-specific. Their language was almost always fluent and idiomatic but occasionally lacked precision.

Common errors included:

- lack of punctuation;
- lack of capitalisation of nouns;
- incorrect but phonetic spelling.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Jede neue Generation hat ein besseres Leben als die vorherige Generation. Teilen Sie diese Meinung?

This question was quite popular with candidates. Many mentioned the development of technology as a defining feature of their generation compared to previous generations. Most candidates weighed the evidence, wrote thoughtful essays and came to the conclusion that each generation faced different problems, so it is impossible to evaluate who has or had the better life.

Question 2

„Wenn ich ungesund leben will, geht das nur mich etwas an. Die Verantwortung für die eigene Gesundheit und Fitness liegt bei jedem Einzelnen.“ Dirk, 45 Jahre alt. Was halten Sie von Dirks Standpunkt?

Most candidates agreed that health and fitness are the responsibility of the individual but only in a positive sense. They disagreed with Dirk that he could live unhealthily without affecting anyone else. Smoking and alcohol consumption were rarely mentioned as an unhealthy lifestyle choice.

Question 3

Wie viel Prozent eines Jahrgangs sollten nach der Schule an der Universität studieren? Begründen Sie Ihre Antwort.

No candidates chose this title.

Question 4

In der Zukunft wird es nur noch fahrerlose Fahrzeuge geben. Stimmt das Ihrer Meinung nach? Finden Sie diese Entwicklung positiv?

This was a popular question. Those who chose it were obviously interested in this subject and many were very well-informed about the technology and the social and ethical aspects of driverless vehicles. The essays were usually argued with conviction, with relevant examples and interesting to read.

Question 5

Tierarten sterben aus ganz natürlichen Gründen aus. Wir sollten nicht versuchen, alle gefährdeten Tierarten am Leben zu erhalten. Stimmen Sie diese Aussage zu?

Few candidates chose this question but those who did were convinced that animal species are dying out through the effects of human activity and not for purely natural reasons. They wanted to conserve all species.

GERMAN LITERATURE

<p>Paper 9717/42 Texts</p>
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General comments

In this paper candidates are expected both to demonstrate knowledge of the texts and an understanding of how the texts work. To achieve a very good result it is necessary for candidates to show that they can see the texts in the context of the time they were written and display some understanding of the authors' intentions and effect on the audience.

Candidates who did well on this paper were able to show in-depth knowledge of the text, chose good examples to illustrate their arguments and structured their answers well.

Most candidates' command of German was good to very good. However, there were some candidates whose command of German was very poor. This had an influence on how well they were able to make their points (lack of vocabulary, poor grammar knowledge, spelling errors).

In general, candidates labelled their work correctly. Most structured their essays clearly. Suitable paragraphing, organisation and linking of arguments and a structured approach in writing always resulted in a better analysis and essay. This approach should be encouraged. Good planning makes for a better essay.

A very small number of candidates did not answer the required three questions, probably running out of time. Some candidates did not answer questions from both parts or answered two questions on one text. Candidates should be reminded to read the instructions very carefully to avoid this.

Also, candidates must pay careful attention to the wording of the questions. Before tackling to answer a question, they must decide what is expected of them. Is it a two-part question? Does the question require close reading? Are examples required to illustrate their points? Does the task require interpretation/opinion/text analysis? Candidates should ensure not to reproduce pre-learnt essays. They must make sure that what they write is relevant to the question.

When writing their answers candidates should focus on producing a clear structure to their argument. There should be an introduction to introduce the theme, a main part to present evidence and a clear argument, leading to a conclusion. Candidates should use one paragraph for each main point they wish to make, should avoid repetition and should use relevant examples from the texts to illustrate their points.

Summary of good practice for candidates:

- Choose one question from each section first, then decide on a third question.
- Make sure to read each question carefully and identify what is actually required.
- Divide your time into three equal parts and start working on the first essay.
- Label each essay with the section and question number.
- Plan your essay before you start to write.
- Think about paragraphs: present one main idea and supporting evidence per paragraph.
- Make sure you have an introduction, main part and conclusion to each essay.
- Make sure everything you write is relevant to the question and avoid repetition.
- Throughout your essay make sure your language is formal: *herunter* instead of *runter*, *etwas können* instead of *was drauf haben*, *bekommen* instead of *kriegen* etc.
- Focus on your spelling, grammatical accuracy and use of vocabulary.
- Make sure your writing is legible.
- When you have finished writing, read through each essay and check for grammatical or spelling mistakes and make sure names of characters/authors are spelt correctly.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

This was one of the most popular texts in this exam.

Die Physiker, Friedrich Dürrenmatt

- (a) (i) Higher marks were achieved by candidates who went beyond merely retelling the text passage. Many candidates did well by placing the passage within the play as a whole and looking at the actions of Möbius and Schwester Monika and the motivation behind their actions.
- (ii) Strong candidates went beyond the play itself and placed it in its historical context asking questions of morals and responsibility beyond the individual but for society as a whole, weighing up the complexities behind the murders. Weaker candidates simply repeated much of what had been said in (i) and took a simpler approach.
- (b) Candidates who tackled this question were mostly able to connect the quote well with the play as a whole and the character of Möbius, his actions and motivations – the complexities and the futility of it all. Stronger candidates also drew comparisons with the realities of the historical context of the play and/or today's political situation. The two-part nature of the question was recognised by most candidates and addressed appropriately.

Question 2

This was also one of the most popular texts in this exam.

Tschick, Wolfgang Herrndorf

- (a) (i) Almost all candidates showed very good knowledge of the text when answering this question. Some weaker candidates narrated far too much of the story. A clear focus on the question should be recommended.
- (ii) This was a very popular question but once again, most candidates showed depth of knowledge and narrated this in too much detail and/or did not see that the question asked for a clear answer as to who had the most influence on Maik.
- (b) Weaker candidates merely described Maik and Tschick, repeating facts they knew and/or narrated too much of the story without saying clearly what the characters had in common or what separated them. The strongest candidates were able to connect the characterization of Maik and Tschick with the author's intentions drawing conclusions beyond the question itself and looking at motives like friendship, comradeship, coming of age, love.

Question 3

Only a small number of candidates chose this text.

Homo Faber, Max Frisch

- (a) (i) This question required a close reading of the given passage. Although candidates tackling this question were mostly able to characterise Faber well, they rarely illustrated what they said by referring clearly to the passage.
- (ii) Candidates mostly showed good knowledge of the text and the character, contrasting his rational, science-focused, non-emotional side with the more emotional behaviour with Sabeth. However, there was often a lack of understanding of the complexities of the character. Also, the question of surprise for the reader about the characterisation, development and actions of the main character was rarely touched upon.

- (b) The few candidates that answered this question did so quite well. They drew on relevant examples like Faber's reaction to his illness, his relationships with Hanna and Sabeth and his reaction to the discovery of his friend's death and the possibility an incestuous relationship with Sabeth.

Section 2

Question 4

This was also a very popular text.

Als Hitler das rosa Kaninchen stahl, Judith Kerr

- (a) This was the most popular question on the paper. Many candidates knew the text well. However, weaker candidates tended to retell too much of the story in both (a) and (b). Also, at times the approach taken was rather simple: nice memories must make for a nice childhood. Candidates possibly did not look at the age of the narrator in the book, the historical context and were possibly not able to fully explore the complexities of Anna's life and the lives of people at the time. Stronger candidates did better and explored the character, her life, the historical context and also drew possible comparisons to their own lives and the current world we live in.
- (b) Answers here were mostly good. At times, candidates could have given more examples as the question required. The weakest candidates merely retold the situation around the 'Kopfgeld' moment in the story.

Question 5

Weiter leben, Eine Jugend, Ruth Klüger

There were too few responses to this question for meaningful comment.

Question 6

Not many candidates selected this text.

Liebesfluchten, Bernhard Schlink

- (a) Candidates who answered this question did so very well. They showed in-depth knowledge of the stories they chose to illustrate their answers and were able to connect German history and the stories' narratives well. Still, the approach taken was often too simplistic. There was no attempt for instance to look at possible intentions of the author.
- (b) Most answers to this question were very interesting, showing that the candidates had really thought about not only about the narratives of the stories but their possible effect on the reader. What might the opposite sex be able to learn from the actions of a male character?

For both questions the advice to candidates should be to go beyond retelling the stories.