

FOREIGN LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0525/01

Listening

General Comments

The November 2007 paper was of a similar standard to the paper set at previous examination sessions. A full spread of marks was obtained including many candidates who achieved work of the highest possible standard. This was particularly pleasing as all candidates are now expected to tackle all three sections of the paper and their success reflected well on both the candidates and on those who prepared them for the examination.

All candidates appeared to be familiar with the paper in terms of rubrics and question types.

As is almost inevitable, some candidates find answers requiring the use of the target language more difficult than ticking and matching exercises. For answers in German, accuracy is not demanded at this level as long as spelling and minor grammatical mistakes do not obscure communicative intent except in Section 1, where a name or address is spelled out using the German alphabet. This needs to be accurate.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1 – 8

This initial component tested comprehension of short extracts. The vocabulary is based on the Defined Vocabulary content accompanying the syllabus.

This exercise was well executed by the vast majority of candidates and any mistakes which did occur did not fall into a particular pattern.

Exercise 2 Questions 9 – 14

Candidates heard a brief advertisement for a trip and had to fill gaps with snippets of information. In **Question 9**, it seemed somewhat surprising that a number of candidates wrote 18:00 hours, instead of 08:00 hours when it was clearly stated that the time referred to the morning. **Question 11** not infrequently resulted in an answer of € 4,50, when the correct answer should have been € 450.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 15 – 22

In this exercise candidates heard a brief interview with a young woman about her job and had to decide if the eight statements were true or false. The vast majority of candidates coped well here. If the wrong answers were supplied, they usually involved **Questions 12** or **13**.

Exercise 2 Questions 23 – 29

A young musician was interviewed in this exercise and this was the first exercise where somewhat longer answers had to be given in the target language.

In general, candidates coped well. **Question 23** depended on the word *verkauft*, it was not acceptable if candidates thought she owned or had bought 15 Million records or CD's. **Question 24** proved problematic to some candidates and sometimes no response was provided. **Question 27** was also incorrectly answered by some candidates; the idea was that the family used to give 300 concerts per year but now gave fewer concerts.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 30 – 35

Here, the candidates heard an interview with a child about her circumstances and her life of relative poverty. The question type was multiple choice.

Most candidates fared well with this exercise. If mistakes occurred, they were usually to be found in **Questions 30 to 32**.

Exercise 2 Questions 36 – 42

Candidates heard an interview with young Germans about their attitude to looking after their parents in later life.

Answers had to be given in the target language, which - coupled with this being the last and most taxing exercise - led to problems for some.

In **Question 38** candidates needed to state that 70% or the majority would look after their parents themselves. It was not enough to give just the percentage. *Pflegen* was occasionally rendered as *fliegen*.

In **Question 39**, candidates encountered problems with the notion that the interviewee did not believe that young people knew what they were taking on or that they would actually carry out their stated intention.

In **Question 40**, it was necessary to state that having teams of carers would enable young people to spend more time and have more fun *with their parents* to score.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE GERMAN

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| <p>Paper 0525/02 Reading and Directed Writing</p> |
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General comments

The November 2007 paper was of a similar standard to that set at previous examination sessions and candidate performance was comparable.

The majority of candidates coped well with all three sections of this paper, many achieving high scores. Candidates fared particularly well on exercises of a multiple-choice type or those that required matching of answers. Answers given in the target language were as usual marked for communication not for grammatical accuracy. On the language side the use of possessive pronouns was something that a number of candidates found particularly challenging.

All candidates appeared to be well-prepared and familiar with the paper in terms of rubrics and question types.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1 – 5

In this exercise candidates had to choose between four different visual representations in answer to five questions with short written stimuli.

Virtually all candidates scored full marks. Perhaps surprisingly in view of the fact that all material in **Section 1** comes from the Defined Content Syllabus, a few candidates found **Question 3**, relating to weather, difficult.

Exercise 2 Questions 6 – 10

This was a matching exercise, finding the appropriate hobby according to young people's statements about themselves.

Most candidates scored well here. If an error occurred, it was usually with **Question 10**, where **E** was incorrectly chosen. This may indicate careless reading of the question rather than candidates not knowing the answer.

Exercise 3 Questions 11 – 15

In this exercise, candidates needed to decide whether five statements relating to a short letter were true or false.

This part of the examination presented virtually no problems to most candidates.

Exercise 4 Question 16

In this exercise, three marks were awarded for covering all three bullet points of the rubric, a further two marks were available for the quality of language. In terms of covering the necessary points, total accuracy is **not** required. The majority of candidates scored full or nearly full marks here.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17 – 25

Generally, candidates coped well here, particularly in view of the fact that this needed to be answered in the target language, and most scored well. Somewhat surprisingly, **Question 20** was answered incorrectly by a few candidates. **Question 25** posed problems for some who responded with *unsere Freunde* instead of *ihre Freunde*.

Exercise 2 Question 26

In this exercise, 10 marks are available for covering all the five bullet points. A further 5 marks are awarded for quality of language. Please see detailed generic mark scheme for allocation of accuracy marks.

Virtually all candidates achieved 5 marks for quality of language. Most candidates also managed to refer to all bullet points. This performance represented an improvement over previous sessions and reflected well on the candidates and the care they had put into their preparation.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 27 – 33

In this exercise, candidates have to decide on the basis of a written text whether the statements provided are true or false. Only where a statement is false need an answer be corrected.

Candidates performed well: nearly all were aware that they did not need to write anything if the answer was **ja**. Any errors that occurred were not part of any particular pattern.

Exercise 2 Questions 34 – 40

Despite this being an exercise which requires answers in the target language and is intended to be the most testing of all in this paper, the majority of candidates coped well and managed to score a creditable number of marks. The answers were not assessed on the basis of grammatical correctness but – as elsewhere in this paper – on communication.

Question 34 was answered incorrectly by most candidates who otherwise scored well.

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Paper 0525/03

Speaking

General comments

These comments are to be read in conjunction with the **Teachers' Notes** for October / November 2007.

As in previous years, the ability of candidates to communicate in German is impressive and there were many highly scoring performances by candidates. The full range of marks was available to all candidates and there was a wide range of performance from candidates again this year. The cohort included candidates of native-speaker or near native-speaker standard and candidates whose language had been learned in a German-speaking country or at school

Centres generally conducted the Speaking Test very professionally and Examiners had prepared themselves thoroughly before the examination and prepared their candidates to deliver of their best. A few Examiners unnecessarily extended the Role plays into mini-conversations however or, on occasions, some tasks in the Role plays were actually not completed. Most Examiners asked appropriate questions in the Topic and / or General Conversation sections of the test, and candidates seemed well-prepared for these sections: it should be stressed that thorough preparation for these sections can produce excellent performances. On the language side: candidates were usually prepared to use the full range of time frames (present, past and future) in these sections of the test. Most Examiners do give ample opportunity to ask the sort of questions which allow these time frames to be used, but it must be noted that marks in Table B, scale (b) (linguistic quality) might well be limited if the candidate is not able to show this use.

Only a few recordings were of a poor quality. It should be stressed however that the tape should run uninterrupted between sections in accordance with the instructions (p5). One Centre recorded candidates on CD with very high quality sound.

Administrative work in Centres was very good this November; there were no clerical errors of addition on the working mark sheets (WMS). It would however be helpful if the Role play Card number were indicated on the WMS for each candidate recorded and also on the tape in the appropriate place.

The recommended timings for each section of the examination were usually observed, but some Examiners did run together the Topic and General Conversation sections, which can make moderation difficult.

The mark scheme was usually applied fairly consistently and the order of merit within the Centre was accurate, where multiple candidates were entered. Where adjustments were necessary, the lack of time frames in the conversation sections or failure to complete all the Role play tasks was usually to blame.

Comments on specific questions

Role plays

Examiners are reminded to encourage candidates to attempt all parts of each task. If only one part of a task is completed, only one mark can be awarded. The majority of candidates were able to converse fluently in their Role plays and make use of natural and idiomatic German to complete the required tasks.

It is highlighted in the **Teachers' Notes** (p4, 7(h)) that a candidate's mistakes should not be corrected. As has been stated earlier, Examiners should adhere to the rubrics and printed stimuli of the Role plays and not add to or extend the set tasks, nor develop them into mini-conversations. Full guidance is given on p6 of the booklet, under **Structure of the Examination**.

Role plays A

Page 13

Most candidates did very well. The situation was quite straightforward and posed no problems. The task requiring the framing of a question was found to be no more demanding than the other tasks.

Page 14

Most candidates were able to play the role of the school pupil and offer suitable information about their own school and respond positively to the invitation.

Page 15

Most candidates were able to handle this Role play well and showed that they were fully conversant with offering opinions about a stay in Germany.

Role plays B

These Role plays were more demanding in that they required the ability to use different time frames and to give explanations, justifications and opinions where necessary. The set tasks tended to be longer and were often split by the Examiners, which is quite appropriate.

Page 16

This Role play task (the theft of a camera) and other relevant points was within the candidates' scope and posed no particular problem.

Page 17

Once again a variety of time frames were necessary for full completion of the tasks, relating to the candidate improving their German during the holidays at a language school in Germany. However, this was not beyond the scope of most candidates. The factual information necessary to respond to the Examiner was handled well.

Page 18

Again there was a necessity of handling a range of time frames for successful communication of tasks here, but this was not beyond the majority of candidates. The necessary vocabulary to explain the circumstances of an accident were expressed well.

Topic (prepared) Conversation

A pleasing and wide range of topics was offered. The best examining in this section sounded natural and not too over-rehearsed. It gave rise to natural, spontaneous exchanges whilst encouraging the candidates to use a variety of tense, vocabulary and structure. Examiners are reminded to let candidates speak for up to a full minute before interrupting: in a few cases candidates were questioned as soon as the section started and this was often not helpful for the candidates nor did it help them to show qualities of preparation.

Candidate performance was on the whole very good on this section and some fluent, interesting expositions and discussions were heard. Candidates presented a very wide range of prepared topics on subjects which were relevant or interesting to them personally; these are inevitably more stimulating and can bring forth a whole range of descriptive individual language. Well-prepared candidates are then able to proceed to the General Conversation with greater confidence, knowing that they will then be able to answer questions on a wide variety of personal issues. Candidates who clearly do not prepare a topic as prescribed by the syllabus, cannot be awarded high marks for scale **(a)** (quality of presentation of material in the topic) and those whose topic conversation is significantly curtailed cannot expect to be awarded full marks if they do not have time to demonstrate a wide range of vocabulary and language structures.

General Conversation

Again, the best performances from candidates in this section of the test were ones where they were encouraged to use a variety of tenses, relevant vocabulary and appropriate structures and very many were able to demonstrate a high degree of fluency in their responses to the Examiners' questions. As in previous years, the overall standard of work heard in this section was extremely high. A good range of topics was discussed, with most Examiners covering at least 2 or 3 areas. Topics covered included school, holidays, family life, education, daily life, life in other countries, geographical surroundings and free time – all of which are entirely appropriate. A few Examiners however do pose questions, which are too sophisticated for the average candidate or make an unsuitably cursory attempt at a conversation. Examiners must consult the

Instructions to Teachers very carefully however as there are still a few Examiners who are awarding higher scale **(b)** marks to candidates who do not (or cannot) convey past and future meanings. Such candidates cannot be awarded above the satisfactory band (see **Teachers' Notes**, p6).

General Impression

It was pleasing to see that the impression mark was consistently well used by the majority of Examiners.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0525/04
Continuous Writing

General comments

The majority of candidates acquitted themselves well and there were relatively few weak candidates. There were some very good pieces of writing, remarkable for their style and accuracy and the inclusion of a wide variety of sophisticated constructions.

The majority of candidates handled basic German syntax well and wrote flowing, idiomatic German. At the same time many candidates limited themselves to a few subordinate clauses and almost all of these began with **weil** or **dass**. The latter sometimes occurred as **das**. Vocabulary, though appropriate, tended to be repetitive and unadventurous.

A relatively small number did not always use capital letters appropriately; they were sometimes omitted for nouns, even in some very fluent scripts. Genders were often incorrect and sometimes nouns changed gender seemingly arbitrarily within the same piece of work.

Linguistic accuracy is crucial on this component of the examination with the 25 marks available broken down with the emphasis on language and accuracy: Accuracy = 5 marks; Impression = 5 marks; Communication = 5 marks.

There continues to be a very marked difference on a significant number of scripts between the standard of German of **Question 1** and that of **Question 2**. Some candidates, who seemed to be accomplished letter writers, and who produced idiomatic and accurate German in **Question 1**, produced German of a much lower standard for **Question 2**. This would suggest that while letter writing is rigorously prepared to good effect, essay writing may be receiving less attention.

Several candidates produced work that was almost illegible. Occasionally there was so much crossing out that parts of the script were indecipherable. Candidates should be aware that poor handwriting can be to their disadvantage.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 (a)

Ein deutscher Familienfreund wird bald 100 Jahre alt. Sie schreiben einen Brief über ihn an die Lokalzeitung.

There were many very good letters and it was clear that most candidates were thoroughly versed in this skill and familiar with the range of vocabulary. Candidates would be advised to note the requisite number of words, namely no more than 140; just a very few candidates exceeded this, which was not to their advantage and deprived them of potential communication marks.

Most wrote an appropriate letter opening, although *Hallo, Wie geht's ?* did occur.

Occasionally *du* or *ihr* or a mixture of forms of address was used instead of the more appropriate *Sie*.

- Most candidates made it clear why they were writing, although one or two candidates wrote about a woman rather than a man as indicated in the rubric.
- Candidates supplied appropriate information here, although occasionally they omitted to describe the man's character and only described his appearance. In the main the descriptions were appropriate even if sometimes somewhat unexpectedly the friend had long brown or black hair. He was invariably and appropriately, given the context, friendly and pleasant and sometimes generous.

- Candidates generally had no problem describing the man's living arrangements. Occasionally he appeared to be a family member rather than a friend and/or lived at the home of the letter writer. Sometimes he had a wife almost as old as himself.
- Candidates generally wrote about the friend's routine without difficulty. Activities included eating, watching television, snoozing and chatting.
- Only a few candidates fulfilled this task satisfactorily. Some only mentioned the interview. Some seemed to suggest that they themselves were going to interview and write about the friend.

Some candidates concluded their letter inappropriately. *Alles Gute* and *bis bald* occurred on a number of occasions.

Question 1 (b)

Nächsten Monat schließt der einzige Jugendklub in Ihrem Dorf. Sie schreiben einen Brief an Ihren deutschen Brieffreund/ Ihre deutsche Brieffreundin.

- Candidates were able to state how often they went to the youth club.
- Details regarding activities were supplied without problem and sometimes at length. They included various sports, meeting friends and also doing homework.
- Candidates predominantly described unruly behaviour and/or noise, unreasonable parents with no understanding of the club's importance in the youngsters' lives, building plans and lack of money as reasons for the club's closure.
- Most candidates described themselves as sad, uncomprehending or indignant in the light of the forthcoming closure.
- Suitable questions were asked.

Question 2

Sie waren auf Urlaub und hatten auf einem Campingplatz mit Freunden übernachtet. Als Sie am folgenden Tag abfahren wollten, merkten Sie, dass Ihr Rad nicht mehr da war.

Almost all candidates wrote relevant if rather unimaginative responses. Generally responses involved the mysterious disappearance and equally mysterious and sometimes unexplained reappearance of a friend.

Some candidates may still not understand the instruction '*Erzählen Sie, was weiterhin geschah*' ; a significant number of candidates spent much or all of the essay scene-setting rather than developing the story, which cannot be credited for accuracy or communication.

Nearly all essays involved the candidate being extremely sad about the disappearance of the bike, indeed one victim cried all day until there were no more tears to be cried. Friends and sometimes the police assisted almost invariably in retrieving the bike. It was occasionally stolen, but the thief spotted so that it could be reclaimed. Sometimes a friend had borrowed the bike without permission and on occasions it was not really missing, but had merely been hidden by the friends as a joke.

Candidates are reminded that a narrative in **an appropriate past tense** is required here as indicated by the rubric: '*Erzählen Sie, was weiterhin geschah.*' Just a very few wrote in the present tense or mixed the present and a past tense.