

GERMAN

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

Key messages

- The presentation should relate clearly to the culture or society of a German-speaking country but should also reflect the candidate's personal interests. It should last between three and four minutes.
- 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 may be awarded for Seeking Information if no questions are asked.
- It is important that the candidate's two questions in each conversation should be asked within the allotted 8 minutes; they should not be left to the end, but must be integrated into the discussions.
- 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

Nearly all candidates were appropriately entered and the majority were aware of the requirements of the speaking test. Presentation topics were mostly appropriate and related to a German speaking society, and were often very interesting or informative. However, not all candidates seemed to be 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, and 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 encouragingly responsive on the whole and nearly all were spontaneous, with very few relying on prepared responses. Most examiners 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 test

Section 1 (Presentation)

- If the presentation contains ideas and opinions and is delivered in a fluent and confident fashion, nine or ten marks may be awarded for content.
- Presentations that are far too long, even if confidently delivered, should not receive nine or ten marks however, as they cannot be considered to have been 'well organised', as in the published 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 four 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 too, including the following:

Der Tag der deutschen Einheit, Klonen, Reitsport, ein Tempolimit auf der Autobahn?, internationale Schulen, Elektroautos, der Öko-Trend in Deutschland, mentale Gesundheit, Bayern, Turnsport, Frauen am Arbeitsplatz, der Lehrermangel and der Klimawandel

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, as they can 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 must be zero.
- A maximum of three should be awarded for Providing Information if the candidate can deal with basic situations and concepts, but clearly not more complicated ones.

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 expected that some fairly complex issues are covered in this section. This will allow the candidate 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 the candidate will know any specific information on an unexpected topic chosen by the examiner, such as a topic of current affairs. It would be better to switch quickly to a different topic if a candidate is clearly unhappy with, or uninformed about, the original topic suggested.

GERMAN

<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 (Integration of disabled students into mainstream schools).

They must then answer vocabulary questions for **Question 1** and grammar questions for **Question 2**. In **Question 3** and **Question 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 challenges of integrating disabled students into mainstream schools and then to 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 their 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. **Question 1** and **Question 2** also presented a difficulty for candidates who did not have a sufficient command of vocabulary and grammar for this level.

In **Question 5**, students should be reminded to keep their summary brief and precise without going into too much detail in order not to exceed the word limit.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Almost all candidates answered this question well and identified the word *Deutschland* from the text.
- (b) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly and provided the correct synonym.
- (c) Many candidates answered this question well.
- (d) Most candidates answered this question well.
- (e) Nearly all candidates answered this question correctly.

Question 2

- (a) Candidates answered this question well and the majority answered correctly.
- (b) Many candidates answered this question correctly.
- (c) This question was usually answered correctly, and candidates recognised the infinitive requiring *zu*.
- (d) A significant number of candidates managed to answer this question correctly and used the correct word order.

- (e) Many candidates answered this question correctly and used the correct gender for the noun.

Question 3

- (a) Almost all candidates answered this question correctly.
- (b) Many candidates answered this question correctly and were awarded full marks. They understood the dilemma that teacher found themselves in by wanting to support integration but being overstretched at the same time.
- (c) Most candidates scored at least two marks. In order to obtain full marks, it was necessary to mention three out of four possible answers.
- (d) This question was often answered correctly. Some candidates did not mention the fact that the courses should be free for teachers.
- (e) The question presented no difficulty and most candidates referred both to the lack of trained teachers and to the problem that school buildings are not adapted for disabled students.
- (f) The majority of candidates scored at least two marks in this question. However, some candidates failed to mention the fact that Lisa is deaf.

Question 4

- (a) The majority of candidates answered this question well and gained full marks with many even mentioning more detail than necessary.
- (b) This question was usually answered correctly, and candidates identified the two benefits that integration brings to the students.
- (c) Most candidates identified the three details necessary here to gain full marks.
- (d) Some candidates struggled with the second part of this question and did not mention the fact that the important thing is not her disability, but her character.
- (e) A significant number of candidates answered this question well, with many giving additional details.
- (f) This question presented no difficulties for most candidates and the answers were mostly extensive.

Question 5

Most candidates gave good responses to this task and were able to identify various advantages and challenges of teaching disabled children in mainstream schools. Candidates should be reminded to adhere to the word limit as any points after the 150 word cut-off will not be credited. The aim of this question is to produce a concise summary. Candidates should be discouraged from rephrasing points of the text and instead they should summarise points briefly and succinctly.

In **Question 5(b)**, the majority of candidates were able to give a well-founded opinion on the topic. Many candidates supported their opinion with valid reasons, often drawing on their own experience.

GERMAN

Paper 9717/23
Reading and Writing

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

GERMAN

<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 but occasionally lacked precision. Candidates should ensure they write legibly and clearly.

Common errors included:

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

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Freunde aus der Kindheit bleiben lebenslange Freunde. Teilen Sie diese Meinung?

This was a popular title which produced some thoughtful essays exploring the nature of friendship in the course of a lifetime. Candidates' opinions as to the truth of the statement in the title were divided almost equally for and against. On the one hand a mobile lifestyle militates against maintaining friendships but, on the other hand, staying in touch is nowadays made so much easier with technology.

Question 2

Es gibt viel mehr Männer als Frauen im Gefängnis. Warum ist das Ihrer Meinung nach so?

This title was rarely chosen. Some candidates who chose it wrote a relevant and interesting essay but others misunderstood the title.

Question 3

'Ich bin glücklicher bei der Arbeit als in meiner Freizeit. Ist das so ungewöhnlich?' Peter, 60 Jahre alt. Was halten Sie von Peters Standpunkt?

A number of candidates chose this title. They approached it in different ways, making relevant observations about the nature of work and leisure. Most attempted to explain Peter's point of view, making reference to his age, and related it to the experiences of the wider workforce.

Question 4

Der Mensch ist von Natur aus nicht fähig, mit seinen Mitmenschen in Frieden zu leben. Wie stehen Sie zu dieser Aussage?

This was a challenging topic but was chosen by some candidates. They had very different views but wrote insightful essays which demonstrated good knowledge. The points they made were generally backed up by well-chosen evidence.

Question 5

Um die Umweltverschmutzung wirklich zu reduzieren, müssen wir die Weltbevölkerung auch drastisch reduzieren. Sind Sie auch dieser Meinung?

Very many candidates chose this title. The essays were mostly coherently argued and demonstrated good knowledge of environmental issues. Although many agreed that a reduced human population would improve the condition of the planet, very few could contemplate a realistic strategy for achieving that goal.

GERMAN LITERATURE

Paper 9717/33
Essay

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

GERMAN LITERATURE

Paper 9717/42
Texts

Key messages

Candidates should be reminded to:

- Choose one question from each section first, then decide on the third question.
- Make sure they have read the question carefully and know what is actually being asked.
- Monitor themselves to make sure they devote equal time to each of the three questions.
- Label each essay with the section and question number, do not forget sub-questions.
- Think about paragraphs: present one main idea and supporting evidence per paragraph.
- Think about evidence, which does not have to be a precise quote but should show that they have read the text in detail, not just a summary of the plot (or watched the film, if available).
- Make sure they have an introduction, a main part and a conclusion in their essay.
- Throughout each essay make sure that their language is formal: 'herunter,' not 'runter' 'etwas können' instead of 'was drauf haben', or 'verärgert' instead of 'genervt' or 'sauer' are examples for this.
- Capitalise all nouns. Do not separate compound nouns.
- Not use any English words.
- Read through each essay when they have finished and make sure spelling mistakes are eliminated as far as possible. They should ensure they spell names of characters correctly and make sure they belong to the text they are referring to.

General comments

In this section of the examination candidates are expected both to demonstrate knowledge of the texts and an understanding of how the texts work. Candidates who did well were able to show good knowledge of the text, choosing good examples to illustrate points made while structuring their argument well. They also linked the points made back to the question of the essay title. The majority of the candidates had good knowledge of the texts and many were able to organise their thoughts into coherent, relevant essays.

A number of the difficulties encountered by candidates were similar to those highlighted every year and most notably included giving relevant answers to the questions and organising essays coherently in German.

A few candidates' German was poor to the point where their responses were hard to read. Candidates need a good grasp of conjugation, genders, plurals, cases and past participles to do well in this paper.

Labelling and Layout: Generally, candidates labelled their work correctly. As regards layout, clear paragraphing throughout the essays was linked to a more organised and structured approach in the writing and therefore to better analysis and marks.

Following Instructions: A small number of candidates did not answer the required three questions, or gave a very short answer to the third question. In some instances it looked like the candidates were not prepared and could not come up with an answer, or their command of German was so poor that they struggled to articulate themselves. Other candidates appeared to have run out of time, writing a very long answer for one or two questions and then not having time to answer the third question appropriately. Candidates should be reminded to time themselves well during the exam to avoid the problem of not having sufficient time to answer all questions. Similarly, in two-part questions candidates should know that it is important to give due consideration to both parts of a question.

A few candidates misunderstood questions about text extracts in that they wrote about the book in general when they were required to discuss the extract on the question paper. Candidates should be encouraged to read questions very closely in order to understand what is asked.

Candidates are not permitted to answer two questions on the same text. Three different books have to be covered, one from each of the two main sections and a third book from either of these sections. It is advisable that candidates decide on the questions they wish to answer before they start writing and ensure they have chosen books from both sections. Apart from a few who only answered two questions, candidates were good at addressing these requirements.

Each essay should have a length of about 500 to 600 words to allow candidates to make a variety of points pertaining to the questions of their choice. Quite a few answers were significantly shorter and therefore candidates penalised themselves by not including enough detail to access the higher marks.

Focus on the terms of the question: The essay titles are very carefully worded and candidates' first task when tackling an essay must be to decide what is expected of them. A generic, pre-learnt essay or an accumulation of knowledge listed in the answer does not constitute a good essay, however accurate the knowledge may be. It may be helpful for candidates to copy down the question and clearly label their own work. They could then refer back to the question in order to ask themselves whether each point they are making is relevant and contributes to a good answer.

Structuring the essay: An essay should be seen as an argument. The writer is seeking to persuade the reader of the validity of the argument he/she is putting forward. An argument must be properly structured, introducing the theme, presenting evidence and leading to a conclusion. Some candidates omitted the introduction or started their essay with what would effectively be their conclusion. Other candidates did not come to any conclusion, either because they seemed to have run out of time, or because the essay was poorly structured or argued throughout.

Clear paragraphing is crucial for a coherent argument. Candidates should use one paragraph for each main point they wish to make. Candidates who do not do this are at danger of repeating themselves and losing track of their own argument, which leads to lower marks. Stronger candidates made relevant points in separate paragraphs and supported their points with detailed examples.

Language: Many candidates were able to produce the level of language required to write essays that could be followed easily. Others struggled considerably with grammar and word usage, and a small number of essays were grammatically and linguistically so poor that it was difficult to make out what the candidate was saying. It was noticeable that even candidates with a very secure grasp of vocabulary and grammar made an array of spelling mistakes not expected at this level.

Examples of particular weaknesses:

- ß and ss mixed up, the former still required after long vowels and diphthongs, the latter after short vowels.
- Apostrophe s applied when this is not done in German, such as in 'Faber's Charakter' instead of 'Fabers Charakter.'
- Nouns not always capitalised; compound nouns sometimes separated.
- Incorrect or missing pronouns: 'er redet ,über ihn' instead of 'über sich'; 'er fühlt' instead of 'er fühlt sich.'
- Cases were often wrong, such as in 'sorgen für sein Sohn' instead of 'seinen Sohn'.
- Register/style: the language was sometimes too informal, with candidates not being able to differentiate between spoken colloquial and written/formal language, such as 'rum' instead of 'herum' or 'runter' instead of 'herunter.' More serious errors included colloquial expressions that make candidates' essays instantly unacademic such as 'genervt sein' instead of 'verärgert sein,' die Aussage ist 'Schwachsinn' instead of 'unglaublich'; 'Maik bekommt es nicht auf die Reihe' instead of 'Maik schafft es nicht' or 'es ist Maik nicht möglich;' 'einfach gestrickt sein' instead of 'einfach sein oder denken;' and 'sein Talent austoben' instead of 'sein Talent realisieren oder umsetzen.'
- Anglicisms – phrases: often candidates had weaknesses in their vocabulary and translated English phrases into German literally: 'in meiner Meinung' instead of 'meiner Meinung nach'; 'in 1931' instead of just '1931'; 'sie lassen' instead of 'sie verlassen'; 'es handelt über' instead of 'es handelt von'; 'hören über' instead of 'hören von'; 'einen Freund machen' instead of 'einen Freund gewinnen'; 'sein Leben wechselt sich' instead of 'sein Leben verändert sich.'
- Words made up from the English meaning: 'relaxiert' instead of 'entspannt'; 'influenzen' instead of 'beeinflussen'; 'befreundlichen' instead of 'sich anfreunden mit'; 'Engineur' instead of 'Ingenieur'; 'eventuell' instead of 'schließlich'; 'stationär' to indicate that a person is not travelling.
- Incorrect formation of adjectives, verbs or nouns: 'stressvoll' instead of 'gestresst'; 'künstlich' instead of 'künstlerisch'; 'abstößlich' instead of 'abstoßend'; 'erstaunend' instead of 'erstaunlich'; 'nutzvoll' instead

of 'nützlich,' 'Wohlheit' instead of 'Wohlsein,' 'Vernünftigkeit' instead of 'Vernunft,' 'Wahnsinnigkeit' instead of 'Wahnsinn,' 'Beweisung' instead of 'Beweis,' 'gefühlig' instead of 'gefühlvoll,' 'schlichtig' instead of 'schlichtweg,' 'entfreien' instead of 'befreien,' or 'scheulos' instead of 'unscheu' or 'ohne Scheu.'

- Mixing up of related words: 'beurteilen' instead of 'verurteilen,' 'verlieben' instead of 'lieben,' 'bewusstlos' instead of 'bewusst,' 'überraschend' instead of 'überrascht,' 'Jahre verpassen' instead of 'Jahre vergehen.'

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Dürrenmatt – *Die Physiker*

This was the most popular text overall with the majority of candidates choosing the first question.

- (a) (i) While a few candidates put the text passage into the larger context of the play most candidates simply retold it.
- (ii) Most candidates successfully picked up on clues in the extract that become relevant later in the play. They discussed the significance of the changing von Zahnd family portraits on the wall. They drew attention to the fact that Doktor von Zahnd shows little interest in the murders or in house rules – she and the inspector smoke, both of which make the reader question her integrity as a doctor. Most significantly, Doktor von Zahnd claims that she determines who her patients believe they are, and that she knows them better than they know themselves. This forecasts the end of the play when it is revealed that von Zahnd knew the true identities of her patients all along and deceived them in order to attain world dominance by appropriating the scientific discovery made by Möbius.
- (b) A few candidates chose this question, but they usually responded very generally with few candidates offering detailed examples to substantiate their points.

Question 2

Herrndorf – *Tschick*

This text was also very popular, with the vast majority of candidates choosing the first question.

- (a) (i) Quite a few candidates took at face value Maik's suggestion in the book that Tschick's interpretation of Brecht was wrong, missing the irony of that remark. Many also simply summarised Tschick's homework rather than drawing attention to how unconventional Tschick's approach to the task was. Others discussed Tschick's creativity but claimed with certainty that Tschick imagined himself as a character in the story and wished to live in the world he described. As a result some responses were somewhat simplistic.
- (ii) Candidates were able to make a number of good points regarding Tschick's way of dealing with authority. Most obviously these included the way in which Tschick broke with convention in his homework, completely disregarding the expectations of the teacher and seemingly not being worried about what the teacher and the class generally thought of him. Curiously a number of candidates did not pick up on this. Tschick's apparent glorification of criminals was also discussed. In addition, candidates looked at the book in general, citing incidents like Tschick's first drunken appearance in class and his apparent lack of concern about whether his classmates liked him or not. A lot could be done with this question, and some candidates answered it successfully.
- (b) Fewer candidates chose this question. Some responses just ended up being general narratives of Tschick's personal history or character. Stronger essays addressed the specifics of the question and wrote about how Tschick's schooling was unusual saying why. These candidates structured their argument clearly and illustrated their points.

Question 3

Frisch – *Homo Faber*

Frisch was not very popular this year.

- (a) Only three candidates answered this question.
- (b) This question produced some good responses where candidates split their argument into clear sections and were careful to distinguish between what could be considered an accidental or, conversely, a controllable event. They also pointed out overlappings, discussing where an event could be interpreted to be both 'Zufall' or controllable. Some also considered chronology as an important factor, suggesting that 'Zufall' became more important in shaping Faber's life as the story developed. However, this was not a condition for accessing the higher marks, as candidates could equally argue that 'Zufall' always played a role for Faber as long as that claim was substantiated with examples. Weaker candidates did not structure their essays clearly and listed random events that might or might not be attributed to 'Zufall'.

Section 2

Question 4

Kehlmann – *Die Vermessung der Welt*

This book was by far the most popular choice within **Section 2**, and the second most popular book overall.

- (a) There were some good, well-structured essays for this question. The strongest candidates clearly defined what the differences between an egoistic genius and an outsider are, if they believed there were differences, and offered examples from the book to support a claim to either genius or outsider. Stronger candidates also discussed the intersections between genius and outsider, giving examples that could define Gauss in both ways. It was important for candidates to state their view clearly in the introduction and conclusion as to what they believed Gauss to be. Weaker candidates jumped back and forth between examples to illustrate claims to genius or outsider apparently without having decided themselves what they believed Gauss' overriding characteristic to be.
- (b) This question had few responses.

Question 5

Klüger – *Weiter leben*

There were very few answers to either question on this book.

Question 6

Schlink – *Liebesfluchten*

This book was not a popular choice.

- (a) Only two candidates chose this question.
- (b) Some candidates chose this question. A few of them made interesting observations as to how love in the stories is shown in a less masculine way and how experiences of caring, forgiveness and de-sexualised love are important messages for young people. They also drew attention to the relevance of reflections in some of the stories on parent-child relationships.

GERMAN LITERATURE

Paper 9717/43
Texts

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.