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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

GERMAN

GCE Advanced Level and GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level

Papers 8683/01 and 9717/01
Speaking

General comments

There was a wide range of entry, from candidates who had a German-speaking parent or relative to candidates for whom German was a completely foreign language acquired at school. There were some very lively, interesting topic discussions following on from candidate presentations. Candidates must be ready in this section of the test to supply additional factual material on their chosen topic in response to the Examiner and to express and defend a point of view. As emphasised below, candidates must ensure that they too ask questions, in the course both of the topic discussion and of the general conversation that follows it. General conversations will begin with fairly straightforward questions about the candidate's background and interests, moving on to a more challenging conversation where candidates will be required to discuss more abstract and/or current issues. There were good examples of such general conversation at this session.

Teachers at Centres which have entered candidates for Speaking in the past seem now to be well aware of the various requirements and regulations for this component. On the whole, tests from these Centres were well examined and assessed.

Two aspects which do need to be considered by new Centres and Centres which have not entered candidates for recent sessions are:

- The candidate must ask at least two questions in the **Topic Conversation** and in the **General Conversation**. The syllabus states: "Candidates are required to seek information and the opinions of the teacher". Candidates who do not ask any questions in these sections must be prompted. If they still fail to ask a question, no marks can be awarded under the heading "Seeking information and opinions". If only one question is asked, then the maximum mark is 3 out of 5.
- All timings of the test should be adhered to. The **Presentation** should last three minutes, the **Topic Conversation** seven to eight minutes and the **General Conversation** eight to nine minutes. At a few Centres, parts of the test lasted too long, and so the examination as a whole was allowed to run on much longer than the stipulated twenty minutes.

Individual Centre Reports will highlight any specific shortcomings.

There are no further comments on particular sections of the Speaking test.

Papers 8683/02 and 9717/02
Reading and Writing

General comments

The level of difficulty of the paper was similar to last year's. Candidates performed in a similar way, except that there were slightly more candidates whose written German was poor. Centres will find reference in this Report to specific aspects of performance to which candidates need to pay attention.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Good candidates found all five correct answers, except sometimes (a) *halten* for *dauern*. Weak candidates found only (c) *Zahl* and sometimes (b) *steigt*.

Question 2

Good candidates tended to score 4 or 5, whereas weak candidates managed only one correct answer and occasionally none at all.

- (a) Some candidates had difficulty with the passive construction: *wird von/durch ... verändert*.
- (b) A few candidates spoiled answers by omitting the dative plural ending "-n", writing *mit Kinder* instead of *mit Kindern*.
- (c) Some candidates put the verb incorrectly in the plural: *drohen* instead of *droht*.
- (d) A few candidates failed to insert the negative *nicht*, which made their answer the opposite of the truth.
- (e) Some candidates omitted the necessary adverb *klar*.

Question 3

The rubric to this question and to **Question 4** makes it clear that candidates should answer in German using their own words. Some candidates had difficulty, when not copying from the text, in rephrasing the sentences with correct grammatical constructions of their own. Common errors were as follows:

- (a) Many candidates were able to find the required three points from the four available. The following point was rarely mentioned: *was für Hilfe sie brauchen werden, um mit der neuen Situation fertig zu werden*.
- (b) This question was not well answered by the majority of candidates. They did not relate the answer to Herr Wiechmann and wrote instead about what fathers in general should do. Those who mentioned that Herr Wiechmann had exchanged roles did not state that the exchange was with his wife.
- (c) Many could give only these two points:

bei einer Scheidung
dürfen beide Elternteile für ein Kind sorgen.

Some lost the mark for the latter point by stating that both parents had to (rather than were allowed to) look after the child. The following points were also misinterpreted:

selbst wenn sie unverheiratet sind
selbst wenn sie nicht zusammen leben/selbst wenn sie geschieden sind.

Some candidates had the rather absurd idea that parents **had** to be unmarried or not living together in order to be entitled to custody.

- (d)(i) Many thought erroneously that the mother was automatically entitled to *Sorgerecht*, omitting the condition: *Wenn ein unverheirateter Vater das gemeinsame Sorgerecht nicht beantragt/Wenn unverheiratete Elternteile das gemeinsame Sorgerecht nicht zusammen beantragen.*
- (ii) This was mostly correctly answered.
- (e)(i) Some candidates misinterpreted the court case initiated to claim custody as a divorce case and thought that the children were the cause of a divorce or a divorce case.
- (ii) Usually only one of the following points was given:
dass Eltern an einem "Machtspiel" teilnehmen
und dass sie sich in einem Loyalitätskonflikt befinden.
- (f) The following point was mostly given correctly, except that some omitted the idea of *das Recht: das Recht, beide Eltern zu haben/zu lieben.*
- Few candidates added the necessary conditional clause: *wenn ein Elternteil den Kontakt zum anderen Elternteil nicht erlaubt.*

Question 4

The same general comment can be made about this question as for **Question 3** above.

- (a) Often the following point was omitted: *Er [Der Vater] hat das gemeinsame Sorgerecht, nur wenn die Mutter zustimmt.*
- (b) Instead of mentioning children's sufferings or the fact that they have no lobby, some candidates discussed children's need of both parents, which was not directly relevant here.
- (c) The answer here was straightforward, but a number of candidates did not gain credit because they copied the text.
- (d) This was mostly correctly answered.
- (e) Some candidates gave irrelevant answers about the issue of *Sorgerecht* in general, instead of mentioning the following:
die Mutter darf tun, was sie will, ohne Strafe zu fürchten
die Vaterschaft wird (von Müttern und Richtern) geringer eingeschätzt als die Mutterschaft/man achtet nicht darauf, dass Kinder auch ihre Väter brauchen.
- (f)(i) The answer here again was straightforward, but a number of candidates could not be given credit because they copied from the text.
- (ii) There was some copying again, and some incorrect statistics as well: instead of stating from 3% to 6%, candidates gave either 3% as their answer or 6%. Indeed, some added 3 and 6 to make 9%.
- (g) To be fairer to the candidates, this question was marked as a whole rather than in two parts. Of the three points required, the following was often omitted: *das Tabu, dass Gleichberechtigung ein Frauenthema ist.*

Question 5

It is important to organise the response to this question like a mini-essay in order to fit everything in to the stipulated 140 words. Marking of the answer is cut off at around 150 words or at the end of the sentence after 140 words is reached, and no further marks can be awarded for the remainder. This year, many candidates wrote at great length and failed to mention their opinions in their first 140 words, thereby losing the up to five marks available for part (b): *Was ist Ihre Meinung zu diesem Thema?*

Finally, five marks are awarded for language. Language marks awarded here were broadly comparable to those awarded on **Questions 3** and **4**. There were a number of very good candidates who wrote interesting answers in correct German. However, it has to be said that there were a few very weak candidates who wrote inaccurate and sometimes incomprehensible German here too as in **Questions 3** and **4**.

Papers 8683/03 and 9717/03

Essay

General comments

All questions were attempted and proved equally popular, with a very even distribution across all Centres in the choice of essays. Most popular was **Question 6**, *Ist Gentechnologie gut oder schlecht für die Zukunft der Menschen?*, closely followed by **Question 3** under the topic heading *Reisen und Tourismus*. There was a significantly greater number of linguistically very weak essays than in recent years, particularly from some AS candidates. There was also the shortest essay ever seen: *Liebe macht blind also bin ich blind!!* A good many candidates still have problems with word order, inflected endings and with more specialised vocabulary. At the top end of the range, however, were a number of fluent, correct and well written essays.

Previous reports have pointed out that titles set are intended to provoke discussion, and that this is not helped when candidates state their conclusions at the outset. The main criticism of many essays is that they fail to construct an argument that sets out the issues and arrives at a conclusion. There is a tendency to rely on generalised, or even random statements which are not supported by evidence. However good the language of the essay, it is important to remember that a significant proportion of marks – 16 out of 40 – is given for relevance, coherent argument, structure and the ability to draw conclusions.

Comments on specific questions**Question 1**

Im Jahre 2030 werden in Deutschland die über 60-jährigen die Mehrheit der Bevölkerung stellen. Gleichzeitig werden immer weniger Kinder geboren. Was werden Ihrer Meinung nach die Folgen dieser Entwicklung sein?

Many candidates showed awareness of the range of problems which would result from a reduced labour force and increased demands on social services by an aging population. Some candidates found it difficult to cover the range of issues represented by the title. One essay focused exclusively on the need to produce more children otherwise the German people would die out. Another was devoted largely to the need to promote marriage as a solution to the lack of children. This was a complex subject to deal with, which nonetheless produced some good essays.

Question 2

«Liebe macht blind». Ist das auch Ihre Meinung?

This question proved surprisingly popular, producing a wide range of response. Some candidates took “love” to refer to parental affection as well as to passion, but showed that here also love could blind people to reality. There were some interesting reflections on personal experience and acquaintances who had abandoned all rational behaviour as a result of falling in love.

Question 3

«Reisen bildet». Ist das immer wahr?

This was a popular title. Some essays set out to show how all travel could be seen as educational, in some sense. For example: *Egal, ob man reist, um sich zu amüsieren, oder etwas zu lernen, man kann es nicht vermeiden, auf eine gewisse Art gebildet zu werden*. Others made a sharp distinction between travel with a specifically educational slant and travel where one was shielded from the reality of the country visited.

Question 4

Was muss sich an Schulen ändern, damit es Chancengleichheit für alle Schüler geben kann?

This question produced a mixed range of answers, some narrowing down the potential range by seeing *Chancengleichheit* as referring only to issues of gender, others to issues of race. Some candidates took the broader view and considered issues of social deprivation and differences in wealth. There were arguments against German selective schools and for more comprehensive education to iron out social inequalities.

Question 5

Umweltfreundlicher leben – wie ist das möglich? Was könnte man besser machen?

A wide range of responses were given here, as is to be expected from a theme as broad as “environment”. Some candidates focused on global warming, others on local issues such as the separation of different types of rubbish. All such responses were acceptable as long as candidates drew attention to the possible action open to individuals.

Question 6

Ist Gentechnologie gut oder schlecht für die Zukunft der Menschen?

This was the most popular title, but not all candidates had the vocabulary needed to deal with issues such as cloning and genetic manipulation. As with other essays, some candidates chose to focus on a single issue, such as cloning, others on genetic crops. All such approaches are acceptable as long as the candidate makes clear at the outset what the area of analysis is to be and the essay is well structured and reaches a conclusion. Some candidates, however, wandered off the point, e.g. one who stated that *Gentechnologie* would lead to a loss of jobs and then went on to write an essay on unemployment! Such a case leads one to assume that the candidate had an essay on unemployment prepared and was determined to make use of it.

Papers 8671/04 and 9717/04

Texts

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. Those who did well were able to show what they knew, choosing good examples to illustrate points made and structuring their argument well.

A number of the difficulties encountered by candidates were similar to those highlighted in previous reports: relevance and an ability to organise their material effectively were crucial.

Focus on the terms of the question: A number of candidates failed to engage with the terms of the question set and to focus on the issues raised. In such cases candidates tended to use passages and questions as a springboard for storytelling, but did not actually attempt answers to the questions in the paper. The essay titles are very carefully worded and the candidate’s first task when tackling an essay must be to decide on the significance of the words used.

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 completely. Other candidates did not come to any clear conclusion. In some cases this happened because the candidate had run out of time.

Clear paragraphing also helps to structure a coherent argument. Candidates should use one paragraph for each main point they wish to make. In some cases candidates did use paragraphs, but the points they were making overlapped from one paragraph into the next. This made it more difficult for the reader to follow the argument.

Storytelling: It is clear from the published criteria for marking the essay that simple retelling of the story gains low marks. Obviously, candidates must demonstrate knowledge of the story, but this must be tied in to the title of the essay, and evidence from the book must be relevant to the title. Relevant points need to be backed up with detailed examples from the text. It was good to see more candidates at this session attempting this type of response successfully and fewer answers were simply given over to story telling.

Language: Many candidates lacked the ability to produce language of an appropriate register, for example: *Die Beziehung zwischen Hannah und Michael ist ein seltsames Thema, als ich mitbekommen habe, was da eigentlich los ist, ist mir die Kinnlade heruntergeklappt.* A few essays were difficult to follow because of weaknesses in lexis, punctuation and grammar. Examples of particular weaknesses:

- usage of capital letters on nouns
- use of the passive: e.g. *Der Tod in Venedig hat viele Symbole, die benutzen sind, um uns an Dekadenz und Verfall zu erinnern*
- prepositions plus change of cases: e.g. *... und wie viele Journalisten nur über dem Dreck schreiben, um viele Zeitungen zu verkaufen*
- modal verbs: e.g. *...weil Böll uns zeigen möchte, wie die Zeitungen schreiben können, was sie wollen*
- use of *um...zu*: e.g. *Sie sind sehr wichtig weil Mann sie benutzt, zu der Tod von Aschenbach vorspielen*
- word order in subordinate clauses e.g. *....weil er die Wahrheit entdeckt und sagt nichts.*

Punctuation seemed to be increasingly shaky. Just a few candidates did not know where to put a full stop, but most candidates were unaware of how to use a comma, especially for subordinate clauses.

Length: Some candidates' answers were too short. In many cases what was written indicated that a better performance could have been achieved, if the candidate had carried on with their argument. Several candidates tackled just one or two questions instead of the three required. A few candidates wrote just a couple of sentences instead of 500 – 600 words in response to questions. Where candidates write two essays on the same text they may only be credited for one essay.

Instructions to candidates: Candidates should know before they enter the examination room what the demands of the question paper are. To remind themselves, candidates are advised to read the instructions on the front of the question paper carefully. Three questions should be answered, one question from **Section 1**, one from **Section 2** and one other. Not all candidates were aware of these requirements. Copying the wording of the question at the top of their answer can help candidates to focus on the requirements of the chosen task and is recommended. A few candidates for example indicated that they intended to tackle **Question (a)** on a particular text, but then went on to write an answer that was better suited to **Question (b)**.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Böll – *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum*

- (a) This book is still popular with candidates. Sixteen candidates chose this question. Its implications were: "Why is the murder of a journalist described as something particularly shocking and was Tötges really a victim of his profession?" Candidates were expected to quote from the passage and to give their own opinion.
- (i) This question focused on use of language and candidates needed to refer to Böll's particular style and aspects of it, such as his use of sarcasm. Candidates were expected to comment on the author's choice of words, grammar and punctuation. Some were very successful in producing a good linguistic analysis of the extract.
- (ii) Candidates could have discussed to what extent Tötges was in fact a "journalist", working as he did for the tabloid press. Another key issue to consider: how killing a journalist could be seen as an attack on the freedom of the press and thus on democracy.
- (iii) The third question invited candidates to agree or to disagree with the view that Tötges had been a victim of his profession. There were some well structured responses to this question.
- (b) There were relatively few candidates for this question, which focused on the introduction to *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharine Blum*. There was scope here to refer to the author's own experiences with the tabloid press, as well as to link references in the introduction to concepts such as dignity and honour to examples in the body of the text.

Question 2

von Droste-Hülshoff – *Die Judenbuche*

- (a) Eight candidates chose this question. On the whole candidates who tackled the text extract did better on (i) than on (ii).
- (i) Successful candidates used the extract to describe Friedrich Mergel's parents by reading between the lines and analysing the text, rather than just quoting from it and retelling the story. Several candidates correctly concentrated on the differences between Friedrich's parents.
- (ii) A number of candidates had difficulty with this aspect of the question. Just a couple of answers referred to the "*genetische Voraussetzungen*" in the question, going on to argue successfully either for or against the notion that Friedrich's story was determined by his genetic make-up.
- (b) This question invited responses as to the extent to which the author had created a picture of the society of the time. Reference could have been made for example to "*Gewohnheitsrecht*", the key role played by custom in society, and to the way chaos can prevail over law and order.

Question 3

Richter – *Damals war es Friedrich*

- (a) Twelve candidates chose to tackle this question, producing many good answers.
- (i) Candidates were expected to refer to events immediately preceding this extract. The families had been to the fair to celebrate the two boys' first day at school, a landmark day for children in Germany.
- (ii) This question prompted candidates to describe and to analyse the differences between the two families. The best answers referred to the differences in religious belief, and to those in status brought about by the fact that Hans-Peter's father was unemployed, and the resulting psychological and material problems faced by *Vater, Mutter und Ich-Erzähler*. Successful candidates also included references to other parts of the book, as well as to the economic situation in Germany at the time.
- (iii) In response to this final part of the question candidates needed to connect this episode from the beginning of the book to the final three chapters of the story. Friedrich returns from his hiding place to beg Hans Peter's parents to let him have the picture which had been taken years ago. He has lost his parents and needs the picture to remind him of them and of happier times. Successful interpretations were offered by most candidates.
- (b) Eight candidates chose this task, though some essays showed that the question had been misinterpreted. Successful candidates put the book into the context of educating young people in Germany about the Third Reich, i.e. *Erziehung nach Auschwitz*. Candidates were also expected to comment on the significance of the lines at the opening of the book: *Damals waren es die Juden ... Heute sind es dort die Schwarzen, hier die Studenten... Morgen werden es vielleicht die Weißen, die Christen oder die Beamten sein*. Some candidates successfully demonstrated the way in which the book seeks to educate people to avoid such an escalation of racial hatred happening again.

Question 4Langgässer – *Saisonbeginn*

- (a) Three candidates chose this question.
- (i) Successful answers were expected to explore the character of the *Chefin* and show evidence of reading between the lines. However, not all were able to see beyond the actual description successfully to point out that, for some of the time, this character was putting on an act that enabled her to get away with helping Frau Behagel.
- (ii) Here candidates were expected to go beyond the extract and refer to other parts of the story. Successful descriptions would have pointed out, for example, how some women were behaving like committed Nazi supporters, e.g. *die Sekretärin*, whilst others did their best to help Frau Behagel, e.g. *die Meisterin*. There was plenty of scope here to quote from the story and to offer an interpretation of individuals' behaviour.
- (iii) This final part of the question asked candidates to give their view as to why Frau Behagel might be described as *ein Ausnahmefall*. Of course, the *Chefin* said this because she wanted to save her, but there was scope here to go into greater depth, pointing for instance to how Frau Behagel was an academic unlike the rest of the women she worked alongside, and that she was married to a German, who was fighting for the fatherland.
- (b) This question invited candidates to analyse and comment on how Langgässer described non-Jewish Germans throughout her collection of short stories.

Section 2**Question 5**Mann – *Der Tod in Venedig*

- (a) A smallish number of candidates chose to answer this question. Successful essays explored how Aschenbach's dream had acted as a catalyst for extreme passion in him, and the important change this brought about in his life.
- (b) This was a popular task with candidates. Most managed to include a range of symbols and went beyond mere description and listings of *Todesboten*, use of colours and the weather, to demonstrate good insight and understanding of the author's intentions.

Question 6Storm – *Der Schimmelreiter*

- (a) Three candidates chose this question, which invited them to discuss the themes addressed by Storm in his story. A wide range of themes was indeed offered, including: *Aberglaube*, *Schicksal*, *Neid*, *Tradition vs Fortschritt*, *Gesellschaft vs Individuum*, *Natur vs Mensch/Technik*. The answers offered were on the whole perceptive and reflected good knowledge of the text.
- (b) Thirteen candidates tackled this task, mostly successfully. Weaker candidates simply retold the story from Hauke's point of view, but several well structured essays offered good insights in their examination of the protagonist, looking beyond the mere words, to read successfully between the lines.

Question 7

Ende – *Das Gauklermärchen*

- (a) Nobody chose this question where candidates were invited to examine the part played by the puppet Ottokar as commentator and critical voice.
- (b) Five candidates tackled this question and some sound and relevant answers were given. The contract offered to the travelling entertainers is the reason behind the story that Jojo tells to Eli and the others. The contract creates a moral dilemma that the group has to deal with. Good answers explored this dilemma and candidates offered their own opinions.

Question 8

Schlink – *Der Vorleser*

- (a) Very few candidates opted for this question. Successful answers referred closely to the letter Hanna left for Frau Schmitz: ...*eine Art Testament* as it is called in the story. This will written by Hanna indicated that in addition to her time in prison and the sacrifice of her own life Hanna wanted to offer some kind of material reparation to a particular survivor. The fact that there was no personal message left for Michael could also have been explored in greater detail.
- (b) Ten candidates tackled this question, which invited them to explore how the relationship between Michael and Hanna impacted on his adult life. Possible points that could have been made were, for example, on the positive side, that Michael was encouraged by Hanna to seek to do well academically at school and beyond. On the other hand, he was not able to sustain relationships with other women as an adult, as he kept comparing them to Hanna.