

GERMAN

Paper 3025/01
Translation and Composition

There was a wider range than usual of candidates for this examination, including native or near native speakers of German, a number of candidates who had been very well prepared indeed and others who appeared to be unfamiliar with the rubrics to the questions and with what to expect. A small number of candidates wrote their answers in English.

Accurate use of tense and verbs was an issue this year. A substantial number of candidates had a poor grasp of common verbs and formation of tenses. Sentences which mixed tenses such as *Ich möchte einen Ferienjob gefunden* were common and limited the candidates' ability to communicate clearly and gain full marks for communication.

It can be difficult to spot one's own mistakes, however all candidates should develop strategies to check their work carefully to ensure that it makes sense and to avoid errors such as *Nach fünf Minuten später*. Also, there is little excuse for copying mistakes when a particular item of vocabulary has been used in the question or when the same item of vocabulary is spelled inconsistently within an answer.

A few candidates planned their answers in English and then attempted to translate from English into German. This is inadvisable. Candidates would fare better using relevant German structures with which they are already familiar and then adapting them to suit the question they are answering.

Question 1 Picture Story

The convention of this type of question is to relate the events depicted using the past tense: the perfect tense, imperfect tense or a mixture of both are acceptable. Some candidates appeared not to be aware of this and answered in the present tense. Whilst some credit could be given to those candidates, they nonetheless failed to achieve their full potential.

Correct use of verbs and tenses were a problem in this question. The following example illustrates the confusion and is a good example of the kind of mistakes made by many mid-range candidates: *Stephen's Vater hat arbeitet, er ist sehr müde und schläft er*. This candidate is thinking along the right lines in terms of what they want to communicate. However, in the space of one short sentence they attempt the perfect tense but get the past participle wrong and then they rather illogically move in to the present tense. The sentence should read: *Stephen's Vater hat gearbeitet, er war sehr müde und er schlief ein*. Very few candidates knew the imperfect form of *helfen* (*half*) and *lesen* (*las*). Both are common strong verbs and candidates at this level should be familiar with them. Other verbs which caused problems were: *regnen* in the imperfect, *schlafen* in the imperfect, *wollen* in the present and imperfect, and *werden* meaning to become, *der Himmel wurde dunkel*, for example. On top of this, candidates also experienced some difficulty with the correct subject to go with their verbs. For example, many candidates used *ihr* instead of *sie* when they wanted to say 'they', and a considerable number of candidates were unaware that *Familie* is a singular concept not plural. After *sein* candidates should use the nominative: *es war ein sonniger Tag*.

Question 2 Essays

Candidates must read the rubric carefully. The instructions make it clear that candidates choose **one** essay out of the three options in this section. Their other answer must come from either the first or the third section of the paper. Essay questions (a) and (b) were equally popular, with slightly fewer candidates attempting question (c). Many of the comments written above are of relevance to this question too.

(a) *Sie möchten einen Ferienjob in Deutschland finden. Schreiben Sie einen Brief an einen Freund/ eine Freundin, in dem Sie um Hilfe bitten.*

Candidates were not afraid to be inventive and expect their pen friends to find them high ranking jobs such as doctor or engineer. In this context where communication is key inventiveness is entirely acceptable. Candidates mostly covered all 5 prompts, although *Ihre Arbeitserfahrung* was not mentioned by some.

(b) *Am Ende Ihres ersten Tages in einer neuen Schule will Ihre Mutter wissen, wie der Tag war. Wie verläuft das Gespräch?*

Not all candidates appreciated that this question calls for a dialogue and that their answer should have been laid out as a dialogue. Candidates should be aware of this as the exam always follows the same pattern. Credit was nevertheless given where possible. The prompt *und morgen?* was intended to lead candidates to write something using a future construction.

(c) *Was machen Sie, um fit zu sein und was sollen Sie vermeiden?*

Many candidates were able to draw on their personal experience when answering this question, which undoubtedly helped them. A few candidates had a tendency to write lists of sports and foods. Credit was given for the first few items on a list but not to extensive lists. The prompt *was haben Sie schon gemacht, um fit zu sein?* was intended to lead candidates towards writing something in a past tense. However, a number of candidates did not pick up on this.

Question 3 Translation

Many weak candidates struggle to do well on the translation question if they opt for it. This year the translation included two stock phrases which it would be reasonable to expect candidates to know: 'I'm sorry': *Es tut mir leid* and 'Happy Birthday': *Herzlichen Glückwunsch zum Geburtstag*. Most candidates knew I am sorry but many struggled with Happy Birthday, even though credit was given for whichever variation candidates chose to use.

Other problem vocabulary items, some more challenging than others, included station: *Bahnhof*; Australia: *Australien*; to be homesick: *Heimweh haben*; and lorry: *Lastwagen*.

Many candidates were not aware that *fahren* and *reisen* take *sein* as the auxiliary verb in the perfect tense. He had travelled: *er ist gereist/gefahren* or *er war gereist/gefahren*.

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Paper 3025/02 Reading Comprehension

General comments

Candidates' performance on this paper was in line with that in previous years. There was a full spread of marks, with a number of candidates achieving full or nearly full marks, in **Section 1** in particular.

Section 2 proved to be more challenging, though all candidates appeared to be familiar with the rubrics and the question types.

Section 3 as usual posed the biggest challenge for all candidates, but even here candidates appeared well-prepared for the layout of the exercise.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Questions 1 – 5

This initial exercise tests comprehension of short reading extracts by way of multiple choice questions. The correct answers had to be selected from four visual stimuli. This exercise posed very few problems; there was no discernible pattern of mistakes, if any were made at all.

Questions 6 – 10

Most candidates scored full marks on this exercise, where short statements about their ambitions, plans and interests needed to be matched to a list outlining various activities. If mistakes were made they related most frequently to **Question 10**; some candidates did not grasp the link between *Kunst* and *Malen*.

Questions 11 – 15

Again, this exercise was well answered by most candidates. They were required to read a short letter and decide whether statements on it were true or false.

Section 2

Questions 16 - 26

In this exercise, longer answers had to be produced in the target language in response to questions on a text about a child's first experience of a kids' club on a family weekend away. Candidates who did not score highly here appeared either to have spent insufficient time on reading the questions carefully or had failed to understand them. Although answers can be lifted from the text in some instances, the material does of course need to correspond to the correct question. Most mistakes occurred with **Questions 16 and 17**, focusing on the earlier part of the text. **Question 23**, asking why the child did not want to have breakfast with his parents, occasionally elicited the answer that he wanted to take part in the evening programme with the other children. A fair number of candidates nonetheless tackled this exercise well.

Questions 27 – 35

This exercise mirrored the problems some candidates had encountered in the previous task. Many did well; however, a number copied from the text on the subject of an unusual new style of student accommodation in Munich, but did not then match the copied text to the questions. Able candidates did score well. Again it

seems clear that candidates should be encouraged to spend more time on reading and ensuring they have fully understood the questions.

Section 3

Questions 36 - 55

Many candidates found this cloze test, the last exercise on the paper, particularly challenging and generally did not score highly on it. The main problems appeared to be: separable verbs (**Q39/40**, *teilnehmen an*), reflexive verbs (**Q46**, *um sich ein paar Extras leisten zu können*). Prepositions also caused problems, as did relative pronouns linked to them (**Q49**, **Q54**, *von denen*). A number of candidates nonetheless scored creditably here.