



Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

On the whole, students seemed to have planned their time effectively and responses to the Section 3 writing task in particular did not appear as rushed as was the case in 2011. Despite the time constraints, it is advisable for students to break down each task into manageable components by highlighting the key words in each question in order to ensure that they answer the entire question appropriately.

Unfortunately, a significant number of students did not appear to have carefully read each question and note what was required of them. Part B of Sections 1 and 2 and Section 3 exposed many examples where students had not taken the time to read each question, which resulted in many incomplete and sometimes irrelevant answers. For example, the questions on Text 3 and Text 5 questions required linkage and comparisons between Rolf and Anna (Text 3) and Uncle Erwin and Julia (Text 5). Too many students failed to make these comparisons and instead presented unrelated lists or listed differences without any relationship to the characters mentioned.

Question 6 was the most popular topic in Section 3; however, many students had clearly not noted the key components of the task: in this case, a school reunion 10 years into the future, with the key questions of ‘What has become of you and your best friend?’ and ‘Is this what you expected?’

Grammatical errors such as incorrect formation of past participles of verbs, in particular differentiating the verbs conjugated with *sein*, were all too common. The future and conditional tenses as well as the past tenses also require much more thorough revision. Word order, particularly in complex structures, use of the comma to separate main and subordinate clauses, and the use and spelling of *das* and *dass* also caused problems.

It would be advisable for teachers to assist students in creating a list of useful and appropriate words to learn in order to avoid direct word for word, and therefore mostly inappropriate, translation from the dictionary. Some examples included words such as *endlich* for ‘at the end’ or ‘finally’ instead of *zum Schluss*, *also* for ‘also’ and *jedermann*, which was mostly inappropriately used for ‘everyone’. Students also looked up *abhielten*, but confused *heilen* with *hielten* and therefore referred to the ‘healing’ of Protestants and Catholics.

A recent observation has been the number of students who have difficulty when they look up an incorrect spelling in the dictionary only to then come up with an inappropriate translation. For example, some students looked up the word ‘manly’ instead of ‘mainly’, resulting in the inappropriate translation of *männlich*. Another such example was ‘piece’ instead of ‘peace’, resulting in *Stück* rather than *Frieden*. Again, a careful and methodical approach may help to avoid many of these errors.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what the answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

Section 1 – Listening and responding Part A – Answer in English

Text 1

Question 1a.

It’s the week of the (final) exams/students are doing their VCE.

Abitur on its own was not accepted, unless this word was then translated.

Question 1b.

The advice given is (any four of)

- go to bed early
- do not study the night before the exam

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- relax
- start with a jog/exercise
- (eat a) good breakfast (not just healthy food)
- drink water or juice/not too much coffee.

Question 1c.

The listeners may benefit because they would (any two of)

- be more relaxed/not tired or stressed
- have better concentration
- have a better chance of passing exams/getting into university/getting better results.

Text 2

Question 2a.

- In a department store/the Department Store Müller (not a shopping centre).
- There are bargains/specials/there is a sale.

Question 2b.

- 50–70% discount for (summer) dresses (not clothing)
- 50% (half-price) men's shirts and tie

The percentages needed to be correct.

Question 2c.

- level 3: men's/gentlemen's clothing/wear/men's shirts and ties
- level 5: coffee and cakes/a coffee shop/café

Question 2d.

Listeners need to act quickly because

- the sale is only for today/until the end of today/until 17.00 or 5 o'clock (not 7 o'clock)
- tomorrow/after that/after today you'll have to pay full price.

Part B – Answer in German

This section assessed students on their comprehension of the spoken text and also on their ability to answer the questions in complete and accurate sentences in German.

Text 3

Question 3a.

Rolf and Anna are discussing Lena's/their daughter's career choices/career options/future plans/future work (after the VCE).

Unfortunately, a number of students incorrectly used the possessive pronoun *sein* instead of *ihr* when referring to the daughter. This answer was therefore only partly correct and could not be accepted.

Question 3b.

- Rolf thinks Lena is intelligent/takes after him but Anna thinks that Lena is lazy/doesn't do enough homework.
- Anna finds Lena poorly motivated/poorly organised, whereas Rolf trusts that Lena will find her own way and wants to give her more time.
- Anna says Lena should study law/become a diplomat, whereas Rolf believes Lena will find studying law boring.
- Anna says Lena spends too much time with DVDs and her mobile phone but Rolf says that Lena will find her own way.
- Anna thinks Lena plays too much sport but Rolf likes the fact that Lena is sporting.
- Anna is concerned that Lena doesn't know what she wants to be, while Rolf says that at her age he didn't know which career path to take either.

The points made had to be contrasted and discussed, not merely listed.



The most successful answers used comparative words or phrases such as *einerseits/andererseits*, *während*, *wobei* and *im Vergleich zu*. These answers also used complex structures, including subordinate clauses and even reported speech, mostly correctly. For example:

Rolf ist der Meinung, dass Lena ein intelligentes Mädchen ist(sei), während Anna glaubt, dass Lena zu faul ist(sei).

Es geht Anna auf die Nerven, dass Lena so Sport fanatisch ist. Im Vergleich zu dem, findet Rolf Lenas sportliche Leidenschaft prima.

Question 3c.

- Anna wants Rolf to talk with Lena, but Rolf doesn't want to speak with her because he says it is Anna's idea.
- Anna wants to have control over Lena/Rolf wants Lena to find her own way.

The importance of carefully reading each question and highlighting key words must be impressed upon students. Many students did not grasp that they were to discuss the disagreement on how to handle Lena. Many students simply listed the points of difference again; however, this answer required them to link Anna and Rolf's opposing points of view.

The following is an example of a good answer.

Rolf will Lena Zeit geben um ihren eigenen Weg zu finden. Er sagt, dass Anna sich keine Sorgen machen muss. Im Gegensatz zu Rolf, hat Anna eine bestimmte Meinung bezüglich auf die Berufswahl ihrer Tochter. Sie möchte, dass Rolf ein „ernstes Wort“ mit Lena spricht.

**Section 2 – Reading and responding
Part A – Answer in English**

Text 4

Questions on this text were generally answered well, although many students had difficulty gaining full marks for Question 4d.

Question 4a.

The author's grandfather followed in the footsteps of his role model by

- becoming a doctor
- playing the keyboard/piano/organ
- having knowledge of philosophy.

Question 4b.

Albert Schweitzer's life was publicly acknowledged by the award of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Question 4c.

University discipline	Reason for this choice
Theology	His father was a pastor/(he liked the fact that both) Catholics and Protestants worshipped in the church.
(Organ) Music	He loved the organ music in his father's church/his favourite composer was Bach/he published works on Bach.
Philosophy	He wanted to find the meaning of life/why and what we live for.
Medicine	He wanted to put his philosophy of reverence for life into action/he wanted to help the people in colonial Africa.

Question 4d.

Evidence from the text supporting the claim that Albert Schweitzer wanted to create a more humane world included

- he campaigned/preached against atomic wars
- he campaigned/preached against colonialism
- he promoted the protection of the environment
- his philosophy was 'reverence/respect for life'
- he was in favour of Protestants and Catholics coexisting in harmony
- he raised money to build/built a hospital for natives in Africa
- he studied medicine/became a doctor to help people.



Question 4e.

Albert financed his project in Africa by raising funds through

- giving/performing organ concerts
- giving lectures/presentations.

Part B – Answer in German

Text 5

Students were assessed on their capacity to understand general and specific aspects of texts and on their capacity to convey the required information accurately and appropriately. They were required to compare, and therefore link, the differences in the travel experiences of Uncle Erwin and Julia in the years 1949 and 2012 respectively.

Question 5a.

The methods of communication reflect history

- through the development of technology
- because Uncle Erwin writes a letter and Julia sends an email/uses Skype.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Die erste Kommunikationsmethode ist ein handgeschriebener Brief und die zweite Methode ist eine Email. Das zeigt wie es weniger Technologie in der Vergangenheit gegeben hat und dass heutzutage Technologie stark um die Welt sich erweitert hat.

Question 5b.

Differences between the years 1949 and 2012 included

- Erwin enjoyed the flight; Julia hated it
- Erwin's trip took a week; Julia's only 21 hours
- Erwin needed many visas; Julia only needed to pass through passport control
- Erwin saw and experienced many things; Julia saw nothing/only clouds/flew over countries
- Erwin made an overnight stopover at each landing; Julia flew over each country
- Erwin had good/exotic food; Julia found the food on the aircraft boring
- Erwin met and saw exotic people; Julia spent only two hours in Singapore airport
- Erwin found Melbourne to be a small and sleepy city in 1949; Julia found Melbourne in 2012 to be rather large and modern.

Strong answers used linking and comparative words/phrases such as *im Vergleich zu diesem, anstatt, während* and *wobei*.

The following are some examples of good answers.

Anstatt viele schöne Landschaften zu sehen, hat Julia nur Wolken auf ihrem Flug gesehen.

Julia findet Melbourne auch sehr groß und modern, während als Onkel Erwin dort war, war Melbourne eine kleine, verschlafene Stadt.

Section 3 – Writing in German

Students had five topics from which to choose, with five kinds of writing and five text types. The choices were a diary entry (personal writing), a magazine article (evaluative), a brochure (informative), a speech (persuasive) and a short story (imaginative).

Given the broad selection of topics, it was somewhat surprising that the majority of students elected to write about their class reunion (Question 6). It is important that students have sufficient practice throughout the year at writing on a broad range of topics and text types so that they then feel comfortable choosing from the broader range of topics on offer in the final examination. Creating lists of useful words which may accompany certain text types would also assist. Before selecting a topic, it is also very wise to consider the key components of the topic and whether the student has the necessary vocabulary to tackle it successfully.



While it was pleasing to see a general improvement in students' ability to successfully form the more complex sentences with *dass*, many students still had trouble remembering to place the verb at the end of the sentence. It was also somewhat frustrating to see the number of students who still had trouble conjugating regular as well as irregular verbs and using them correctly in sentences. Whether a past participle takes *haben* or *sein* can easily be checked in the dictionary, yet many students consistently used the wrong one. A thorough knowledge of prepositions, their meanings and the cases that follow was rare. Adjectival endings should also be high on the list of priorities in order to avoid mistakes.

Word order should also be thoroughly revised. Weakness in all three assessment criteria for the writing section was apparent, particularly criterion 3.

Question 6

This was the most popular topic, but many responses lacked the sense of relationship and self-reflection that this style of writing requires. Many essays were quite superficial, focusing more on factual information such as describing babies, husbands, appearances, money earned and professions gained. The more successful essays were reflective, creating a sense of personal relationship with oneself and the then best friend.

Below is one example of an excellent starting sentence that indicates this sense of reflection that followed.

je mehr ich an den letzten Abend zurückdenke, desto unglaublicher kommt er mir vor.

Question 7

Students who attempted this question generally produced thoughtful pieces. This topic is quite relevant in today's society and most students who attempted it expressed strong views either in support of the internet or in support of the strength of personal relationships. Many successfully presented an even-handed discussion of the topic.

Question 8

This topic was not done well in that most students did not write the text for a brochure informing young German tourists about the possibility of an environmentally friendly holiday as required. Some students wrote a very general piece on environmental issues. Some even appeared to have simply presented a memorised written piece or speech about the environment.

Question 9

Although this topic called for a speech which aimed to persuade its audience that the youth of today had much to contribute, many pieces were superficial, with little analysis of youth and global issues and few examples of young people's positive contributions. The most successful were those in which students were able to contextualise the place of students and their contribution to today's world; for example, technologically, multiculturally and environmentally, and provide examples of their concern with the issue of world peace.

Question 10

Some students presented highly original, imaginative pieces. The demands of this topic were to create a strong sense of the physical surroundings and situation. Students generally had difficulty creating an imaginative narrative that also created a physical image of the strange visitor's planet. Many who selected this topic lacked the vocabulary to create such an atmosphere.