German B

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 14	15 - 30	31 - 45	46 - 59	60 - 72	73 - 86	87 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 13	14 - 27	28 - 42	43 - 56	57 - 70	71 - 85	86 - 100

Higher Level Internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 26	27 - 30

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The work submitted was generally appropriate and the topics varied. A small minority of pictures were not really suitable as a springboard for deeper and wider discussion, but were described for their surface value, rather than anything more. Other schools seemed to not have read the guidelines in detail and submitted cartoons instead of photos. Occasionally captions were really too long, in other pictures the directive from the guide asking for 'graphic text' had been misunderstood to mean 'text in the picture' and there were signs to be read, or even speech bubbles or news inserts.

It seemed that the majority of schools chose Health (beauty, plastic surgery, anorexia) and Cultural Diversity (multiculturalism, racism) and Science and Technology (digital media, recycling and alternative energies) as options to be studied. One school, with a large number of candidates, presented pictures from all 5 options and it was not clear if the teachers had understood that only 2 options need to be studied. A few schools submitted random pictures, which seemed to relate to the core rather than the options.

It was worrying to hear some students introducing the oral with the phrase 'the photo I have chosen' – it can only be hoped that this referred to a sealed envelope, as choice is not allowed (Guide, p.59 "…previously unseen …selected by the teacher".)

Candidate performance against each criterion.

The vast majority of candidates did well in Criterion A: Productive Skills. It was clear that the majority of candidates were learners of German and not native speakers. Only a few candidates spoke at a level below 'good'.

The range of performance for Criterion B: Interactive and Receptive Skills was larger. The success of the students against this criterion depended upon the teacher's ability to ask questions which required higher level thinking. Many teachers asked yes/no questions which did not allow the student to express an opinion. In some cases the students only gave a cursory description of the picture, followed by an analysis of the theme which then gave the impression of pre-learned material, especially if the views presented were not challenged by the teacher.

The recommended timings were not always adhered to; it is difficult to time a discussion 'to the minute', but a sense of balance needs to be maintained.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates.

The guidelines for the individual oral in the Language B Guide (pp 59-60) are very detailed and need to be read carefully, and both teachers and students need to be aware of the assessment criteria.

- Practise the description of pictures with students in class. Most spent very little time actually describing the picture, but went straight into a discourse of the greater theme, which led moderators to question the spontaneity of the oral. An image can be 'read' just as a text can – perhaps Art teachers can give some inspiration for this.
- Provide students with a 'checklist' of points which need to be covered: colour, focus, light, feeling evoked, presentation of people etc.
- Practise complex questions in class and systematically teach students to use transition phrases such as 'in my opinion' or 'according to the statistics' etc.
- Put more emphasis on the cultural comparisons which promote intercultural understanding – eg why is multiculturalism considered a success in Canada, but not in Germany? Try to choose pictures that are culturally relevant, allowing students to compare the German culture to their own in a more natural way.
- Choose colour photographs, which allow weaker students more scope for description.
- If there are several teachers teaching German HL, internal moderation is vital, but also a collaboration over how to approach this assessment component, so that students receive consistent instruction.
- Teachers are encouraged to gear their questions to the ability level of the individual candidate. Asking all candidates the exact same questions does not allow strong students to demonstrate their fluency, nor does it allow the weaker candidates to carry on an acceptable conversation at their own level.

Further comments

Considering this was the first time that any of the teachers had conducted the exams using the new syllabus and the new criteria, most orals were carried out according to the guidelines. However, the points made above really should not have occurred if the instructions had been followed more precisely. It would be wonderful if they were all improved upon for the next session, so that all students have an equal chance of success.

Standard Level Internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 26	27 - 30

General comments and observations

It is clear that some teachers still need to read the new Guide and implement various aspects of the new format of the IA oral. Not a significant number but nevertheless a few even retained the old format completely, with a three-minute "part 3" general conversation announced and conducted.

There were many examples of excellent photo selection with captions designed to give the candidates a way in to both the topic and their approach to it. However there were also rather too many examples of photo selection which was less than ideal. The Guide clearly states that it should be a photo (not a drawing, a computer-generated image or a diagram) and that it should be related to an option topic. While the Guide does not give specific advice on suitable photos, it should be apparent that a static uninspiring photo of an old couple sitting at a dining table will not elicit a stimulating presentation or discussion. Similarly, a photo of a stuffed paprika against a plain white background hardly seems sufficient as the basis for a three-minute presentation. The photo should be something that the candidate can easily relate to an option topic, that makes the option topic clear, and something that the candidate can "get their (linguistic) teeth into". The caption is also really important. Often no caption was provided at all. Others were far too long or, conversely, very short and obscure. The key thing to bear in mind is that one is trying to help the candidate relate the photo to the topic.

The photo should also be easily related to German-speaking culture/society. Of course it can and often will be more generally/globally relevant, but surely it is hardly expecting too much of candidates to include reference to the culture and society of the language they are studying at some point in their presentation. This, however, can prove difficult if the photo has no obvious connection, as was the case, for example, with a photo of an Antarctic marathon runner and a penguin or of an Indonesian child smoking a cigarette. In the latter case even the caption focused the candidate on third-world issues. Somewhat surprisingly, there was no obvious candidate or school connection with Indonesia, so the choice of photo remains mysterious.

With regard to captions, everything was offered, from no caption at all through to a mini paragraph of text or a list of 6 questions. It is to be hoped that schools will learn from the collective experience of this first session with the new Guide and that photos and captions will

in future exam sessions on the whole be suitable. They do, after all, have a significant impact on candidate performance.

With regard to the forms, teachers should remember to use the 2/BIA to comment on reasons for the mark awarded, not for comments such as "Mary war gestern krank" , "John begeistert sich für Weihnachten in Deutschland" or "Lucy ist nicht immer so nervös".

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Despite the above comments, the majority of work was appropriate to the new format, with suitable photos, captions, presentations and discussions. The format is thus clearly accessible to all, with a little planning.

There was a wide range of topics, most of which (although by no means all of which!) were relevant to option topics. Many photos and presentations managed to keep alive some of the old favourites – and popular topics were Oktoberfest , environment (although this often led candidates to talk about 'global issues', which is a core topic), German Christmas and Jugend/Alkohol. Others followed a more refreshingly idiosyncratic path, including the German paralympic basketball team, the Hundertwasserhaus and German Trimmpfade. As mentioned above, some failed to retain any connection with German society/culture, but these were few. It was more frequently noted that globally-relevant issues were rarely related specifically to German society/culture. In this instance it was clear that the candidate had come to the oral with a prepared factual biographical presentation which actually bore little relevance to the (non-regulation) picture. There were quite a few presentations where the candidate gave lots of facts and statistics. It is difficult to believe that these were not prepared in advance of the oral. This is particularly so when the resulting presentation is flat and sounds contrived.

Most candidates described the photo in greater or lesser detail and then proceeded to widen their presentation to address the topic related to the photo. This is good practice, particularly as it then allows the discussion phase to pick up on points made and widen the subject still further, thus also allowing greater depth and complexity of ideas. Some candidates, however, restricted themselves to a basic factual description of the image in front of them (even if clearly capable of more) and indeed some teachers encouraged their students to get every drop of blood out of the photographic stone (sorry about this tormented metaphor), when they would have been better advised to move on to other aspects of the wider topic as otherwise candidates cannot easily score well with regard to complexity of ideas. Consideration needs to be given to this aspect when selecting photos for the oral – some photos (and topic aspects) do not easily lend themselves to complex ideas (e.g. German Christmas, Oktoberfest) and instead they encourage factual descriptions.

Candidate performance against each criterion.

A) Language B SL does not aim for perfection. Many candidates were able to attain the upper reaches of the mark bands (7+) by keeping their language reasonably straightforward, clear and accurate. Where possible, repetitive structures should be avoided – one candidate stood out simply by beginning almost every sentence with "ich denke, dass …"

B) The upper end of the marks (7+) require good interaction and complex ideas. The latter often depend on the topic (see above). It is rarely possible to achieve the former with "Q & A" sessions in the discussion phase. Such Q & A sessions generally take two forms, both

equally inappropriate. With one, the teacher asks a series of short factual questions requiring specific short factual answers. This is not a conversation, it is more like an interrogation. With the other, the teacher asks a small number of (one senses sometimes pre-arranged) questions, each of which results in a long mini-monologue response from the candidate. Such monologues lack spontaneity. In one extreme case, a "discussion" of over 6 minutes consisted of three short questions and three long answers, the only connection being that they were on the same topic. Neither of these approaches help candidates achieve higher marks, in that they do not help show a coherent flow to a "conversation". It should be remembered that the oral is not intended to assess content but language.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates.

Although there should be plenty of practice in class of the oral format during the course, it is obvious when a presentation is shoehorned in during the oral. Often there is then suddenly a section where a candidate who has been struggling to find the right words knows all the subject-specific vocabulary and produces beautifully formed sentences.

Candidates should be trained in responding to a photo/caption directly and then developing their presentation out of this organically as much as possible. They should also be reminded to try to relate their presentation to Germanic society/culture where possible.

Of course, weaker candidates can and should keep closer to the actual photo as something to hang their ideas on. It is better to show what you know than what you don't know.

Finally, remember that at the upper end of Criterion B candidates are expected to show evidence of the ability to express complex ideas – but that this does not necessarily mean using complex language structures.

Further comments

Teachers should match their questions in the discussion phase (and indeed their choice of photo and caption) to the individual candidate's ability, not approach all orals with the same set of questions (as done by a couple of schools). This applies across the ability range – maybe some candidates can't 'do' complex ideas, but in some cases the teachers don't give them much chance to show what they can do.

Some teachers in the discussion phase try to wring extra information out of the candidate in relation to the photo/caption as if this is a requirement, and a few even comment on 2/BIA that the candidate did not spend long enough describing the photo. This is not a requirement. More able candidates should be able to progress quickly from the descriptive to the analytical, and this should be encouraged.

Similarly, some candidates seemed to feel compelled to give a mini history lecture on the Berlin Wall or the Oktoberfest. As noted above, the oral is not a test of factual topic knowledge.

Finally, a reminder that one may use the same photo for up to five candidates, but each one should have a separate caption.

I hope the above does not read too negatively. It seems to be important to give as much detailed feedback as possible in this first year, but my main memory after listening to very

many tests is one of pleasure. The vast majority of the orals were a pleasure to listen to and showed clearly the great dedication of both teachers and students.

Higher level written assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 3	4 - 7	8 - 11	12 - 14	15 - 18	19 - 21	22 - 25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The range of works submitted was extremely wide. Given the choice of texts some students were over challenged or not well served by an over ambitious choice of literary text (e.g. H. Hesse, Steppenwolf or A. Feuerbach, Kaspar Hauser). The quality of the work was overall good, exceptional pieces of creative writing were submitted (a combination of Kafka stories brought to a new level) as well as rather weak ones (Interview with Rumpelstilzchen); however, it was clear that on the whole the students enjoyed the task and many came up with highly original approaches. The rationale often posed greater problems as this demands a more analytical kind of writing.

Very few students were penalized for not writing enough words, an equally small number had text crossed off for too many words.

Many schools chose texts that were appropriate for BHL: works by Dürrenmatt, Frisch, Schlink, Short stories by Borchert, Böll etc. However, quite a few schools chose texts that are either teen fiction or Children's literature and are a so called "easy read" (as opposed to Easy Reader). The literary merit of a particular book must be taken into account when designing the BHL course.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Some candidates camouflaged their weak language proficiency by choosing a straightforward text type eg. interview using very basic vocabulary. However, on the whole the quality of the language was good. Many candidates used a wide range of vocabulary with flair and sentence structures including adhesive devices were used correctly and even finer points like adjective endings posed no problems to the flow of the text. Weaker candidates sometimes resorted even to the use of the infinitive and it was obvious that they struggled to express their ideas with clarity, very often the text then was repetitive.

In some cases, the language of the rationale was much weaker than the language in the task. I assume that this was because creative writing was not new to most students while it was much more difficult to use precise language, packing all the information required into a relatively short rationale.

Criterion B: The best students produced remarkable pieces of writing. Both an inspired choice of literary text and appropriate choice of text type are crucial to this. There were many papers that showed that the students really enjoyed the exercise. In cases where the literary work

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was used only as a kind of „jumping board" the candidate often produced a completely different chapter/ending to the text that differed greatly from the original text in style and intention. When, in addition, he/she omitted to explain the reasoning behind this in the rationale, the marks suffered: To state that one did not like the ending was not satisfactory. (A "Happy End" to Schlink's Der Vorleser is not a good choice). The range of texts chosen spanned from Fairy tales and easy to read Teen fiction to classical literature suitable for language A Lit HL or for study at University level.

Criterion C: Many students were well prepared in regard to text types. The preferred text types were: diary, interview, interview style pieces, letters, short story and speeches. Unfortunately some chose to do a text analysis, which is not acceptable and the teacher should have picked up on this. It also seems that some students understood the text type "interview" to be a job interview. The suitability of a text type for a specific task needs to be taken into consideration: e.g. an e-mail from Grete Samsa to her brother Gregor in regard to beetles (Kafka, Die Verwandlung) is not to be recommended.

Criterion D: Only very few students did not write a rationale at all. In many cases one or more points of information were lacking: author and title were missing or only became clear through the task and the information on the cover sheet; very often students did not explain their aims and objectives or they forgot to mention the text type.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

The teacher's guidance in the WA process cannot be stressed enough.

When designing the BHL course, the choice of texts is of utmost importance, the WA focuses on „literary texts in the target language".
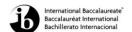
This does not include works translated from another language (Morton Rhue, The Wave/Die Welle) or films (eg. R.W. Fassbinder) that are not based on a published literary text. If there are a large number of candidates the number of texts studied must be adjusted accordingly. 30 or more students cannot write WAs based on the same two texts, there is bound to be an overlap of approaches, ideas etc.

To focus on the conventions of text types is also very important. The text type must fit the task and all this needs to be discussed and put into practice regularly.

In regard to the rationale, students must be made aware of the requirements and must get the chance to practise writing a rationale: Stating title and author, naming of the text type, being clear in regard to aims and objectives, stating clearly how the task fits the text. The rationale should be on the first page and not on the last. Students need to revisit the rationale and the task at the end in order to ensure that all the points are clearly executed. Teachers who taught A2 before must keep in mind that the WA BHL rationale differs somewhat from the former format.

Standard level written assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 3	4 - 7	8 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 19	20 - 22	23 - 25

General comments

The Written Assignment is a new component for Language B, assessed for the first time in this session, and it is therefore unsurprising that in some schools there was clearly an air of uncertainty (shared by teachers and candidates in some cases) about what exactly was required, particularly as, at this stage, there are no language-specific exemplar materials. Overall, however, it was gratifying to see that a significant proportion of the work submitted reached a relatively high standard, and that standards in this component compared well with standards in other areas of assessment.

Some teachers had clearly studied the Guide thoroughly and used other sources of support effectively, including relevant workshops. This was reflected in some excellent pieces of work underpinned by carefully selected source materials and presented in exemplary fashion. Others failed to observe certain key aspects of the WA, resulting in candidates risking losing marks unnecessarily. This included, for example, not submitting a rationale, or using three completely unrelated source texts.

As this was a new component, attempts were made to accommodate many idiosyncratic approaches without penalising candidates too severely, but teachers are strongly advised to acquaint themselves fully with procedures and expectations in advance of future sessions.

Almost all recommendations in this respect relate to the selection of source texts. Examiners invariably commented on how crucial this aspect is to candidate success. This is something over which the candidate has no control, but it is essential that teachers take heed of advice offered here and elsewhere. The best source texts were related closely on a clearly defined aspect of a core theme, and offered different perspectives on this aspect. They were rooted in reality with concrete examples, case studies and facts, rather than vague and abstract philosophical generalisations.

If the texts are not closely linked thematically, candidates are unable successfully to incorporate ideas from at least 2 of the texts in their work in an integrated manner. Too often, the relationship between the three texts, the common ground, was not immediately apparent, and as well as making the writing task more difficult, this does nothing to settle the nerves of a candidate reading the texts for the first time. In one example, the declared topic focus was the environment, and the 3 texts were on EU water legislation, organic farming in Ecuador and fracking in Germany. Unsurprisingly, the response was not good. In another case, again with the topic "environment", the 3 texts were on renewable energy, atomic power and domestic recycling. It was not clear how text 3 related to the other two. The topic focus should be more narrowly defined than "the environment", and the texts linked and accessible.

In selecting source texts, teachers should be guided by the level of difficulty found in the texts in Paper 1, and be mindful that candidates are working at Standard Level in Language B. In some cases the texts were of a degree of complexity which would challenge university students, with the language far too difficult or the vocabulary too technical. Publications such as "Spiegel", for example, should be used with care. It must be remembered that candidates

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are expected to read and digest these 3 unseen texts independently, and find ways of using the ideas and information in their own writing.

With this in mind, source texts should not be too long. The Guide advises between 300 and 400 words. Very many texts were longer, in some cases several pages long. Candidates have limited time to read and understand the texts and extract relevant ideas, and can hardly do justice to more than 10 pages of source text material in a 300-400 word assignment. It is expected that longer texts will be edited for length, or suitable extracts selected.

When selecting texts, it is advisable to avoid obscure and dated sources. Particularly if related to an aspect of technology, a text from 2004 is likely to be out of date. Other sources to avoid include textbooks (the texts should be previously unseen for the candidates) and textbook audio transcripts (these are often 'semi-authentic' scripted texts), and Wikipedia should only be used with great caution. In one case a school submitted an eight-page Wikipedia printout as a source text.
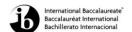
Source texts should be submitted as hard copies with the work (although one set is sufficient where several candidates have used the same sources). There is then no need to submit summaries of the texts, written either by the teacher or by the candidate. However, simply providing hyperlinks on the cover sheet invites problems, such as a link being inaccurate or no longer being available, and causes unnecessary extra work for the examiner. It also fails to take account of any editing for length or selection of a particular text extract. In one case a teacher included a link to an entire website, rather than to a specific text. Source text references on the cover sheet should be precise. Simply stating "Die Welt", or, worse, "Kursbuchtext" or "Internet" is not sufficient.

Finally, teachers should remember that the Guide stipulates that the same 3 source texts can be used with up to 12 candidates. There is no need to set 3 different texts for each candidate. Different candidates can then choose the same format for their responses, as long as they adopt an individual focus/perspective.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The vast majority of candidates made a reasonable to good attempt at the task overall, with most of the work suitable to the requirements of the component. Many candidates, given carefully selected source material, rose admirably to the challenge, and almost all were able to produce a piece of writing to reflect their linguistic ability. Where weaknesses were evident, these were primarily in command of the language and in relation to a clear expression of the aim(s) of the piece of writing. Certain text types were particularly problematic in this respect: a newspaper/magazine article needs a clear context, readership and purpose, otherwise it descends into a thinly disguised essay.

Assignments were submitted based on a wide variety of topics, and only a very small minority of teachers overlooked the stipulation that source texts should be related to one of the 3 core themes. The variety of topics encountered serves to illustrate how wide-ranging the teaching of these core themes is across schools. Despite this variety, candidates were invariably able to display good subject knowledge and incorporate their own ideas (or those from work in class) into their work effectively. A wide range of topics gave rise to a wide range of responses, formats and perspectives.

The main topic areas covered fell into four broad categories: environmental issues (such as energy sources and climate change), social issues (such as child poverty and family conflict), technology-related topics (such as cyberbullying and mobiles in schools), and multicultural Germany (such as migrant workers and integration). While some of these may at first sight be seen as option topics, there is such a pronounced overlap between core and options in so many topics that the area of focus for the source texts was rarely seen as a problem. Even schools who elected to use source texts on the Oktoberfest or Karneval – surely primarily from the option topic of Customs and Traditions – could contend that these also to some extent fall under Social Relationships. However, in the context of a German language examination it is difficult to justify source texts on human rights in China or the tensions between the USA and North Korea, or on the possession of guns in the USA (under the thematic rubric of "urban environment")

In a very small number of cases candidates from the same school with the same set of texts produced assignments of a very similar nature – for example, articles adopting essentially the same perspective. Teachers and candidates should be aware of the requirement that assignments should all differ in some way. It is of course acceptable to have more than one letter, for example, but the aims/recipient etc should then be sufficiently different to distinguish them from each other.

Candidate performance against each criterion.

Criterion A – Language

In this Criterion the vast majority of candidates were able, partly due to the generous assessment criteria, to score at least half marks. Candidates were able to aspire to the higher mark bands if they could display clarity of message, effective language (in relation to the aims), a range of relevant vocabulary (often to be found in the source texts) and reasonable levels of accuracy, with perhaps some evidence of an ability to handle complex structures. Perfect German is not expected at this level.

Although most candidates scored 5+ for Language this should not disguise the fact that a command of basic structures is essential at this level. All but the very best pieces of work were characterised by shaky verb forms, word order, cases and pronouns in particular. In general, the advice should be to keep the language clear and simple and to avoid being over-ambitious with structures, but then at the end to read through what has been written, paying attention to the fundamentals of the language. It should be remembered that use of a dictionary is permitted, and this can be a very useful tool if used properly. A dictionary is not only a good source of alternative vocabulary to achieve variation, but will also include vital grammatical information.

Range and complexity of language cannot be credited if it is copied direct from the source texts. Although words and phrases will obviously be needed, entire structures and sentences should not be copied. Often when this occurred the sentences made little sense in their new context, thus also affecting the assessment of Criterion B.

The WA was supposed to be between 300 and 400 words in length. The overwhelming majority were within these parameters, although a significant minority wrote too much. Although there was no mark penalty for this, it was not necessarily advantageous to exceed the 400 word limit, as examiners were instructed to stop marking at 400 words. Very few

failed to reach the minimum number of words. Those who did were penalised one mark in Criterion A.

Criterion B – Content

Criterion B assesses both the fulfilment of the aims (as stated in the Rationale) and the use of the sources. The skill lies in achieving both aspects, and some candidates did indeed produce a well-written assignment clearly inspired by the source texts in an imaginative way, integrating aspects from 2 or 3 sources in a well-organised response which gave a new perspective to the subject matter. However, more often candidates were able to fulfil their aims but without adequate reference to the source texts. This may have resulted in well-presented, well-organised and, in a standalone context, convincing pieces of work, but in the context of the assessment criteria they cannot achieve the higher mark bands. At the other end of the spectrum are assignments which use the sources extensively and thoughtfully, but without fulfilling any significant or clearly stated aim. As long as these are not merely summaries of the sources these may again be cogent and well-organised assignments, but unless a 'hidden' implied aim can be discerned from reading the piece of work it cannot be said to "fulfil the aims" and thus achieve the higher mark bands. At times, however, candidates were content to recycle and summarise information and ideas from the source texts in linear fashion, with little integration. Alternatively, candidates took the wider generalisations from the source texts rather than focusing on a specific aspect, and these more general responses tended to become somewhat vague and rambling, or resemble an essay on the topic rather than a letter or a blog. Summaries and generalisations tend to be dry and lack perspective, which is scarcely appropriate, for example, when aiming to produce an impassioned speech designed to convince or persuade an audience.

From this it can be seen that one main failing with regard to Criterion B lay in the absence of a clear and specific aim. The other main failing lies outside the control of the candidate. The selection of the source materials is absolutely crucial to success with the WA and must not be underestimated. Invariably, accessible source texts of an appropriate length closely linked to a well-defined topic area led to candidates scoring high marks. Conversely, most pieces of work which scored low marks could at least in part be traced to source texts which were too demanding, too long or not closely enough related to each other.

Good assignments incorporated information and ideas from at least 2 of the source texts. Depending on the aims of the piece of work the use of all 3 sources was not always appropriate, and this was deemed perfectly acceptable. The use of only one source was not seen as more than "adequate" at best. It was also acceptable to have an approach including direct reference to information in the sources or one which used the information and ideas in the sources as a springboard for a response, as long as this springboard had a clear and explicit basis in the source texts. If a lot of source information is quoted directly, this is not "skilfully using sources". The Guide is very clear about this, and excessive copying was not assessed as "good" or "effective" use of the sources. Some excessive copying was clearly the result of a lack of understanding of difficult source texts – in such cases what was copied often did not fit logically into the piece of writing and seemed to have been included to demonstrate that a particular source text had been 'used'.

Many assignments dealt with global issues. It would have been good if all of these could have been given a perspective/slant which drew some relationship with German-speaking societies and cultures. While it is perfectly acceptable to write about child labour in India, for

example, the perspective of an interview with an American charity officer is less easily defended. It is a simple step to make this interviewee German.

Criterion C – Format

"Format" is the brief label for Criterion C, and includes wherever appropriate observation of the key conventions associated with the chosen text type. However, it needs to be viewed more widely to include style, register, tone, rhetorical devices where used, to further the purpose of the piece of writing.

Choice of the format/text type was often central to the success of the overall assignment. Candidates submitted examples of all text types listed in the Guide, although some were clearly more popular than others.   There were many variations on forms of written correspondence, and articles, blogs and speeches/presentations were also often chosen. The choice of format was generally successful as long as the candidate set the writing in a specific context. One format where candidates excelled in this respect was the interview, where it was easy to create a concrete setting. In one example on environmental issues, the candidate chose to write an interview with a geography teacher for the school magazine, thereby immediately limiting the audience and the context and avoiding the danger of lapsing into vague generalities. In contrast, many who chose to write a speech failed to identify the aim of the speech, or to think about their audience and address themselves to this audience.

The danger with many formats is that it quickly degenerates into an essay. This often comes from a poorly thought through aim. When addressing the issue of why the format was chosen, many candidates wrote in the Rationale "weil es gut geeignet ist", without stating what it was suited to, or "um zu informieren", without stating why or whom, or "damit ich meine Meinung ausdrücken kann", a reason which can apply to so many of the text types.

Specifically on some of the more common text types chosen:

Letter/Email:

Almost without exception, those who chose the write a piece of correspondence had no problems with the associated conventions. Occasionally, however, candidates displayed an apparent ignorance of aspects of register (e.g. du/Sie) and style. It is scarcely appropriate, for example, to end a letter to the head of the school with "Alles Liebe, Mary", or to begin a letter "Sehr geehrte Regierung". In all cases, a letter or email needs a specific recipient and reason. While a letter to mother or the head of the school has a specific context and audience, it is important then to remember who the recipient is while writing and to remain on task. An email "to a friend" is particularly vague, especially if there is no precise aim. All too often candidates gave the context of writing to a friend and then proceeded to lecture them on the pros and cons of a specific issue for no obvious reason. In one instance a candidate wrote to a grandparent to warn them of the dangers of global warming. It was unclear why.

It would also be beneficial for candidates to show an awareness of audience and levels of formality in their writing, for example through judicious use of formal connectives and longer, more complex structures in formal contexts or shorter, simpler linking devices and colloquialisms in informal contexts. An impersonal tone or style in an informal letter is not appropriate.

Blog:

There were some very imaginative and effective representations of what is by common consent a text type which is not easy to define. This inherent indefinibility should work in favour of the candidate, as they are then given relatively free reign to express themselves imaginatively in a personalised, reflective, emotional or even polemic response to the source material. Many showed a clear awareness of various features typical of a blog, and although marks are not awarded for decorative elements of layout, these unavoidably create a positive impression when assessing the piece of work. However, there were some candidates who failed to pay much attention to their chosen format and rather lazily wrote an essay but called it a blog.

Speech/Presentation:

When the audience and purpose were clearly defined and when the main body of the speech remained focused, this popular format was well done. However, candidates often failed to specify why they were giving a speech, or where, or to whom, and at times confused speech and presentation. If the need to address the audience, either directly or at least in the context of what is said, is ignored, the speech descends into vague generalisations.

Article:

The article was a very popular choice, with a wide variety of success in the implementation. Where it was done well, the context of the article was clearly specified, for example "for a teenage magazine". On the other hand, where candidates merely stated they were writing "an article", with no specified target audience and no clear aims or context, the assignment often quickly degenerated into what was essentially an essay.

With regard to conventions, an article should have a headline which attracts attention, and perhaps a strapline, plus a byline (authorship), an introductory sentence or paragraph focusing on the content, and clearly defined sections with headings. It can include a range of features such as quotations, statistics, references to other sources of information, etc, depending on the subject matter. Several candidates produced articles including many of these aspects, with creditable results. Those who failed to do so often also lacked clear aims to their writing, with correspondingly disappointing results.

Interview:

This was a fairly popular and generally well-executed text type. It lends itself particularly well to giving a concrete and specific setting, and this helps to maintain focus throughout the assignment. It helps to give the interview a short introduction to establish the context and the participants. It does not help to try to write an interview with several people. One candidate tried to include 3 completely different people to represent the three source texts, but it proved impossible to represent their views adequately within the constraints of 400 words.

Diary:

Although it is perhaps no longer quite so prevalent in everyday teenage life, this format was quite popular. It was also consistently well done. This suggests that the format is still taught, analysed and practised extensively in schools.

Criterion D – Rationale

Some candidates really struggled to comprehend what was required here, with many thinking that they had to summarise the source texts. A lot of rationales were at best ambiguous in their statement of aims, which had a consequential effect on Criterion B, which includes consideration of how effectively the aims stated in the rationale are achieved.

The rationale was assessed according to how well it states the aim(s) of the piece of writing in relation to the source texts used. A clear and convincing rationale should establish links with the sources, including how the sources have been used to achieve the aims. The candidate has a free choice with regard to the format for the piece of writing, and it is therefore expected that the rationale will include reasons for the choice of format, including where relevant how this format contributes to achieving the overall aims.

Thus candidates who say they have chosen to write a speech because they want to put forward a particular argument could go on to explain that with a speech they can more effectively seek to persuade their audience to support their standpoint. Otherwise many other formats could be equally valid.

Guidance on the rationale has perhaps been less specific than many teachers would have liked. However, most candidates succeeded in writing some form of rationale which established an aim and a choice of format. Weaknesses lay in making the aims specific enough, in giving reasons for the chosen format and in making sufficiently explicit references to the source texts.
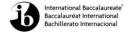
Of course, it can be argued that 100 words is barely enough to fulfil all these aspects, but this is a guide length, and no penalties were incurred if candidates wrote more. Obviously, the complete absence of a rationale resulted in zero marks for this criterion. This has an impact on Criterion B, but efforts were made to avoid over-penalising the few candidates who failed to write a rationale by lowering the mark for B excessively.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates.

Students should be taught the importance of

- a clear rationale with clear and precise aims

- choosing a format with which they are comfortable, but one which is appropriate to the task and the aims

- using the conventions, features and style appropriate to a particular text type

- making the format and the style compatible (e.g. not an academic essay in a letter to a friend)

- reconciling the audience/recipient and the aims, and maintaining the focus throughout

- balancing appropriate selection of vocabulary from the source texts with the avoidance of direct copying of longer extracts

- planning a response in detail to ensure it is well organised

- allowing time at the end to read through and check the work, and using a dictionary effectively in this time, as well as in the planning and writing phases.

Above all, however, the teacher should ensure that the source texts are accessible. It is vital to have suitable source texts if a meaningful and successful response is to result.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 11	12 - 23	24 - 30	31 - 37	38 - 44	45 - 52	53 - 60

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

All examiners agreed that the texts in this paper were appropriate and manageable for most students. Text A was from the type of magazine students appeared familiar with, Text B presented some surprises, but the questions were nevertheless answered with competence. Text C was from a topic area most students seemed to recognize, as was Text D, where Questions 45 and 46, however, presented some difficulties. The same was the case for Text E - a manageable text, with a few difficulties; all of these appropriate for a paper at Higher Level.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Students appeared well prepared for all areas of the programme, which was the first examination of the new syllabus. Now that the Written Response Task has been replaced with more text handling exercises, the students seemed very focused on these and dealt with the challenges confidently. They appeared to be familiar with different text types and also the concept of not looking for meaning through translation, but dealing with the text by focusing on the questions to be answered.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Text A was generally managed very well. Many students misunderstood Q 1, though, giving specific points rather than the overall topic. Q 4 and Q 6 presented a few problems in that students seemed to be guessing the answer, rather than finding it in the text. The same applied to Q 7, where many students chose 'Taschentuch' instead of 'Tränen'.

Text B appeared to be difficult, so many students did not read the questions as carefully as they should have. Q 13 was often guessed at (wrongly), and Q 16 and 18 presented numerous problems. Guesswork also in Q 22 (often matched with I, as everyone thinks the Swiss are very rich) and in Q 23 the option A was not often identified.

Text C was perceived to be relatively straightforward and the T/F questions were managed well. Q 28 and Q 30, though, often had the correct justification, but the wrong T/F choice.

Text D was generally managed well. Q 35 a few students focused on 'grinst', not mentioning the fresh T-Shirt, but Q 36 to 42 were mostly answered correctly. Q 46 was a problem for weaker candidates, as some gave 'Fahrer auf den hinteren Plätzen' or simply 'die immer zweite werden' - showing that they had not really grasped the context.

Text E was easier to understand, and students generally answered the questions correctly. Q 49 was sometimes interpreted, rather than answered from the text (aggressiv, wütend), as was Q 48 where the answer often referred back to Betthany - interesting also, that many students understood this name to be feminine.

On the whole there was a danger in writing too much - when copying out larger chunks of text there is always the problem of some unnecessary text obscuring the sense of comprehension.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

As always, preparation should focus on wider reading of a variety of texts on a range of topics. The core themes are so broad that it is impossible to predict the topic focus of any text in the paper. Candidates should be trained in extracting meaning from context rather than trying to 'understand' (or worse still, translate) every single word per se.

I would also recommend work on the recognition of word classes, as in gap filling exercises nouns were put into gaps where adjectives were required, and verbs were missing in the sentence completion. The understanding of question words should also be emphasized.

Apart from these two detailed suggestions, teachers seem to be preparing candidates successfully by exposing them to a wide variety of text types and exercises.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 7	8 - 14	15 - 18	19 - 24	25 - 30	31 - 36	37 - 45

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

The paper was relatively straightforward, more so now that the Written Response has been replaced by a further text handling/comprehension text. While some teachers may consider certain text themes problematic, this was not particularly evident in candidates' responses.

More than the level of difficulty of the text (text C is supposed to be the most challenging one), the type of questions proved to be the deciding factor of candidates' success.

There are mainly three areas that teachers should point out to students while practising the various question types:

The need to observe instructions about where answers can be found.

If the instructions (written in italics above the questions referring to a certain text) indicate specific sections that the questions refer to no mark can be awarded for (correct) answers relating to other sections of the text.

For example, for Q 1-3 the answers were to be taken from sections 1-3 of the text. Where factually correct answers to Q3 were taken from later text sections, it was not possible to award a mark.

The need to put time aside to read the options carefully.

Contrary to what might be expected, candidates had more problems dealing with precise answers than with open ended ones. There are, in particular, two types that require more attention:

  a.   Choosing the correct heading for a section (for example Q4-6)
  b.   Linking two halves of a sentence (for example Q32-35)

Both tasks provide a considerable number of options to choose the correct answers from, which requires thorough reading of not only the text, but also the various answer options. Candidates need to take this extra time into consideration. For type b, applying basic knowledge of German sentence structures would help to minimize options and to save time (for example: a plural noun requires a verb in plural, verbs come second in a main clause, after prepositions expect nouns not verbs…)

The need to double-check confusing logic.

The true/false format with justification remains a tricky one. Candidates need to read the statement carefully and assess how it is phrased, negatively or positively. They also have to double check that they answered both parts of task: ticking the appropriate box **and** justifying answers (even if they are correct).

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

The majority of candidates appeared well prepared for the format of this paper. Overall, candidates seemed to be well versed in how to find the answers to questions, even if they were not entirely sure of meaning, suggesting much work has been done in teaching candidates how to select appropriate text.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Some of the questions were more straightforward than others, and these were distributed across the four texts. Similarly, there were questions which were more challenging. In most cases, these two sets of questions were good discriminators between candidates of differing abilities.

The trickiest questions were:

Q2 and 3 -To be awarded the mark, it was necessary to adhere to specific sections for the correct answer. (See above)

Q7- Many candidates failed to discriminate between "Abfälle" and "Abgase".

Q8 – Several candidates overlooked the double negation "Die Gefahr**los**igkeit … nicht umstritten"

Q11-This question required a good understanding of the text and only few candidates produced a correct response.

Q13 -This overview question proved difficult for several candidates

Q21 & 22 - Many found it impossible to produce a precise enough response to gain the marks or gave the same answer to both questions.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

While examination preparation should always ensure that candidates are familiar with the various question types and core key vocabulary, this session proved again that for high scores in paper 1 a sound acquisition of general vocabulary and reading skills are needed. Wider reading of a variety of texts on a range of topics, with a focus on extracting meaning from context rather than trying to 'understand' every single word per se is recommended.

A procedural reminder: candidates who intend to change an answer should clearly cross out the old one and write the new answer not inside, but next to the box.

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 7	8 - 15	16 - 21	22 - 27	28 - 33	34 - 39	40 - 45

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

On the whole the questions were dealt with very well by the candidates. The new presentation of Paper 2 did not seem problematic and the Higher Level candidates wrote strong responses to the chosen question. Part B was the new element in this paper, and again candidates dealt with this task confidently, finding the theme interesting and a good stimulus for their ideas.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

As always students had very good ideas on the chosen question, while the same could not always be said about their confidence about the different text types. Most candidates had strong ideas for the argument in Part B, perceiving the discussion to contain familiar elements. On the whole the range of vocabulary was more than adequate for this level, and the ability to express ideas was not limited by language problems.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Question 1: Some excellent knowledge of German specialities (food) was displayed, as well as the vocabulary to discuss these. Some candidates with only vague ideas about their role in the 'Schulfest' did not do well, others did not write about food at all, but used the question as a vehicle to reproduce a prepared essay about 'culture'.

Question 2: Many good ideas were offered about how to increase the number of sports activities, often imaginative and very detailed. This was obviously a subject close to the heart of many students, and a very popular question. A weakness was, as usual, the apparent lack of knowledge of some candidates as to how to write a formal letter and how to address the head teacher.

Question 3: Another popular question. There were some good approaches, and much detailed subject knowledge - again this seemed to be a topic most students have encountered in some depth. A weakness was the lack of features specific to a magazine article.

Question 4: There were many excellent ideas for wet weather activities. A weakness was the lack of email conventions in some responses and, in some cases, having written without having fully understood the question and therefore not addressing fellow camp leaders at all, but writing about a holiday experience.

Question 5: This was not a popular question, although a small number of students wrote excellent blogs. A weakness was, once again, that some candidates had prepared essays on environmental issues and re-wrote these without really responding to the slant of the question about food additives. The format of the blog also has some specifics that did not always appear.

Part B: In general students liked the topic and responded well to the stimulus. There was an occasional re-surfacing of the Written Response with some students quoting the text, but this was not a problem. A weakness was the lack of a planned and organized argument - the limited number of words means that students really need to think about how to present their ideas convincingly.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

As in previous years, the main recommendation is to prepare students for the different text types. The number of conventions is limited and these can be easy marks to gain - their absence simply does not merit a top grade, even if the ideas are good and the language is fluent. The candidates this year had a wide variety of ideas and demonstrated imagination and a good range of grammar and vocabulary to express them. In Part B students need to be taught how to approach this task in an organized way; it is essential that the arguments are planned and organized logically, there has to be a sentence introducing the point, and a short conclusion. Not all text types offer themselves to this, and this means that students can lose marks if they are too creative! A letter to a friend may not suggest arguments for or against, but bubbly exuberance for one side of the argument is not enough in this case. There are no marks here for the conventions of the text type, and students need to be aware of this.

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Teachers should ensure that students have a checklist for what is needed, and also that they are fully aware of the details of the assessment criteria.

Further comments

It was very encouraging to see how confidently the Higher Level students dealt with both parts of the examination, and also to find that a topic such as bilingualism is apparently thoroughly discussed in IB schools around the world.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

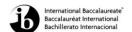| Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 10	11 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 25

General comments

The standard of performance in this session was broadly comparable with standards over recent years, reflecting the fact that although this is the first year of a new Language B Guide the format of Paper 2 has remained essentially the same. There should have been little in this exam to surprise the well-prepared candidate. Assigning the writing tasks to specific topic areas certainly seems to have helped the majority focus their responses appropriately in terms of ideas and vocabulary, and there were very few examples of candidates producing largely irrelevant answers. The assessment criteria may be different, but essentially the candidates are still being assessed on their ability to produce a clearly formulated and well-structured response to a given task, developing a range of relevant ideas using an appropriate format and style, although the mark for Format has been reduced to a maximum of 5. This means that the ability to construct a meaningful written text in German remains central.

Examples of both well-written responses and poor attempts were to be found in answer to all five tasks. By far the most popular was task 1, followed by task 3. Task 2 elicited the smallest number of responses.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

The overwhelming majority seemed well prepared for the format of the exam, and there were few instances of responses falling short of the length expectations. Similarly, there were few answers which failed to address the question in some way. It was encouraging to see that many candidates planned their responses before writing them, although evidence of checking at the end was in some cases much less apparent.

Where candidates were able to engage with the task on a personal level there were many examples of good responses. Weaknesses were more evident when candidates strayed outside the spheres of knowledge where they were comfortable.

Most candidates seemed reasonably well-prepared in their approach to text types, although a significant minority seemed to regard this aspect as an intrusion on their desire to write a straightforward essay response. This is an aspect which can and should be prepared.

The biggest weakness lies, as in previous years, in the general standards of linguistic competence. Although there are examples at this level of responses in well-written German, these remain in the minority. More often, standards are at best inconsistent and at worst some candidates sadly show little understanding of basic sentence structures and grammar. If candidates show little command of verb forms, for example, the examiner will understandably have difficulty in extracting meaning, and the low marks in Criterion A will consequently be mirrored in Criterion B. It is therefore essential that this aspect of language learning is addressed.

Question 1

This was by far the most popular choice in this session and proved very accessible even for many weaker candidates with the focus on personalised daily life, the candidate's home country, informal language and a familiar format. The question provided an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate an awareness of cultural diversity and intercultural understanding, and some demonstrated an insightful knowledge of a range of issues, including migrant workers and national identity. Others focused on aspects of daily life such as food, transport and alcohol – equally relevant, although occasionally a little superficial. Weaknesses in addressing the subject included concentrating on just one aspect, such as Christmas, or at the other extreme listing a range of differences with little or no development. Ideally, candidates chose to highlight 3-4 aspects and were able to develop these with examples and details. This also helped to give structure to the overall response, and this is where planning bears fruit. Some candidates lapsed into generalisations, such as the assumption that all Germans travel everywhere on public transport or by bicycle.

The task required differences to be analysed, rather than simply a description of the candidate's home town or region. Some candidates focused almost exclusively on their own home, describing in detail local customs without drawing any comparisons, or chose to write about a trip to Germany, again without comparing in any detail with home. The perspective for the task is that the friend is visiting the candidate, not vice-versa. In the marking this aspect was often handled with a degree of leniency, as long as differences were brought out, but it exemplifies a careless approach to reading and understanding the task which can easily result in an unnecessary loss of marks.

The email format was handled well by the majority of candidates, with an informal register and style and also often a welcoming tone. However, in some cases it was difficult to discern whether the text was an email or a letter. As with other formats, one deciding factor for the award of the maximum 5 marks for Criterion C was whether the correct format was instantly and clearly recognisable. This can, for example, be reflected in the use of a subject line and/or emoticons.

Question 2

This task was chosen by very few candidates. The specific reference to Karneval/Fasching may well have put many off if they had neither first-hand experience nor lesson-based knowledge. Unfortunately, it did not put off a small number of candidates who chose to write instead about the Oktoberfest. The suspicion arises that these candidates had gambled on meeting a question on the Oktoberfest and had prepared a response. Otherwise the amount of statistical and historical material would be difficult to explain. Furthermore, these candidates had clearly not reflected on whether an account of a beer festival was an appropriate topic for a presentation to a class of younger schoolchildren.

Those few who did write about Karneval/Fasching rarely got beyond rather superficial tourist information, with little attempt, for example, to describe the atmosphere, colour etc. and to appeal to a young audience. Indeed, on the general level of format, there was also sadly little evidence of attempts to write a presentation aimed at younger children, beyond a few pre-learnt introductory expressions such as "Liebe Mitschüler". Such a format also requires the audience to be addressed, engaged and involved in the course of the presentation.
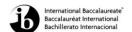
Question 3

This was a fairly popular choice of task. As with Question 1, opportunities to use personal experience on a familiar topic area resulted in some solid responses, although others failed to progress beyond more superficial aspects of nutrition or provided unconvincing alternative suggestions.

It is important to recognise that the task is in two parts. A few candidates wrote extensively on the importance of breakfast while neglecting to outline solutions to the problem, and this affected marks for Criterion B. A further minority had clearly learnt an excess of facts and statistics on healthy eating, which then looked stylistically incongruous in the context of an article in a school newspaper.

Candidates should always be prepared to devote some thought to producing a response which reflects the required format, and to go beyond simply giving the piece a title and then writing what is essentially an essay. Criterion C Format does not simply assess the framework conventions of a text type. It also considers style, tone and register, and thus has a reflection in content as well. Too many candidates lost marks in Criterion C for this task by writing in an undefined format, lacking in any characteristics which might be expected of a newspaper article. These could include here, for example, alongside a catchy headline, the author's name, an introductory paragraph summarising the content of the article, sub-headings for different sections, the use of statistics and/or quotations (e.g. from pupils), references and links to further background reading, and so on.

Question 4

This task was attempted by a reasonable number of candidates and resulted in a full range of responses, from convincing, interesting and even entertaining museum descriptions clearly written by candidates with an affinity with their subject matter and the ability to convey their enthusiasm, to rather superficial accounts which could have been about almost any museum anywhere. A small number of candidates overlooked the bold reference to "**einem** Museumsbesuch" and instead wrote about several. These responses consequently lacked depth and detail. A minority also chose to ignore the wording of the task and wrote in general about a visit to Germany, sometimes mentioning museums along the way.

With regard to content, two distinctively different approaches were encountered: a detailed description of the exhibits/artefacts in the museum, including background information, or an account of personal experiences of and reactions to a visit. Both approaches were deemed appropriate. The course is not intended to culminate in a test of specialist knowledge of the contents of the Pergamon Museum, and it is equally valid to focus on feelings and thoughts inspired by a visit, or to enthuse about the museum shop or café.

While it is accepted that a blog is characterised by a relative freedom from conventions, there are still elements of format which might reasonably be expected from candidates selecting this task. Indeed, many produced admirable blogs, including elements such as addressing the wider readership in the body of the text and inviting comments, as well as the more obvious but essentially more "decorative" features surrounding titling and layout. In contrast, others lapsed, as with Question 3, into a more indefinable format and style closer to an essay. While real-life blogs may well at times be written as essays, candidates must recognise that they are writing in the context of an examination and will thus be expected to demonstrate an ability to reflect the desired text type.

Question 5

Clearly this task was not inviting candidates simply to write a list, and indeed almost all who attempted this question recognised that the requirement to write 250-400 words alone precluded such an approach. Nevertheless, there were occasional responses which failed to develop the "list" sufficiently, choosing to list up to 20 different aspects each with 1-2 sentences, rather than focus on perhaps 6 key points of domestic relevance, each with some development. Those who did choose the latter approach, together with an attention-grabbing heading, a short explanatory introduction and a few concluding comments directed at the family, were easily able to aspire to the higher mark bands, although complexity of language was perhaps a little more difficult to demonstrate with this task.

With regard to content, it is important to recognise that the context is one of everyday family life. Many did just this, exploiting fully the range of everyday household realities around saving energy and water, avoiding waste and reducing use of the car. In contrast, those candidates who wrote extensively on the pros and cons of nuclear power and renewable energies or the effects of global warming on polar ice-caps clearly possessed a wealth of topic-related knowledge but had also clearly come into the exam ready to reproduce this knowledge in answer to whatever environment-related question came up. As well as being largely irrelevant in the context of the task, such responses were also largely written in a style inappropriate to the given domestic situation. At the other extreme, several candidates were successful in injecting elements of humour into their admonition of family members, thus producing a very effective piece of writing. In summary, this question elicited a large proportion of good responses.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Most teachers have become very adept at giving their students exposure to a wide range of topics and text types. However, the grammar aspect still appears to be being neglected by some. Teachers should pay attention to the grammatical side of language learning alongside vocabulary acquisition and thematic knowledge, otherwise the more productive components

of any exam will present insurmountable difficulties. As in previous years, it befalls this report to state what should be obvious: there is a need for basic grammatical accuracy in order to score high marks. A lack of awareness of the fundamentals of German sentence structure will always impinge negatively on communication of the message, thus affecting the marks for Criterion A and B. Candidates need to show command of key aspects of verb tense formation, word order and cases to access more than half marks in Criterion A. Once relative competence with simple structures is achieved, students should work on using cohesive devices such as linking words and expressions, and on varying sentence openings and sentence length. Variation of structures, openings and length all help to demonstrate some linguistic maturity, and if aspects such as verb forms and word order are reasonably accurate, clear and simple language will still score up to 7-8 for Criterion A. While attempts to produce more complex structures and a wider, more abstract vocabulary will be rewarded, the concept of "complex" language only occurs in Criterion A in the highest mark band. In learning the language and preparing for the exam, more complex structures should be introduced gradually once students are confident with simple structures, otherwise the result is often confused language and clouded messages. Frequently in such situations candidates in the exam seem to be reduced to relying on Anglicisms – not just in their vocabulary but also in their sentence structure. Candidates should remember the adage: the exam is there to show the examiner what you know, not what you don't know.

It is of course imperative that students are acquainted with the various text types which they could meet in the exam. The requirement to produce different text types is nothing new, and these are clearly laid out in the Guide. There are also sufficient examples in past exams to give practical contexts. Many teachers clearly do this, but it is still surprising that certain formats seem to catch some candidates unawares, and always disappointing to read a response which is essentially an essay when a different text type is prescribed. In this session, Question 5 showed that most candidates are able to use their intelligence and common-sense to produce a response appropriate to the question. In contrast, many responses to Question 3 lapsed into a generic essay-style response rather than considering the wider purpose.

Finally, a word on the importance of planning. As noted above, it is heartening to see that this skill is taught by many teachers. Invariably these candidates score more highly in Criterion B, where both the development and organisation of ideas are assessed. All students should be encouraged to compose a plan.

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