

May 2013 subject reports

German *ab initio*

Overall grade boundaries

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 16	17 - 33	34 - 51	52 - 64	65 - 75	76 - 87	88 - 100

Standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 11	12 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 21	22 - 25

Individual oral

Please ensure that the visual stimuli presented to the candidates are directly linked to the target culture. Words should only appear on the visual stimulus if they are a natural part of the scene, for example, shop or street signs. Any such words should be in the target language.

Introductions, even if they do not form an official part of the oral, should take place in the target language. The candidate should introduce himself/ herself in the target language giving name and candidate number.

Teachers are reminded to 'guide' students through the oral by informing them of when one Part is over and when another is about to begin.

In order that candidates can access the upper markbands for both criteria, teachers are encouraged to intervene if necessary and move the candidate on in order that the three parts are completed in timely fashion.

Teachers are reminded to ask the two compulsory questions on the Written Assignment after the description and follow-up questions on the visual stimulus. It is important to ask these questions because the student will possess the necessary vocabulary to handle both open ended and more direct questions on the Written Assignment and thus stands a better chance to access the higher markbands in Criterion B, interactive and receptive skills.

The style of questions chosen by the teacher is important and must be one which allows stronger candidates to access the upper markbands while allowing weaker candidates to feel comfortable throughout.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

It was encouraging to see that nearly all schools provided appropriate visual stimuli. Stimuli which have writing in a language other than German should be avoided (and mostly were avoided). Almost all teachers followed the new format correctly, i.e. they asked questions about the Written Assignment at the beginning of the oral examination. A number of candidates were able to have a meaningful, interesting conversation about their research.

As in previous years, the standard of the internal assessment varied. Some candidates demonstrated the ability to manipulate the language very well, using both basic and complex structures accurately. These candidates were able to communicate fluently and express both basic and complex ideas at a normal pace of speech, using idiomatic expressions correctly. At the other end of the spectrum, the weaker candidates had difficulties to express basic ideas and were not able to manipulate the language in order to communicate efficiently. These candidates had difficulties in understanding the teacher's questions and comments, particularly during the general conversation.

In most orals the teachers managed the transition between the two parts of the oral well and found a good way to connect the description of the visual stimulus and the follow-up questions to the general conversation. In most orals the general conversation flowed well and naturally, covering a range of topics from the syllabus, thus giving the candidates the opportunity to talk about a number of issues. Only in a few cases the general conversation was reduced to a mere question and answer format. Assessment is difficult if the candidate is not engaged in a conversation. This part of the oral is intended to be an authentic conversation which should not be rehearsed. It should also give the candidates the opportunity to show what they can do and what types of structures they are able to use.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Typically, candidates had higher scores in criteria B= communication skills and C= interaction than criterion A= language.

Criterion A: language

Candidates usually attain the lowest number of points in this criterion. This can sometimes be attributed to nervousness but also that it is more difficult for learners to speak accurately and clearly than to understand and communicate.

Criterion B: communication skills

Even weaker candidates manage to communicate some ideas, both about the visual stimulus and in the general conversation.

Criterion C: interaction

Weaker candidates require some repetition and prompting but most candidates are usually able to keep the flow of the conversation.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers who develop a positive rapport with their students can ultimately elicit stronger oral performances from them. Teachers who seemed genuinely interested in what the candidates were saying (who asked genuinely interesting questions) got the best communicative responses from the candidates.

There seems to be a tendency for teachers to ask questions which only require the use of the present tense. As the perfect tense is an important part of the syllabus, the candidates should be given the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to use it. When preparing candidates for the internal assessment, attention should be paid to the correct verb and adjective endings and grammatical accuracy in general.

Further comments

At times there is a tendency for teachers to be generous with their marks. This leaves a discrepancy between the teacher's grade the moderator's grade.

A few teachers did not ask questions about the Written Assignment. They should be reminded of the new format of the Internal Assessment.

Standard level written assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 7	8 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 15	16 - 17	18 - 20

Written assignment

Choice of topic

The topic selected for the written assignment **must** come from the prescribed topics as detailed in the guide:

Individual and society	Leisure and work	Urban and rural environment
Daily routines	Employment	Environmental concerns
Education	Entertainment	Global issues
Food and drink	Holidays	Neighbourhood
Personal details, appearance	Media	Physical geography

and character		
Physical Health	Sport	Town and services
Relationships	Technology	Weather
Shopping	Transport	

Teachers should guide students to choose topics which are sharply focused and manageable in the number of words available (200 -300).

The topic should be clearly stated in the title of the written assignment. It is recommended that the target culture (country /countries) is mentioned in the title.

Students must select a target culture where the target language is spoken.

Teachers are reminded that the topics selected by students for the written assignment can overlap but each title **must** be different.

Presentation

The written assignment consists of:

- Title
- Description
- Comparison
- Reflection
- Bibliography

The headings (Description, Comparison and Reflection) should be used to structure the text. The three questions which form the basis for the section Reflection should also be written out fully.

All written assignments must be hand-written in ink.

When quoting from a source, almost all ab initio languages use the same convention of either speech marks or footnote notes:

1. ...and confirmed according to J Fotheringham: "cycling is as popular in Great Britain as it is in France".
2. ...and confirmed because cycling is as popular in Great Britain as it is in France.¹

Word count

The word limit **must** be respected. There is a 2 mark penalty in Criterion E, Language if less than the minimum number of words or more than the maximum number of words has been written.

¹ J. Fotheringham

For the purposes of the written assignment, a word is defined as having a space either side of it:

It's a shame that = 4 words

It is most unfortunate that = 5 words

Quotes, the headings of each part, the three questions (Reflection) are **not** included in the word-count.

Criterion specific comments

Description

It is important that factual information on the **target culture** be included in this section. Information given on the student's own culture will not be awarded marks in this section.

The factual information should emanate from the research conducted by the student. Justifying why this topic has been chosen is **not** considered factual information.

Comparison

A comparison may be made in a single paragraph using comparative language (*but, on the other hand, while, whereas, more than...*) or in two parallel paragraphs which treat the same elements in both cultures.

For the purposes of assessment, similarities and differences between the cultures chosen for the written assignment will be treated equally.

Reflection

All three questions must be answered.

Students should not include any information that has already appeared in the two preceding parts (Description and Comparison).

In the third question: *What might a person from the target culture(s) find different about your chosen topic in your culture(s)?* the student is being asked to consider the chosen topic not in the context of the target culture but in his / her own culture from an "outsider's" point of view.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Predictably the standard of candidates' work varied from very well articulated and well-researched pieces to barely comprehensible, unstructured and incoherent scribbles.

The topics of the WA also varied. A lot of candidates chose to write about how certain festivals are celebrated (Christmas and Easter in particular), education systems in different countries, women's role in different societies and different political systems were also popular.

There were also more unusual topics such as how school leavers mark the occasion in different countries. I did not see one topic that was wholly unsuitable.

On the whole the candidates chose a topic that suited their interest and succeeded in describing the cultural differences well.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

A lot of candidates didn't seem well prepared to write a suitable description. It was often confused with a general introduction or an expression of their personal opinion on their choice of topic.

Criterion B

Most candidates successfully described cultural differences and/or similarities well. Weak candidates often only wrote about one or two differences. Some candidates focused on the similarities rather than the differences.

Criterion C

The successful candidates wrote the three questions out and answered them succinctly. A lot of candidates showed that they have a clear understanding of intercultural issues.

Criterion D

Most candidates scored full marks here. Only very few WA's were written in a very personal and thus unsuitable way.

Criterion E

The candidates' linguistic abilities varied. Some candidates exceeded the word limit and lost marks, a few didn't write the required 200 words. Adequate preparation for the task would have prevented this.

Criterion F

Direct quotes from sources were often not appropriately referenced. Also not all candidates had 2 sources in the target language in their bibliography.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

If candidates choose not to use the sub headings, they should be taught to lay out their work so it is clear which aspect of the WA they are writing about. Some candidates lose marks as it is not obvious to the person marking the work what they are writing about.

Candidates should practise writing within the word limit. Candidates should also know that they have to reference the source of factual information in the text and that direct quotes have

to be referenced. Even though some candidates put quotes in quotation marks, they did not state the source. Teachers should ensure that candidates have used at least 2 sources in the target language.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 7	8 - 14	15 - 21	22 - 26	27 - 31	32 - 36	37 - 40

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

The main problem areas were connecting sentence halves, some of the grammar in context questions and some of the true/false sentences with justification.

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

Multiple choice and short answers questions did not seem to present difficulties, the same as deciding whether a person had made a negative or positive statement.

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

Q 1-5 Deciding whether a person had made a positive or negative statement

This task was intended as an easy first task. Almost all candidates received full marks, only a few, very weak candidates made mistakes here.

Q 6-10 Matching a list of words with a synonym

Although the words in this task referred to Text A, the easiest text of the paper, it proved nevertheless challenging to some of the weaker students. Stronger candidates did not encounter great difficulties. Mostly wrong answers were given to Q 6 and 10.

Q11 Multiple choice question

This task was intended as a lead-in question to Text B. The vast majority of candidates attained a mark here. The answer was the first sentence of Text B, the candidates only had to make the connection between the different forms of the verb 'können'.

Q 12-15 Finding a noun in the text that corresponds to a personal pronoun in a given sentence

Almost all candidates made a mistake here. The questions which presented the most difficulties were Q 12 and 13. A common mistake was that candidates put 'die Kinder' for Q13.

Q 16-17 Multiple choice questions

Few candidates found these questions challenging.

Q 18–19 Answering short questions with information from the text

On the whole candidates did not experience difficulties with this task. However, a number of candidates answered "Normalschrift" and "Blindenschrift" rather than "Internet" and "Buch" for Q 18. For Q 19 some candidates did not change the personal pronoun from "ich" in the text to "er". However, as this paper tests text comprehension, candidates still received the point. In general, almost all candidates received at least some points for this task; a fair number of candidates received full marks.

Q 20 Multiple choice question

This task was intended as a lead-in question to Text C. Although this was the most difficult text of the paper, the vast majority of candidates attained a mark here.

Q 21-25 Connecting sentence halves

Weaker candidates were not able to connect the sentence halves correctly because they did not know the correct syntax for main and subordinate clauses and/or did not understand the cohesive devices. They also found it difficult to find the sentences in the text that corresponded to the completed sentences to check that their answers were correct content wise. This exercise tested the grammatical knowledge of students as regards correct syntax and which cohesive devices introduce main clauses and which subordinate clauses. The added difficulty for weaker candidates may have been that Text C is an interview and the information was presented in the third person singular in the questions.

Q 26 Identifying four correct statements out of a list of nine

Only very weak candidates had difficulties identifying the correct statements.

Q 27 Multiple choice question

This task was intended as a lead-in question to Text D. Only very few, very weak candidates did not attain a mark here.

Q 28-32 True/false questions with justification

This task required thorough reading of both the text and the questions. Stronger candidates had no problem with this task and attained full marks. In general, weaker candidates had difficulties extracting the relevant part of text for the justification and they seemed not to realise that both the T/F answer and the justification are needed to gain the point. The examiners did not accept incomplete answers for the justifications, notably for questions 28

and 29. For these questions, some candidates left out the word “verloren” and the web address respectively. However, there were a few candidates, who did not write the justification, they may have not been aware of the fact that the justification was needed to get the point.

Q 33-36 Finding the sentence which best summarises the paragraph

The vast majority of the candidates got full marks here. Weaker candidates did not make the connection between the summary and the text.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

It is essential that teachers work through past papers with their students. The question types are the same every year and familiarity with the questions would eliminate mistakes such as putting true/false but not a justification. Also some knowledge about the language such as different parts of speech is useful for gap filling exercises. For the grammar in context questions candidates should be familiar with different pronouns. Again, a lot of practice of exercises which test this question type would help candidates to prepare for this. Teachers should endeavour to do a lot of vocabulary building exercises so candidates do not find the synonym questions so challenging.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 19	20 - 22	23 - 25

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

Frequent problems for all sections included using both basic and complex grammatical structures. Word order - particularly the position of the verb in both the main and auxiliary clause - vocabulary range, verb conjugation, cases and tense referencing, using the correct auxiliary verbs and in some cases past participles were also challenging for many candidates. This applied particularly to Part B, where more creative, independent written text production was required.

Many candidates demonstrated appropriate knowledge of the subject matter relating to the various tasks and were able to provide a comprehensive text presentation. This year the majority of candidates, except the very weakest, did not have great difficulties with the format of the tasks although for task 3 and 4 titles, dates and the writer’s name were frequently omitted. Addressing the readers also appeared quite difficult for many candidates and the informal “du” and formal “Sie” were occasionally mixed up in the same piece of writing. For tasks 3 and 4, where “du” and “ihr” were appropriate forms of address some of the weaker

candidates used “Sie”. “Sie” was appropriate for task 5 and most candidates who chose this task did use the appropriate form of address.

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

In most cases, candidates communicated most of the relevant information necessary to carry out the tasks. In both parts, appropriate formats were used almost without exception.

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

Part A, 1 & 2

Candidates produced mostly appropriate responses.

Part B, 3

Most candidates produced good blog entries and presented original ideas about their neighbourhood and the people who live there.

Part B, 4

The quality of the responses to this task varied. A number of candidates used the formal form of address which is inappropriate for an article for the school magazine. Some of the weaker candidates did not structure the article into paragraphs or put their name either at the top or the bottom of the article.

Part B, 5

Almost all candidates used the appropriate form of address for this task. On the whole they came up with attractive and appropriate ideas. A lot of candidates did not structure the text into distinct paragraphs.

A lot of candidates scored higher marks for the shorter, more guided writing tasks in Part A than the longer, more creative tasks in Part B.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Language

Teachers can guide students in using basic grammatical structures effectively and help them practice spelling. Students should also be taught to avoid sloppy mistakes such as not putting capital letters for nouns, omitting umlaute, putting ‚ei‘ instead of ‚ie‘ and vice versa, using straight translations from English such as ‚wie bist du?‘, using ‚vor‘ instead of ‚für‘ and capitalising ‚ich‘.

Presentation

Those candidates who lost marks for Criterion C 'presentation' used inappropriate formats. It would probably help students to practise writing tasks on different topics using different formats. Again, using past papers to practise is useful as the different formats used in the exam are the same every year.