

May 2014 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 - 53	54 - 66	67 - 76	77 - 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

The range and suitability of the work submitted

All schools now provide their own visual stimuli which are on the whole colourful and very attractive and suitable for 17-19 year olds. Only a couple of schools provided stimuli which had a lot of writing on them, for example a picture of a classroom in which most objects were labelled. This is obviously not suitable as the candidate's vocabulary is not tested.

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 to understand the teacher's questions and comments, particularly during the general conversation.

Candidate performance against each criterion

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 to understand the teacher's questions and comments, particularly during the general conversation.

In most internal assessments 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. Mostly 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. This part of the oral is intended to be an authentic conversation which should not be rehearsed, however, there are a few internal assessments every year which appear to be rehearsed. Also some schools ask all their candidates the same questions. The candidates should be given the opportunity to show what they can do and what types of structures they are able to use.

Typically candidates had higher scores in Criterion B = interactive and receptive skills than in Criterion A = productive skills. It can sometimes be attributed to nervousness that candidates attain fewer points against this criterion. Also it is more difficult for learners to speak accurately and clearly than to understand.

Even weaker candidates managed to describe the visual stimulus and respond to the teacher's questions. Teachers generally pitched their questions at the student's level.

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 seem genuinely interested in what the candidates say (and who ask genuinely interested questions) get 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 and the moderator's grade.

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

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Similarly to last year the standard of the Written Assignment was quite high. Most students wrote meaningful, interesting pieces.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Many candidates did not include factual information about the target culture in the description but wrote about their own culture and/or why they had chosen the topic. This means that the candidates do not receive any points for this criterion at all or they received fewer points than they could have done.

Some candidates did not write a comparison at all but just a description which meant that they did not receive any points for Criterion B. Some candidates did not answer all three questions for Criterion C.

This year there was only a couple of assignments which did not comply with the word count which means that only a few candidates lost points for Criterion E.

Some assignments did not fulfil the formal requirement. Some did not include any sources in the target language or there was just one source. Or there was no bibliography or the bibliography was not in a standard format. A number of students did not give the sources of their information.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

The requirements for the Written Assignments are clear. Teachers preparing their students for this task can ensure that candidates do not lose marks in areas where it can be easily avoided. Students should be thoroughly prepared for this task.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 8	9 - 16	17 - 24	25 - 28	29 - 32	33 - 36	37 - 40

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

Some of the weaker candidates were unable to understand the questions. However, a number of candidates who gave incorrect answers were still unaware of the nature of the task. The main problem areas were connecting sentence halves, some of the grammar in context questions, some of the true/false sentences with justification, some of the short answer questions.

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

On the whole the candidates did well on the multiple choice questions and at identifying the correct statement. They also did not seem to have difficulties answering short questions.

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

Q 1: This task was intended as an easy first task. The majority candidates received full marks, only some weak candidates made mistakes here. The problem for those candidates was that they did not understand that 'manchmal' is a synonym for 'ab und zu'.

Q 2-3: Again the majority of candidates received full marks here. The candidates, who did not, did not understand some of the vocabulary in the questions, especially the word 'reisekrank' seemed to present a problem.

Q 4: Only very weak candidates did not get marks here. This seemed to be because they did not know that 'gratis' is a synonym for the word 'umsonst' which is in the text.

Q 5-9: 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, except for question 9, here it was acceptable to omit the word 'wenn' because it did not alter the sense. 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 10: This task was intended as a lead-in question to Text B. Only very few, very weak candidates did not attain a mark here.

Q 11-14: The vast majority of the candidates got full marks here. Weaker candidates did not make the connection between the summary and the text.

Q 15-19: Almost all candidates made a mistake here. The questions which presented the most difficulties were Q 16 and 18. For Q16 some candidates did not realize that 'ihre' here

referred to a plural. For Q 18 a number of candidates put 'Marokko' as the answer as they did perhaps not realize that 'Driss' is a name and 'Marokko' a country.

Q 20: This task was intended as a lead-in question to Text C. Although this is the most difficult text of the paper, a number of candidates attained a mark here.

Q 21-23: 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 as regards to content. This exercise tested the grammatical knowledge of students as regards correct syntax and which cohesive devices introduce main clauses and which subordinate clauses.

Q 24-26: A number of candidates received points here. Those who did not did not understand some of the distracters – for example in Q 24 a number of candidates chose D as the correct answer as they did not make the connection with the information in the text.

Q 27: On the whole this question did not present any problems, however, a large number of candidates were not aware that 'studieren' means 'to go to university' rather than 'study'.

Q 28-30: On the whole candidates did not experience difficulties with this task. However, a number of candidates answered Q 28 with 'über 40 mal' as they did not realize that 'über' in the text is part of the verb. The examiners did not accept this answer.

Q 31-34: Only very weak candidates did not get full marks here because they did not have the vocabulary necessary for this task.

Q 35-37: This exercise presented few problems to the majority of students. Those who had difficulties lacked the understanding of the vocabulary.

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 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 19	20 - 22	23 - 25

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

Many candidates encountered various difficulties, such as using the appropriate register or genre. This applied particularly to Part B, where more creative, independent written text production was required. 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.

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 tasks 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. This applied particularly to task 2.

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

For Part A candidates had a clear preference for topic 2, for Part B topic 3 and 4 were preferred, few candidates chose topic 5.

Part A 1 & 2: Candidates produced mostly appropriate responses.

Part B 3: Few candidates produced good blog entries, a lot of entries were not very well structured and they seemed to be confused.

Part B 4: The quality of the responses to this task varied. A number of candidates came up with good ideas about saving energy and recycling and 'green' ideas. 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: Most of the relatively few candidates who chose this topic put a greeting at the beginning and an appropriate end to the speech. They also structured the text into distinct paragraphs. On the whole they fulfilled the task effectively.

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

This year the general standard of writing was not as high as in previous years.

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?‘, ‚nach meinem Hause‘ 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 practice is useful as the different formats used in the exam are the same every year. This gives weaker candidates in particular the chance to get full marks for Criterion C 'Format'.