

FIRST LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0505/01

Listening

General Comments

Paper 1, the Reading paper of this First Language syllabus, consists of two extended passages. One passage invites candidates to answer reading comprehension questions and then both passages are summarised in **Question 2** of the paper.

Overall, candidates did well on this paper. Most responded to both parts of the examination with extensive, well-written answers and, particularly on the first question, there were almost no examples of an incomplete response – all candidates gave a full answer to most of the questions. Presentation was generally good, but candidates should make sure they label all questions clearly and ensure that later additions are clearly marked with asterisks or numbers which correspond to numbers or asterisks in the main body of the text.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) A straightforward warm up question, which the vast majority of candidates answered correctly. Only a few candidates either gave a wrong age or year – many however, provided both age and year.
- (b) Most candidates gained the mark awarded here.
- (c) Most candidates answered this question correctly by mentioning two things that the children created from natural material – there were 5 possibilities here (hats, baskets, belts, sashed or toys), candidates only needed to mention any two to gain the marks.
- (d) The majority of candidates scored only one mark here – they explained that children had to create their own games/toys, but failed to mention the fact that they had no electronic toys at their disposal.
- (e) This question posed few problems for the candidates: Most candidates described the grandparents' house in some detail – no running water, no toilet, small, sparsely furnished. However, some candidates misunderstood the question and described where the house was situated instead.
- (f) This question presented no difficulty whatsoever; the majority of candidates gained the mark by explaining how the children used the trees to have a shower.
- (g) Again, most candidates managed to gain this mark, explaining the strange fact that the white sand turned the childrens' feet black.
- (h) For this question, many candidates simply copied the relevant sentence from the source text without understanding it fully. However, in order to gain two marks, the candidates needed to explain Loki's inquisitiveness in relation to nature/plants etc. The second mark was awarded for explaining that she had the opportunity to observe and learn from nature in her village.
- (i) This question referred to team games only and the three team games *Schlagball*, *Fussball* and *Abo-Bibo* needed to be mentioned to gain three marks here. Many candidates listed all the games mentioned in the text and consequently lost marks. A considerable number of candidates did not understand the concept of playing with old sticks that are found in the woods – they just copied the "Schlagball mit gesuchten", showing a complete lack of understanding.

- (i) Some candidates answered this question very well and managed to gain the 5 maximum marks by describing how Loki grew up – learning through play, growing into life as an adult through play, cooperative play, inventing games, no electronic games, chores part of play, growing up in poor conditions (no toilet, small house etc.). Many candidates however wrote about today's children rather than Loki.

Overall, it was pleasing to see that most candidates had labelled the questions properly and presented their work in a legible fashion. The level of language used when answering the questions was good or very good in the majority of cases. Some candidates did quote at length from the text rather than using their own words – this is not necessary and tends to waste time, which could be spent on proof reading work and eliminating mistakes.

Question 2

Most candidates structured their summaries effectively and there were few instances of linguistic analysis and interpretation of the texts, which are not part of a summary. Some candidates nonetheless continued to include their opinion about use of technology and different ways of growing up. This likewise is not part of a summary and could not be credited.

Some summaries did not include the level of detail that would have scored marks under the mark scheme.

Especially the first text was often so broadly summarised that almost all points disappeared, whereas the second text then got summarised well and quite a few marks were awarded. This scenario often occurred when candidates had written just about 200-220 words or even less, so an extra 30 odd words might have added a few more ticks!

It was encouraging to see that nearly all candidates finished the summary exercise and the work in general did not appear to have been rushed. In a small number of cases candidates had taken a long time to produce a detailed draft of their summary and did not have time to mention all the points they had made in their drafts.

Candidates scored well on the language side. Most candidates wrote in fluent, correct German and handled their responses to **Question 1** and the summary appropriately. Two trends in particular are worthy of note:

Many candidates adopt English spelling rules and have stopped using capital letters for nouns – not just for English words like computer, i-pod, camera, but also for German words.

Numerous candidates used too colloquial a register for the summary; *relaxen*, *chillen* and *rumhängen* should be replaced by *entspannen* or something similar in an appropriate register. Candidates need to be made aware of the more formal language required in an examination. The use of informal abbreviated words like *was* when *etwas* is meant should be avoided. A clear distinction should be made between written and spoken German.

Some general language mistakes picked up in both parts of the paper:

- *dass* and *das* confusion
- endings of adjectives were often incorrect or even missing: *in einem klein Haus*
- for unusual or difficult words, candidates often use phonetic spelling which makes understanding very difficult; it is important to spell words correctly.

FIRST LANGUAGE GERMAN

Paper 0505/02

Writing

General comment

The majority of this year's candidates acquitted themselves very well again. German syntax and lexis were handled well and there were many outstanding essays. These candidates used again language that included sophisticated complex sentences, consistently using appropriately, ambitious words with a high level of accuracy and only a few errors, which were of a minor nature.

Candidates demonstrated excellent knowledge of the language, displaying their own particular style and sense of humour.

It is evident that those candidates who have prepared their chosen topic thoroughly (i.e. structured plan, key notes etc.) produced higher quality essays, both grammatically and linguistically.

Very few candidates showed inconsistency in their use of common structured sentences, spelling and grammar including fundamental errors, faulty genders and tenses. They could not justify their opinion effectively and there was not much evidence to support their point of view.

Few candidates used non-target language vocabulary, mostly English, i.e. *...ich finde das ist eine Gute idea.....*

Some candidates showed significant errors with some invented words, i.e. *Responsabel* for *verantwortlich*; *Akkeptation* for *akzeptieren*; *exsestirete* for *existieren*; *Konsiquensen* for *Konsequenzen*; *Konklution* or *in conclusie* for *Zum Schluss* or *zum Abschluss*; *man hat mehr Chanksen* for *man hat mehr Chancen*.

If a candidate is not sure of a word, it is much better to choose an alternative word that is spelt correctly and is definitely found in the dictionary!

Words like *man/Mann*, *das/dass*, *viel/fiel* were quite commonly spelt wrong.

There were also some issues with comparisons and forms like *mehr interessant* or *der einzigste* and some candidates kept switching the present and imperfect tense in both narrations and descriptions. Many of the candidates forgot to put infinitives and past participles last in the sentence or conjugated verbs at the end of subordinating clauses.

Most candidates stayed within the prescribed word limit although a handful were below or above. Where essays were lengthy, the quality of expressions did not necessarily increase.

Candidates' handwriting did not cause many problems this year; there were only a small number of instances where it was difficult to make out what words a candidate had intended to write.

However, it is very positive and reassuring to see that Centres generally are taking on board the comments made in the past.

In order to gain top marks, candidates should prepare and plan before writing the essay straightaway; using bullet points to describe what each paragraph will contain and mapping out the structure of their argument!

Comments on specific questions:

Erster Teil - Diskussion und Erörterung

Question 1 (a)

Ist ein Schuljahr in einem anderen Land eine gute Idee? Wie denken Sie darüber?

This topic proved to be the most popular and was chosen by 363 candidates. The focus on the importance of living and attending a School in a foreign country seems a very real topic in today's life and candidates in international Schools clearly relate to this topic. Most candidates discussed quite passionately the advantages and disadvantages and were able to evaluate both sides of the argument very well.

Question 1 (b)

Ist ein Theaterbesuch heute noch zeitgemäß? Wie sehen Sie das?

This title proved the least popular. Only a few candidates, mostly top candidates, chose to tackle this question and argued their views very well.

Question 1 (c)

Ab welchem Alter sollte man Auto fahren dürfen? Was meinen Sie?

This essay inspired candidates to submit a strong opinion, as well as being linguistically accurate. Candidates were able to present their views convincingly. On the whole, the candidates who attempted this title, tackled it very well.

Question 1 (d)

Viele Menschen verbringen ihren Urlaub im Ausland und vergessen dabei ihr eigenes schönes Land. Sollte man das ändern und warum?

The quality of the responses varied somewhat. A couple of essays were weaker, lacking inspiration and also completed unsuccessfully, i.e. ...um dies zu ändern müssen wir ändern, was wir ändern können.

Zweiter Teil - Schilderung und Erzählung

Question 2 (a)

Stellen Sie sich vor, dass Sie an einer Mars-Expedition beteiligt sind. Beschreiben Sie den Flug dorthin.

A popular choice and most candidates decided to focus on a description and there were some very detailed responses. Some candidates, mostly boys, impressed with detailed technical knowledge.

Question 2 (b)

Mit dem Fallschirm-Tandem springen - beschreiben Sie den Sprung und was Sie dabei fühlen.

Another popular option, chosen equally by boys and girls. As required, most candidates were able to describe the atmosphere and expressed their feelings very well. Weaker candidates turned this question into a narrative, without giving any details nor achieving a convincing climax.

Question 2 (c)

Das konnte auch nur mir passieren. Erzählen Sie darüber.

This title provided easy access to narrate a great story and there was some fantastic build up of tension with very unexpected and sudden turns of events. However, some candidates let their minds wander, falling into the trap of creating a mundane, unstructured essay. They showed simple and sometimes inaccurate grammar and language development, i.e. ...ich hüpfte unter die Dusche...;nehmen sollen kann.....As a result the content lacked imagination and had an inconsistent or meandering focus.

Question 2 (d)

Oh...das war Omas liebste Vase. Erzählen Sie eine aufregende Geschichte.

This title provided an opportunity for candidates to display their linguistic strengths and creativity. There were a number of good essays with examples of positive and negative situations, followed up by their own opinion. These essays did not vary greatly, candidates simply ventured too far from their title, letting their minds wander. Mostly the 'vase' was dropped via a dog or little brother when fighting or playing football inside the house. However, some very unexpected and imaginative answers were submitted here too.