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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

GERMAN

GCE Advanced Level

Paper 9717/01

Speaking

General comments

There was a wide range of entry, from candidates who had a German-speaking parent or relative to candidates for whom German was a completely foreign language acquired at school. There were some very spontaneous, interesting topic discussions and general conversations. The candidates who performed best sounded as though they were taking part in a natural conversation, whereas there were some candidates who seemed to have over-rehearsed their topic and were awarded lower marks.

Teachers at Centres which have entered candidates for Speaking in the past seem now to be aware of the various requirements and regulations for this component, in particular the need for the candidate to ask the Examiner at least two questions in both the Topic conversation and the General conversation. On the whole, tests from these Centres were well examined and assessed.

There are two aspects, which need to be considered by new Centres:

- The candidate has to present the chosen topic for three minutes without interruption. The Examiner should intervene only if the candidate has obvious difficulty in continuing with the presentation. The Topic discussion should not commence, until the three minutes have elapsed.
- The candidate must ask at least two questions in the Topic Conversation and in the General conversation. The syllabus states: "Candidates are required to seek information and the opinions of the teacher." If the candidate fails to ask a question, no marks can be awarded under the heading "Seeking information and opinions". If only one question is asked, then the maximum mark is 3 out of 5. If no question is asked, then no mark can be awarded.

Individual Centre Reports will highlight any shortcomings.

Paper 9717/02

Reading and Writing

General comments

The level of difficulty of the paper was similar to last year's. Candidates performed in a similar way. There was evidence that some had improved their examination technique, but Centres will find in this report aspects of performance which still need attention.

Comments on specific questions

Erster Teil

Question 1

This year, candidates chose words which were inside the lines 1-9, as indicated in the rubric.

Answers to (a), (b) and (e) were those that were most frequently correct. Candidates had less success with (c) and (d).

(c) A few chose "führen" instead of *fordern*.

(d) Some wrote "bisher" and others "dabei" instead of *vielmehr*.

Question 2

Many candidates had difficulty in rephrasing the sentences with correct grammatical constructions.

- (a) A conditional was required here: *hätte* or *haben würde* or *haben könnte*, but it was often omitted in answers.
- (b) This question was usually answered correctly, as candidates had only to supply two words: *vorurteilsfrei prüfen*. It was also possible to express the concept *vorurteilsfrei* as *ohne Vorurteile*.
- (c) Candidates often omitted the necessary passive construction, or they put the verb *werden* in the wrong position in the sentence.
- (d) A number of candidates omitted to start their reply with *man* when writing: *(Westerwelle zufolge sollte) von der Bundesregierung eine entschlossene Einwanderungspolitik fordern*.
- (e) The comment made for (c) above also applies to this question.

Question 3

There were two reasons why candidates lost marks in this question: the failure to mention enough relevant points and the inability to express the answers with original wording instead of lifting them from the text. The rubric for **Questions 3 and 4** states: *ohne längere Satzteile direkt vom Text abzuschreiben*. Where the candidate merely copies the relevant part of the text, no mark is awarded. Candidates of average to less than average ability in the language need more practice in the art of finding synonyms to express concepts. Good candidates were still able to make most points and to gain 4 or 5 marks for language in this exercise.

- (a) Most candidates found the correct answer: *Sie sollte über Zuwanderung entscheiden*. However, some mentioned the need for a discussion or a decision but failed to say about what.
- (b) Candidates could choose five points from the available six here. Almost all candidates could express the idea:

Sie hat ihn scharf kritisiert/Sie hat darauf negativ reagiert/Sie war dagegen.

Of the following points, most candidates could make only one or two correctly:

Er ist/sei Stichwortgeber der Neonazis.

Er sollte sich mit den Opfern rechtsradikaler Angriffe solidarisieren.

Er erklärt die Ausländer zum eigentlichen Problem.

Schilys Unterscheidung in "gute" und "schlechte" Ausländer sei das Fundament des Rassismus/sei rassistisch.

Die Neonazis begründeten ihre Gewalttaten auf eine solche/ähnliche Unterscheidung.

- (c) Candidates could choose three points from the available four here. They were often able to express the ideas:

bis zu 400 Milliarden Mark würden fehlen,

weil zwei Drittel des Schwarzmarktumsatzes wieder in den Wirtschaftskreislauf/in die Wirtschaft zurückfließen.

The following points proved to be more elusive:

Es hätte fatale volkswirtschaftliche Konsequenzen/Folgen.

Es würde eine scharfe Rezession verursachen.

- (d) Many candidates were able to express two ideas correctly for full marks.
- (e) Only the best candidates achieved full marks here. The point which was most frequently omitted was: *Die Ausländer müssen verpflichtet werden, das Angebot zur Integration anzunehmen*.

Zweiter Teil**Question 4**

The general comment made for **Question 3** above also applies to this question.

- (a) There were fewer correct answers to this question (*mehrere Monate*) than were expected. Too many of candidates merely copied *mehrmonatigen* from the text.
- (b) The correct answer was 13, but other numbers from the text appeared on scripts: "2002 and 23".
- (c) Only two points were required from a possible three here. Most candidates were able to supply two. The correct point which few candidates mentioned was: *(Man beschuldigt die Fälscher) Schusswaffen/Munition besessen zu haben*.
- (d) The same comment applies here as to (c) above. The point which some candidates could not reword successfully from the text was: *Sie hätten Sozialhilfe mit Betrug/unberechtigterweise empfangen*.
- (e) There were four points to make in this answer. Few candidates could convey all of them satisfactorily. Many omitted to give an example of the criminal activity: *Sie müssen Diebe werden*.
- (f) Candidates had to make three points. The one which most overlooked was: *Ohne Schwarzarbeit könnte man 500.000 zusätzliche Arbeitsplätze in Deutschland schaffen*.
- (g) A number of candidates copied the text here instead of analysing the figures. They needed to express their answer e.g.: *Die Zahl der Fälle ist von 253 im Jahre 1998 bis 609 im letzten Jahr gestiegen*.

Question 5

The essential task is to summarise the two texts with original wording, according to the question set. Ten marks out of 20 are awarded for this aspect, as is stated on the question paper. Then the candidate is asked to give his or her own opinions on the issue for 5 marks. Indeed, some very able candidates express their own views whilst summarising the texts, in order to avoid repeating details.

It is important to organise the response like a mini-essay in order to fit everything in to the stipulated 140 words. The answer is cut off at around 150 words or at the end of the sentence after 140 words is reached, and no further marks can be awarded for the remainder. This year, only a few candidates wrote at great length and failed to mention enough points in their first 140 words.

Candidates who had understood the texts well were able to gain many content marks, and, in some cases, all 10 marks. A few summarised the passages very well but gave little personal response to the texts, thereby gaining only one or two marks out of 5.

Finally, 5 marks are awarded for language. For candidates who had properly planned their response to this question, language marks awarded here were broadly comparable to those awarded in **Questions 3** and **4**, as these candidates maintained their consistency. Some of those wrote too much paid less regard to accuracy. A few candidates appeared not to have devoted adequate time to this exercise and made more errors than they had in previous exercises.

Paper 9717/03

Essay

General comments

There was a marked preference among all candidates for the essay on the topic *Familie*. Second choice was equally divided between *Medien* and *Die Entwicklungsländer*. Then came *Gesundheit und Fitness*. No candidates opted for **Questions 1 and 2**. There was an exceptionally wide range of performance across the entry, from fluent, accurate and well-planned essays to brief and highly inaccurate offerings. It is clear that, for some candidates, writing a foreign language essay of this length on a serious topic is just too demanding. A list of the errors of the weaker candidates could serve little purpose in a report of this kind. Such a list would include all of basic German grammar. Amongst those candidates who write good but flawed German, one might point out the recurrence of errors such as a confusion between *weil* and *wegen* when wishing to find a German version for "because of"; the misuse of *man*, either in an extended piece (*man weiss, dass er nicht wählen kann*) or in oblique cases; common use of verbs such as *helfen* without a following dative. Other errors (frequently referred to in previous reports) occurred with the use of the comparative (*mehr frei* rather than *freier*), and in confusions between the usage of *bevor* and *vorher*.

As regards the mark given for Content, the main criticism of many essays is that they fail to construct an argument that sets out the issues and arrives at a conclusion. There is a tendency to rely on generalised statements which are not supported by evidence, or to give rather rambling anecdotes.

Comments on specific questions**Question 1 and Question 2**

No essays were submitted.

Question 3

Welche Gefahren hat das Fernsehen als Informationsmedium?

The main problem for candidates here was maintaining the focus on the question set. The essay required a point of view on TV as a medium of information. This was not intended to be an essay about the effects of TV on society at large, the low level of amusement or entertainment on offer, the prevalence of old films etc. Those candidates who did succeed in dealing with the issue of information commented on the possibility of political bias or of manipulation by various interested parties. Nobody chose to deal with other ways in which images may deceive, mislead or misrepresent. This was a good example of an essay title which candidates disregarded so that they could write the essay they expected on the harmful social aspects of TV.

Question 4

Was sind die größten Probleme für die Entwicklungsländer? Wie kann man zu diesen Problemen Lösungen finden?

Most candidates selected poverty as the principal problem, but also mentioned were health, corruption, the role of women and the problems caused by the emigration of young people. The phrasing of the question led candidates to write in rather general terms and some answers would have been improved if candidates had been more specific in naming countries. It was not surprising that candidates could not come up with very convincing solutions, since the problems are so daunting. Some essays touched on the issues of improved trade conditions but most often the solution proposed was to provide more cash and make sure it actually reached the people in need.

Question 5

«Gesundheit ist der größte Reichtum.» Sind Sie auch dieser Meinung?

The title produced some rather rambling essays. The idea of *Reichtum* was not fully understood or explained in this context.

Question 6

Aus welchen Gründen haben wohl die Leute in einigen Nationen immer weniger Kinder?

This was a popular title, producing some of the best essays. Candidates had views and information that ranged over a variety of issues, including improved contraception and the changing role of women in society. Candidates pointed to the egotism and selfishness of individuals in some advanced societies where children were seen as interfering with personal aspirations and *materieller Wohlstand*. On the other hand, some pointed out the higher value placed on the child in modern families (*Qualität nicht Quantität*). The decline of the extended family was noted, as was the declining role and influence of grandparents in children's upbringing. One candidate managed to argue that the fault all lay with the older generation for living too long. (*Die alten Menschen sind die schuldigsten...sie sterben nicht!!*). Besides the personal and social issues raised, reference was made to legal and political controls, such as exist in China.

Paper 9717/04

Texts

General comments**Focus on the terms of the question**

Candidates fail to engage with the terms of the question set and to focus on the issues raised by the question. Thus, in many cases the candidates used passages and questions as a springboard for storytelling, but did not actually attempt answers to the questions set in the paper. Candidates should be reminded that essay titles are worded with care, and the first task when tackling an essay is to get to grips with the meaning of the title.

Structuring the essay

An essay should be seen, first and foremost, as an argument. The writer is seeking to persuade the reader of the validity of the argument he/she is putting forward. An argument must be properly structured, introducing the theme, presenting evidence and leading to a conclusion. Some candidates start their essay by agreeing with the title, others do not conclude in any noticeable way, their essay just stops.

Storytelling

It is clear from the published marking criteria that simple retelling of the story gains low marks. Obviously, candidates must demonstrate knowledge of the story, but this must be tied in to the title of the essay, and evidence from the book must be *relevant* to the title. A candidate gains few marks if their knowledge of the text is not examined critically in the light of the question asked.

Length

Some candidates' answers were too short. In many cases what was written indicated that higher marks could have been achieved, if the candidate had carried on with their argument. Some candidates wrote only two essays rather than three or produced three half finished answers.

Language

Many candidates lacked the ability to produce language suited to express an appropriate argument. Often the essays were difficult to follow because of weaknesses in lexis, punctuation and grammar.

Instructions to candidates

Candidates should be aware of the demands of the question paper before they enter the examination room. The instructions on the front of the question paper remind them of the requirements: three questions should be answered, one question from **Section 1**, one from **Section 2** and one other. Not all candidates were aware of these requirements and attempted three questions from **Section 1** and none from **Section 2**.

Comments on specific questions**Section 1****Question 1**

Goethe, *Iphigenie auf Tauris*

A limited number of attempts were made at this text. Candidates showed that they were not thoroughly familiar with the plot. For instance, not knowing whether Orest is a man or a woman, or in the case of Iphigenie herself *Diese Person könnte ein Lehrer sein – oder ein Pfarrer...* Too much speculation without proof from the text was presented e.g. *Orests Vater war vielleicht eine primitive Person.*

Question 2

Frisch, *Biedermann*

- (a) The candidates who tackled the text extract were able to discuss the questions quite well. Some candidates know the play well and sustained good arguments about the behaviour of the characters and humour in the extract as well as in the rest of the story. Biedermann and his character and patterns of behaviour were also discussed particularly well in some cases. Few candidates repeated the points made in (i) under (iii), without showing further insights. The weakest answers show problems with the language and are insubstantial with very little relevance.
- (b) Nobody chose this question.

Question 3

Mann, *Der Tod in Venedig*

- (a) Few of the candidates who tackled the text extract were able to discuss the points raised in the questions well. Only very few went beyond simply quoting from the text and story telling. Some candidates showed some understanding of the theme of *moralischer Verfall*, but in many cases the argument was difficult to follow because of problems with the language.
- (b) More candidates chose this questions which involved discussing Aschenbachs *Reiselust* in the light of a longing for death. This question was, on the whole, not tackled well by most. Candidates retold the story, without including their own opinion. Some candidates had problems expressing their ideas coherently, often it appeared that candidates had learnt an essay about *Todesboten* by heart and were unable to make their material relevant to the question set in this paper.

Question 4

Storm, *Der Schimmelreiter*

- (a) Many candidates chose this question, although few were able to discuss the situation well. On the whole, not many candidates referred to the extract whilst discussing points (i) - (iii).
- (i) This question was answered mostly to the point but with little reference to the extract. Some candidates tried to use the passage, but contradicted themselves by claiming first the relationship Hauke has with his wife is a good one and then proceeding to prove the opposite, with quotes from the passage.
- (ii) The second part-question was tackled successfully only by very few candidates who were able to use the passage within the context of the whole story. Some candidates had very little of relevance to say.
- (iii) This question was left unfinished in some cases or used for storytelling.
- (b) Many candidates attempted this question and on the whole the answers were satisfactory. In some instances, however, there was no discernible material and no relevance to the question at all. In some cases the answer started off satisfactorily, but was then left unfinished.

Section 2

Question 5

Andersch, *Sansibar oder der letzte Grund*

Nobody chose this text.

Question 6

Brecht, *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis*

- (a) Very few candidates chose this question. Answers were on the whole satisfactory.
- (b) This question attracted some good answers. Weaker candidates spent most of their time retelling the story, but others produced a good argument which showed a deeper knowledge of the text and Brecht's understanding of *Gerechtigkeit*.

Question 7

Böll, *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum*

- (a) Quite a few candidates opted for (a). In general, candidates showed good knowledge and understanding of the story. There were a couple of good answers which discussed the question in detail and used the text to back up their argument. Weaker candidates had inadequate language to write a coherent argument and their knowledge shown was only marginal.
- (b) More candidates attempted this question. Few answers showed a good understanding of the text and were able to find the proof asked for in the question. Weaker candidates tended to retell the story and many answers were abandoned and left unfinished.

Question 8

Horváth, *Jugend ohne Gott*

- (a) Very few candidates chose this question, but the answers showed a good understanding of the text and some good points were made. Interesting passages were quoted and made good use of in well sustained arguments.
- (b) This question was also tackled by very few candidates and presented the opportunity to discuss the historic situation as well as the teacher's personal one. This task, on the whole, was carried out quite well.