



**2013**

**Languages: German GA 3: Examination**

## Written component

### GENERAL COMMENTS

Many students were thoroughly prepared for the 2013 German examination. They demonstrated a thorough knowledge of grammatical structures and had a broad vocabulary.

Many students highlighted key points in the questions and texts before attempting to answer each question. The ability to break questions down to ensure all parts are answered, particularly in Section 3, is of utmost importance.

Although most students attempted all sections of the 2013 German examination, it was concerning that some students did not attempt some questions. Students are reminded that they may be awarded some marks for an intelligent and thoughtful attempt, but cannot be awarded marks if they do not make any attempt.

Many students struggled to create simple German sentences without error. Errors were often fundamental, careless and included word-for-word translations from the dictionary; for example, *Pferderasse* for horse race, and *befestigen* to fix or cure. Sentences such as *sie war für ein Auto sparen* were clear examples of English syntax. There were many examples where meaning was obscured and the student's intended meaning was difficult to decipher.

Poor spelling was an issue for many students. For example, *gahr nicht*, *Pflicht*, *geschichte*, *feuchtbar* and *freutbar*. This was surprising given that students are permitted to bring dictionaries into the examination. Students need to ensure that they check the spelling of words in their dictionary. The gender of nouns and correct verb conjugations can be verified with a dictionary.

Understanding the differences between *wenn*, *wann* and *als* is important to avoid such errors as *und wann er nach Hause war*, and this should be revised. Verbs were at times taken directly from the dictionary in their infinitive form. Examples such as *du lernen viel* and *ich verstehen dass*, were common, and incorrect conjugations were frequent. Further attention should be given to knowledge of modal verbs and how to use them correctly, the formation and correct use of the perfect and conditional tenses, and personal and possessive pronouns and their correct use. In Section 3, Question 7, some students used formal address when addressing their cousin. Ending the letter with *mit freundlichen Grüßen* was not appropriate. This draws attention to the need for students to understand and be able to differentiate between the formal and informal modes of address. Furthermore, knowing the differences between *dein*, *sein* and *ihr/Ihr* is imperative at this level.

The importance of a solid grasp of the fundamentals of German grammar cannot be stressed enough. Mastering critical aspects such as verb conjugations, word order, tenses, cases and adjectival endings, as well as those issues raised in this report, must be key goals. A strong vocabulary base is also critical to success.

### SPECIFIC INFORMATION

**Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.**

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what the answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

## Section 1 – Listening and Responding Part A – Answer in English

### Text 1

#### Question 1a.

This announcement is an advertisement for a job.

#### Question 1b.

About yourself

- I am young/enterprising/adventurous/have ideas. I am an architect/engineer/IT/computer qualified.

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- I am willing to work hard/enthusiastically/conscientiously.
- I am a (young) parent/have children.

About your reasons for going to Dresden

- Dresden is a beautiful/attractive/baroque/a historical city/rebuilt.
- Dresden is an industrial city/has modern industries.
- Dresden has good childcare facilities/kindergartens.
- Dresden is good for young families/has everything young families need.

## Text 2

### Question 2a.

(Last summer's) regrettable/unfortunate incidents/events

Many students gave information that was not mentioned in the text.

### Question 2b.

To keep safe, people should avoid

- high waves/rough seas
- swimming out too far
- going too deep into the water
- swimming outside the (red and yellow) flags
- swimming at unpatrolled beaches.

Some students included their own knowledge about safety in summer. It is important to remind students that answers should be sourced from the text only.

### Question 2c.

The final warning given is to be careful/cautious/to take care/stay safe.

## Part B – Answer in German

This section assessed students on their comprehension of the spoken text and also on their ability to answer the questions in complete and accurate sentences in German.

## Text 3

### Question 3a.

The man is dissatisfied because

- in his opinion the mobile isn't working/it doesn't ring when his wife tries to ring him/the mobile is dreadful
- the mobile is far too complicated/you need a Diploma of Technology to operate it
- the salesman explained everything too quickly.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Dear Mann meint, dass das Handy furchtbar ist. Er sagt, dass es zu kompliziert ist und dass man fast ein Diplom in Technologie braucht um es zu benutzen. Er meint auch, dass der Verkäufer alles zu schnell erklärt hat und dass es bei ihm leicht aussah. Als der Mann es probierte ging es nicht und er meinte, dass das Handy nicht funktionierte weil keine Anrufe angekommen sind.*

### Question 3b.

The conversation takes place in a shop/mobile phone shop.

### Question 3c.

The woman is the/a female sales assistant.

### Question 3d.

The problem is resolved when the sales assistant

- discovers that the volume was turned down/on zero/turned off
- rings him on the new mobile and proves that it works.



The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Die Verkäuferin musste den Ton einschalten. Dann hat sie versucht, das Handy anzurufen und es hat geklingelt. Das Problem wurde gelöst.*

**Question 3e.**

The change in the man's attitude is explained in that

- he realises he has made a silly mistake
- the sales assistant is able to politely show him that there was no problem with the phone, which changed his behaviour from angry to humble/she was able to calm him down
- he says/admits that this is embarrassing for him
- his tone/demeanour changes.

Students' knowledge of possessive pronouns was poor. They often confused *sein* with *ihr* and there were many examples of poor grammar.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Am Anfang des Gesprächs war er manchmal respektlos, weil er geärgert war, weil sein Handy nicht funktioniert hat. Er dachte, dass es etwas los mit dem Handy gab und er wollte die Entschuldigungen der Frau nicht akzeptieren. Aber als die Frau sein Problem gelöst hat, war es ihm klar, dass er einen Fehler gemacht hat und deshalb sagte er, dass es eine peinliche Situation war.*

## **Section 2 – Reading and responding**

### **Part A – Answer in English**

**Text 4**

**Question 4a.**

The poem 'Nibelungenlied' was documented in the 13th century.

Answers that referred to the 1300s or 1300 were not accepted.

**Question 4b.**

Three key motives referred to in the text were

- love
- honour
- betrayal (deception).

Jealousy/revenge/murder/money/greed/gold/riches and survival were all accepted.

**Question 4c.**

In the past, stories were

- told/spoken
- written down as poems/in rhyming form
- learned by heart/memorised by professional storytellers who travelled through towns and countries/states/lands and told the stories to audiences in public places
- made into operas and performed.

Now

- people go to the cinema/see films/to see the latest crime movie/performances/operas

**Question 4d.**

Richard Wagner contributed to the ongoing interest in the 'Nibelungenlied' in that

- he was a famous composer who created/composed impressive music
- he composed (the opera cycle) 'The Ring of the Nibelungen', which became famous
- the opera is still performed today, from Germany to Australia/all over the world.



**Question 4e.**

We know from the text that the story still attracts large audiences because

- the operas are still performed/are performed again and again
- the operas are performed all over the world/from Germany to Australia
- everybody who is enthusiastic about/interested in operas will go and see them
- the music is impressive
- the story is the most important Germanic/German saga.

**Part B – Answer in German**

**Text 5**

Students were assessed on their capacity to understand general and specific aspects of texts and on their capacity to convey the required information accurately and appropriately.

**Question 5a.**

Germans considered it necessary to construct the ‘Mittellandkanal’ (three of)

- because there was no river
- because Germany’s biggest industrial zone needed to be connected with the capital Berlin
- to enable the transport of goods by boat
- because the German economy/industry needed well-functioning transport/waterways
- because rivers sometimes flow in the wrong direction.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Deutschland brauchte und braucht noch gut funktionierende Verkehrswege. Die Flüsse fließen manchmal in die, falsche Richtung-nicht in die Richtung, in die die Schiffe die Waren transportieren müssen. Deutschland brauchte eine Verbindung zwischen dem Ruhrgebiet und der Hauptstadt Berlin*

**Question 5b.**

The construction of this canal is regarded as unusual because (three of)

- this canal bridges several roads
- at one point the canal bridges the Elbe/a big river
- the canal has to traverse/cross mountains/hills and valleys
- the canal is the longest/most significant canal in Germany
- the height is above sea level.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Da dieser Kanal Straßen und auch einen Fluss überbrückt ist er ungewöhnlich. Er musste Berge und Täler durchqueren und Kanal-Brücken mussten für ihn gebaut werden. Es war auch nicht genug Schiffsverkehr nur mit Schleusen zu regeln, deshalb wurden die Brücken gebaut.*

**Question 5c.**

Four of the following were required for full marks.

- The picture/stamp shows a canal bridging a big river.
- I saw this bridge when I visited Germany/I could not believe my eyes.
- The bridge had to be constructed because the canal flows higher than the river.
- The stamp was issued in 2006 for the canal’s 100th birthday celebration.
- The stamp was to honour the remarkable achievement in engineering.
- The canal is important for Germany’s economy/industry.
- The canal is the longest/most significant in Germany.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Als ich auf einem Schiff auf der Elbe war, habe ich diesen komischen Kanal gesehen. Wegen des Kanals können Schiffe Waren transportieren. Der Kanal verbande das Ruhrgebiet mit der Hauptstadt. Er überbrückt manchmal Straßen oder den Fluss ‚Elbe‘- (was ihr in dem Bild sehen könnt) Er ist sehr wichtig für die deutsche Wirtschaft und Industrie und er ist 100 Jahre alt.*



### **Section 3 – Writing in German**

Students had five topics from which to choose, with five kinds of writing and five text types. The choices were a speech (informative), a personal letter (persuasive), a diary entry (personal), a magazine article (evaluative) and a short story (imaginative). It is pertinent to remind students of the importance of revising all possible text types throughout the year in preparation for this section of the exam. Typically, the areas of greatest weakness were in the accuracy, range, appropriateness and variety of vocabulary and grammar as well as the appropriateness of the structure and sequencing of the piece.

#### **Question 6**

This topic required students to write a formal speech, informing the public of how to manage with a very limited supply of electricity per day. Some students became quite resourceful and utilised their knowledge of alternative energy sources, while others used common-sense approaches such as wearing more clothes, sending children outdoors to play and living more conscientiously. Weakness in the genders of nouns was particularly evident.

#### **Question 7**

This was the most popular topic and was generally well done, with a number of outstanding pieces written. Many students reflected on their own education and the importance of completing secondary school.

Far too many students were unable to use the correct possessive pronoun. Some used formal address when writing to their cousin or when referring to their mother wrote *seine Mutter* instead of *deine Mutter*. Strong responses used the conditional and subjunctive mood here highly effectively.

*Wäre ich an deiner Stelle, würde ich mich echt auf nächstes Jahr freuen*

*Hast du schon darüber nachgedacht was du eigentlich machen würdest? Ich stelle mir vor, dass es ziemlich langweilig wäre ...*

#### **Question 8**

This topic was also popular, and students attempting this topic had very clear views. This topic required frequent use of the conditional and subjunctive mood. Students should be aware of the expectations regarding the use of specific structures before they attempt a response. If they were unable to form sentences using the conditional mood, it would be have been wise for them to choose a different topic.

Most students were quite familiar with the text type of a diary.

#### **Question 9**

This topic required students to write a magazine article evaluating whether there were any genuine Australian traditions. Very few students attempted this topic. Those who did attempt this topic included Australian foods and traditions such as AFL, meat pies at the football, barbecues, pavlova, Anzac Day and Australia Day.

#### **Question 10**

This topic required students to write an imaginative short story. Some students used well-known fairy stories, while others created a horror story. Students are reminded that a short story should include a title and an author. Students were expected to develop a convincing storyline with a strong sense of context, using a descriptive narrative leading to a climax.