

Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Many students were able to demonstrate their capacity to understand and convey information accurately and appropriately on the spoken (Section 1 – Listening and responding) and written texts (Section 2 – Reading and responding) in the 2014 German examination. In addition, many students were able to ascertain and convey key aspects of texts, even when faced with the challenges of listening to German spoken at normal speaking pace.

Section 1 of the examination presented a major challenge to most students. It is of the utmost importance that students have as much practice as possible in gleaning meaning from spoken texts, in particular German spoken at normal pace. Regular practice will result in much needed improvement in not only listening skills but also in the capacity to convey information in German accurately and appropriately.

Many students were able to express grammatical structures correctly, but word order, accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar continue to be the areas that require the most attention. Part B of Sections 1 and 2 and Section 3 required answers to be written in full sentences in German and it was important to remember that the number of marks allocated to these sections totalled 40 of a possible total of 75 marks. This emphasises the importance of having mastered and thoroughly revised grammatical structures, in particular the correct gender of nouns and the correct use of the dative and accusative cases, the imperative, adjectival agreements and verb forms, which include the correct use of reflexive verbs as well as tenses, and word order.

Question 3, for example, revealed the poor knowledge of possessive pronouns of a significant number of students. The use of the incorrect possessive (in this instance, *sein* instead of *ihr*) altered the meaning of the answer; for example, in Question 3b., it was incorrect to say *es macht mehr Spaß ein Fußballspiel ... wenn sein Team gewinnen. Es ist sein Lieblingssport und sein Team spielt*. Gisela was the football fan, not Markus, so the possessive pronoun *ihr* was required. This is an example where incorrect usage rendered the incorrect answer, not because of poor grammar but because its use altered the meaning of the answer.

Section 3 included a variety of options to choose from. A significant number of students chose Question 6, but many students did not read the question carefully and treated this topic as an opportunity to simply write a travelogue. In most cases students did not address the key issues of worried parents and a student choosing to make a trip in an old, worn-out car with a friend who had just gained their driver's licence. A significant number of students used formal address when writing to their parents or used incorrect reflexive and personal pronouns, particularly in the dative case (for example, *Ihr müsst nicht sich sorgen machen* or *Was haben sie schon getan?* and *Warum können sie kein Auto mich kaufen?*) while referring to parents. Such examples of very poor grammatical knowledge were not isolated instances. Thorough revision of the correct use of register is important.

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 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.

Gabi's phone call was caused by (one of):

- Peter not turning up/forgetting to come
- Gabi waiting for an hour/for a long time for Peter/her boyfriend.

Question 1b.

Gabi is upset because (any four of):

- she has been waiting for an hour (if **not** the first point given for Question 1a.)
- Peter/her boyfriend had forgotten the date (if **not** the first point given for Question 1a.)

2014 Examination Report

- Peter/her boyfriend never has time for her/never thinks of her
- Peter always wants to study
- Peter thinks only about his career/studies
- Gabi thinks Peter no longer loves her
- Peter is too ambitious/selfish/egotistical
- Peter wants her to be patient/wait until later but she doesn't believe it will get better
- Peter is always at university.

Question 1c.

Peter responds to Gabi's complaints by saying (all of):

- he is sorry (that he forgot)
- that she shouldn't make a scene/be hysterical/talk nonsense/talk rubbish.

Text 2

Question 2a.

The city council considers this announcement necessary because (any two of):

- the garbage cannot be reused/recycled or is difficult to reuse/recycle
- not everybody is putting garbage in the right bin/following instructions/some people don't care
- people don't check the colour of the lid/they throw their garbage into any bin.

Question 2b.

All of:

- we can recycle/reuse paper
- we can recycle/reuse used bottles
- we can generate compost from organic waste
- we can recycle/reuse old metals for industries.

Question 2c.

Both of:

- the red bin is special because it is for batteries **and** electronic devices
- those things are toxic/should never be mixed with other types of garbage.

Part B – Answer in German

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

Text 3

Question 3a.

Markus and Gisela differed in their expectations for the evening in that:

- Markus wants to watch a film on television (not go to the movies)
- Markus had **prepared** (not simply **wanted**) a nice dinner, with wine by candlelight
- Gisela wants to watch a football/soccer match on TV.

Question 3b .

Gisela justifies her choice with:

- tonight is a (direct/live) telecast of a footy match that she can't possibly miss
- she wants to see/be there when her team wins (the whole world looks better then)
- it's her favourite team.

The following is an example of an excellent response.

Gisela hat gesagt, dass Bayern München ihr Lieblingsmannschaft ist. Sie sagte, dass ihr Leben besser aussehen wird, wenn sie der Fußball schauen könnte. Das sind die Gründe, die Gisela anführt, um ihre Wahl zu rechtfertigen.

Question 3c.

Markus's challenges to Gisela's justification include:

- her team (BM) wins every match, so why watch it? It's boring/not exciting
- she doesn't play

- she isn't a club member
- she doesn't even live in München/she lives in Karlsruhe
- she has no link/makes no contribution to the team, so why should she feel happy if they win?
- she only wants to be on the side of winners, which is childish.

The following is an example of high-scoring response.

Markus hat Gisela gefragt, warum ihr Leben besser aussehen wird, wenn sie das Fussball(spiel) sehen könnte. Er sagte, dass alle schon wissen, dass Bayern München gewinnen wird, weil sie die beste Mannschaft ist. Außerdem spielt Gisela nicht mit dem Team und sie ist kein Mitglied auch. Sie wohnt auch nicht in München, deswegen war Markus ein bisschen verwirrt, warum sie wirklich es schauen möchte und hat sie diese Frage gestellt.

Question 3d.

The conflict is resolved when:

- Gisela suggests/they agree to (watch soccer tonight and record the movie and) watch/view the movie tomorrow
- Gisela offers to provide a(n equally) nice dinner with wine tomorrow night.

The following is an example of an excellent response.

Die Beide haben ein Kompromis gemacht. Heute Abend werden sie das Fußball schauen und der Film aufnehmen. Den Film sehen sie morgen und Gisela wird dann ein besonderes Abendbrot vorbereiten.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Part A – Answer in English

Text 4

Question 4a.

Franz Joseph's 'mood' when writing the letter was sad/reflective/reminiscent/lonely/nostalgic/yearning/longing/pining/lovesick/melancholic.

Evidence from the text to support this is that (any one of):

- even a walk through the gardens doesn't cheer him up
- he looks at her painting, wishing she were with him
- he finishes the letter by asking her to come home soon
- he thinks about when they first met.

Question 4b.

Franz Joseph was captivated by Sisi when he met her for the first time because (any three of):

- she was so beautiful
- she was so cheerful/happy/joyous
- she was so charming/enchanting/bewitching
- she was so young/15.

Question 4c.

The lifestyles of Emperor Franz Joseph and Sisi differ in that:

- for Franz Joseph the military and the church are very important, together with the demands of politics/political decisions
- Sisi:
 - loves art
 - enjoys horse riding
 - enjoys the outdoors/(exercise in) nature.

Question 4d.

Sisi's presence benefited Franz Joseph's reign, in that her charm/presence:

- was useful to improve diplomatic relations
- made political negotiations/dealings easier.

2014 Examination Report

Question 4e.

Sisi is absent from the court in Vienna because (any two of):

- she finds the court atmosphere/etiquette stifling
- she is sick/needs to recover/improve her health/get well
- she needs the sunshine (in Greece).

Question 4f.

Franz Joseph's concerns for Sisi's welfare are (any four of):

- she needs to recover/get well/she is sick
- she needs sunshine
- she needs to eat more
- she is too skinny
- she needs to eat the meat (not just put it on her face)
- she should not walk too much and then only eat fruit.

Question 4g.

He pleads/begs her to come home soon or eat more.

Part B – Answer in German

Text 5

Students were assessed on their capacity to understand general and specific aspects of two texts, as well as on their capacity to convey information accurately and appropriately using complete German sentences.

Question 5a.

Stumbling stones:

- are small/flat/smooth concrete stones
- are covered with a brass plate
- have names engraved in them
- are inserted into the pavement of footpaths (in German cities)
- commemorate people who died/disappeared.

The following is an example of an excellent response.

Die Stolpersteine sind kleine flache und glatte Betonsteine. Mit einer Messingplatte abgedeckt, werden die Steine auf den Fußwegen vor Wohnhäusern eingesetzt, in dem haben Menschen die in den späten dreißiger Jahren und Anfang des Krieges verfolgt wurden und verschwanden, gewohnt. Die Namen der Menschen wurden auch auf die Steine eingraviert so dass Menschen sie erinnern konnten.

Question 5b.

Susi did not get a luxury holiday, instead her grandmother had her polish *Stolpersteine* on the footpath/do physical work.

Students were expected to include both parts of this answer, by comparing and or contrasting what Susi expected to do with what she actually did.

Students were expected to explain why or why not Susi's expectations of a luxury holiday were realistic. Some students argued that her expectations had, in fact, been realistic since, after all, her grandmother was wealthy, generous and lived around the corner from the Ku-Damm. As long as students were able to logically justify their decision, their answers were accepted.

The following is an example of a very good response.

Susi's Erwartungen für ihren Berlin Aufenthalt waren nicht so realistisch. Sie dachte, dass sie eine Luxus-Ferien haben wird aber dannach hat sie entdeckt, dass ihre Ferien viel um putzen und zur Erinnerung an Menschen ging ...

Question 5c.

Grandmother's reasons for organising school students to polish *Stolpersteine* during their holidays were (any five of):

- to keep the brass plates clean/to clean the brass plates

- so that passers-by can read them
- to think specifically about the people whose names were on those plates
- these people lived in her street/house where the *Stolpersteine* were
- so that the students/people think about the (shocking) fate of these people
- so that the younger generation should learn about the past/history
- so that students thereby contribute to the wider community.

The following is an excerpt from a very good answer.

Sie möchte, dass diese Schüler immer an die Menschen denken deren Namen sie auf den Messingplatten lesen. Sie hat auch gewünscht, dass die Schüler dadurch zur weiteren Gemeinschaft beitragen konnten weil diese Stolpersteine wichtig für die Geschichte sind. Sie zeigen die Namen von Menschen, die im Weltkrieg verfolgt wurden und verschwanden.

Section 3 – Writing in German

Students were given five questions from which to choose, with five kinds of writing and five text types. The choices were a letter (personal), an article (informative), a speech (persuasive), a report (evaluative) and a short story (imaginative). The topics were varied and broad, but the majority of students chose Question 6 (the letter to their parents).

Students are expected to be thoroughly prepared on all styles of writing as well as the expectations of each text type. It is, however, also most important that students read the topic very carefully, even underlining or highlighting the key parts to be sure that they have answered the questions as required. This year in particular students appeared far too frequently to have only a very general idea of the question, and simply wrote a response that suited them and not the question.

It is important to remind students to read both the English and the German versions of the question carefully. Students should practise reading and planning responses to a variety of essay topics so that they become more comfortable in tackling all text types and all styles of writing. This familiarity may discourage students from simply choosing a topic that they may perceive to be ‘safer’ and therefore less challenging.

Question 6

This was by far the most popular topic. It dealt with several issues, namely very worried parents and the road trip adventures of the student in an old, worn-out car with a friend who has just obtained a driver’s licence.

Some students wrote of minor mishaps with the car, of instances of the car’s unreliability and of examples of the young driver’s inexperience and lack of judgment. Some made the letter a reflective one, some retold amusing anecdotes of their adventures and others wrote of near misses, but the stronger pieces belonged to those students who addressed the key issues mentioned above. Far too many students used the letter as an opportunity to simply name and describe places visited and people met, with barely a reference to the key points of the scenario. Correct register was often not used, and parents were addressed in the *Sie* form or students used the incorrect form of possessive pronouns; for example, *Ihr* *must nicht sich Sorgen machen* and *Wie geht es ihnen in Österreich?* as well as *ich sehe sie beide bald* and *ich liebe sie viel*, or *warum können sie kein Auto mich kaufen?*

Question 7

This question required students to write an informative magazine article looking at the way the world of work has changed in three generations.

Students who attempted this question drew largely on their knowledge of their grandparents’ and parents’ histories compared with their own. Their reflections and understanding of the significant influences of education, technology, and a comparatively peaceful world and a stable economy, as well as the changing status of women were interesting. Students are expected to communicate their ideas, but this does not necessarily require the use of highly academic or sophisticated language.

Question 8

Here students assumed the role of a coach delivering a speech in order to motivate an unsuccessful under-14 team to lift their game for the coming season.

Emotive and encouraging language was required. Students could have drawn on vocabulary from topics such as healthy lifestyles and fitness, as well as personal goals, and they could have ended with some original ‘you can do it’-type

2014 Examination Report

slogans. The key was to use one's own voice and perhaps draw on some personal experiences. Students who attempted this question generally did so competently.

Question 9

This question was an evaluative piece that was to be delivered in the form of a report. Two timetables (full school days and half school days) needed to be considered, together with their strengths and weaknesses.

Some advantages and disadvantages included, for example, having to get up particularly early yet finishing early with more time for homework and other activities versus a whole day of school plus homework and after-school activities.

This question was generally well done. High-scoring students approached the topic by logically and methodically discussing both alternatives and concluding with clear final recommendations.

Question 10

Students had an opportunity to allow their imaginations to take the lead in this discovery of a new reality.

Many students wrote charming and amusing pieces, capturing those first moments on waking (for example, discovering to their horror furry paws in place of their feet or wondering what they were doing in their pet's basket). They wrote of the reversal of roles and the impact of the new size differential, of trying to call out for help but making only meowing or barking sounds, and of being ceremoniously marched out and left at the back door by their mother on being discovered in the house. The changing of roles was also handled well, with their pet also struggling as a human. However, students generally had more difficulty in concluding their imaginative story with some kind of wisdom or lesson learnt.