

2015 VCE German written examination report

General comments

Many students performed well on the 2015 German written examination, particularly in Section 3.

Students are advised to ensure they are thoroughly familiar with the format of the written examination. It is most important that they take the time to read each question carefully and highlight key words to avoid missing key question components. Students are also expected to have a thorough knowledge of all aspects of grammar and structures and to have an extensive vocabulary.

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

Answers to Question 1 in Section 1 – Listening and responding revealed that many students appeared to have some difficulty with the cultural concept of a maypole or 'May tree' festival. It also appeared that the prepositions *um*, *auf* and *an*, together with their meanings, caused significant difficulty, highlighting the need for extra attention to be given to prepositions in general.

Question 1a.

Tomorrow would be an ideal day for this type of event because of:

- good weather/clear/22 degrees
- no school/no work/public holiday/day off.

Question 1b.

The event and what it celebrated was:

- a Maypole or May tree festival/celebration
- spring.

Question 1c.

The traditions celebrated that day were:

- young men putting up the maypole/tree

- (young men) hanging presents on the tree for their dream girl/sweetheart
- dancing around the maypole/May tree
- (May) wine and fresh pretzels.

Text 2

Responses to Question 2 highlighted the need for students to make sure they listened to a spoken text in its entirety. In this particular case, the key words *der letzte Bus* were mentioned only at the end of Text 2.

Question 2a.

The service being advertised is a bus service.

Fledermausservice was not an acceptable answer.

Question 2b.

Five advantages of this service are:

- it brings you home safely
- it is cheap/only 4 euros
- it is convenient/comfortable
- no-one needs to drive/there is no argument over who needs to drive
- you can stay out later.

Question 2c.

You can get a cheaper fare for this service with a monthly and/or semester ticket (it costs only 2 euros).

Part B – Answer in German

Text 3

Question 3a.

Mrs Balta's childhood experiences when compared with those of her children show that:

- the children have friends; Mrs Balta felt like an outsider/alone
- the children get help with homework in the afternoon; Mrs Balta didn't get tutoring or support at school
- the children get help with learning German at school
- Mrs Balta speaks German and her parents only spoke Turkish
- neighbours accept the loudness of children/are friendly/helpful/accepting/accommodating/cooperative
- Mrs Balta could not play too loudly/neighbours were unfriendly/would complain.

Question 3a. asked students to 'compare' the childhood experiences of Frau Balta with those of her children, giving six examples. Many students did not read the question carefully and overlooked this essential component of the question.

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

Als Frau Balta ein Kind war, fühlte sie sich oft einsam und als Außenseiterin. Ihre Kinder hingegen haben Freunde in der Nachbarschaft und werden von allen akzeptiert. Auch die Nachbarn selbst sind heutzutage netter als in Frau Baltas Kindheit. Wenn die Kinder zu laut spielen, beschwerten sich die Nachbarn nicht sofort, wie sie es in Frau Baltas Kindheit getan haben. Frau Baltas Eltern sprachen nur Türkisch mit ihr. Das erschwerte für sie die Hausaufgaben und die Schularbeit. Frau Baltas Kinder haben es leichter. Sie gehen in eine

Ganztagsschule und machen dort ihre Hausaufgaben. Im Gegensatz zu ihrer Mutter können sie auch dort ihr Deutsch üben.

Question 3b.

Mrs Balta believes that the world will be open to her children because they:

- have dual citizenship
- will have a good job
- speak two languages
- will have a good final year/secondary education/Year 13.

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

Frau Balta meint, ihre Kinder werden einen guten Schulabschluss machen und einen guten Beruf bekommen. Außerdem sprechen sie zwei Sprachen und haben die Doppeltestaatsbürgerschaft. Daher steht ihnen die Welt offen.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

In Section 2 – Reading and responding, most students seem to understand the texts well but many did not read texts or questions carefully enough. An example of this was Text 5. Too many students failed to take a position, although this requirement was made clear at the beginning of Question 5. It can be beneficial for students to highlight or underline key words in a question.

Part A – Answer in English

Text 4

Question 4a.

In the first paragraph, the author ridicules Hanni Gold. Three examples of this are:

- Hanni Gold can't sing particularly well
- Hanni Gold shows off in a bear costume/tattoos
- Hanni Gold is not a real artist.

Question 4b.

Apart from their gender and singing in German, Tim Bendzko differed from Hanni Gold because:

- he is a real artist or talent/natural/lovable/great voice
- he has an everyday/ordinary appearance/outfit/jeans and jumper
- his lyrics are thoughtful/emotional without being tacky/kitschy/corny/cheesy
- he uses no electronic gimmicks/uses guitar and piano.

Question 4c.

The interests and pathways Bendzko pursued before he turned to music were:

- he wanted to become a professional soccer player
- he sold second-hand cars
- he studied religion(s).

Question 4d.

The key themes and views expressed in Bendzko's songs are:

- about relationships
- about self-identity/finding your own way/self-discovery

- he is interested in the meaning of life
- he doesn't judge people on first impressions, but rather analyses and questions things
- he gives everything a second chance.

Question 4e.

He wanted to express feelings/songs/lyrics that had always been in his mind/head.

Question 4f.

Tim Bendzko is referred to as *der Weltretter* in the title because it refers/relates to his first great hit/successful song (which was called 'Nur noch kurz die Welt retten').

Question 4g.

We know that Bendzko is recognised in Germany and internationally because:

- he won many/almost all German prizes/awards
- he performed together with international stars/Elton John and Joe Cocker
- his song made it into a movie/was played during the credits of a movie.

Part B – Answer in German

Text 5

Question 5

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

Specifically, students were asked to adopt a position as to whether globalisation is a positive or negative development. They were asked to justify their point of view using five pieces of evidence from the text. These pieces of evidence could be used or adapted to support their positive or negative position.

- Globalisation developed to solve a scarcity of necessary products in home countries, which were imported from countries that had an oversupply./Today, however, globalisation is more complex and has gone beyond simply satisfying a shortage.
- It is advantageous for some, as they have cool and cheap T-shirts or fruits from around the world./It is a disadvantage because the workers barely survive on their income or the farmer goes bankrupt.
- People are more connected through the internet, etc./Some people seem lonelier than ever.
- There are more opportunities for holidays and study options overseas and opportunities to learn a new culture.
- Minorities and immigrants have the opportunity to seek a better life./Minorities and immigrants seeking a better life lose their home, culture and language in the process.

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

Globalisierung ist ein großer Teil unseres modernen Lebens und hat die Welt in den letzten Generationen stark verändert. Aber diese neue Entwicklung ist nicht ohne Nachteile. Zwar sind wir im Internet weltweit vernetzt und können mit Menschen aus der ganzen Welt kommunizieren, sind jedoch oft einsamer als zuvor. Ohne den echten Kontakt zu unseren Mitmenschen fühlen wir uns allein. Viele Klammotten kann man heutzutage sehr billig bekommen. Für den Käufer ist dies ein Vorteil. Aber für die Arbeiterinnen die dank der Globalisierung kaum von ihrer Arbeit als Schneiderinnen leben können, sieht die Situation nicht so toll aus. Klar, wir haben viele Luxusprodukte und exotische Lebensmittel aus aller Welt bei uns im Supermarkt, aber die Bauern die diese Sachen herstellen gehen in ihrem Heimatland bankrott. Globalisierung ist seit

ihrem Beginn im 19 Jahrhundert ausserdem viel komplizierter geworden. Menschen auf der Suche nach einem besseren Leben verlieren durch diese Entwicklung Sprache, Heimat und Kultur. Die weltweite wirtschaftliche Vernetzung hat auf jeden Fall viele Nachteile und während sie einigen Menschen ein vielfältiges Leben bereitet, nimmt die Globalisierung vielen die Chance auf eine glückliche Existenz. Insofern ist dies eine schlechte Entwicklung.

Section 3 – Writing in German

Students could select from questions on five different topics: a story (imaginative), a letter of complaint (personal), a speech (persuasive) a brochure (informative) and a report (evaluative). The most popular topic was Question 7, the letter of complaint.

It is important to stress that students must read each question carefully before they select the one that is most suited to them, so that they are clear about what is expected. Underlining or highlighting key words is a very important strategy because it serves to clarify exactly what is expected and provides a framework for an essay plan.

Students need to be familiar with all text types and should understand the requirements of each style of writing, whether it be informative, imaginative, persuasive, personal or evaluative. In 2015, the majority of students were able to meet this requirement and developed a response suited to the question and in the format required. While it is important that students select the question best suited to them and to their ability level, developing a highly relevant and original response within the framework of a broad range of vocabulary and accurate grammatical structures must be the goal of all students.

Aside from some poor grammar and limited vocabulary, many of these responses read well on the whole.

Question 6

Answering this question required an imaginative style, with students writing a short story about a superhero. The superhero to be described was not defined, which created many possibilities for students. Some of the superheroes created were an ordinary, everyday person in the street or even the students themselves. These were thought-provoking responses and were high-scoring.

Question 7

Students were required to write a letter to the travel agency responsible for arranging their disastrous 'luxury holiday', demanding compensation. Students enjoyed the opportunity of being outraged and used their imaginations regarding all the dreadful things that had happened on this luxury holiday. The responses that included the most carefully thought-out and thoroughly detailed complaints were often not only amusing but also the highest-scoring responses. Some students did not ask for compensation, indicating that they had not noted each part of the question. Most students were very familiar with the correct formatting of a letter.

Question 8

This question required students to prepare a speech to be presented to a government body, arguing for one year's compulsory social service for all school leavers. There were some excellent responses containing arguments for compulsory social service that were highly relevant and compelling. Students appeared to be genuine in their views and their thoughtful and insightful responses were persuasive.

Question 9

Students were required to create an informative brochure on how and where students could find work, how best to apply and what other relevant information they may need to keep in mind.

Underlining the four key parts to this response would have provided students with a very useful plan. The structure required a title or heading with subheadings, and it could have been set out under key bullet points or in key paragraphs. Contact details would have made this response authentic.

Students who attempted this question generally did very well. They clearly understood the requirements for young people with regard to the world of work. Their advice was sensible and showed wisdom.

Question 10

Students were required to write a report for an environmental magazine, evaluating the practice of society throwing away food. Although students strongly supported the notion that too much food is thrown away and were able to give many examples of this, very few were able to draw on or evaluate any current practices through which discarded food is utilised, such as charities that collect leftover food from restaurants and shops to prepare meals that are then donated to the poor. Some high-scoring responses did evaluate these practices, arguing that society's wasteful ways actually created new industries to deal with this waste, which in turn led to job creation; these were highly original, relevant and creative.