

2019 VCE German written examination report

General comments

In the 2019 VCE German written examination, students demonstrated their capacity to understand and convey general and specific aspects of texts, particularly in Section 1. They effectively used the note-taking spaces provided and could recall details accurately and in depth, particularly in Text 3, Question 3. Effective note-taking in the exam, and regular practice in this skill, is of utmost importance to ensure accurate responses.

Effective use of the 15-minute reading time is also an important skill. For example, in both parts of Section 1, reading the questions just before hearing the aural texts helps students gain some insight into the subject matter and to anticipate possible relevant vocabulary. Reading through Text 4 in Section 2, worth 20 marks, allows students to provide logical and clear responses in English, thus demonstrating an accurate understanding of the text. Responses that are too brief will not adequately demonstrate that the text has been understood.

A good use of reading time also helps students prepare for the tasks ahead through efficient use of the dictionary, and by identifying themes and preselecting a writing topic which best suits their interest and skill level. Students would be well advised to clearly **highlight** the key words and requirements of each task.

Demonstrating an understanding of the task itself is also critical. For example, Text 5, Question 5 clearly required students to write the response as if it were the year 2050 and the key solutions suggested in the text had been implemented. Too many students did not read the task carefully and reproduced information directly from the text without modification.

Some responses showed inaccuracy in grammar and vocabulary. It can be expected that, at this level, students have mastered the fundamentals of grammatical structures. Some students do not appear to use their dictionary to check genders of nouns or even meanings of words, which results in a loss of marks that is avoidable. Modals, verb agreements, word order and incorrect spelling require ongoing thorough revision.

The use of a comprehensive dictionary is highly recommended in order to identify precise meanings of words and phrases in the context of the theme in which they occur. This would assist in avoiding simple word for word translations, which, when taken out of context, can obscure meanings and not make sense.

A substantial number of students appear to have memorised their own bank of useful linking words and phrases in order to produce well-crafted, clear and well-structured extended responses.

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.

Friedberg has a special connection to Elvis Presley because:

- Elvis is still popular in Friedberg
- he was a soldier/was stationed/was in Friedberg for 3 years
- there is an Elvis Presley square/place
- there is an annual Elvis music festival
- traffic lights are now showing Elvis Presley.

Question 1b.

The different opinions about the Elvis traffic lights were:

- Elvis on traffic lights is more interesting
- Elvis is part of the history of Friedberg
- the traffic lights attract tourists/are good for tourism
- the new traffic lights are dangerous/could distract people/could cause accidents.

Text 2

Question 2a.

Thomas wants to stay at Julia's overnight.

Question 2b.

The events leading to Thomas' situation were:

- he burnt his hand/finger
- he panicked/he ran out of the house
- the door shut/he couldn't get back in/he was locked out
- there was no fingerprint recognition anymore/the system no longer recognised his fingerprint.

Question 2c.

Julia is hesitant to assist Thomas because:

- he called her apartment old-fashioned
- he referred to his own smart apartment as his new best friend/girlfriend.

Part B – Answer in German

Text 3

Students effectively used the note-taking space and could recall the details of this listening text. A few students, however, confused the roles of *Kundin* and *Verkäufer*. This error could easily have been resolved through use of the dictionary, where (female) customer and salesman are clearly

defined. Some students understood the word *luxus* to be a Lexus car. Students should be advised that a given brand of a motor vehicle would not be used in an examination.

Students needed to compare the different features the customer is looking for with the offerings of the salesman (10 of 11).

The customer wants a car that:

- is environmentally friendly
- has airbags/is safe
- is affordable/good value
- is a battery-operated car/an electric car
- has space for a bicycle.

The salesman wants to sell her a car that:

- is a two seater
- is a sports/fast car
- has leather seats
- has natural colours
- has a sunroof
- is a luxury car.

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

Die Kundin sucht ein sicheres und umweltfreundliches Auto. Ihr ideales Auto hätte auch genug Platz für ihren Fahrrad und wäre relativ günstig. Besonders interessiert die Kundin sich für Elektroautos, die umweltfreundlich genug für sie sind. Im Gegensatz war das Auto, das der Verkäufer anbietet, zu teuer. Obwohl dieses Auto Ledersitze und ein Schiebedach hat, was laut des Verkäufers umweltfreundlich sind, war er kein Elektroauto und nicht umweltfreundlich für die Kundin in der Realität. Zusätzlich hat dieses Auto nur zwei Sitze und deshalb nicht genug Platz um einen Fahrrad zu tragen. Jedoch war dieses Auto ein Sportauto und schneller als viele andere Modellen wie Elektroautos.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Students need to make sure that their responses are logical and coherent. Some students translated unknown words using their dictionaries but didn't connect them to other words in the sentence, resulting in responses that did not make sense to the reader.

As an example, in Question 4c. students were asked to give reasons why cities offered a better habitat for bees. Some students noted the word *Gewitter* in their dictionary translating as thunderstorms and were somewhat thrown by the pronoun *vor*. Responses such as bees were 'better with thunderstorms' were not uncommon, yet were not coherent. This was because students had not noted the past participle *geschützt* (protected) at the end of the sentence, which translates as something entirely different, namely that bees were protected from the elements (thunderstorms).

Part A – Answer in English

Text 4

Question 4a.

In major cities around the world:

- there is an increase in (swarms) of bees
- the new trend is beekeeping.

Question 4b.

This hobby is so attractive for city dwellers because bees:

- are easily cared for **and** there is no need to feed them
- take up less space **and** they can fit on a balcony/in a box
- are lucrative/save money/don't cost much **and** honey can be harvested/collected/made
- are not time-consuming **and** you can go on holidays whenever you want/there is no need to walk them.

Question 4c.

Cities offer a better habitat due to:

- a constant supply of nectar
- many different plants/variety of plants
- protection from the elements
- fewer predators
- warmer weather.

Question 4d.

The different steps to be followed by a person who wants to take up this hobby are:

- applying/registering with the council
- participating in courses about beekeeping
- using apps about suitable plants/general care of bees
- buying protective/special clothing
- buying/acquiring/getting bees.

Part B – Answer in German

Text 5

This task required students to write the extended response as though the five key solutions had **now been implemented**. The use of the present or past tenses would have been acceptable; however, many students simply transcribed information straight from the text using the same modals *sollen*, *müssen* and *wollen* as well as *werden*, suggesting that either they had not read the question carefully or were unable to use the past tense. Such responses could not be awarded marks.

Question 5

The five solutions implemented by the year 2050 are:

- food is transported more efficiently/refrigerated vehicles are used to increase the life of food
- there is more conscientious shopping
- meat is manufactured in laboratories
- insects and algae/seaweed are eaten instead of meat
- vertical gardens grow fruit and vegetables.

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

Es ist jetzt das Jahr 2050 und wir haben die globalen Ernährungsprobleme schon gelöst. Wieso haben wir das geschafft? Zuerst haben wir offener Landwagen in Entwicklungsländer durch Kühllastwagen ersetzt, damit der CO₂-Fußabdruck verringert gewesen ist. Wir haben auch einen neuen leckeren Fleischersatz: Insekten! Sie enthalten großen Mengen von Proteinen. Um Obst und Gemüse effizienter zu bauen, verwenden wir ungenutzte Wandflächen als Vertikale Gärten. Wir essen Tiere wie Kühe und Schafe nicht, weil sie zu viel Platz und Wasser brauchen.

Stattdessen ist Fleisch aus dem Labor zu einer Normalität geworden. Am Anfang war es ein bisschen komisch, Insekten und Labor-Fleisch zu essen, aber jetzt finden alle das toll, weil, wir damit die ganze Welt ernähren können. Eine andere neue Delikatesse ist Seetang und auch andere Arten von Algen, weil sie viele Vitamine und Kalzium enthalten, und auch keine Bewässerung brauchen. Im großen und ganzen haben wir gelernt, wie effizienter mit dem Essen zu sein. Mit diesen 5 Lösungen können alle gesund sein und musste niemand hungern.

Section 3 – Writing in German

The writing response carried 15 marks and saw a broad spread of scores with over 40 per cent of students scoring 12 or above, demonstrating positive outcomes with regard to meeting the requirements of the task. Question 6 was the most popular choice, with almost 48 per cent of students selecting this task.

It is important to once again emphasise the importance of careful time management during the exam so that sufficient time is left for the essay. Unfinished or rushed responses did not score highly.

Students are also reminded to underline key words in the task to ensure all aspects are covered adequately. Students' ability to demonstrate accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar as well as the characteristics of the kind of writing in the required format is of utmost importance and cannot be emphasised enough.

Question 6

Students generally demonstrated strong persuasive writing skills, providing thoughtful, detailed and convincing arguments for taking a year off from further study. Some students, however, chose to **demand** time off rather than to **persuade** their parents to allow them a year off. This was not what the task required. Another point worth noting was the confused form of address regularly shown. A significant number of students used the polite form *Sie* when addressing their parents when the informal register was clearly more appropriate.

Question 7

Many students who chose this topic appeared to be confused as to who they were addressing, although the topic clearly stated that in their role as school captain they were to present an evaluation to the school council. It is important to remind students to read the task carefully. This piece required a formal register, the structure of a formal speech and a justification for and evaluation of the final two choices from the student body. The task also required significant details to be given for each option and a comparison of the final two choices.

Question 8

This topic was also popular with students. The concept of 'tradition' was broad and students enjoyed writing about their family traditions or habits that had in time become a tradition for them and which they hoped to pass on to future generations. The informal diary format allowed students flexibility in the way they responded to this task, but most students simply addressed it as a reflective and personal piece. Students who scored highly provided details of their own particular 'traditions' and what made them so important.

Question 9

A relatively small number of students attempted this topic. The task required students to write an imaginative story for a competition for young writers, therefore requiring a story format, a title and descriptive language. An imaginative piece calls for the use of adjectives, which help create an atmosphere that would appeal (in this case) to a young audience. Students who scored highly wrote to the audience in the required format, using colourful and descriptive language.

Question 10

Students were asked to write an informative article for a youth magazine providing information on a recently completed 12-month backpacking trip overseas. Highlights, tips on how to save money as well as advice about transport and safety were also to be covered. The strongest responses successfully demonstrated the characteristics of an article, provided detailed highlights and comprehensively informed readers of ways to save money, use transport and travel safely.