



Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Generally speaking there appeared to be an improvement in the overall standard and presentation of work by students this year. Students had consistently prepared very well for Section 1 and were able to converse competently on the common topics. Most students listened carefully, understood the questions and were able to present the facts and give ideas and opinions. They expanded on answers instead of responding with single words or short sentences, so that they were able to show what they were capable of. If they were initially unsure of the meaning of a question, they were able to use appropriate repair strategies. They had also clearly anticipated being asked questions where they were encouraged to express opinions, such as giving the advantages and disadvantages or explaining why they liked or disliked one or another thing.

Students performed well in both the Conversation and the Discussion of the Detailed Study. In both sections it is important that students realise that there will usually be questions for which they have not prepared or which they have not considered. One initial strategy is to state *Das ist eine schwierige Frage* to gain a moment's thinking time, but assessors usually realise this and are deliberately asking a challenging question to give the student the opportunity to extend themselves. Students should not misconstrue such difficult questions as indicating that they have not understood the topic or that the assessors are highlighting areas that the student does not know. On the contrary, it is common for assessors to ask questions which challenge all levels of students; difficult questions simply indicate that the student is coping well with the examination.

Most students seemed to enjoy interacting with the assessors and were surprised when told that the oral had finished. It was apparent that previous Assessment Reports had been read and the points noted. Students should be encouraged to accept responsibility for their own learning and should be told that there are resources and much information on the VCAA website, which can help them.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

Communication

Most students responded readily and confidently to questions and were able to lead the conversation, say interesting and unique things about themselves, express unusual ideas and opinions, relate anecdotes and keep the conversation flowing. They were able to give extended answers and volunteer additional information beyond what was asked.

Students need to be careful not to revert to very simple language when covering topics that were first introduced in the early years of learning German. It is important to give extended answers, not just monosyllables or single sentences. Some students did not seem to think about maintaining the listeners' interest. They should try to identify some aspects which may differentiate them from all the other students. Original input is valuable, such as something funny, unusual or adventurous; some students did this very well.

Some weaker students resorted to English words and struggled to expand on ideas. They sometimes used complicated sentences to try to explain their ideas and subsequently got lost or stuck in the middle of a sentence. It is better to speak in simpler sentences and use correct language. Students should listen carefully to the whole question not just simply rely on picking out one known word and then talking about that aspect; this often results in the student missing the point of the question. Some students just gave a monologue of prepared sentences, which is not appropriate as a conversation. Students should pause to allow the assessors to ask for more detail or find out more about an aspect that has interested them. Talking too fast also makes it difficult for the listeners to follow.

A useful exercise is for a set of questions to be prepared which students can answer aloud while recording their own responses. They should then listen critically to themselves, paying special attention to aspects such as the length of pauses, areas in which they struggled to find an answer and grammatical errors such as word order in subordinate clauses. However, students should also expect to be asked questions that they have not anticipated; there was often a huge drop in linguistic competence when unexpected questions were asked. Many students were not very skilled in self-correction. Words were sometimes used which were not understood and irrelevant comments were made.



It is important for students to speak clearly and not swallow the endings of words in the hope that the assessors will not be aware that they are wrong. Correct pronunciation with appropriate intonation, stress and tempo are very important, as are effective repair strategies. Students are not marked harder because they are native speakers or because they have spent some time in Germany. All are assessed in the same way, so there is no need to attempt to mask a perfect German accent.

Content

Most students were able to talk capably about their family, school and the subjects studied, but some had difficulty talking about their future and did not know the names of tertiary courses in German. Questions about their last day at school and their summer holidays sometimes proved difficult. English should not be used, so the term 'schoolies' should be avoided. If asked whether they have a job, 'no' is an inadequate answer. Students need to be able to say why they don't work (such as having no time or too much homework) or what work they would like to do if they had the chance. They should always try to answer each question with at least three sentences.

When talking about their family, they should not just give lists of names, ages and appearance. It is better to talk about personality traits and relationships with others in the family, giving a picture of the kind of people around them.

Students should be aware that they cannot bring in photos or other support material for the conversation about their personal world.

Language

Well-prepared students used an excellent range of vocabulary and sentence structures, introducing a variety of conjunctions as well as relative pronouns. Their language was accurate and appropriate. They also used the correct style and register and were able to correct their own errors. It is vital that the register is correct and that assessors are addressed with the *Sie* form. Some students did not seem to be used to being addressed themselves with the *Sie* form and were confused by this, so that they did not realise the assessors meant them. For generalised comments, students should practise using *man* and not *du*.

Aspects of the language which proved difficult were word order, particularly after conjunctions like *weil*, *wenn* or *dass*; use of the correct tense; agreement of subject and verb in both singular and plural, particularly with the third person singular; the perfect tense, especially when conjugated with *sein*; adding weak endings to strong verbs in the imperfect; comparative and superlative (with the use of *mehr* instead of adding *-er*); possessive adjectives, with many students confusing *sein* and *ihr*; and the use of the infinitive.

Similar words were sometimes confused, such as *Freiheit* and *Freizeit* and *Student* and *Schüler*. *Wer* was understood as *where*; *putzen* was used for 'to put' and *will* was used for the future instead of *werden*. 'It is fun' was often incorrectly translated and various words were incorrectly pronounced, such as school subjects and English words used in German like *Job* and *Joggen*. The letters *ie* were often confused with *ei* in words like *Mitglieder* and *Lied*.

Section 2 – Discussion

Communication

Many students had obviously enjoyed their Detailed Study and spoke enthusiastically about their sub-topic, concentrating on the resources studied, expressing complex ideas and giving balanced opinions. They knew their texts well and elaborated with well-prepared, in-depth answers. Most students carried the discussion forward effectively. A wide range of texts was used: films, poems, short stories, songs, book extracts, articles, magazines, pictures and websites (which should be in German, if they are one of the texts relied on in the Discussion). It is essential that students clearly explain what has been covered in class and what they themselves have focused on. They should organise their thoughts and steer the assessors in the direction of their preferences and strengths. They should advise the assessors what they have prepared and what they would like to talk about.

Some students simply rote-learned lengthy passages about their texts and delivered these at great speed, so that the assessors could not break in and ask a question. Pre-prepared responses tended to hinder students from pursuing a meaningful discussion. They often failed to listen if the assessors asked questions and, when interrupted, tended to repeat the same response or start again where they had left off. Some were completely thrown and were unable to continue. It would help if they practised survival strategies such as asking for the question to be repeated or clarified or for a moment to think. It is wise for students to brainstorm – by anticipating likely questions, they can respond more successfully. Practising impromptu answers to a variety of likely and less likely questions helps students to improve their performance and avoid using pre-learned material.



If students bring in an image or other support material, they need to be able to describe and analyse it, especially if it is one of their texts. If they are unable to do this, the amount of material to discuss on their texts is considerably reduced. The material brought in should not be used as a cue card and should not have any words written on it (other than perhaps a heading). Students who bring in a poster or image such as a detailed diagram with a great deal of German written on it will not be able to take it into the examination as it may provide an unfair advantage. Students should avoid this situation as many feel lost and unable to cope without their support material.

If the topic is an unusual one, students should be able to pronounce the key words correctly, particularly those in the title of the topic and in the names of their resources, otherwise assessors may not understand and could find it difficult to phrase suitable questions.

Few students had a concluding statement prepared. Assessors usually ask at the end of the Discussion if there is anything else the student would like to say. This gives them an opportunity to cover areas that they have concentrated on which may not have been raised. A summary of their findings and thoughts makes a good finish.

It is sad when students make negative comments and say their Detailed Study did not interest them, which often means that they have little to say about it. It is essential to find a topic that holds some interest for every member of the class.

Content

At the start of the Discussion students should make a statement that language and culture have been studied through texts. Some failed to do this, while others produced more efficient ways of dealing with it. Students should then go straight on to give a list of their texts and state whether they have brought in a picture or other image. The introduction does not need to be more than this. Some students did not name their texts and others started to give extensive details and a summary about each one, which is not appropriate at this point.

It is vital that a suitable sub-topic is chosen, something that interests the students, extends the more able ones and is not too difficult for the others. It should be appropriate for the capacities of the particular cohort of students. The texts should be interesting, should match and link with the sub-topic, should support the focus chosen by individual students and should provide sufficient material for an in-depth discussion. The emphasis should be on interpretation and opinions, not on facts and content *per se*. In some cases the texts were unrelated to the nominated sub-topic, while other texts had no relation to each other, making the discussion of linkage problematic. In such as case, each text had to be asked about quite separately.

Students need to find texts that they can personally relate to, so that they will have some ideas to articulate if the assessors move away from the anticipated questions. If the texts are too short or too simple, breadth and depth may be lacking in the discussion. If the texts lack an issue, relevance or are not related to each other, students may resort to a simple retelling of the content, rather than engaging in a meaningful discussion. Some texts were too difficult and were not understood, consequently they were superficially explained. With large classes, the assessment becomes more interesting, as everyone has a different focus for the same topic. In other cases every student had their own topic that they had personally researched, which suggests that the required 15 hours of class time was not spent on one topic.

Literary themes can be very interesting but can also be very challenging, both for the students' comprehension and ability to explore various aspects and for the assessors to ask questions at an appropriate level. If a film is used as a source, the details of the film and the film's relevance to the topic as a whole need to be understood. Comments and opinions are required, not just a lengthy retelling of the story. Some films can be very difficult to interpret effectively, despite the fact that the subject matter links with the topic; for example, *Good-bye Lenin. Das Versprechen* gives a good picture of East and West Berlin, but it is important to have some background of the history of the period to analyse it effectively.

There was a much wider range of topics selected this year. Some effective ones were: *Sport und Nationalstolz* (with special reference to the World Cup), *Jugend in der DDR*, *Erziehung in der Nazizeit*, *Kindheit und Beziehung mit Eltern*, *Deutscher Widerstand* (using the new Sophie Scholl film), *Kriegsgefangene* and *Die Verbergung der Wahrheit in der Nachkriegszeit*. Although topics that have a depressing tone, such as a number of those listed above and others such as *Obdachlosigkeit und Straßenkinder*, *Spätheimkehrnde Soldaten* and *Kinder im Krieg*, can lead to a serious and extensive discussion, it would be good if students could see beyond the purely negative aspects and gain a broader outlook. Not all assessors are familiar with every topic, so if an unusual and refreshing one (such as *Wattenmeer*) is chosen, students need to be able to explain it to assessors, who may know less than the student does.



Some topics proved to be ideal for competent students but too difficult and challenging for others. It must be remembered that VCE students vary greatly in their maturity and that a number who are in Year 11 may not be as confident or mature. *Expressionismus* proved difficult for many students who were not knowledgeable about art and art appreciation, while *Schicksal oder Zufall* required a considerable degree of maturity in order to be discussed meaningfully. Other topics were too broad and vague, such as *Deutsche Kunst und Unterhaltung* (where the texts lacked coherence and linkage), *Mode* and *Die Faszination der Deutschen mit Australien*. Some students who chose *Deutsche in Australien* used as their texts three separate individuals. If these were not interlinked, or if aspects such as their reasons for coming to Australia were not included, there was little scope for linkage and for ideas and opinions.

Weaker students who had chosen the sub-topic about the contribution of particular Germans to the Australian society only seemed able to recite facts, so that not much emotional connection seemed possible. Sometimes the global issue was lost in the detail and relevance to the German language and culture was lacking. Topics like Arnold Schwarzenegger and the Terminator, the Beatles (although they performed in Hamburg), and *Tarzan und ein Naturschutzgebiet* did not really satisfy this requirement.

Language

As considerable time has been spent studying the sub-topic, students should have mastered the correct words and genders and be able to express their ideas and opinions in varied language, using a wide range of vocabulary, structures and expressions. The language should have the appropriate style and register. Students should also be able to detect and correct their own mistakes.

As many of the topics included historical material, it is important to be able to say dates correctly. Students should either just give the date or prefix it with *im Jahr*; many simply said *im* plus the date, which is incorrect in German. Another difficulty encountered was pronouncing the year correctly in German. If students include dates and other figures or statistics, they should practise them thoroughly so that the language flows appropriately without long pauses.

Students should rehearse expressions like *Meiner Meinung nach*, *Meiner Ansicht nach*, *Ich denke*, *Ich glaube*, *Ich finde* and other phrases to help them express an opinion. The correct word order after these expressions is important, particularly if *dass* is added after the last three examples. Some students had trouble understanding the assessors when they used the verb *gefallen*, particularly if they had to answer with the singular third person form *gefällt*. Mispronunciation sometimes caused assessors to smile, with comments such as *Mozart wohnte in Wein*.

When students were well-prepared and talked with enthusiasm about their Detailed Study, it became an enjoyable experience for them and for the assessors too. Some students made it so interesting that it was difficult to stop after 15 minutes.

Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

This year was the second year of the shorter LOTE exams, and students seemed to be better prepared for the format and time constraints. The three sections of the examination are demanding for students, requiring them to work steadily through each section and watch the time closely to ensure that there is sufficient time to complete all sections. The vast majority of students coped very well with these demands. There were very few students who did not complete all sections of the examination, and many of the responses to Section 3 were thoughtful and articulate, particularly given the tight time frame for planning, completion and checking. This year students appeared to have prepared themselves well for each of the sections, and to have coped very well with new vocabulary and meeting the demands of each question and task.

Future students are advised to practise each of the sections of the examination repeatedly using the prescribed time frame; this includes practising reading new passages quickly and with careful, but limited, use of a dictionary. It is essential to practise writing tasks against the clock, especially so that students learn to use the prescribed number of words and how to include the characteristics of text types within the word count.

When deciding whether to answer in pen or pencil, the student's main consideration should be that the writing is legible. Responses completed in pen are usually clearer to read; however, responses that are written initially in pencil then gone over in pen can be quite confusing and difficult to read for assessors. It also wastes valuable time during the examination. It is suggested that students commit themselves to using either pen (preferably) or pencil. Crossing out and rewriting is better than going over an answer and making the final version unclear.



Students should use the reading time to prepare for the examination. They should read the Section 1 questions to help anticipate the content and context of the listening passages, and to be aware of the exact information they need to listen for. Students should read the Section 2 reading passages and anticipate which words they might need to check in a dictionary, and also try to get an understanding of the passage as a whole before they concentrate on individual sections, phrases or words. Checking the questions may in fact give a guide to unknown vocabulary without having to look up the word at all.

Throughout the examination it is vital that students read the whole question, as questions may contain two parts. Even the best students often lose marks when an otherwise excellently written response fails to address part of the question. Questions 2 and 17 in 2006 were typical examples of such questions, as were the writing tasks. In Question 2 the two parts were deliberately placed on two lines to emphasise the need for two answers, two lines were given to write the answers, and two marks were available; all of these were simple guides to help students know how much was expected of them.

Despite having completed Units 3 and 4 German, many students still confused the possessive pronouns *sein, ihr, dein, euer* and *Ihr*. Many students misspelled *Abitur* and *Lehre*, as well as confusing the difference between *Lehre* and *Lehrer*. Once again *werden* and *bekommen* were commonly swapped. The article was also often incorrectly used in front of occupations. All these led to mistakes such as *Peter hofft ein Lehrer zu bekommen, Peter will Tischler/Lehrer bekommen, Peter will ein Tischler bekommen* and *Aber sein Eltern wollen* (or *will*) *Peter ein Abitur zu machen*. A simple rereading of these sentences should enable students to see their errors and correct them. The same is especially relevant for errors with capital letters, verb endings and word order after *dass* or a modal verb.

It was unfortunate to see incorrect spelling of German words when they were provided on the examination paper, often in the question directly above where the student was writing. Common examples of this mistake this year were *Feiretagen* instead of *Feiertag/e* and confusion between *Gesicht* and *Geschichte*.

Although background knowledge may help students to understand a passage better – especially the listening passages – answers must be based on the material given in the text, not on prior knowledge. For example, Text 2 did not mention anything about being able to make your own food as an advantage for youth hostel members; however, for Question 8 some students gave this as a response. If an answer has been missed or is not known, it is appropriate to make an intelligent guess, but there needs to be some material in the listening or reading passage to give grounds for the response.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Part A – Answer in English

The number of marks for a question indicates the number of points or responses required, likewise the number of lines is intended to indicate the length of response required. Question 2 asked two questions, and two marks were available. Therefore the two answers needed to be clearly separated, not implied one in the other.

Generally the order of questions corresponds to the order in which information is presented in the listening passages, however students should know that some questions will relate to the passage as a whole and some information may be found in different places in the passage, not necessarily in direct order of hearing.

Text 1

Question 1

Anne says he has stolen, or taken, the CDs. Martin says he has borrowed them.

Question 2

Yes, this has happened before. We know because she says ‘again’, or has said a hundred times not to go in her room.

Question 3

He has bought new chocolate and says he will give her CDs back.

Question 4

Ask permission to go in her room, or not go in without permission.

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Question 5

Any of:

- by the tone of her voice
- she says 'you're kidding'
- she says 'that can't be true'
- she says 'you're crazy'
- she has told him before but he has still done it.

Text 2

Question 6

Any three of:

- hotels
- castles
- youth hostels
- luxury
- budget
- 3/4/5 star hotels.

Question 7

Three of:

- they are original, medieval castles/buildings
- you can sleep in a king's bed
- you can eat with your hands, or eat medieval food
- you can enjoy extra activities; for example, saving maidens from evil spirits, tournaments and jousting, experience ghosts, dance with ladies of the castle (it was acceptable to list three of these activities to gain three marks).

Question 8

Either of:

- special cheap prices
- an overnight stay costs **from** 15 Euros.

Part B – Answer in German

This section is marked according to two criteria (see Assessment Criteria on page 17 of the examination). This means students need to identify the correct answer(s) **and** also write as accurately as possible in German. The accuracy of the language use is still assessed even if the answer given is factually incorrect. This criteria marking is also used in Section 2, Part B.

The questions indicate how many points need to be given and how much information is needed, for example two or three pieces of information; there are no individual marks for each question. A total of 10 marks is available for this criterion, the capacity to understand general and specific aspects of texts.

The second criterion looks at grammatical accuracy: whether students can write in complete sentences; if there are errors, where they are slips rather than basic mistakes; and whether the student is able to use gender, case, verb and adjective endings, subordinate clauses, appropriate tenses, etc., accurately. Marks are given ranging from whether language use is largely accurate through to little or no attempt to use basic German sentence structures. Five marks are available for this criterion.

Most questions in Part B sections require full sentence answers, and it is important that students are aware of this. This is the student's opportunity to show the assessors how they are able to use the German language. They should try to use a range of relevant structures, and find the best vocabulary to express their answers. Question 9, for example, offers students the opportunity to use phrases like *einerseits/andererseits* or *auf der einen Seite/auf der anderen Seite*. It is important to practise structures needed to compare and contrast, in anticipation of such questions.

Text 3

Question 9

Peter wants to:

- leave school after Year 10



- not do Abitur
- do a carpenter apprenticeship
- become a carpenter/cabinet maker
- stay living at home
- follow his own ideas, not those of his parents (doesn't want to do things simply because his parents want him to do them)
- and believes English is not vital for a carpenter.

Parents want him to:

- complete Abitur
- go to university
- travel overseas, to the USA or Australia to learn English.

Answers needed to show contrasting ideas between Peter and his parents, and had to be in full sentences.

Question 10

She says that (any two of):

- many parents have their own ideas
- many parents put a lot of pressure on their children
- many young people have this problem with their parents.

Question 11

Three of:

- discuss career plans with teachers and/or careers adviser
- compromise and/or do work experience away from home
- write down his thoughts to clarify his future
- learning English is good and important.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

This section of the examination is challenging for LOTE students as they are presented with two passages containing a lot of information. Students must work quickly if they are to complete the two reading tasks and writing task within the time frame. Therefore students and teachers need to be aware that the skills required for this section need a lot of practice during the VCE years. The passages can be expected to contain some more complex vocabulary, but students are permitted to use dictionaries and should be familiar with how to make limited and effective use of the dictionary given the time limitations. Students should read the passages during the reading time and look closely at the questions before and during the reading, as unfamiliar meaning and details are often indicated in the wording of the questions. Careful reading of the questions also means that students do not waste time looking up words which are not needed to answer the questions.

The *German VCE Study Design* specifies on page 31 that this section is designed primarily to assess the student's knowledge and skill in analysing and responding to information from written texts. In Part A students may be required to extract, summarise and/or evaluate information from texts. In Part B students are expected to demonstrate understanding of a text by responding in German to information provided in that text. Teachers and students must understand that not only comprehension skills but also analysis and evaluation skills are required in this section. The questions may require students to look at the whole passage to gain an answer, not one sentence or paragraph alone.

The two reading passages dealt with topics that should be familiar to students. The merit of school uniform is a typical question in the oral examination, and it is reasonable to expect that the historical facts of the Berlin wall, reunification and divided Germany would be handled at some time in Units 1–4. However, some weaker students consequently made the mistake of responding with content based on background knowledge rather than careful reading and analysis of the information given in the texts. This requirement is reinforced through the questions/instructions with phrases such as 'giving reasons based on the text', 'select aspects from the text', 'according to the article' and 'with reference to the text'.

Students answered most of the questions quite well. It was very interesting to read students' responses to questions that required them to think about the passages as a whole. Most students gave very thoughtful and insightful responses, showing that they had understood the implications of the passages well.



Part A – Answer in English

This passage contained some quite difficult vocabulary, but students generally dealt with the complexity well.

Many students assumed that 13 August was a happy day because it marked the fall of the Berlin Wall. Students were able to find aspects of the dark German history quite well, but were often not able to write about the positive future. Some students did not understand the meaning of a monument, and appeared to find it difficult to explain what a monument is. Most students listed the reasons for Berliners objecting to the path accurately.

It was very pleasing to see the majority of students cope very well with the final question for this passage (Question 17). It required students to think about the meaning of the passage as a whole, not as the sum of individual facts, and fulfilled the study design’s examination description ‘to assess the student’s knowledge and skill in analysing and responding to information from written texts’. In a question like this, students are not so much required to list a series of examples from the text, but to explain the meaning of the passage as a whole. Most students were able to complete this very well. Some did not read the question accurately and failed to give the reasons for selecting one title as well as explain why the other two were not appropriate. Any one of the three titles was acceptable as an answer so long as the student explained their understanding effectively.

Text 4

Question 12

- sad – it’s the anniversary of the building of the wall
- happy – it celebrates the opening of the bike path along the former route of the wall (**not**, happy that the wall is ended)

Question 13

Dark German history	Positive future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • barbed wire, concrete barricades • separation of two Germanys • Cold War • places of suffering and pain • building of the wall • brutality of the East German Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • green belt through Berlin • bike riders, pedestrians, hobby historians can use the wall path • city is no longer divided • area of recreation • discovering parts of the city unknown before • Berliners are proud of their city • opening new opportunities and possibilities

Students needed to give four examples each of the dark history and positive future.

Question 14

Any of:

- the wall path remains a warning/reminder for future generations
- it commemorates a significant event/situation
- it is a reminder of the time when Germany was divided
- it is an integral part of German history.

Question 15

All of:

- space is needed for housing/buildings
- high cost of wall path construction
- there are already enough parks and monuments
- the Berliners don’t want to be reminded of the Berlin Wall.

Question 16

Either of:

- Berliners are discovering parts of the city they’ve never seen before because of the former wall
- they are proud of Berlin, their city.



Question 17

Any one of the three titles was acceptable, so long as the reasons given were based on the text. At least two reasons needed to be given as to why the other titles were not acceptable. Points may have included:

- the wall is not being rebuilt; parts are being restored and the bike path is being placed along the line of the former wall
- bike paths will follow the line of the former wall, into suburbs surrounding Berlin as well
- the line of the bike path will raise many emotions as it follows the line of the former wall
- many people are seeing areas of the city not seen before because of the wall; joy and other emotions are involved
- the path is not only for cyclists
- it reminds people of emotional times when the wall separated the city
- the wall is being reconstructed in another form.

Part B – Answer in German

Some students appear to have struggled with the time allocation of this part of Section 2. Given that school uniform is a common area of discussion in class throughout secondary schooling, it was expected that students would be able to deal with some more challenging vocabulary and unusual aspects of this topic. There are very few schools in Germany where school uniform is worn, and so the reasons and experiences behind its introduction gave students the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the text effectively, not just show how much they know about school uniform.

Text 5

Question 18

The word reminds people of uncomfortable clothing at school, suggests strict discipline, having to stand up straight and is a reminder of the military (bad historical memories) and being in the Army.

Simply naming scratchy socks and standing up straight gained half marks.

Question 19

Any five of:

- don't have to decide what to put on every morning
- less stress in the morning
- no pressure among students to wear 'correct' clothes
- does not allow students to express themselves or show who they are through their clothes
- better social climate/atmosphere
- more concentration in class
- solidarity expressed by some teachers when they wear school clothing
- sense of belonging
- they look good as they all look the same
- parents enrol students in school because of the clothing.

Question 20

Any three of:

- 'clothes/fashion terror' – students are given a hard time if they don't wear the right clothes
- if there is a school uniform the peer pressure would escalate to mobile phones and watches
- bullying through SMS and phones
- in Germany most students wear jeans and t-shirts anyway
- selecting clothes in the morning is stressful
- well-known brands are preferred to cheaper clothes.

Section 3 – Writing in German

This year it was very interesting to see quite an even spread of responses across the five writing tasks. Some students did not complete the required number of words, presumably because they ran out of time, and most others completed the task at the lower end of the 200–300 word limit. However, within these confines the range of writing was very impressive, and led to very interesting reading.

Students should be encouraged in their imaginative and original approaches to some of the topics, so long as they remain within the requirements and instructions for the task. Assessors are always impressed with some of the



thoughtful writing tasks students present, and students should be aware that 'relevance, breadth and depth of content' is worth a third of the marks for this section. Each of the three assessment criteria is allocated five marks.

A personal profile has not appeared in the Writing section for a number of years, and it would appear that a number of students were not familiar with how to deal with this text type. Page 13 of the *German VCE Study Design* lists the text types with which students are expected to be familiar, and page 58 gives the main characteristics of these text types. Students should know these characteristics by heart so that they are aware of the requirements of each task, as many marks can be lost simply by not fulfilling the requirements of the structure of a text type. Pages 59–60 list the main characteristics of the different kinds of writing, which are summarised for the following tasks. Weaker students often do not effectively differentiate between, for example, informative and evaluative, or personal and imaginative. These are areas which can quickly gain (or lose) marks for students.

Question 21

Students were asked to write a persuasive speech that:

- included a title/topic, register for school students (*ihr*), the layout for a speech, information on many positive aspects of sponsoring a child from a developing country, persuasive techniques and language appropriate to a student speech, second person for direct address and appeal and careful choice of words
- manipulated reader emotions and opinions
- may have used exaggeration, extravagant language and humour to create a relationship.

Some excellent pieces were written on this topic, showing admirable community concern for others. Some students spent too long on the informative writing aspects of this topic, for example the problems for children in developing countries, rather than the actual task of **persuading** fellow students to sponsor a child. Teachers and students should be encouraged to practise persuasive techniques appropriate for such tasks, especially the requirements to 'manipulate the reader's emotions and opinions' and choose 'the best word (with the precise shade of meaning and overtones of approval/disapproval), sometimes [using] exaggeration, extravagant language and humour to create a conspiratorial relationship between reader and writer' (*German VCE Study Design*, page 59).

It was important to address students in this topic as *Mitschüler* or *ihr*. It is not appropriate to start a speech as a class representative with *Meine Damen und Herren* or *Danke für die Einladung heute hier zu sprechen*. Students should also note that page 58 of the study design requires that a speech have a title or topic as part of the main characteristics. Very few students fulfilled this requirement.

Question 22

Students were asked to write an imaginative short story that:

- included a title/topic, the author (fictional name), the layout for short story, a story about what happened to person/self, how the situation was approached/dealt with, a description and careful selection of language, using a range of techniques to create the desired atmosphere or emotion
- manipulated the reader's response to create the desired impression or response
- created a strong sense of context and situation.

Question 23

Students were asked to write a magazine article that:

- included a title, the author (fictional name), register for school magazine, the layout of article, two Australian public holidays, an objective style and impersonal expressions, although it may have used an informal style to establish the relationship of 'friendly helper' with the reader
- was suitable for German students who do not necessarily know much about Australia
- aimed to convey information as clearly, comprehensively and accurately as possible
- generally used facts, examples, explanations and references as evidence.

Question 24

Students were asked to write a personal profile that:

- included a title/heading, factual information in content, headings/sub-headings, how sport has (or has not) changed the author's life, subjective, informal or familiar register (may have used emotive language), a minimum of three experiences and possibly cynical responses if a negative approach was taken
- created a sense of person/personality for writer
- established a relationship between reader and writer
- emphasised ideas, opinions, feelings and impressions rather than factual, objective information



- may have used contracted language such as is used in speech.

It was disappointing to see students make assumptions about this topic and not read the requirements closely. A common error in this task was to write an informative piece on health and the general value of sport rather than a personal piece on how sport has changed the author's life.

One effective approach was to describe how the student had considered him/herself to be overweight and not involved with school and friends, so he/she joined a sporting club. Immediately the student made new friends, instead of being on the edge of the group. The team won a premiership after a hard-fought season, which gave a real sense of achievement, and was the proudest moment in his/her life. In preparation for the premiership, the student also learned to organise school work better to enable training. As a result, sport had also caused his/her school marks to improve. From being a 'nobody' at the back of the class, the student recognised that, through sport, he/she could be a success in many areas so long as he/she put his mind to the task and effort into the preparation.

Question 25

Students were asked to write an evaluative (factual report) that:

- included a topic, correct structure (introduction, body, conclusion), the author (fictional name), layout for report and advantages and disadvantages of going to the cinema or watching a DVD
- reached a conclusion through the logical presentation and discussion of facts and ideas
- presented important aspects, discussed these rationally and used evidence to support the contrasting sides or alternatives
- used an objective style, appealed to reason rather than emotion, and gave the impression of balance and impartiality.

Students had clearly thought a lot about the two options in this topic and gave some interesting arguments for each case. Often these tended simply to take the form of a list, rather than a presentation and discussion of facts. Possibly more practice is needed in vocabulary and structures that express advantages and disadvantages, contrasting alternatives and how to reach a conclusion.

An original and effective approach to the task, while remaining within the specified requirements of the task, was to present the report in the form of a response to a student question from a previous school newsletter.