



Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Virtually all students made a very good attempt at each section of the written examination. They managed their time for each section effectively. The degree of student comprehension (listening and reading) was very pleasing.

However, the standard of German writing skills, shown in Part B of Sections 1 and 2 and in Section 3, was again low. There was a tendency this year for some students, although trying to use rather complex and advanced structures such as past perfect and subjunctive, to be unable to master essential structures. Students need to master core structures, such as perfect, imperfect and irregular verb forms, as well as more complex structures. Mistakes occurred across all grammatical areas.

In Part B particularly, students need to pay attention to directives such as 'summarise', 'compare' and 'explain', which require them to go beyond simply quoting passages. In order to tackle such tasks, students need more knowledge of comparative structures and prepositions or conjunctions such as *einerseits/andererseits*, *obwohl*, *aber*, *zwar* and *während*.

As it is now more than 10 years since the introduction of the German spelling reform, all students of German should have learnt the current spelling right from the start of their language studies. However, many students still apply the old rules for the spelling of *ss* and *ß*, or use both the old and new spelling rules together and inconsistently. Teachers need to advise their students to use dictionaries no older than 2005 editions.

Very basic idiomatic mistakes still occurred, such as *Freunde machen* (which should be *Freundschaft/Freundschaften schließen*, *Freunde kennen lernen*, *Freunde finden*), *Er war richtig*. (*Er hatte Recht.*), *für zwei Jahre* (*vor zwei Jahren*; often confused with *zwei Jahre lang*) and *es hat* (*es gibt*). The latter is not standard German. On the other hand, most students knew more difficult words such as *Gefahren* (dangers). Many students struggled with irregular comparative forms such as *gern* and *lieber*, or confused *viel* (much) and *sehr* (very).

Plural forms are a major area of concern. Students must learn genders as well as plurals from the beginning of their studies. Students can also look up plural forms in a dictionary. It seems that many students have no real concept of German plural forms.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Part A – Answer in English

Text 1

Text 1 provided students with an easy start. Even so, many students struggled with simple numbers: instead of 45, students understood 55, or even 4.50.

Question 1a.

- Cost: 45 Euro
- Duration of the course: 3 days
- Starting date: 23 June
- How to make a booking: call/ring/telephone/(by) phone



Question 1b.

- self-confidence, courage, to be less shy, self-esteem, to be less self-conscious
- public speaking, preparing speeches for the public/in front of class
- communication skills (not just 'how to communicate/communication')

'Success' alone was not a correct answer.

Most students were able to distinguish between what is actually taught in the course and what subsequent effects were promised.

Text 2

Question 2a.

- The youth forum has been organised for many years/10 years/for the 10th time.
- Many/thousands of people participate (not just '1000 people').

It was very pleasing to see that the majority of students were able to understand implied meaning. They understood the statement that young people were not interested in politics, and found the two text passages that contradicted this statement.

Question 2b.

Any three of:

- discussions/talks with politicians (not 'about politics' or 'listen to politicians')
- presenting projects
- cultural programs
- plan/do/undertake/complete a task/project, organise events, take action.

Question 2c.

Any three of:

- integration of foreigners/migrants/people from other countries
- the future of the school system/education
- dangers/risks/misuse of the Internet (not 'use' or 'disadvantages')
- environment/environmental problems/issues.

Part B – Answer in German

Text 3

Many students did not seem to have heard of Munich or Hamburg. *München* was often spelt incorrectly in German. Many students did not realise when the two speakers talked about their own city or when they described the other city. Many students confused *Berg* (mountain), *Burg* (castle) and *Bürger* (citizens). Once again, students often had difficulties with the possessive pronouns *sein* and *ihr*, and did not add appropriate gender and case endings to possessive pronouns.

Question 3a.

- various greetings, *unterschiedliche Begrüßung(en)*
- greetings in different styles, *sagen anders Guten Tag*
- he says ... she says, *Er sagt ... Sie sagt*
- this is typical for, *Das ist typisch für*
- they say hello in different ways
- they *sagen/say* 'Moin Moin' and 'Grüß Gott'

Question 3b.

They:

- point out problems/social issues, *Er/Sie sagt, dass, reden über Probleme/soziale Probleme*
- use stereotypes and clichés, *benutzen Stereotypen*
- say that Bavaria/Munich is boring, conservative, just leather pants and beer, *Bayern/München: langweilig, konservativ, nur Lederhosen und Bier*
- say that the north/Hamburg has no traditions, is unfriendly and the people don't talk much, *Nord/Hamburg: keine Traditionen, unfreundlich, Menschen reden nicht viel*



- stress the advantages of their own city/make comparisons in favour of their own city (the beach is nicer in Munich or Hamburg) and use metaphors and picturesque language, *Betonen Vorteile ihrer Städte; Vergleiche/eigene Stadt besser (schönerer Strand in München oder Hamburg); benutzen Metaphern/Bilder/Beschreibungen.*

Question 3c.

Possible areas to address included:

- mountains/hiking, *Berge/wandern* and skiing, *skifahren*
- sea/ocean/harbour, *See/Ozean/Meer/Hafen*
- interest in the opera, musicals, rock, street music, classic concerts, castles, *Interesse für Oper, musicals, rock (music), Straßenmusik, klassische Konzerte, Schlösser/Burgen*
- multiculturalism versus traditions, *Multikulturalismus oder Traditionen*
- (different) foods, *(anderes) Essen, Weißwurst/Currywurst*
- both cities have common problems, *beide Städte haben Probleme.*

Students needed to make the link to their own interests in order to get marks; for example, *Ich fahre gern Ski. Deshalb wäre München für mich besser.*

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Part A – Answer in English

Text 4

Question 4a.

People did not know what to eat or ate the green leaves/what was above the ground (not ‘ate green potatoes’).

Question 4b.

- The king triggered curiosity by planting a big field and guarding the crop.
- The king showed people that the actual potatoes grow under the ground.

Question 4c.

- It was an important food that became part of the staple diet.
- It was used in many new recipes.

Question 4d.

Money doesn’t satisfy; food is more important. People need to eat and can’t live off money alone. Potatoes are valuable, like money.

Some students mixed up the words *Geld* (money) and *Gold* (gold).

Very good responses, often from weak students, included the following.

- *The things money can buy are more satisfying than the money itself.*
- *Money doesn’t fill you up, potatoes do, meaning that money cannot replace some of the core elements of life like food.*
- *One cannot grow money, but he can grow potatoes. It highlights the value of potatoes.*

Question 4e.

Because they were:

- small
- sour.

Question 4f.

Difficulties

- bad roads
- transport takes too long
- cherries couldn’t be kept fresh

Resolution (either of the following)

- Cherry trees were planted all over the city.

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- They planted their own cherry trees.

Question 4g.

- when they flower
- at harvest time/when they are picked

Question 4h.

- at Christmas: luck/happiness/prosperity
- after Christmas: a long and hard winter

Question 4i.

- The young women attach paper slips with the names of men to branches.
- The blossoms mean a wedding.
- The branch that blossoms first reveals the name of their future husband.

The three steps were needed to achieve three marks.

Many students translated *verraten* wrongly as 'to betray'. The correct meaning was 'to reveal'.

Part B – Answer in German

Text 5

Students generally performed very well in this task and identified the necessary information from the various diary entries. Even weaker students were able to structure their responses well. It was pleasing to see that more students than in previous years were able to adapt passages from the text and turn them into accurate responses, indicating that students had understood the text well; however, students are encouraged to use their own words and produce original responses. Many students did not seem to know the phrase *ein Studium abschließen* (complete university), which suggests a limited vocabulary. This is a phrase that students at this level would be expected to know.

Question 5a.

He has:

- a university degree in business, *Universitätsabschluss in Wirtschaft*
- work experience in marketing, *Arbeits Erfahrung in Marketing*.

Many students overlooked that the question asked for Jürgen's professional suitability, not his personal one.

Question 5b.

- The climate was not as hot as expected, *Klima gar nicht so heiß*.
- People speak Spanish, not English, *Menschen sprechen Spanisch, nicht Englisch*.
- It is not just a beautiful landscape; it is also a difficult life with many problems, *Nicht nur schöne Landschaft, sondern schweres Leben*.
- He expected adventures, but was shocked to find it hard, *Hat Abenteuer erwartet, aber es war anstrengend, er war schockiert*.

Students needed to contrast certain aspects or explain how things were different in order to gain marks.

Section 3 – Writing in German

The following three main issues emerged in Section 3 this year.

- Students at this level should have acquired a greater variety and range of vocabulary. The majority of students used basic vocabulary, and often incorrectly.
- Although there was no specific grammatical area that was of concern, many students showed a general lack of understanding of basic German grammatical structure, ranging from verb forms and plural endings to word order and pronouns. Students need to learn, practise and revise basic German grammar before they move on to more difficult structures such as the subjunctive or even the past perfect. It seems that many students may rush through some areas of grammar during their years of learning German, but with little depth. In addition, free and creative writing must be practised from the beginning. The grammatical and writing skills of many German students in Victoria need improvement.

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- Students need to pay more attention to the different kinds of writing that can be expected in the examination. An informal letter, for example, is not automatically a personal piece of writing, although students might use at least some features of personal writing, such as direct address, emotive language, contracted language, expression of feelings.

Question 6

Some students did not address the aspect of how the writer had changed in his/her new environment. Many students talked about school life only, while other students incorrectly wrote as though they had moved to the city, not to the country.

Many students were not able to apply *liebe* or *lieber* (dear, addressing a female or male) appropriately at the beginning of the letter. Incorrect spelling such as *leibe* also occurred very often. Some students struggled to make the letter really personal while other students did very well in this regard.

Text type	Personal letter
Style	Personal
Register	Use of <i>du</i>
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • salutation, greeting, body (content), farewell, signing off (fictional name) • creates a sense of person/personality • establishes a relationship between the reader and the writer • emotive language, feelings and impressions • may use contracted language such as is used in speech

Suggested points for answers

- outline of new life in the country
- description of new school, peers, teachers
- description of impressions, experiences, feelings
- description of personal changes (more confidence, new friends, new or fewer opportunities)

Question 7

Text type	Information leaflet
Style	Informative
Register	Impersonal, or may address the reader informally (addressing young people) or formally (addressing parents), generally objective
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • topic/product name, content (factual and explanations) • aims to convey information as clearly, comprehensively and accurately as possible • objective style and impersonal expressions, although may use informal style to establish relationship of 'friendly helper' with the reader

Suggested points for answers

- description of language immersion program: date, duration, place (in Australia)
- classes offered
- leisure time activities
- expectations of participants (behave properly, be prepared, regular attendance)

Students were not supposed to be writing a tourist brochure for Melbourne, and responses along these lines could not score highly.

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Question 8

Text type	Review
Style	Evaluative
Register	Formal
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • topic/title; author (fictional name), content (facts, pros and cons, evidence), conclusion/summary • advantages and disadvantages, possible solutions • reaches a conclusion through logical presentation and discussion of facts and ideas • presents important aspects, discusses these rationally, uses evidence to support the contrasting sides or alternatives • uses an objective style, appeals to reason not emotion, gives an impression of balance and impartiality

Suggested points for answers

- description of facilities and activities
- advantages/disadvantages: variety of activities and facilities, fees, opening hours, location
- suggestions for improvements

Question 9

Students found this topic very inspiring. Some students who struggled with basic German grammar were still able to write beautiful and structured short stories. This task showed how important it is to trigger students' imagination and how it can enhance their performance.

Text type	Story (short)
Style	Imaginative
Register	Various
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • title, author (fictional name), progressing content • deals with how the cat approached the situation and how she felt • manipulates the reader's response to create the desired impression or response • creates a strong sense of context and situation • includes description and careful selection of language • uses a range of techniques to create the desired atmosphere or emotion; for example, contracted language, direct speech, direct use of the present tense

Question 10

Text type	Text of a speech
Style	Persuasive
Register	Formal (addressing a jury), second person for direct address and appeal
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reason for speaking, issue, content (opinion, personal and factual information) • manipulates the reader's emotions and opinions • persuasive techniques and language appropriate to the audience • may use exaggeration, extravagant language and humour to create a relationship

Suggested points for answers

- the importance of youth and a young audience in general and for the festival
- typical experiences, concerns and interests of young people
- a greater variety
- young directors need a start

An actual film review was not expected in response to this question.