



2010

LOTE: German GA 3: Examination

Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2010 examination covered topics, such as leisure, hobbies, school, casual jobs and the environment. The writing tasks focused on common experiences of young people, such as camps, television, participating in cultural events and using mobile phones.

Many students had not acquired basic vocabulary and grammatical structures. Some students need to further develop the skill of using a German language dictionary. A surprising number of students did not recognise the past tense when reading Text 4. Students should respond as accurately as possible to each question in the examination.

The standard of writing skills shown in Part B of Sections 1 and 2, and in Section 3 needs a great deal of improvement. Many students were not able to show that they understood essential structures. Mistakes occurred across all grammatical areas. The most common areas of weakness were possessive pronouns, reflexive verbs, comparative forms and noun–verb agreement. Many students did not attempt to capitalise nouns. Common spelling mistakes included confusing *ei* and *ie*, and *weinig* instead of *wenig*.

Students need to pay attention to tasks asking them to ‘evaluate’ and ‘explain’, as they need 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*.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Part A – Answer in English

Text 1

Question 1a.

The caller joined the fitness club three months ago.

Question 1b.

He was attracted to the fitness club because of:

- advertisements or cool poster(s)
- it is a gym/club for (school/university) students/young people/youth.

Question 1c.

The caller complains that:

- the music is not modern/it is boring/old-fashioned/outdated
- there are (too) few (sports) courses for boys/there are too many sports for girls
- it is more expensive than promised/expected.

Some students confused the words *Jungen* (boys) and *Jugend* (youth). A surprising number of students did not understand the word *Kurse* (courses).

Question 1d.

The caller is requesting an appointment/meeting (time) with the boss/manager/owner/head/director.

Suggesting that the caller was requesting ‘a chat’ was not sufficient. It was pleasing to see that many students understood the term *der Termin* (appointment).

Text 2

Many students did not know Germany’s official full name: Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Federal Republic of Germany). The Federal Republic of Germany celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2010. Students should at least have heard about this important milestone.

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Question 2a.

This play is celebrating 60 years/the 60th anniversary of Germany/FRG/BRD/Federal Republic of Germany/Bundesrepublik Deutschland.

Question 2b.

- it takes place in a railway station/not in a theatre
- there are no (professional) actors/the play uses authentic, real people/witnesses

Some students did not understand the very basic word *Bahnhof* (train station). Many students did not know or understand the verb *stattfinden – findet statt* (to take place), and understood instead that the play took place in the city or town.

Question 2c.

The performers speak about:

- the foundation/formation/start/establishment of Germany/FRG/BRD/Federal Republic of Germany/Bundesrepublik Deutschland
- the difficult life back then/in 1949
- current/today's dreams.

Question 2d.

All the performers wish for Germany to be a country where people show solidarity for one another/help/support each other/where people are not selfish.

Some students did not know the word *Solidarität* (solidarity), and translated it as 'solid'.

Question 2e.

- old and young performing/participating
- different generations talk/participate/perform
- talking about past as well as today (and future)

Part B – Answer in German

Text 3

Students and teachers need to remember that in this section of the examination, students are assessed for both their understanding (criterion 1) and their ability to write in German accurately and appropriately (criterion 2). In order to get full marks for criterion 2 (response in German), students were expected to demonstrate at least some knowledge of conjunctions, such as *aber* (but) and *obwohl* (although) and comparative structures. Please refer to the *VCE German Study Design* for vocabulary and grammar that students are expected to be familiar with, as well as advice regarding dictionaries.

Students often had difficulties with the possessive pronouns *sein* (his) and *ihr* (her), and did not add appropriate gender and case endings to possessive pronouns. Students need to practise writing in German in order to improve their writing skills.

Question 3a.

The journalist uses plastic bags and the minister uses a car for shopping/short trips.

Question 3b.

The government plans to introduce:

- car-free zones
- bike paths
- (more) energy from wind power.

A number of students understood *Sonnen* (suns). While there is no prescribed vocabulary list, it is expected that students will be familiar with a range of vocabulary and idioms relevant to the topics prescribed in the *VCE German Study Design*.

Question 3c.

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- greater care for the environment
- rivers are cleaner
- less paper used

Some students mistook *größer* (bigger, greater, increased) as *Griße* (greetings). A number of students did not understand the word *Flüsse* (rivers).

Question 3d.

Possible responses could have included:

- Journalist – cool, relaxed, cheeky, impolite, unconventional, unprofessional, uses informal address, misbehaves, is late, uses rude language, challenges the minister
- Minister – upset, defensive, frustrated, throws him out, claims to have an appointment (as an excuse).

In general, responses were acceptable as long as the behaviour was evaluated and the minister's reaction described.

Section 2 – Reading and responding Part A – Respond in English

Text 4

Question 4a.

ballet/dance

Question 4b.

- school starts earlier ('earlier' needed to be indicated. Alternatively, students could have listed the times when school used to start and when it starts now. Simply stating 'school start at ...' did not earn any marks)
- dancing (classes/practice) every day/daily/two hours per day, not just on weekends
- lives at boarding house or shares room or used to have own room
- does homework together with friends/mates/not alone

Question 4c.

- English
- can't remember/memorise/learn (new) words

Many students needed to look up the verb *sich merken* (to remember/memorise) in their dictionaries, and when they did, they picked the first given (and incorrect) meaning of to notice/recognise. It is important that students develop the necessary skills and confidence in order to use dictionaries effectively.

Question 4d.

- wanted/preferred to play
- hated teacher/instructor
- long (bus) trip

Some students did not understand the phrase *mit drei Jahren* (at the age of three) and understood instead 'for three years' or 'three years long'.

Question 4e.

The most recent indicator that Anja has received success is she is one of many/five chosen for an international dance festival in London.

Question 4f.

To be selected, Anja needed to:

- dance in front of a jury/panel
- perform a modern dance
- (in the modern dance) to express feelings/emotions (listing all five emotions was not expected)
- dance/perform a piece of classical ballet.



Question 4g.

Possible areas to address included:

- dancing/training helps her in life and calms her down
- compares learning/school to dancing
- doesn't give up, determined, passionate, competitive and hard-working
- homesick, misses her family, is sometimes nervous/weak
- optimistic, open-minded.

Many students did not read this question carefully. Although they described Anja's personality, they overlooked that the question asked about the impact of dancing on Anja.

Part B – Answer in German

Text 5

In this section of the examination, students are assessed for both their understanding (criterion 1) and their ability to write in German accurately and appropriately (criterion 2), and 50 per cent of the marks are allocated to each criterion. Therefore, what may seem to be an easy comprehension task still has its challenges for students. This task was in accordance with the *VCE German Study Design*, page 13.

Students coped well with the slightly different format of the reading text this year. The majority of students were able to comprehend the pie charts and the short passage. They extracted information from both sources and synthesised them in their German responses.

However, the German responses demonstrated that students' writing skills need to be improved. A large number of students were not able to describe accurately in simple terms the boy's casual jobs and how he could improve his situation. The majority of students were unable to rephrase given information or questions. A large number of students lacked knowledge of reflexive verbs, such as *sich kümmern um* (to look after).

In order to get full marks for criterion 2 (response in German), students were expected to demonstrate some knowledge of conjunctions, such as *aber* (but), comparative structures and the subjunctive.

Question 5a.

Max does:

- jobs that may be more typical for girls to do, or does not do jobs that the majority of boys do
- three jobs: babysitting, looking after the dog and delivering newspapers

Question 5b.

Possible responses included:

- do less work/fewer jobs, not every day, only in the morning or afternoon
- have a plan; balance work, friends and school
- work together with friends
- combine delivering newspapers with walking the dog
- do homework while babysitting
- buy cheaper clothes
- work in a clothing shop to get a discount on clothes
- ask for more pocket money
- take a rest from time to time.

Students needed to provide three aspects. Their answers needed to be logical and based on the text. Working more was not acceptable, as the boy clearly expressed his concerns about not having enough time for friends and homework, and being tired.



Section 3 – Writing in German

Students were given a choice of five topics, five kinds of writing and five text types.

Students should read the tasks carefully, in both English and German, paying attention to key words and noting and addressing each aspect of the task. Misreading or overlooking a key word can put a student on the wrong track altogether.

Students should not only pay attention to the text type, but also to the kinds of writing: informative, persuasive, evaluative, personal and imaginative. These five kinds of writing are covered in the examination every year and teachers should prepare their students accordingly.

Criterion 2 not only refers to text type features, but the overall structure of a text. A well-structured text includes a variety of coordinate and subordinate structures and conjunctions. Regardless of the topic, text type or kind of writing, a logical progression of the text and linking of ideas are essential.

Students should have acquired a wide variety of vocabulary. The majority of students used rather basic vocabulary, and often used words incorrectly. Many students showed a general lack of understanding of basic German grammatical structure, ranging from verb forms, to word order and pronouns. There was a tendency for students to have rote-learned some information, but when they were preparing their response, they were unable to incorporate this information into their text in a meaningful and logical way. Students should avoid word-for-word translations and instead aim to create a correctly written structure.

Students should learn, practise and revise the foundations of German grammar before they move on to more difficult structures such as the subjunctive or even past perfect. Free and creative writing should be practised from the early years onward. Students are encouraged to practise writing and the study design should be referred to for information regarding common text types and different kinds of writing.

Question 6

This task was by far the most popular. The question did not specify whether students should write one or a number of diary entries as students were not judged on technicalities, but on their writing skills in German. As this task required a personal style of writing, students needed to express their feelings and their way of dealing with them, rather than just listing features of the mobile phone.

Text type	Diary entry or entries
Style	Personal
Register	Mainly use of <i>ich</i>
Structure	Date(s), content (reference to three days, consequences of not having a phone, events, frustrations) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creates a sense of person/personality • emotive language, feelings and impressions • may use contracted language such as is used in speech

Question 7

The kind of television programs students could or should write about was not specified. However, simply listing common shows on Australian television was not sufficient. Some students overlooked that a report was required and instead presented an application letter.

Text type	Report
Style	Informative
Register	Impersonal or third person plural, generally objective
Structure	Topic; content (factual and explanations), reasons: experiences/expectations of young people, appropriateness of programs; summary/conclusion (suggestions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aims to convey information as clearly, comprehensively and accurately as possible • objective style and impersonal expressions

Question 8

Students in Australia are very familiar with camps; however, some students did not address the evaluative aspect. Besides giving information, an evaluative text involves weighing up the good and bad points, and making value judgments.

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Text type	Review
Style	Evaluative
Register	Objective (may include personal features)
Structure	<p>Topic/title; author (fictional name), content (facts, pros and cons, <u>evidence</u>), conclusion/summary (recommendation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advantages and disadvantages, and 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 objective style, appeals to reason not emotion, impression of balance and impartiality, but may also have some personal features

Question 9

The cartoon served as a visual stimulus and this worked well for many students. The task was not to describe or analyse the cartoon. The *VCE German Study Design* does not require students to write in what is regarded as the genre of *Kurzgeschichte* in German literary studies. Therefore, the German wording of the task specified *kurze Geschichte*.

Students who chose this task recognised a wolf and sheep, and some invented a range of beautiful, highly imaginative and well-structured stories, despite some weak language skills.

Text type	Story (short, brief)
Style	Imaginative
Register	Various
Structure	<p>Title, author (fictional name), narrative content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manipulates reader to create desired impression or response • creates strong sense of context and situation • includes description and careful selection of language • uses range of techniques to create the desired atmosphere or emotion

Question 10

It was not specified what kind of cultural event students could or should write about. The majority of students need to pay more attention to text type and kind of writing, in this instance, a speech and a persuasive text.

Text type	Speech
Style	Persuasive
Register	Second person for direct address and appeal , <i>Sie</i> or <i>ihr</i>
Structure	<p>Reason for speaking (in some form)/issue, content (proposal, supporting arguments, reasons)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manipulates reader's emotions and opinions • persuasive techniques and language appropriate to school audience • may use exaggeration, extravagant language and humour to create relationship