

# GERMAN

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<p><b>Paper 8683/01</b> <b>Speaking</b></p>
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## Key messages

- The Speaking Test should begin with an uninterrupted presentation from the candidate, clearly relating to the culture or society of a German-speaking country, whilst also reflecting the candidate's personal interests.
- Presentations should last for around three minutes, up to a maximum of four minutes
- No questions should be included in the content of presentations, unless they are rhetorical.
- Candidates should ask the Examiner at least two questions in both the topic conversation and the general conversation, ideally spontaneously; the Examiner should prompt them to do so if necessary
- No marks may be awarded for Seeking Information if no questions are asked.
- The two conversations should be of approximately equal length, at around eight minutes each and the whole test should be completed within twenty minutes.

## General comments

Nearly all candidates were appropriately entered at this level and most were aware of the requirements. Presentation topics mostly referred to issues in a German speaking society, as required by the syllabus, and many were interesting and informative. On the other hand, some presentations referred only briefly to Germany, Austria, or Switzerland, which was not really sufficient to achieve a high mark for Content. Some specific detail is expected, with ideas and opinions, as well as factual points. Some centres had not ensured that their candidates' presentations mentioned a German speaking country at all, and their marks for Content should have been lower to reflect this. If they wish, candidates may ask rhetorical questions as part of their presentation, but obviously no answer is required. Some Examiners even interrupted the presentation to ask questions themselves. Examiners should leave any questions that may arise until the Topic Conversation, as candidates must deliver their presentations uninterrupted and for at least three minutes.

Candidates must be made aware that they must ask the Examiner a minimum of two questions per conversation. While Examiners must be aware that they should prompt them to do so if necessary. It was sometimes the case that candidates did not ask any questions spontaneously, and if they were not prompted to do so by the Examiner, they were unable to access the marks available for Seeking Information. Some Examiners did prompt their candidates but only at the very end of a conversation. Questions should be integrated and arise naturally, during the discussion. There were still Examiners who awarded marks for Seeking Information even though no questions had been asked.

Candidates were mostly very responsive and nearly all were spontaneous. If candidates rely mainly on prepared material, they should be placed no higher than in the 'satisfactory' box for Comprehension and Responsiveness. Apart from some incorrectly awarded marks for Seeking Information, most centres used the mark scheme correctly and accurately. Also as detailed already, some marks for the Content of the Presentation were pitched slightly too high, but the criteria for marking the linguistic categories were usually interpreted correctly. Some centres allowed the tests to last too long, thus risking tiring the candidates. Twenty minutes should be the maximum duration of a test. Recording quality was usually very good, but at some centres either the candidate or the Examiner was less audible, owing to incorrect placement of the recording equipment.

### Specific comments on the sections of the examination

#### **Section 1 (Presentation)**

- The presentation should contain ideas and opinions and refer in reasonable detail to the culture or society of a German-speaking country; if it is also delivered in a fluent and confident fashion, nine or ten marks may be awarded for content.
- If there are only brief references to a German-speaking country a lower mark for content should be awarded.
- Presentations that are far too long, even if confidently delivered, should not receive nine or ten marks for content, as they cannot be considered to have been 'well organised' as stated in the mark scheme.
- For a mark of five for pronunciation a candidate does not have to be a native speaker.
- A well-prepared candidate should be able to access at least 4 marks for Language. If there is evidence of a 'reasonable range' of structures and (topic-specific) vocabulary, delivered 'fairly fluently', and without ambiguity of meaning.
- In this session there was again a wide range of up-to-date and relevant presentation topics. The following is a list of some of the most interesting:

*Der Klimastreit; Familien in der Schweiz; Kulturunterschiede in Österreich; zwischenmenschliche Beziehungen in der Schweiz; Kriptowährungen; Feminismus; bikulturelle Familien; der Sport 'Schwingen' in der Schweiz.*

#### **Section 2 (Topic Conversation)**

- In this conversation issues raised in the presentation should be followed up and discussed.
- Candidates should be able to defend any ideas and opinions they have already expressed and ought also to have prepared plenty of additional points; however, Examiners should not expect them to know any specific factual information over and above what has been presented.
- Any issues more suitable for the General Conversation should be raised later in **Section 3**, provided that the main issues of the Topic Conversation are not returned to.
- The questions a candidate puts to the Examiner to 'seek information' should be as varied as possible. 'Was denken Sie?' or something similar, is a useful question to move the conversation along, but a wider range is expected for marks of four or five.
- If a candidate asks only one question during a conversation the maximum mark for Seeking Information is three; if no questions are asked, even after prompting, the mark is zero.
- A maximum mark of three should be awarded for Providing Information if the candidate can deal with basic situations and concepts, but finds more complex ones difficult.

#### **Section 3 (General Conversation)**

- This section should be distinct from **Section 2**. It should not be shorter, but of a similar length to the Topic Conversation at around eight minutes.
- The Examiner should clearly inform the candidate that the Topic Conversation is over and should introduce a completely different topic for the General Conversation. At least two different topics should be covered in this section.
- Examiners should ensure that the two topics are covered in reasonable depth, and they should therefore not put a series of further questions requiring relatively short responses until the two main topics have been thoroughly discussed.
- It is essential to cover mainly complex issues in order to allow candidates to access the higher marks available for Comprehension and Responsiveness or Providing Information and Opinions.
- Questions, such as *Warum?* or *Inwiefern?* are particularly useful in prompting in depth discussion.
- It should not be expected that candidates will know specific information on a topic chosen by the Examiner, even a topic currently in the news. If a candidate is clearly unhappy with any topic put forward, the Examiner should quickly suggest a different area of discussion.

# GERMAN

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<p><b>Paper 8683/22</b> <b>Reading and Writing</b></p>
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## Key messages

In this paper, candidates read two texts with a common theme (pros and cons of going away on holidays).

They must then answer vocabulary questions for **Question 1** and grammar questions for **Question 2**.

In **Questions 3** and **4**, candidates answer comprehension questions about the two texts. In **Question 5**, candidates are asked to summarise the two texts with reference to the advantages and disadvantages of holidaying abroad and then briefly give their own opinion.

Candidates should:

- ensure they read the questions carefully, identifying what is required
- adhere to the word limit and summarise their points briefly.

## General comments

The majority of candidates coped well with the demands of this exam and showed a fair understanding of the two texts as demonstrated by the answers to **Questions 3 – 5**. The quality of language varied from excellent to very poor. Whilst some candidates wrote confidently using their own words, others restricted themselves to copying large chunks of the original text without attempting to rephrase ideas and opinions. This cannot be credited. **Questions 1** and **2** also presented a difficulty for candidates who did not have a sufficient command of vocabulary and grammar for this level and simply guessed an answer.

In **Question 5**, candidates should be reminded to keep the summary task in mind and not just rephrasing both texts without reference to the task. Simply copying sentences from the text does not gain marks as it does not demonstrate summary skills.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

- (a) Many candidates coped well with this question and were able to find the correct synonym.
- (b) Many candidates struggled with this question and could not find a synonym in the text.
- (c) Many candidates struggled with this question as they did not understand the original word they were given and were thus unable to find a synonym in the text.
- (d) The majority of candidates answered this question incorrectly.
- (e) The majority of candidates did not cope with this question and were unable to find the correct synonym in the text.

### Question 2

- (a) Many candidates answered this question correctly and used a correct sentence structure.
- (b) A significant number of candidates did not answer this question correctly and did not use the required passive mode.

- (c) Not many candidates answered this question correctly.
- (d) Only very few candidates coped well with this question and answered correctly; however many candidates did not change the sentence beginning.
- (e) This question was answered correctly by many candidates who were able to give the correct adjectival ending.

### Question 3

- (a) A straightforward warm-up question that presented little difficulties for most able candidates.
- (b) Some candidates answered this question correctly and were awarded full marks.
- (c) This question presented no difficulty for the majority of able candidates and they were awarded full marks.
- (d) The question presented no difficulty, and most candidates referred to at least two of the three required pieces of information.
- (e) This question presented a difficulty for many candidates as they had to explain the title of the text in their own words. Many candidates simply repeated the title without any explanation and thus were not awarded any marks.

### Question 4

- (a) Many candidates were only able to identify one of the two necessary points for the answer.
- (b) Many candidates coped well with this question and mentioned at least two out of the three required details.
- (c) A significant number of candidates coped well with this question and were able to identify at least two of the required three points.
- (d) The majority of candidates gained at least one out of two marks and were able to identify at least one advantage of staying at home.
- (e) Most candidates identified at least two out of the possible three details.
- (f) A significant number of candidates did not cope well with this final question and were unable to give details about the author's criticism.

### Question 5

Some candidates coped well with this task and were able to identify many pros and cons connected to holidaying abroad. However, the often very poor quality of language made it very difficult to understand some candidates' summaries at times.

Candidates should be reminded to adhere to the word limit – any points after the 150-word cut-off will not be credited. The aim of this question is to produce a concise summary; candidates should be discouraged from copying sentences verbatim from the text; instead, they should summarise points briefly and succinctly.

In **Question 5b**, some candidates were able to give a relatively well-founded opinion on the topic and supported their opinion with valid reasons, often drawing on their own experience. The majority of candidates however restricted themselves to writing short general platitudes without giving personal opinion or simply repeating sentences from **Question a** – this is to be discouraged as it does not demonstrate that the candidates has understood and engaged with the text.

# GERMAN

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<p><b>Paper 8686/23</b> <b>Reading and Writing</b></p>
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## Key messages

In this paper, candidates read two texts with a common theme (state/private school versus home schooling).

They must then answer vocabulary questions for **Question 1** and grammar questions for **Question 2**.

In **Questions 3** and **4**, candidates answer comprehension questions about the two texts. In **Question 5**, candidates are asked to summarise the two texts with reference to the disadvantages of state school education and then briefly give their own opinion.

Candidates should:

- ensure they read the questions carefully, identifying what is required
- adhere to the word limit and summarise their points briefly.

## General comments

The majority of candidates coped well with the demands of this exam and showed a good understanding of the two texts as demonstrated by the answers to **Questions 3 – 5**. The quality of language varied from excellent to very poor. Whilst some candidates wrote confidently using their own words, others restricted themselves to copying large chunks of the original text without attempting to rephrase ideas and opinions. This cannot be credited. **Questions 1** and **2** also presented a difficulty for candidates who did not have a sufficient command of vocabulary and grammar for this level and simply guessed an answer.

In **Question 5**, candidates should be reminded to keep the summary task in mind and not just rephrasing both texts without reference to the task. Simply copying sentences from the text does not gain marks as it does not demonstrate summary skills.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Question 1**

- (a) Many candidates did not cope well with this question and were unable to find the correct synonym.
- (b) Many candidates struggled with this question and could not find a synonym in the text.
- (c) Some candidates struggled with this question as they did not understand the original word they were given and were thus unable to find a synonym in the text.
- (d) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.
- (e) The majority of candidates coped well with this question.

### **Question 2**

- (a) Many candidates did not answer this question correctly and used a wrong sentence structure.
- (b) A significant number of candidates did not answer this question correctly and used an incorrect sentence ending.

- (c) Only very few candidates coped well with this question and answered correctly; however many candidates used the wrong word order in their answer.
- (d) Many candidates answered this question correctly.
- (e) This question was mostly answered correctly, and candidates recognised the required structure.

### Question 3

- (a) A straightforward warm-up question that presented little difficulties for most candidates.
- (b) Many candidates answered this question correctly and were awarded full marks.
- (c) This question presented no difficulty for the majority of candidates and they were awarded full marks.
- (d) Many candidates did not read the question properly and gave irrelevant detail; thus scoring no marks or only one out of two possible marks.
- (e) This question was mostly answered correctly. Some candidates, however, only gave one or two pieces of the required information.
- (f) This question presented no difficulty, and most candidates referred to at least two of the three required pieces of information.

### Question 4

- (a) Many candidates were only able to identify one of the two necessary points for the answer.
- (b) Many candidates coped well with this question and mentioned at least two out of the three required details.
- (c) A significant number of candidates did not cope well with this question and were unable to identify the dilemma that parents faced.
- (d) The majority of candidates gained at least one out of two marks and were able to identify at least one disadvantage of teaching in state schools.
- (e) Most candidates identified at least two out of the possible four details.
- (f) A significant number of candidates coped well with this final question and were able to give details

### Question 5

Some candidates coped well with this task and were able to identify many problems connected to a state school education. However, the sometimes very poor quality of language made it very difficult to understand some candidates' summaries at times.

Candidates should be reminded to adhere to the word limit – any points after the 150-word cut-off will not be credited. The aim of this question is to produce a concise summary; candidates should be discouraged from copying sentences verbatim from the text; instead, they should summarise points briefly and succinctly.

In **Question 5b**, some candidates were able to give a relatively well-founded opinion on the topic and supported their opinion with valid reasons, often drawing on their own experience. The majority of candidates however restricted themselves to writing short general platitudes without giving personal opinion or simply repeating sentences from question a – this is to be discouraged as it does not demonstrate that the candidates has understood and engaged with the text.

# GERMAN

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<p><b>Paper 8683/32</b> <b>Essay</b></p>
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## Key messages

This essay paper was sensibly and effectively answered by the vast majority of candidates who sat the examination. There had clearly been a significant amount of wise preparation, with teachers supplying the knowledge, subject-based awareness, phrases, structures and detail required to answer well, and with students generally having revised in a manner which enabled them to respond appropriately.

## General comments

In the majority of cases, candidates had been well-prepared. This meant that they approached the examination with a clear idea of what was required, in terms of topic content, length of essay, phrases which are effective and detailed information to support their arguments. Good answers showed the ability to express a wide range of opinions, often weighing up several standpoints to find a solution, and could support these views with anecdotal or statistical information from German-speaking sources. As far as language is concerned, strong candidates were able to use a wide range of tenses appropriately, expressing themselves through complex language, including rhetorical questions, adjectival phrases, compound nouns and a full range of clauses. Many candidates had a broad range of essay phraseology at their disposal, so could move smoothly between paragraphs, linking their ideas closely together for best effect.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Question 1**

This question required students to weigh up the differing opportunities offered by studying at university of finding an alternative career path. It is quite easy to be drawn into only discussing the possibility of university, but most candidates were able to produce work which indicated a range of pathways available. Better answers saw past the immediate question and elaborated on how choices at this age can impinge on the rest of a student's life. Some candidates needed to focus on getting away from their own individual school's failings and seeing things on a broader level. In order to achieve this level of argument, candidates used a wide range of tenses, especially the conditional and conditional perfect and the very best also used subjunctives.

### **Question 2**

Very few candidates attempted this question. A sensible answer would be to weigh up the power of the internet in modern society and to gauge whether or not it has the power to bring governments and society down. The key question word 'könnte' would need to be drawn out, as this gives some indication to the writer how possible or otherwise such a situation could be. This is a very subjective question and requires some knowledge of how society operates. Candidates should, as with **Question 1**, use a range of conditional tenses and subjunctives, to illustrate how the world might appear within certain scenarios.

### **Question 3**

An immensely popular choice with candidates, this question enabled the writer to look at the standing of women in modern society and to review how men are viewed. This allowed for a range of strong emotions from pro-feminist essays to others, where the balance of thought was clearly shifting back. To answer well, candidates should offer a balanced view between various arguments. Weaker answers tended to narrow in on specific perceived inequalities, rather than looking at the topic more broadly. Those candidates whose

answers were characterised by a wide range of tenses could be expected in this essay, from perfect and future tenses, through to the conditional and subjunctive for use of doubt.

#### **Question 4**

In order to answer this question, candidates were required to assess what free-time activities might be assumed and critique whether these would lead to mental or physical wellbeing. This required a degree of maturity and good candidates were able to pick out hobbies which could fit either category. The best answers took activities from both camps, assessed their effect and offered some answers. This could, as with previous questions, enable candidates to use a range of appropriate tenses and a wide gamut of linguistic structures.

#### **Question 5**

This focused and precise question was not a popular choice with students. Those who attempted it did well, as they began to assess whether the statement was indeed true and, if so, whether longevity was quite what people sought after all. As with previous essays, a range of tenses including the subjunctive was essential in giving the correct feel and mood to this piece of work. Those candidates whose work avoided looking at the doctors' perspective tended to lose marks, as they had not fully appreciated the scope of the question. The word 'Ziel' could also be appropriately explored, as it does not reflect the quality or requirements of old age, and this would enable a good student to broaden the scope of their discussion.



# GERMAN

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<p><b>Paper 8683/33</b> <b>Essay</b></p>
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## **Key messages**

This essay paper was sensibly and effectively answered by the vast majority of candidates who sat the examination. There had clearly been a significant amount of wise preparation, with teachers supplying the knowledge, subject-based awareness, phrases, structures and detail required to answer well, and with students generally having revised in a manner which enabled them to respond appropriately.

## **General comments**

In the majority of cases, students had been well-prepared. This meant that they approached the examination with a clear idea of what was required, in terms of topic content, length of essay, phrases which are effective and detailed information to support their arguments. Good answers showed the ability to express a wide range of opinions, often weighing up several standpoints to find a solution, and could support these views with anecdotal or statistical information from German-speaking sources. As far as language is concerned, strong candidates were able to use a wide range of tenses appropriately, expressing themselves through complex language, including rhetorical questions, adjectival phrases, compound nouns and a full range of clauses. Many candidates had a broad range of essay phraseology at their disposal, so could move smoothly between paragraphs, linking their ideas closely together for best effect.

## **Comments on specific questions**

### **Question 1**

A question of this nature requires candidates to explain first what they mean by 'Hoffnungen'. Those who answered effectively were able to draw conclusions between generations and also pick out differences in ambition, in realistic targets and in achievement. The very best candidates drew parallels and contrasts in equal measure, spelling out simultaneously how the world has both changed and also remained the same. Those who wrote only from the perspective of young people tended to be awarded lower marks for content. This essay required significant use of the perfect and present tenses, alongside the usual plethora of conditionals and subjunctives.

### **Question 2**

In offering an answer to this question, students had to define 'Medien' effectively. That done, there were several very effective routes towards finding a commendable answer and these were explored by the better students. Good answers tended to analyse the effect and influence of several forms of media before drawing up a final conclusion. Those answers which relied on talking about only one form of social media tended not to score as highly, as the writer had not allowed sufficient scope to look at the full situation. This essay requires some topic-specific vocabulary and also necessitates the use of subjunctives as well as conditional and conditional perfect tenses.

### **Question 3**

This is a question which can evoke differing responses from different parts of the world. Those candidates who achieved higher marks queried the notion of a 'Bürger' and quite how that relates to many people today, looked at exactly what was meant by equal opportunities and in what spheres, and related this back to the concept of a national economy. This required an at least passing awareness of economy within communities. Better students revelled in this opportunity and wrote excellent essays. There was plenty of opportunity in this essay to give examples from any culture or society in the world and to analyse it effectively. A broad

range of grammatical and linguistic skills are required to do this, as well as wide vocabulary skills, and many students proved highly capable in doing so.

#### **Question 4**

A hugely popular question amongst candidates from around the world, this brought into focus a series of points. Stronger candidates queried the concept of 'richtige Hobbys', asking who should make the call about which ones are acceptable or proper. Most candidates rightly questioned the view that using a mobile meant you had fewer interests and hobbies, and argued that life has moved on, with work, free-time and communication dependent as never before on the phone. This proved to be a worthwhile challenge for many and there were numerous exceptional attempts to answer this question, using a wide range of tenses and an equally impressive breadth of grammatical structures.

#### **Question 5**

This question required candidates to weigh up the differing opportunities offered by studying at university or finding an alternative career path, specifically considering an online route. Better candidates found the opportunity to see past the immediate question and ask how choices at this age can impinge on the rest of a student's life. Others did well by writing about how effective online learning can be in relation to classroom lessons. Some candidates needed to focus on getting away from their own individual school's failings and seeing things on a more global level. In order to achieve this level of argument, candidates used a wide range of tenses, especially the conditional and conditional perfect and the very best also used subjunctives.