

# GERMAN

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<p><b>Paper 9717/01</b> <b>Speaking</b></p>
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## Key messages

- The presentation should clearly relate to the culture or society of a German-speaking country but should also reflect the candidate's personal interests. It should last between three and four minutes.
- Topics chosen for the presentation should not be too basic or simplistic.
- Candidates should ask the examiner at least two spontaneous questions in both the topic conversation and the general conversation, and if necessary they should be prompted to do so;
- The test should be completed within twenty minutes and the two conversations should be of approximately equal length, at around eight minutes each.
- The candidate and the examiner should be equally audible to anyone listening to the recording, and the recording equipment should be tested beforehand and placed accordingly.

## General comments

Nearly all candidates were appropriately entered for this level and the majority were aware of the requirements of the speaking test. However, this year some candidates chose presentation topics that were too basic for this level regarding content. At some centres candidates did not ask the examiner a minimum of two questions per conversation and were not always prompted to do so. They were thus unable to access all the marks available for Seeking Information. Some examiners did not prompt their candidates to ask questions until the very end of a conversation, which is not good practice as questions should be integrated and arise naturally during the discussion. Candidates were usually responsive and nearly all were spontaneous, with very few relying on prepared responses.

Most examiners used the mark scheme correctly and fairly accurately. Some centres allowed the tests to last too long, thus risking tiring the candidates. 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.

## Comments on specific sections

### **Section 1 – Presentation**

- If the delivery of the presentation is lively and confident, and ideas and opinions are evident, nine or ten marks may be awarded for content, provided that the subject matter is not too basic for this level.
- Presentations that are far too long, even if confidently delivered, should not receive nine or ten marks however, as they cannot be considered to have been 'well organised', as in the published 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. What is required is a 'reasonable range' of structures and (topic-specific) vocabulary, delivered 'fairly fluently', and without ambiguity of meaning.
- Although some topics were too basic, there was a very good range of interesting, up-to-date or relevant presentation topics too, including the following:  
*Die Wiedervereinigung; Stress; Streit zu Hause; Wirkungen des Klimawandels auf den Tourismus in der Schweiz; Zwillinge; das duale Studium; Sprachunterricht für Flüchtlinge, Vegetarismus, Übergewicht, das Tempolimit, Sterbehilfe – ein Vergleich zwischen der Schweiz und Deutschland.*

## Section 2 – Topic Conversation

- In this conversation the issues raised in the presentation should be followed up and discussed.
- Candidates should be able to defend any ideas and opinions 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 „Sind Sie der gleichen Meinung?“ are useful questions, as they can 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.
- A maximum of three should be awarded for Providing Information if the candidate can deal with basic situations and concepts, but not more complicated ones.

## 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.
- It is expected that some fairly complex issues are covered in this section. This will allow candidate to access to the higher marks available for Comprehension & 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 the candidate will know any specific information on an unexpected topic chosen by the examiner, such as a topic of current affairs. It would be better to switch quickly to a different topic if a candidate is clearly unhappy with or uninformed about the original topic suggested.

# GERMAN

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<p><b>Paper 9717/02</b> <b>Reading and Writing</b></p>
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## Key message

- In **Question 5**, candidates should be reminded to keep their summary brief and precise without going into too much detail in order not to exceed the word limit.

## General comments

In this paper, candidates read two texts with a common theme (problems and possible solutions/alternatives to private car ownership). They then answered vocabulary questions for **Question 1** and grammar questions for **Question 2**. In **Questions 3** and **4**, candidates answered comprehension questions about the two texts. In **Question 5**, candidates were asked to summarise the two texts with reference to the problems and possible solutions/alternatives to private car ownership and then to briefly give their own opinion.

The majority of candidates coped well with the demands of this paper and showed a good understanding of the two texts as demonstrated by the answers to **Questions 3–5**. Some candidates wrote confidently using their own words but others restricted themselves to copying large chunks of the original text without attempting to rephrase ideas and opinions. This could not be credited. **Questions 1** and **2** also presented a challenge for candidates who did not have a sufficient command of vocabulary and grammar for this level.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

- (a) Most candidates coped well with this question.
- (b) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.
- (c) Many candidates coped well with this question.
- (d) Most candidates coped well with this question.
- (e) Nearly all candidates answered this question correctly.

### Question 2

- (a) Many candidates had problems with this question and were unable to rewrite the sentence using the correct word order.
- (b) Candidates coped well with this question.
- (c) This question was usually answered correctly and candidates used the verb *entwickeln* correctly.
- (d) A significant number of candidates struggled to use the correct case.
- (e) Many candidates did not know the correct dative for *das* and answered incorrectly.

### Question 3

In **Questions 3** and **4**, to show clear evidence of understanding, it is expected that candidates will rephrase the text to express their answers in their own words.

- (a) This question was answered correctly by many candidates. Some candidates did not provide enough detail to gain full credit.
- (b) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly.
- (c) This question was answered correctly by some candidates. Some candidates mentioned the fact that at the moment, all traffic has to cross the city centre.
- (d) The majority of candidates gained full marks for this question. They provided an explanation for the term *Parkplatzsuchverkehr*, and then made reference to a possible solution.
- (e) This question was answered correctly by the majority of candidates. Most candidates scored at least 3 marks, giving the advantages of roundabouts over traffic lights.
- (f) The majority of candidates gained at least one mark for this question. They provided reasons why the people of Stuttgart prefer using the car. Some candidates did not make reference to the problems of having to wait for a long time when using public transport as the different means of transport are not well coordinated.

### Question 4

- (a) This question was answered correctly by many candidates. Some candidates did not provide enough detail to gain full credit.
- (b) Many candidates scored at least two marks for this question, but some failed to mention the fact that cycling is considered completely normal and is uncomplicated in Copenhagen.
- (c) This question was answered correctly by many candidates.
- (d) Many candidates struggled with this question and misunderstood the information in the text. According to the text, the car is no longer at the centre of society and more and more young people do not feel the need to own a car.
- (e) Some candidates struggled with this question and did not refer to the relevant information in the text when attempting an answer.
- (f) Many candidates scored full marks here, but some candidates failed to give the third reason, namely that your mobile phone offers you a variety of possibilities with regards to mobility.

### Question 5

Most candidates coped well with this task and were able to identify various problems and possible solutions/alternatives to private car ownership. Candidates should be reminded to adhere to the word limit as any points made after the 150-word cut-off will not be credited. The aim of this question is to produce a concise summary and candidates should be discouraged from rephrasing points from the text. Instead they should summarise points briefly and succinctly.

In **Question 5(b)**, the majority of candidates were able to give a well-founded opinion on the topic. Many candidates supported their opinion with valid reasons, often drawing on their own experience.

# GERMAN

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<p>Paper 9717/03 Essay</p>
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## Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- select the title which they feel most confident about;
- write a response that is clearly relevant, supported with examples, coherently structured and well informed;
- use German which is accurate and of a suitably advanced nature, as well as demonstrating a good use of idiom and appropriate topic-related vocabulary;
- use sentence patterns which show some evidence of complexity, in a style which is easy to follow.

## General comments

Most candidates chose the titles on the topics of *Menschliche Beziehungen*, *Arbeit und Freizeit* and *Umweltverschmutzung*. Generally candidates were aware of the need to have an outline plan before starting to write and organise their ideas. However, some allowed themselves to be side-tracked from the title, often into a general discussion of advantages versus disadvantages and came to a conclusion that had very little relevance to the title. This happened with environmental essays where candidates seemed to feel it necessary to end their essay by proposing solutions to the problems. The strongest candidates presented their ideas in a coherent fashion and backed up their opinions with well-chosen evidence.

Many candidates produced essays demonstrating an impressive topic-specific vocabulary and ambitious structures. The language mostly read reasonably well, although spelling and handwriting were sometimes weaker areas. Some candidates wrote clearly and succinctly. Candidates of all abilities are advised to leave some time at the end of the examination to check for avoidable language errors: agreement of subject and verb, consistency of gender, word order, for example.

Common errors included:

- lack of punctuation;
- phonetic spelling;
- singular subjects with plural verbs and vice versa;
- genders and agreements;
- confusion between *man*, *Mann* and *das*, *dass*.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

*Manche Leute finden es leichter, eine Beziehung mit einem Haustier zu haben als mit einem anderen Menschen. Finden Sie das positiv?*

This title was quite popular with candidates. Many seemed to be speaking from personal experience of owning pets which they found had a positive effect on their lives. Many wrote their essays exclusively about the relationship between dogs and humans, so they missed an opportunity to define pets and the motivation behind keeping other types of animal. Most explored the psychology, even superficially.

## Question 2

*Steuerbetrug ist kein richtiges Verbrechen und sollte nicht mit Gefängnis bestraft werden. Sehen Sie das auch so?*

Few candidates chose this title but there were insightful, logically argued essays.

## Question 3

*Ist es besser, viel Freizeit und wenig Geld zu haben, als viel Geld zu verdienen, aber kaum Zeit zu haben, um es auszugeben? Begründen Sie Ihre Antwort.*

This was the most popular title. Many candidates predictably gave no clear preference or they wanted to have a well-paid job which also gave them a great deal of free time. Mostly the arguments for and against were the obvious ones such as having adequate free time for the family and for one's own wellbeing, whilst acknowledging the need for money.

## Question 4

*Wenn jede Regierung von einer Frau geführt würde, wäre die Welt viel friedlicher. Was halten Sie von dieser Aussage?*

No candidates chose this title.

## Question 5

*Die gefährlichste Art der Umweltverschmutzung für die Menschen ist die Verschmutzung der Luft. Teilen Sie diese Meinung?*

Despite air pollution being high on the news agenda in recent times, some candidates did not seem to be well informed or did not have the vocabulary to describe it. However, this was not a great impediment because it was entirely relevant to describe different sorts of pollution and their effects and come to a conclusion. Some did not address the *für die Menschen* element of the question. Most candidates demonstrated a sound grasp of the topic specific vocabulary needed to tackle an essay on the environment.

# GERMAN

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<p><b>Paper 9717/04</b> <b>Texts</b></p>
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## General comments

In this section of the examination candidates are expected both to demonstrate knowledge of the texts and an understanding of how the texts work. Candidates who did well showed a good knowledge of the texts by choosing relevant examples to illustrate their points and by structuring their arguments well. They also linked the points made back to the question. Quite a number of candidates had a good knowledge of the texts and were able to organise their thoughts into coherent, relevant essays. However, some candidates did not demonstrate they had studied the texts closely and their responses were superficial. Some candidates answered only two instead of three questions. A number of candidates got the names or roles of characters wrong, mixed up the sequence of events, or got the facts of the story wrong, thereby demonstrating they had little knowledge of the texts.

A few candidates used pre-learned material to answer the questions. This was particularly obvious where the answer did not fit the question well or where examples to illustrate points were absent.

A few candidates with near native fluency wrote superficial essays, suggesting they had not prepared appropriately for the exam. Some candidates' command of German was poor to the point that it was difficult to derive meaning from their answers. Some candidates' hand-writing was almost illegible.

**Labelling and Layout:** Candidates labelled their work correctly. As regards layout, clear paragraphing throughout the essays was linked to a more organised and structured approach in the writing and therefore to a better analysis.

**Following Instructions:** A very small number of candidates did not answer the required three questions. This appeared to be a case of not having read the required books. One or two candidates gave long, detailed and very good answers to the first two questions of their choice but then ran out of time for the third question. Candidates should be reminded that they should plan carefully so that they have sufficient time for each question. Similarly, some candidates answered one part of a two-part question well but not the other, resulting in an overall lower mark. Students should be reminded that it is important to give due consideration to both parts of a question.

A few candidates misunderstood questions about text excerpts and wrote about the drama in general when the question required them to discuss the excerpt on the question paper. Students should be encouraged to read questions very carefully in order to understand what is asked.

Candidates are not permitted to answer two questions on the same text. Three different books have to be covered, one from each of the two main sections and a third book from either of these sections. It is advisable that candidates decide on the questions they wish to answer before they start writing and ensure they have chosen books from both sections. Apart from those few who only answered two questions, candidates were good at addressing these requirements.

All three essays should have a length of about 500 to 600 words each to allow candidates to make a variety of points relevant to the questions of their choice. Quite a few answers were significantly shorter and therefore candidates penalised themselves by not including enough detail to access the higher marks. Similarly, a number of essays did not offer enough examples to illustrate points. Candidates should understand that using the text to give substance to their argument is a critical aspect of a good essay.

**Focus on the question:** The essay titles are very carefully worded and candidates' first task when tackling an essay must be to decide what is expected of them. A generic, pre-learnt essay or an accumulation of knowledge listed in the answer does not constitute a good essay, however accurate the knowledge may be. Candidates are advised to copy down the question and clearly label their own work. They should then refer

back to the question in order to ask themselves whether each point they are making is relevant and contributes to a good answer.

**Structuring the essay:** An essay should be seen as an argument. The writer is seeking to persuade the reader of the validity of the argument he/she is putting forward. An argument must be properly structured, introducing the theme, presenting evidence and leading to a conclusion. Some candidates omitted the introduction or started their essay with what would effectively be their conclusion. Other candidates did not come to any conclusion, either because they seemed to have run out of time or because the essay was poorly structured or argued throughout.

Clear paragraphing is crucial for a coherent argument. Candidates should use one paragraph for each main point they wish to make. Some candidates wrote whole essays without any paragraphing at all, which made it difficult to distinguish between points made. Often this also led to unnecessary repetitions and as no new ideas were introduced, no extra credit could be awarded. Stronger candidates made relevant points in separate paragraphs, supported these with detailed examples and evaluated or analysed what they had read and said.

**Language:** Many candidates were able to produce the level of language required to write essays that could be followed easily. Others struggled considerably with grammar and word usage, and a small number of essays were grammatically and linguistically so poor that it was difficult to make out what the candidate was saying. It was noticeable that even candidates with a very secure grasp of vocabulary and grammar made spelling mistakes not expected at this level.

#### Good Practice for Candidates:

- Choose one question from each section first, then decide on the third question.
- Make sure you read the question carefully and know what is actually being asked.
- Divide your time into three equal periods and start working on the first essay.
- Label each essay with the section and question number, and do not forget sub-questions.
- Think about paragraphs: present one main idea and supporting evidence per paragraph.
- Evidence does not have to be a precise quote but should show that you have read the text in detail, not just a summary of the plot (or watched the film, if available).
- Make sure you have an introduction, a main part and a conclusion in your essay.
- Throughout each essay make sure that your language is formal: „herunter“, not „runter“; „etwas können“ instead of „was drauf haben“; or „verärgert“ instead of „genervt“ or „sauer“ are examples of this.
- Capitalise all nouns. Don't separate compound nouns.
- Don't use any English words.
- At the end, read through each essay and check for spelling and grammar mistakes. Spell names of characters correctly and make sure they belong to the text you are referring to.

#### Examples of particular weaknesses:

- ß and ss mixed up, the former still required after long vowels and diphthongs, the latter after short vowels.
- ä and e mixed up as in „Probläme“ instead of „Probleme.“
- Apostrophes applied when this is not necessary in German, such as in „Faber's Charakter“ instead of „Fabers Charakter“.
- Nouns not always capitalised; compound nouns sometimes separated.
- Wrong verb conjugation and endings of adjectives.
- Wrong pronouns or pronoun endings: sorgen für sein Sohn (correct: seinen Sohn); hat jemandem, der er liebt, verloren (hat jemanden, den er liebt, verloren); er redet ‚über ihn‘ (in the context where it occurred it should have been „über sich“). Personal pronouns in wrong cases occasionally made it difficult to read the candidates' essays.
- Use of English words such as 'fantasy', 'similar,' or 'message'.
- Anglicisms - phrases: often candidates who had weaknesses in their vocabulary used English phrases and translated them into German on a one to one basis: „in meiner Meinung“ instead of „meiner Meinung nach“; „in 1931“ instead of just „1931“; „sie lassen“ instead of „sie verlassen“; „es handelt über“ instead of „es handelt von“; „hören über“ instead of „hören von“; „einen Freund Machen“ instead of „einen Freund gewinnen“; „sein Leben wechselt sich“ instead of „sein Leben verändert sich“; „versichern“ instead of „sich sicher sein“.



- Words made up from the English meaning: „relaxiert“ should be „entspannt“; „influenzen“ should be „beeinflussen“; „befreundlichen“ should be „sich anfreunden mit“, and „Engineur“ should be „Ingenieur“.
- Creation of adjectives, verbs or nouns that do not exist in German: „stressvoll“ (wrong) instead of „gestresst“, „künstlich“ instead of „künstlerisch“, „abstößlich“ instead of „abstoßend“, „erstaunen“ instead of „erstaunlich“, „nutzvoll“ instead of „nützlich“, „überkämpfen“ instead of „bekämpfen“, „Wohlheit“ instead of „Wohlsein“, „Vernünftigkeit“ instead of „Vernunft“, „Wahnsinnigkeit“ instead of „Wahnsinn“.
- Mixing up of related words: „beurteilen“ instead of „verurteilen“, „verlieben“ instead of „lieben“, „bewusstlos“ instead of „bewusst“, „überraschend“ instead of „überrascht“, „brennen“ instead of „verbrennen“, or „faszinierend“ instead of „faszinier“.

## **Comments on specific questions**

### **Section 1**

#### **Question 1**

##### **Dürrenmatt – *Die Physiker***

- (a) (i) Strong candidates went beyond merely retelling the text passage by locating its place and the characters within the play. They also offered an analysis of the moral dilemma people who possess powerful knowledge face. Weaker answers simply offered a summary of the excerpt.
- (ii) Good answers went beyond repeating what had already been said in response to (i). They also argued specific points for and against the success of Möbius' plan and illustrated these with examples from the play in general. For example, they drew attention to the fact that Möbius' plan was doomed to fail as Fräulein von Zahnd, the institute's director, had already secured copies of the manuscript Möbius destroyed, and that the world would be extremely keen on Möbius' knowledge.
- (b) Few candidates chose this question but in general it was not answered well.

#### **Question 2**

##### **Herrndorf – *Tschick***

- (a) (i) Most candidates summarised well and used their own words giving what the reader learns about the narrator Maik Klingenberg in the excerpt. Stronger candidates placed the text passage into the context of Maik's upbringing and family situation. They also addressed his status as an outsider among his peers, which could then be linked to answering (ii).
- (ii) This question gave opportunity for comprehensive answers with lots of examples as Maik's relationship with his father can be said to change fundamentally as a result of Maik's adventures and his associated coming of age. Stronger answers made this connection rather than simply stating that the relationship changed. The book also contains plenty of reflections and events that highlight Maik's relationship with his mother. This appears to change less, which can be illustrated through Maik's benign attitude towards his mother's alcoholism at the beginning of the book and his admiration for her sporting talent, and through the bonding in the pool at the end of the book, where they dispose of their furniture and middle-class values at the same time.
- (b) This question also offered plenty of opportunity for detailed responses. It asked why Tschick and Maik became close friends when their family backgrounds were so dissimilar. Candidates needed to be particularly disciplined in structuring their answer as many examples could be given of events that contributed to the boys' friendship. Candidates could proceed chronologically or discuss key events and list them in the order of importance. Weaker candidates randomly listed reasons for the friendship without providing an organising framework.

### Question 3

#### Frisch – *Homo Faber*

- (a) (i) Stronger candidates went beyond the surface of what was said about Hanna and Faber, such as interpreting the meaning of Faber calling Hanna 'Schwärmerin' and 'Kunstfee' and Hanna giving Faber the name 'Homo Faber.' Weaker candidates merely offered a superficial summary of the text passage.
- (ii) This question asked whether the relationship of Hanna and Faber had changed by the end of the book. Some candidates gave basic answers like suggesting Hanna and Faber were still in love because Hanna asked Faber how he was when she met him and introduced him as a friend when they went to the clinic. Answers to this question illustrated the lack of depth apparent in many essays overall, and suggested that candidates had not thoroughly engaged with the text in the preparation phase.
- (b) Few candidates chose this question which asked whether Faber was in control of his destiny. There were some creative discussions which argued that Faber's notion of control was self-deception and that for all his belief in the virtues of technology, this merely camouflaged a great vulnerability and put him at the mercy of machines.

### Section 2

#### Question 4

#### Kehlmann – *Die Vermessung der Welt*

- (a) Only a few candidates answered this question.
- (b) In answers to this question, which asked about the main themes of the book stronger candidates were able to structure their essays well, listing the main themes in their introduction and discussing them systematically in clearly set out paragraphs. They also offered solid evidence for their claims. As with many questions, evidence could be interpreted in different ways, so there was much scope for creativity. Death and relationships emerged as leading themes in the discussions, and some interesting points were made about the passion for science overcoming all obstacles. Weaker candidates failed to manage a clear structure and although attempts at structured writing were often visible, and they were superficial in their approach to providing evidence for their claims.

#### Question 5

#### Klüger – *weiter leben*

- (a) Only a few candidates answered this question.
- (b) Only a few candidates answered this question.

#### Question 6

#### Schlink – *Liebesfluchten*

- (a) Only a few candidates answered this question.
- (b) There were few strong essays for this question about whether Schlink's stories have a happy end for the protagonists. There were some creative discussions on what a happy end actually means, but many responses lacked depth and were not well argued.