

ASSESSMENT REPORT 2020

GRM315114 – GERMAN

ORAL ASSESSMENT

The candidates' standard was pleasing in 2020. Preparation is vital and fortunately, most students came well prepared by their teachers.

As the Oral component was reduced to between 8-10 minutes of dialogue, fewer questions were asked, and a small number of students actually said they felt disadvantaged. They would have liked more time to show what they could do. These were interesting comments, as examiners also felt not enough time was able to be allocated for questions in the past tense or for the conditional, which distinguish Level 2 candidates from those at Level 3.

As usual, word order was an issue with many students and it cannot be stressed often enough that if the word order is wrong, it does not sound German. All students succeeded in communicating, though the weaker responses did not always use full sentences and there was an inconsistent use of the German cases in many instances.

- **Perfekt tense**
There was, as usual, quite a lot of confusion with which verbs take "*haben*" or "*sein*" in the Perfekt. These students had obviously not asked their teacher to check answers before presenting for the exam.
- **Future tense**
Several students used "*ich will*" instead of "*ich werde*" when they were talking of future plans. Some also used "*bekommen*" (obviously an Anglicism) instead of "*werden*".
- **Conditional tense**
The pronunciation of "*würde*" caused problems for many students, as it is a vowel sound that does not exist in English.

PART I LISTENING AND RESPONDING

The standard of answers was most pleasing in this section and the four passages were obviously on topics that were familiar to students.

Examiners felt that a full mark being awarded for a simple "yes" or "no" was not at Level 3 standard and that justification must always be included. Many students did indeed qualify their answers, but the wording of the question (e.g. "Does Hannah receive pocket money from her parents?") invited a simple "Yes" or "No" answer and was marked accordingly.

In future, examiners would like a half mark for "Yes" or "No", and then reasons to be given.

Question 1

- (e) Asked for two things Alex was saving for. The text only mentioned that he saved for summer holidays, so that answer received an altered 1 mark.
- (g) There were two reasons why Hannah didn't have time for a part-time job, so examiners made this question worth 2 marks.

Question 2

This was the best answered question, with few problems.

Question 3

- (a) The word "Online" had to be included in the response for a full mark. A couple of students did not recognise the expression "*sehr geehrte Damen und Herren*" and thought Damian and Hermin were the letter's recipients.

Question 4

Questions (c) and (d) were not in chronological order as required, so some students became confused.

- (d) This was deemed to be worth more than the original 2 marks, as much detail was required.
- (f) This was changed to be worth only 1 mark, as it was extremely easy for Level 3 students with numbers being read out individually and not done in pairs which is the German way.

PART 2 READING AND RESPONDING

The standard was very high in this section.

Question 5

All students obtained good marks in this question.

- (a) The wording of this question caused confusion for both examiners and students, as the text does not clearly indicate the answer, which was open for interpretation. Examiners took this into account.
- (c) Examiners had to adjust answers for this question, as there were more morning activities mentioned in the text than the setter and critics had included in their key.
- (f) Examiners felt that this was a lost opportunity for students to show the strength of their understanding, as only two of the possible four details were required for full marks.
- (g) It was amusing to see some translations of "*Leichenwagen*" (e.g. post-mortem body transportation / corpse car), but these were acceptable. "Light car" or "light truck" were not acceptable.

Question 6

The topic was most relevant to current thought and obviously engaged the students.

Questions (b) and (f) caused some confusion, as some just reworded the three main points.

In Question (e) some students had difficulty distinguishing between cutlery and crockery, which is a question of vocabulary. “*Richtiges Geschirr*” was interpreted as “*correct crockery*”.

PART 3 - WRITING IN GERMAN

As usual, the standard varied greatly in this section. All questions were answered, with questions 9, 10 and 11 being the most popular.

Examiners noted that two questions called for an article to be written, whereas this text type is not one that students are expected to produce in the external examination. It was also noted that neither an interview nor a conversation was given as an option.

Question 7

The wording should have read, “write a profile” of the Person of the Year. Only one candidate attempted this.

Question 8

This also called for an article. Only one student attempted it.

Question 9

This was a popular choice. However, an application letter is not a specified text type for the course. Therefore, many students wrote a general letter without the formal forms of address. Examiners did not penalise those students.

Question 10

This was also a popular choice and well answered.

Question 11

Many students attempted this task with most assuming that Austria celebrated Christmas the same way as Germany does. Perhaps the question should have asked students to discuss Christmas in a “German speaking country” rather than be so specific. Examiners did not mark cultural understanding, but the actual writing.

General comments

- Verb conjugation needs work, as many candidates did not make subject, adjectives verbs agree.
- Some students still incorrectly use "*haben*" instead of "*sein*" in the Perfekt tense. Moreover, past participles were often incorrect. Yet even small dictionaries usually have a section of German verbs in their various tenses. Students would have benefitted from using this function.
- Prepositions and their cases caused problems too.
- Nouns, once again, were often not capitalised.
- Spelling needs to be checked. E.g. "gans" is not the same as "ganz". "Nettsball" is incorrect spelling in German.
- Commas were used poorly. E.g. after "*aber*", where they should come before. Definitely no comma after the first idea in the sentence.

Markers were looking for a variety of expression and a few students failed to reach Level 3 standard. They repeated well-learned phrases, but only got credit for the first use.