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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

GERMAN

GCE Advanced Level

Paper 9717/01
Speaking

General comments

There was a wide range of entry, from candidates who had a German-speaking parent or relative to candidates for whom German was a completely foreign language acquired at school.

The overall performance of candidates was fair to very good. On the whole, candidates were well prepared and there were some very interesting conversations.

Teachers at Centres which have entered candidates for Speaking in the past seem now to be aware of the various requirements and regulations for this component, in particular the need for the candidate to ask the Examiner two questions in both the Topic Conversation and the General Conversation. On the whole, tests from these Centres were well examined and assessed.

There are two aspects, which need to be considered by new Centres:

- The candidate must ask at least two questions in the Topic Conversation and in the General Conversation. The syllabus states: "Candidates are required to seek information and the opinions of the teacher." If the candidate fails to ask a question, no marks can be awarded under the heading "Seeking information and opinions". If only one question is asked, then the maximum mark is 3 out of 5. If no question is asked, then no mark can be awarded.
- All timings of the test should be adhered to. The Sustained Speech should last 3 minutes, the Topic Conversation 7 to 8 minutes and the General Conversation 8 to 9 minutes. Some parts of the test lasted too long, and so the examination as a whole was allowed to run on much longer than the stipulated 20 minutes.

Individual Centre Reports will highlight any shortcomings.

Paper 9717/02
Reading and Writing

General comments

There was a wide range of performance, from candidates who wrote fluently and accurately in stylish German to those who had difficulty in answering the questions.

Comments on specific questions

Erster Teil

Aufgabe 1

Answers to (a), (b) and (e) were those which were most frequently incorrect. Candidates had greater success with (c) and (d).

Aufgabe 2

In this exercise candidates are not required to paraphrase the text, as some of them tried to do. They have to re-arrange the sentence from the text grammatically in order to fit the new sentence pattern given in the question.

- (a) The passive idea was often omitted.
- (b) Some candidates gave the correct answer: *Man dürfe keinen Menschen klonen*. However, a few did not use *keinen* and wrote: *Man dürfe **nicht einen** Menschen klonen*, which was rejected. Other candidates realised where *nicht* should be placed if used in this sentence: *Man dürfe **einen** Menschen nicht klonen*, which was an acceptable answer.
- (c) This was mostly correctly answered.
- (d) This was mostly correctly answered.
- (e) A future tense was required here but many candidates wrote in the present.

Aufgabe 3

The rubric for Exercises 3 and 4 states: *ohne längere Satzteile direkt vom Text abzuschreiben*. Where the candidate merely copies the relevant part of the text, no mark is awarded. Candidates of average to less than average ability in the language need more practice in the art of finding synonyms to express concepts. They failed to gain marks, because they lifted phrases or sentences from the text.

- (a) Few candidates realised that the answer was January. They suggested March, October or December.
- (b) Candidates often omitted the point that the end could not justify the means.
- (c) Many overlooked the author's notion that one should not decide which people were worthy and which were unworthy to live.
- (d) A number of candidates believed that Chancellor Schröder was criticising Cardinal Wetter and not the other way around, and so the reason they gave for the criticism was also wrong.
- (e) Both parts were mostly correctly answered.
- (f) Few understood the dilemma correctly, namely that German scientists were able neither to experiment with embryos nor to destroy them.
- (g) Most points were made correctly. However, the fact that research would probably continue in England was usually overlooked.

Zweiter Teil

Aufgabe 4

There were two problems in this exercise. The first, as in *Exercise 3*, was the candidate's inability to express the answers with original wording instead of lifting them from the text. The second problem was the failure to mention enough relevant points in questions worth three or more marks, for instance (a), (b) and (c)(ii). Candidates should be urged to give full details.

Good candidates were still able to make most points in their own words and to gain 4 or 5 marks for language in this Exercise.

- (a) The better use of medication was infrequently mentioned.
- (b) As in (a), the point relating to medication, namely the dose, was not often conveyed.

- (c)(i) Candidates did not include the idea that *most* people die of these illnesses.
- (i) Candidates often overlooked the idea of delaying the onset of the illness.
- (d) Many candidates did not refer to the idea that the success may not be a permanent one.
- (e) This was mostly correctly answered.
- (f) This was mostly correctly answered.

Aufgabe 5

The essential task is to summarise the two texts with original wording, according to the question set. Ten marks out of 20 are awarded for this aspect, as is stated on the Question Paper. Then the candidate is asked to give his own opinions on the issue for 5 marks. Indeed, some very able candidates express their own views whilst summarising the texts, in order to avoid repeating details.

It is important to organise the response like a mini-essay in order to fit everything in to the stipulated 140 words. The answer is cut off at around 150 words or at the end of the sentence after 140 words is reached, and no further marks can be awarded for the remainder. Some candidates wrote at great length and failed to mention enough points in 140 words. Others gave their own opinions with little regard for the set passages, thus losing most of the 10 content marks available. A few summarised the passages very well but neglected their personal response to the texts, thereby gaining only one or two marks out of 5.

Finally, 5 marks are awarded for language. Language marks awarded here were broadly comparable to those awarded in *Exercise 3* and *4*, as candidates maintained their consistency. However, some appeared not to have devoted adequate time to this exercise or forgot to check their answer, because on these scripts more errors appeared than in previous exercises.

Paper 9717/03

Essay

General comments

All questions were attempted, but few chose to tackle **Essays 1** and **6**. The most popular essays proved to be on the theme of *Bildung* and *Arbeit und Freizeit*.

There were very few linguistically weak essays as a proportion of the whole entry and this report does not, therefore, go into details of errors made.

Last year's report pointed out that titles set are intended to provoke discussion, and that this is not helped when candidates state their conclusions at the outset. This point seemed to have been put across to candidates, as there was generally a clear effort to make a case and present an argument. This was particularly the case with the essays on *Koedukation* and *Arbeit und Freizeit*, as discussed below.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Welche unterschiedlichen Meinungen hat man in Deutschland zur Vereinigung von 1989/90?

A small number of candidates tackled this question, showing a good knowledge of the historical facts as well as an understanding of the mixed feelings in the former Bundesrepublik about taking on the financial and social consequences of unification.

Question 2

Ist Koedukation wünschenswert? Können Jungen and Mädchen in getrennten Schulen besser lernen?

This title gave rise to some lively essays. This is a subject on which all have something to say and where there were well-argued points of view from both sides of the question. On the one hand were those who argued that schools should reflect real life, where both sexes need to get on together. On the other hand were those who felt that students were best protected from possible sexual pressures when they should be concentrating on their studies.

Particularly interesting were those essays from candidates in single-sex schools who nevertheless argued for co-education.

Question 3

« Technologischer Fortschritt ist ein falscher Gott. Er wird heute verehrt, aber wir sollten gegenüber ihm zutiefst misstrauisch sein. »

Nehmen Sie Stellung zu dieser Behauptung.

This title produced some thoughtful essays, usually coming to the conclusion that nobody would wish to put the clock back to a more primitive age. The conclusion was that one might have doubts about the value of some technological innovations, but that in the long run, human life was improved and that there was still more to do in this field.

Question 4

Kann es je einen gerechten Krieg geben?

This title produced mixed opinions. The general consensus was that war could never be justified.

Question 5

« In den reichen Ländern arbeitet man, um sein Geld für Freizeitbeschäftigungen zu verschwenden. In den armen Ländern arbeitet man, um am Leben zu bleiben.»

Nehmen Sie Stellung zu dieser Behauptung.

This was an essay title which led to excellent arguments. It was unusual in that no candidates actually agreed with the proposition. Although they were able to see what lay behind the quotation, they pointed out that life was not that simple even in "rich" countries.

Question 6

«Die Jugend will lieber unterhalten als unterrichtet sein.» Welche Bedeutung hat diese Aussage für Sie?

This was not a popular title and the few essays offered tended to defend youth against such accusations.

Paper 9717/04

Texts

General comments

The weaknesses in candidates' essays were the ones that Examiners report on every year:

Focus on the terms of the question

In many cases a summary of the story was given, but not an answer to the questions set in the Paper. Candidates should be reminded that essay titles are worded with the greatest care, and the first task when tackling an essay is to look at the significance of the words used.

Structuring the essay

An essay should be seen, first and foremost, 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 start their essay by agreeing with the title, that is to say they begin with their conclusion. Other candidates just do not conclude in any noticeable way, their essay just stops.

Storytelling

The published criteria for marking the essay show that simple retelling of the story gains low marks. Candidates must demonstrate knowledge of the story, but this must be tied in to the title of the essay, and evidence from the book must be *relevant* to the title. A candidate gains few marks if their knowledge of the text is not examined critically in the light of the question asked.

Length

Some candidates' answers were too short. In many cases what was written indicated that higher marks could have been achieved, if the candidate had carried on with their argument. A small number of candidates wrote two essays rather than three.

Language

Many candidates had difficulties with the language required to express an appropriate argument. Often the essays were difficult to follow because of weaknesses in lexis and grammar.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Goethe, *Iphigenie auf Tauris*

A small number of attempts at this text. Candidates who chose either question showed good knowledge of Iphigenie's story and conflict. Their arguments were well expressed and thus easy to follow. Good use was made of the passage.

Question 2

Frisch, *Biedermann*

- (a) The candidates who tackled the text extract were able to discuss the questions well. Candidates knew the play well and wrote well about the role of the *Chor* in the extract as well as the rest of the story. Biedermann and his character and patterns of behaviour were also discussed quite well.
- (b) Nobody chose this question, which involved a discussion of the black humour in the text.

Question 3

Mann, *Der Tod in Venedig*

- (a) Some of the candidates who tackled the text extract were able to discuss the points raised in the questions quite well. Only few went beyond simply quoting from the text and story telling though. Not all candidates understood the symbolism of the *Sanduhr* in the extract. Most candidates showed some understanding of the theme of *Lüge oder Wahrheit*, but in many cases the argument was difficult to follow because of problems with the language. Only few candidates carried on to express well how Aschenbach decides in the end and why.
- (b) Fewer candidates chose this question which involved discussing *Todesboten* throughout the story. This question was, on the whole, tackled well. Weaker candidates, however, simply retold the story, without including their own opinion. Some candidates had problems expressing their ideas coherently.

Question 4

Storm, *Der Schimmelreiter*

- (a) A popular question. Few candidates referred to the extract in discussing points (i) – (iii).
- (i) This question was answered mostly to the point, but with little reference to the extract.
 - (ii) This second part-question was used by most candidates successfully to refer to other passages in the book. Weaker candidates had, however, used up all their points in (i) and merely repeated what they had already said.
 - (iii) This question was mostly answered satisfactorily. Some answers appeared to be hurried and lacked depth. Other candidates made good connections between the passage and the end of the story.
- (b) Very few candidates tackled this question. Some good points were made, but on the whole it appeared that the term *Spuk und Schauergeschichten* was not really understood.

Section 2

Question 5

Böll, *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum*

- (a) Quite a few candidates opted for (a). In general candidates showed a good knowledge and understanding of the story. There were a couple of particularly good answers which discussed the question in detail and proved why they disagreed. Most candidates agreed that Katharina Blum had lost her honour. Weaker candidates had inadequate language to write a coherent argument and tended to get lost in story telling.
- (b) Fewer candidates attempted this question. The answers showed a good understanding of the text: in some essays, however, the argument was more based on the behaviour of the police and the idea that Katharina Blum was simply hounded by the press because she was an independent woman.

Question 6

Andersch, *Sansibar oder der letzte Grund*

- (a)(b) There were few answers on this text. The questions were answered well and good knowledge of the text was apparent. Even the more complex question (b) triggered some interesting points which were well presented.

Question 7

Brecht, *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis*

- (a) Nobody chose this question
- (b) This question attracted some good answers. Weaker candidates spent most of their time just retelling the story, but others produced good arguments showing a sound understanding of the text and Brecht's *Utopie*.

Question 8

Horváth, *Jugend ohne Gott*

- (a) Few candidates chose this question, but on the whole the answers showed a good understanding of the text and some good points were made.
- (b) This question was tackled by very few candidates and presented the opportunity to discuss the village priest in more detail and to explore the author's ideas about Christianity. This question, on the whole, was answered quite well.