

GERMAN (PRINCIPAL)

Paper 9780/01
Speaking

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- in Part 1, consider the issue raised in their chosen article and their own reaction(s) to it,
- in Part 2, choose a subject which genuinely interests them and which clearly relates to a country where the target language is spoken,
- in Parts 1 and 2, be prepared to take the lead in the conversation,
- in Parts 1 and 2, be ready to engage in natural and spontaneous discussion.

General comments

Candidates approached both parts of the exam with confidence. They managed the two tasks they were set successfully as a result of careful preparation. All candidates were familiar with the format of the examination.

The key to success in the oral component of the Pre-U exam is effective communication. This depends on the candidates' readiness to offer ideas and opinions during both parts of the exam, as well as the ability to demonstrate factual knowledge, analysis and comparisons in their topic discussion. Candidates who have a wide range of structures and vocabulary at their disposal usually cope best in conversations that contain unexpected questions as this requires some versatility on their part. If they are confident about using the language patterns they acquired during their course, they usually do well. For the highest marks it is important that candidates show that their knowledge and language skills are sufficient to lead a conversation.

Part 1 – Text cards and related themes

Six articles under the general headings of 'Health and fitness', 'Medical advances', 'Urban and rural life', 'War and peace', 'Pollution' and 'Law and order' were offered. Candidates were given a choice of any four of these cards at the start of their preparation time. The themes of all six topics proved accessible, and candidates presented a range of creative ideas and personal views on each of them. All cards were chosen. The text '*Ein schönes Leben bedeutet mehr als nur gut aussehen*' (Health and fitness) was the most popular of the six texts.

Candidates managed to hold in-depth discussions both on issues arising directly from the texts as well as from wider issues arising from the general headings. The level of complexity and depth achieved in some discussions was generally of a high standard.

Candidates are given the opportunity during the preparation period to make brief notes on a separate sheet of paper. These notes can be used as prompts or reminders during the examination but must not impede a spontaneous and genuine conversation. Most candidates arrived in the exam room with just a few notes and used them wisely; some candidates brought no notes at all.

The majority of candidates showed good understanding of the articles and offered interesting opinions on the issues discussed in them. Similarly, many candidates scored high marks for Range and Accuracy as well as Pronunciation and Intonation. All aspects of the mark scheme encourage a fluent and spontaneous conversation, while using a range of complex vocabulary and structures. Most candidates made good (in some cases, excellent) attempts to lead the conversation.

Comments on specific tasks

Card 1 – *Ein schönes Leben bedeutet mehr als nur gut aussehen*

This text card was a popular choice. Most candidates who chose this text summarised it without difficulties and presented a range of opinions of the issues arising from it. Some of the discussions on this text covered health and fitness issues in depth, and false ideals of beauty, the fashion industry and reality shows were discussed. Questions on the text covered the value of different diets, potential definitions of what a healthy relationship to one's body could mean, the pressures on young people to conform, and the importance of healthy eating. The potential risks of overdoing fitness as described in the text were also discussed. Questions on wider issues dealt with various issues of healthy eating and drinking, eating disorders, various aspects of a balanced diet, fast food and superfoods, as well as sensible ways of staying fit and healthy.

Card 2 – *Und wer zahlt für unseren medizinischen Fortschritt?*

This topic was very competently dealt with. Several candidates were passionate about the issues it raised and showed personal involvement with the article. It no doubt appealed to candidates who might be thinking of qualifying for a medical profession, but the issues raised were also of a much more general nature. Questions on the text covered the cost for new therapies, different ways of raising the money needed for new research and the main areas of progress in both diagnosis and therapy. Follow-up discussions were extremely wide ranging, and covered genetics, organ transplants, stem cell research and many other topics. The fact that medical systems are not placing enough emphasis on prevention of illness was discussed, as well as the role education should play in getting people to adopt healthier life styles.

Card 3 – *Wenn unsere Dörfer sterben, was dann?*

This was also a text that candidates had passionate opinions about. It was mainly chosen by candidates who either lived in a small village or a very large city. Questions on the text discussed advantages and disadvantages of village life, the importance of access to modern technology (like the internet) in remote villages, and the challenges for young families living in more remote areas. Wider issues included questions of infrastructure, access to culture, employment and schooling, as well as cost issues.

Card 4 – *Muss Deutschland seine Friedenspolitik überdenken?*

Many of the candidates choosing this text were very politically aware and argued convincingly about issues raised in the text. Summarising the text caused no major difficulties. Questions on the text focussed in the first instance on the plight of children, when they are caught up in a conflict. There were also very pertinent discussions on what an active *Friedenspolitik* might look like. Wider issues included discussions about the role armies should have in the modern world, what candidates regarded as the biggest threats to peace in our times, potential ways of solving conflicts and the question of whether individuals can ever be in a position to work effectively for peace. Racist attitudes and discrimination were also discussed.

Card 5 – *Sauberes Wasser ist lebenswichtig!*

This text prompted a number of excellent discussions with candidates who felt passionately about environmental issues. It was impressive to see how much detailed background knowledge some candidates had about this topic. Summaries of the text were given without any major difficulties. This was followed by some lively discussions about whether there have been improvements to environmental issues like water pollution in recent years, whether our drinking water here in Western Europe is completely safe and whether it is still sustainable to use potential drinking water for irrigation in agriculture. Many discussions also focussed on the fact that far too many people in the world have no safe access to drinking water and sanitation. Questions on wider issues ranged from discussing the biggest environmental problems our planet faces in the opinion of the candidates to the cost of environmental protection and a potential ban on diesel cars.

Card 6 – *Cyberkriminelle haben es viel zu einfach!*

There was a good general awareness of the dangers of cyber bullying and identity theft and candidates had many strong opinions. Again, summarising the text caused few difficulties. Questions on the text covered discussions about protecting one's digital identity, the potential dangers of photos in social media and what can be done to raise awareness of cybercrimes. Wider issues covered crime in general and knife crime in particular, what can be done to prevent crimes and appropriate punishments or educational measures for convicted criminals. Issues of terrorism in our world were also raised.

Part 2 – Prepared oral topic

This section of the speaking test was done very well by most candidates. As candidates have no restrictions on topic choice, other than it having to relate to a target language country and not being covered by one of the texts/ films prescribed for Paper 4, most candidates were adventurous in their topic choice and. Some of the best discussions were on specialised topics that required detailed preparation, analysis and evaluation. Themes were discussed maturely and often with finesse. Only very few topics were offered by more than one candidate, showing how much candidates and centres value the free choice of topics.

At the start of the topic discussion, candidates were invited to give reasons for their choice of topic. The discussions then followed the five to eight headings listed on their topic submission form. Most candidates showed good factual knowledge. In addition, candidates coped well with unexpected questions asking for clarification, analysis, comparisons and also personal opinions relating to their chosen topic. Many of the discussions were highly impressive in terms of content and linguistic competence. Good factual knowledge was usually matched by an ambitious range of language and structures, as well as authentic pronunciation and intonation. The range of vocabulary offered by candidates was impressive.

Centres should note that it is preferable for candidates to discuss fewer sub-topics in detail than to just skim the surface of six or eight. Candidates should also be advised by their teachers not to choose topics which are too broad or too large to do them full justice in the time allowed.

Music and art topics were particularly successfully discussed if candidates could directly relate to the work(s) of art or music they were discussing, as this allowed spontaneous discussions on both an individual and intellectual level.

Historical topics were well researched and, in many cases, produced discussions of depth. However, there were some cases where candidates would have benefited from engaging more personally and empathetically with the lives of the people from the historical period in question. This would have added a more creative dimension of analysis to avoid what was sometimes merely a detailed recounting of historical facts and events. There is also a danger with historical topics that candidates try to cover too much and thus do not allow in-depth coverage of the central aspects of a person's historical importance or impact.

The range of topics was wider than ever before and included various aspects of literature, music and the arts (from rap to Wolf Biermann and Richard Strauss), historical figures and events, films, political and current affairs as well as social and environmental topics.

The following specific titles (in no particular order) give an impression of the breadth of choice. The emphasis in the following list is on titles that have not (or very rarely) been offered before:

Max Ernst

Lucas Cranach – Maler Der Reformation

Die deutsche mittelalterliche Kunst des Schwertfechtens

Die Wiener Secession

Die ostdeutsche Kunstszenen in den 1990er Jahren

Nazi Kunst-Diebstahl anhand des Bernsteinzimmers

Franz Schubert: Die Winterreise und Erlkönig

Christoph Willibald von Gluck: Orfeo und Euridice

Musik im Dritten Reich

Wolf Biermann

Richard Strauss als der Pionier des Modernismus

Beethoven, der Revolutionär

Robert Schumanns 'Dichterliebe'

Die Musik in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik

Deutschsprachige Musik in Deutschland nach 2010 am Beispiel von Rap

Heinrich Böll: Die Verlorene Ehre der Katarina Blum

Franz Kafka: Das Urteil

Stefan Zweig: Schachnovelle

Heinrich Böll: Ansichten eines Clowns

Alfred Döblin: Berlin Alexanderplatz

Wolfgang Borchert

Theodor Storm: Immensee und Der Schimmelreiter

Ludwig Feuerbach und 'Das Wesen des Christentums'

Die Politik von Thomas Mann

Der Film 'NVA'

Der Film 'Der Baader Meinhof Komplex'

Der Film 'Das Wunder von Bern'
Joseph II – ein aufgeklärter Despot
Kaiser Wilhelm II und die Schuldfrage des 1. Weltkriegs
Friedrich der Große und der Siebenjährige Krieg
Die Wichtigkeit von Karl Marx für die Rechte von Arbeitern
Die Rote Armee Fraktion
Unternehmen Barbarossa
Die 68er Bewegung als Gründungsmythos der BRD
Waren die Österreicher die ersten Opfer der expansionistischen Politik Hitlers oder waren sie bereitwillige Mittäter an Hitlers Verbrechen?
Die Weiße Rose
Medizin in der Nazizeit
Wie effektiv war Deutschlands Versuch, sich von seiner Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus zu distanzieren?
Anselm Kiefer (die deutsche Identität nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg)
Die Hartz IV Reformen
Die AfD: Verbote eines neuen Zeitalters oder Schlag ins Wasser?
Deutschlands Rolle in der EU seit 1999
Drogen in der Nazizeit
Die Wichtigkeit der Berliner Luftbrücke
Das moderne deutsche Wahlsystem
Türkische Gastarbeiter
Deutschland und die Nato
Deutsche Kultur in der amerikanischen Gesellschaft
Frauen in der DDR – emanzipiert oder ausgenutzt?
Die Schweiz – ein Einwanderungsland gegen Einwanderung?
Die Schaffermahlzeit in Bremen
Die Traditionen der Firmen des deutschen Mittelstands
Deutsche Physik
Ferdinand Porsche
Richard Sorge
Marlene Dietrich
Oskar Schindler
Christiane Nüsslein-Volward
Hafencity Hamburg
Deutsche Dialekte
Eine Diskussion der deutschen Sprache
Klinische Tests in Deutschland – Anmerkungen und Erfahrungsbericht
Die Zensur von Videospiele in Deutschland
Welche verschiedenen Aspekte spielen eine Rolle in der Beziehung zwischen Deutschland und China?
Sollte es ein Kopftuchverbot in Deutschland geben?
Die Konsequenzen des VW Abgasskandals
Ist völlig autonomes Fahren die Zukunft von Porsche?

Communication with centres prior to the examination was efficient and effective. Agreement about exam dates was usually reached easily and candidate topic sheets were sent to the visiting examiners in good time. It was really appreciated when centres gave an early indication of their candidates' topics, as this allowed time for the examiners to be well prepared and made the process of examining a constructive process.

Finally, there is no doubt that candidates had taken a great deal of care to prepare in depth for this examination. Their hard work, enthusiasm and readiness to interact with an unknown visiting examiner were evident throughout, transforming what could be nervous situations into highly successful dialogues.

GERMAN (PRINCIPAL)

Paper 9780/02
Reading and Listening

Key message

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- Read the questions carefully to see what information is required in their responses.
- Focus on the required information and communicate it clearly and concisely in their answers.
- Pay particular attention to conveying this required information in unambiguous, correct language.

General comments

In the Reading part of the examination (**Part I**), candidates are required to answer two sets of questions – one in German, the other in English – and to translate a short passage from English into German. For the Listening part of the examination (**Part II**), candidates listen to three recorded interviews in German. They answer two sets of questions – one in German and the second in English – and write a guided summary on the third interview. The questions are carefully worded, requiring precise and concise responses. Overall, the candidates performed very well this year.

Comments on specific questions

Part I – Lesetext 1

Overall, candidates produced good answers to questions on this text about wolves in Germany. A few weaker candidates struggled to express themselves clearly in German.

Question 1

Most candidates were able to state that according to fairy tales wolves wait for their victims, with some elaborating on the meaning of *Opfer*.

Question 2

To score the mark for this question candidates had to make it clear that the pair of wolves had moved back into Germany and stayed there. Most were able to explain this appropriately using a past tense.

Question 3

Candidates had to state that wolves eat (and not just kill) old and sick animals, thereby keeping the ecological system in the forest healthy. Some candidates found the grammatical structures required for this response challenging.

Question 4

Most candidates were able to say that many people were unhappy with, or sceptical about, wolves resettling in Germany. In order to score the second mark they had to make it clear that wolves had attacked livestock in the past, rather than that attacks were happening currently.

Question 5

The correct answer was that wolves are rarely seen because they are shy or scared of humans. Many candidates referred incorrectly to the electric fences that are in fact used protect livestock.

Question 6

Most candidates were able to state that many wolves died as a result of being shot illegally or because of road accidents.

Question 7

This question proved challenging to many candidates. In order to gain the mark they had to mention the financial help that people can give to support the reintroduction of wolves. Reference to the mobile exhibition and/or regular dissemination of information was not sufficient.

Part I – Lesetext 2

Overall, this exercise generally produced good answers in English to the questions about computer courses and skills.

Question 8

Nearly all candidates were able to state that Karin Maurer wanted to change careers to become a hairdresser. Very few did not understand *Frisörin*.

Question 9

Most candidates could explain that Karin had difficulties with applying online because she was not good with computers. Some candidates referred wrongly to online advertising rather than job application.

Question 10

Nearly all candidates said correctly that Karin had learned to send emails with attachments, although a few did not understand *Anhang* in this context.

Question 11

This question proved slightly more challenging but most candidates referred correctly to Karin's being called for an interview.

Question 12

- (a) Most candidates stated correctly that people are stressed because they cannot keep up with developments in technology.
- (b) The reason(s) for people struggling to address the cause of their stress were usually correctly given as their shame at their lack of knowledge and/or their feelings of being outsiders in the current situation with technology.

Question 13

Most candidates explained correctly that most of Monika's clients nowadays want individual rather than group tuition.

Question 14

This question proved the most challenging in this section. Candidates had to explain that candidates enrolled shortly before they were due to start a work placement or internship (rather than a job, an examination or a practical test) in order to learn the skills that they had claimed to have on their CV but did not in fact have. *Lebenslauf* was frequently misunderstood in this context.

Part 1 – Lesetext 3

This exercise requires a good range of vocabulary as well as sound grammar. Many candidates completed large sections of the task well. Candidates should check carefully that they have translated the full passage.

Question 15

The passage required a range of tenses including two instances where a conditional could be used (*möchten* and *könnten*). The most common grammatical difficulties encountered were with verb-subject agreement, auxiliary verbs, conjugating certain verbs e.g. *wissen*, word order, possessive adjectives (*sein* vs *ihr*) and accusative vs dative cases and case endings. Vocabulary and phrases which caused particular problems included: *Umzug*, *vorschlagen*, *weiß*, *wie man einen Computer benutzt*, *angeboten werden*, *sich anmelden/registrieren*.

Part II – Hörtext 1

As with the first two reading exercises, full sentences were usually not required for a correct response. Most candidates did well answering questions about Mariam Hammer's solo walk across the Alps.

Question 16

This question was very well answered, with nearly all candidates gaining the mark.

Question 17

Most candidates were able to state that she enjoyed being alone and/or that she never felt lonely. Fewer candidates stated correctly that nothing bad had happened to her. Candidates should avoid giving more than one answer in one answer space as only the first one will be credited.

Question 18

Many candidates answered this question well, referring to the need to be interested in people and open to new situations.

Question 19

This question proved more challenging. Candidates were required to refer to the distance walked each day (25 km) and the differences in altitude covered. Some however mentioned her rucksack, the magnesium tablets, her training and/or cramp.

Question 20

Many candidates did not score the mark here because they did not make it clear that walking can make one addicted (*süchtig*).

Question 21

Most candidates answered this question correctly.

Part II – Hörtext 2

Overall, this exercise generally produced correct answers in English, demonstrating a good understanding of the text about digital communication.

Question 22

Most candidates answered this question well.

Question 23

Most candidates had understood the difference between visual language being perceived emotionally and written language, which is processed logically.

Question 24

This question proved more challenging but many candidates understood the example of politicians whose appearance is/looks are nowadays deemed more important than their policies.

Question 25

Most candidates answered this question well, stating that young people have lost the abilities to understand facts and to question or critique arguments.

Question 26

Many candidates responded well to this question, explaining what Herr Heinzmann criticises about how people communicate nowadays.

Question 27

Most candidates answered this question successfully although a few rendered '*ihre moralischen Werte*' as moral worth rather than moral values.

Part II – Hörtext 3

In order to do well in this exercise, candidates need to be disciplined and cover all four bullet points within the word limit. Candidates should make sure to observe the word limit of 100 words as any material beyond the 100 word mark will not be considered. Some candidates did not score full marks because they wrote too many words. Most candidates however did well in this exercise about refugee children in nurseries in Germany.

Candidates should be advised to remember to cross out any notes or rough work and to make it clear which version of their summary is to be marked.

Question 28

- *Situation faced by nurseries*
Most candidates correctly summarised the challenges faced by nurseries, including language barriers, the fact that refugee children come and go and frequently have psychological problems. Some candidates mistakenly referred to speech barriers.
- *How to deal with the situation*
This section proved more challenging but most candidates identified at least part of the approach required in order to deal with the situation.
- *Political and legal aspects of the situation*
This bullet point did not pose any particular difficulties for many candidates. Some misunderstood the number (68,000) which had to be correct if they included it in their answer. Not all candidates made it clear the high figure is not discussed enough by politicians. Most candidates stated correctly that refugee children had the same right to a nursery place as native children.
- *Verena Kern's suggestions for improvement*
Most candidates identified the three suggested measures correctly. Some candidates however reached the word limit before or during the fourth bullet point and therefore could not be given all the marks for their responses in this section.

GERMAN (PRINCIPAL)

Paper 9780/03
Writing and Usage

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- in **Part I**, choose a title and a topic on which they have something to say and for which they have command of appropriate structures and lexis
- in **Part I**, plan their essay to produce a well-structured and persuasive argument
- in **Part I**, write complex sentences when appropriate, but without losing the thread of the argument
- in **Part II**, read first the rubrics and then each question carefully and make sure they understand the sense of the sentence(s)
- in **Parts I and II**, carefully proof read all their responses.

General comments

The Writing and Usage component of the examination consists of two parts:

- In **Part I** candidates have to write a discursive essay which tests their skill in expressing their ideas in German but also their ability to marshal their thoughts on paper coherently and successfully. In linguistic terms, the essay requires candidates to apply a variety of complex grammatical structures correctly and to show their command of German vocabulary and idiom. However, it is important that the complexity of the structures chosen does not impede the reasoning process: the language chosen has to be appropriate for the matter under discussion.
- In **Part II** candidates are required to conjugate verbs (*Übung 1*), rewrite sentences (*Übung 2*) and fill in missing words in a continuous text by means of multiple choice (*Übung 3*).

Both parts of the examination demand detailed and thorough knowledge of grammar, as well as confidence in its application. Furthermore, in **Part I** candidates have to demonstrate the ability to describe, illustrate analyse and evaluate in response to the title and topic of their choice.

Comments on specific questions

Part I: Discursive Essay (Question 1)

All of the five topics were chosen, but there was a preference for topics **(a)** and **(e)**. Topic **(e)** elicited a variety of relevant facts, views and considerations related to environmental taxes on flights, including the influence on families/relatives who lived far away, the increased cost of migration, the impact of higher administration fees, the differences in tax between different countries, the economic impact on flight operators and tourism and what would be done in the end with the extra tax revenue generated. Some answers debated how much flying had contributed to societies becoming more tolerant as it allowed people to get to get to know other countries and the customs of different people.

In question **(a)** a number of candidates firstly focused on one side of the argument by asserting mobile phones should not be allowed in schools before arguing the opposite stance equally strongly in the second half of their essay. Such essays would often come to a sudden conclusion at the end, where candidates baldly stated which side of the argument they favoured. It might have been better in such instances if the arguments presented led more naturally and gradually to the conclusion reached at the end of the essay. Better responses took a more nuanced approach and distinguished between different age groups in schools. They also looked at how different countries handled the question of mobile phones in schools and had more than just one reason for each side of the argument to bring to bear on the discussion. Advantages and

disadvantages were carefully distinguished in a structured way, and the essay would often come across as well-considered and informative as a result. Well-chosen and correct quoted figures and statistics may add lustre to an essay but vague assumptions about numbers are better left out.

In order to write successful essays, candidates need to read their chosen question carefully and ensure that what they write covers all aspects raised. This was particularly pertinent to topic (e). The better essays addressed the question well and avoided a generalised discussion of environmental problems without any strong or clear links to flying, as happened in some weaker responses. Again, referring back to the question at regular intervals is helpful, as is underlining key words and phrases in the essay question and, perhaps most importantly, a clear essay plan. Some essays could have been enhanced by presenting pros and cons in neatly delineated paragraphs. A number of essays were too long, often resulting in repetition. Such essays would have benefitted from a shorter, more concise approach and thorough proofreading. As ever, quality trumps quantity.

There were a number of problems with lexis, which often obscured meaning. Nouns such as *Fliegensteuer* (for *Flugsteuer*), *Menschlichkeit* (for, presumably, *Menschheit*) reflected a less assured grasp of German vocabulary. Further examples of incorrect usage include confusion in the use of *eigene*, *einige* and *einzig*, *nützlich* and *nutzlos*, *Ergebnisse* and *Erlebnisse*, *Geld verbringen* instead of *Geld verbrauchen*, *meistens* instead of *am meisten* and *physikalisch* instead of *physisch*.

The majority of candidates explored their chosen topics successfully and the best essays provided a balanced approach in coherently organised paragraphs. The most successful essays devoted a paragraph to each main point, steered clear of repetition and framed ideas and arguments with clear introductions and conclusions.

Part II: Usage

Many candidates did well in this part of the paper. **Question 6**, where the past participle of *sparen* was often rendered as *gesparen* instead of *gespart*, proved to be challenging. **Question 4** was sometimes answered by inserting the wrong tense (*hat sie in Urlaub fahren dürfen*), but the majority of candidates used either the present or the future tense here and succeeded in scoring the mark.

Übung 1 (Questions 2–6)

Many candidates completed this task successfully. All candidates followed the instructions and wrote a whole sentence. Some candidates used the perfect tense in **Question 4**, which was not a successful manipulation, but correctly formed future and present tenses were accepted. In **Question 3** most candidates realised that they needed to insert *zu* into the middle of the separable verb (i.e. *anzuschaffen*, not *zu anschaffen*).

Übung 2 (Questions 7–11)

The second exercise in **Part II** proved, as is usually the case, more challenging than the first. Most candidates successfully manipulated the sentence in **Question 7**, but some candidates mixed up the word order in the second half and wrote: *Dass große Mengen Alkohol schädlich für die Gesundheit sind, jedes Kind das weiß*. A few candidates stumbled in **Question 8** and wrote 'Instead of going out I would rather do my homework', instead of: 'Instead of doing my homework I would rather go out'. As this did not accord with the meaning of the two original sentences provided in the question the mark could not be awarded in such cases. **Question 9** was handled well by the majority of candidates but some thought that *nachdem* was to be understood in the same way as *nach dem* and wrote incorrectly formed sentences, such as *Nachdem Autokauf ist Kristina nach Deutschland gefahren*.

Questions 10 and **11** were mostly handled successfully.

Übung 3 (Questions 12–31)

Candidates generally did very well in the cloze test where they had to choose the correct word from four options. Stronger candidates knew that they needed a dative plural in **Question 30** and that only **A** would make sense in the context. They also chose the right preposition for *sich verlassen* in **Question 18**, which was *auf*.

GERMAN (PRINCIPAL)

Paper 9780/04
Topics and Texts

Key message:

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- read the question with care and think about what they are asked to do
- plan their answer and organise their material with close attention to the question
- take care to include analysis and argument, and avoid simply retelling the story.

General comments

Overall, the majority of the candidates engaged very well with the demands of the paper and there were a number of exceptional scripts. In **Part I** many candidates also proved adept at formulating good comparisons between the works of their choice and devoted generally an equal amount of space in their essays to each of the two works.

Even in weaker scripts, it was clear that candidates had tried to engage with the material they had studied in a meaningful way. Stronger candidates planned their approach to the question better, however, and were able to construct their essays and arguments well. Weaker scripts tended to rely, at least in part, on rehearsed answers in both parts of the paper.

Writing in the target language (**Part I**) poses a challenge in itself, so it is vital to carry out the planning of ideas in tandem with effective linguistic planning (i.e. deciding on what core vocabulary, constructions, etc. to use). Engaging properly with the comparative nature of the exercise is also a key quality reflected in the mark scheme but this was often missing in some of the less successful answers.

In the majority of scripts, the standard of the German was either good or very good, with some candidates producing work of outstanding quality, often through a focused, concise and incisive style. A lack of linguistic ability adversely affected the way in which some candidates were able to respond to the question, however. In preparation for the Topics section, candidates are advised to build a solid topic-specific vocabulary base which will allow them to convey their views with confidence.

In weaker scripts there was a tendency to generalise and oversimplify. This was apparent in both sections of the paper. Some candidates struggled to get a firm grip on key concepts such as '*Symbol der Unterdrückung*' (**Question 5**), 'justice' (**Question 6**), 'epitaph' (**Question 9**) or 'the grotesque' (**Question 10**).

The best answers in **Part II** (Texts) showed sustained analysis and relevance to the task set. References to the texts were generally handled well, but weaker answers tended towards generalisation, irrelevance or unsubstantiated assertion.

Most candidates chose to write a thematic essay rather than a commentary. Stronger candidates were able to link their commentary of the extract to wider aspects and themes of the text. Weaker answers tended to generalise and lose sight of the extract, or were unable to place the extract within its wider textual and thematic context.

It is important for candidates to state clearly what question they are answering as in a small number of cases this was not clear. Writing out the question may also help to focus the mind.

Candidates are reminded of the need to ensure their scripts is legible throughout.

Comments on specific questions

This year the following topics and texts proved to be most popular: *Sport, Die Mauer, In der Strafkolonie, Im Westen nicht Neues, Die Physiker*. Only the questions that attracted the most responses are discussed here.

Question 3A

On the whole candidates knew their chosen set works well. Weaker answers described rather than analysed the characters' situations. With regards to *Crazy*, Benni's disability, sexual awakening and friendship were aspects which received most attention while the ending of the story and other important facets of the work were sometimes underplayed. *Jenseits der Stille* was by and large dealt with very well, with candidates showing a good knowledge of the film, its characters and the problems Lara faces. *Nichts Bereuen* was not referred to very often.

Question 3B

Candidates also focused mainly on *Crazy* and *Jenseits der Stille* here. Most candidates concentrated on Benni's relationship with Marie and, to a lesser extent, his relationship with his mother in *Crazy*. A few weaker candidates struggled to progress beyond describing to analysing the relationships. More emphasis could have been placed on the significance of Benni's relationships and the impact these relationships and his parents' split have on his own development. Discussions of *Jenseits der Stille* were largely very effective. Most candidates knew the film and the characters well and were able to analyse and interpret Lara's relationship with her mother and aunt to good effect.

Questions 4A and 4B

Candidates compared *Nordwand* and *Berlin 36*. By and large, answers to both questions were good, with candidates displaying equally solid knowledge of both films. Most were able to place the films and their themes in their historical context. Only some weaker essays were mostly narrative. For **Question 4B** a clear understanding of the concept of *die Nation* and the relationship between the individual and *die Nation* was the distinguishing factor between the strong and strongest essays. *Der ganz große Traum* was not discussed.

Questions 5A and 5B

This was the most popular topic, with **Question A** and **Question B** being picked an almost equal number of times.

Overall candidates showed a good knowledge of the set works. However, the complexity of the situations in the East and the West was not always thoroughly understood. Weaker answers tended to generalise and were prone to accepting a rather superficial view of East as entirely unfree and bad and the West as entirely free and good. Stronger candidates were able to deal with the complexities and nuances of the situation better. For **Question A** the key word *Freiheit* needed to be clearly understood in seen in all its complexity. When preparing for these kinds of questions, candidates are reminded of the importance of analysing the question properly by identifying the key words in the question and defining them carefully for the purpose of their essay.

Question 8B and 8C

This was a popular text. There was a strong focus on the themes of colonisation and empire in most answers. The strongest candidates were able to develop their answers more widely by discussing various important aspects, such as the ending, religious and/or philosophical dimension of the work, Kafka's style, the complexities of the reactions of the individual characters to the situation they found themselves in, the story's change of mood and the significance and symbolism of the *Maschine*.

Questions 9A, 9B and 9C

This was also a popular text. Candidates choosing questions that require close reading of an extract are advised to apply a clear method as, on occasion, insufficient attention was paid to the details and meaning of the extract. Some candidates rather hastily placed the extract within the text as a whole before proceeding to interpret and draw conclusions that were more general in nature and had little bearing on the passage itself.

Mostly, however, candidates displayed very good knowledge of the text and its themes and stronger candidates were also able to look beyond the confines of the extract (in the case of **Question 8A**) and the text as a whole (in the case of all three questions) and place the work in its historical and literary context. Some answers to **Question C** showed that the word 'epitaph' had not been properly understood.

Questions 10A, 10B and 10C

This was the most popular text. The best answers to **Question 9A** provided sustained analysis of the dramatic impact of the scene as a piece of theatre by focusing on the stage directions and the verbal and non-verbal interaction between the two characters. Candidates are advised to practise close reading regularly in order to achieve the highest marks for a commentary question. Attention to detail is paramount in this regard. Stronger candidates were able to look beyond the text itself by using their solid background knowledge to place the work in its historical and literary context. When answering **Question B** candidates were mostly able to draw fruitful comparisons between the figure of *König Salomo* in the bible and in the play. The most challenging aspect of **Question C** was getting (and sustaining) a firm grip on the term 'grotesque'. Weaker candidates described or hinted at aspects and scenes of the play they considered to be 'grotesque' but were unsure about their exact meaning and significance. Indeed, what separated the stronger from the weaker responses here was the ability to explain how the dramatist made use of the grotesque in the play and why the concept is arguably crucial to arriving at a deep understanding and appreciation of the play.