

## GERMAN *ab initio*

### Overall grade boundaries

#### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 13	14 - 26	27 - 43	44 - 58	59 - 73	74 - 85	86 - 100

### Standard level internal assessment

#### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 3	4 - 8	9 - 12	13 - 16	17 - 21	22 - 26	27 - 30

### General comments

As in previous years, the standard of the internal assessment varied. Some candidates demonstrated the ability to manipulate the language very well, using both basic and complex structures accurately. These candidates were able to communicate fluently and express both basic and complex ideas at a normal pace of speech using idiomatic expressions correctly. At the other end of the spectrum the weaker candidates had difficulties expressing basic ideas and were not able to manipulate the language in order to communicate efficiently. These candidates had difficulties to understand the examiner's questions and comments, particularly during the general conversation.

Typically candidates had higher scores in criteria B = communication skills and C = interaction than criterion A = language.

The choice of the visual stimulus was generally good. Usually the stimuli were relevant to the target language and the age of the candidates. It is advisable to use coloured visual stimuli as that might make the description easier for the candidates. Stimuli which have writing in a language other than German should be avoided.

In most orals the teachers managed the transition between the two parts of the oral well and found a good way to connect the description of the visual stimuli and follow up questions to the general conversation. In most orals the general conversation flowed well and naturally, covering a range of topics from the syllabus, thus giving the candidates the opportunity to talk

about a number of issues. Only in a few cases the general conversation was reduced to a question and answer format. Assessment is difficult if the candidate is not engaged in a conversation. This part of the oral is intended to be an authentic conversation which should not be rehearsed. It should also give the candidates the opportunity to show what they can do and what types of structures they are able to use.

Teachers who develop a positive rapport with their students can ultimately elicit stronger oral performances from them. Teachers who seemed genuinely interested in what the candidates were saying (and who asked genuinely interesting questions) got the best communicative responses from their students. A supportive vocal tone, some nurturing teacher-noises, and some expressive responses certainly helped some candidates optimise their performance.

There seems to be a tendency for teachers to ask questions which only require the use of the present tense. As the perfect tense is an important part of the syllabus the candidates should be given the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to use it.

At times there is a tendency for teachers to be generous with their marks. This leads to a discrepancy between the teacher's and the moderator's grade.

#### **Administration:**

Some schools sent the old form 2/IA rather than the new form which has a space for the examiner and senior examiner to enter marks. Teachers should ensure that the correct paper work is submitted for moderation.

This year some of the recordings were of very poor quality. In some cases the voices were almost inaudible which makes moderation very difficult.

Some schools submit candidates for the *ab initio* exam who have done a German B oral, i.e. they have given a presentation and then answer questions followed by a general conversation. Teachers need to be aware of the appropriate format of the internal assessment (see the Handbook of Procedures). Also schools should ensure the candidates who enter the *ab initio* programme are genuine *ab initio* students, i.e. they have little or no experience of German. When listening to some internal assessments it becomes apparent that the candidates are not *ab initio* students and should have followed the German B course and thus sat the German B exam.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Students should practise as much oral work as possible. It is recommended for candidates to follow up the teacher's questions with questions of their own. This would generate a more authentic conversation.

As well as practising fluency candidates should practise grammatical accuracy. They should be familiar with describing a visual stimulus and practise different structures to do so.

Particular attention should be paid to the following areas:

- correct use of tenses
- correct adjectival endings
- correct use of vocabulary

Teachers should practise recording candidates during the *ab initio* course so they are not unduly nervous when the oral is recorded for moderation.

## Standard level paper one

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 8	9 - 13	14 - 22	23 - 31	32 - 37	38 - 42	43 - 50

### The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

The main problem areas were finding synonyms, the gap filling exercise and the Written Response.

### The levels of knowledge, understanding and skill demonstrated

Only a small number of candidates were unable to understand the questions. Even if some candidates gave incorrect answers they still realised the nature of the task.

### The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

**Q 1: Multiple choice** – Candidates had to find three correct statements out of seven

Stronger candidates did not experience difficulties with this task. However, weaker candidates appeared to fail to understand the statements and then match them with those they referred to in the text.

In general, almost all candidates received at least some points for this task; a fair number of candidates received full marks

**Q 2-6: True/false questions with justification**

This task required thorough reading of both the text and the questions.

Stronger candidates had no problem with this task and attained full marks. In general weaker candidates had difficulties extracting the relevant part of text for the justification and they seemed not to know that both the T/F answer and the justification are needed to get the point. Individual questions which presented the following difficulties for weaker candidates:

Q 2 candidates did not realise that Lehrer and Professor are not synonyms. Similarly for Q 3 they did not realise that Diplom and Zertifikat are synonyms and for the final question, Q 6, candidates did not realise Spaß means the same as gefällt.

#### **Q 7-10: Finding synonyms in the text and matching them to a list of words**

Here candidates who have a limited vocabulary had difficulties finding the synonyms in the text.

#### **Q 11-12: True/false questions with justification**

As with Q 2-6 stronger candidates had no problem. Weaker candidates had difficulties matching ‚in Düsseldorf geboren‘ with statement 11 and realising that the statement was false. With these T/F questions all candidates realised that a justification was needed.

#### **Q 13-17: Finding a noun in the text that corresponds to a personal pronoun in a given sentence**

Stronger candidates and a number of weaker candidates answered a number of questions correctly. Only stronger candidates realised that the answer to Q 15 cannot be ‚die Gruppe‘ as the verb is in the plural form so the answer has to be ‚Düsseldorfer‘. Candidates need to have some understanding of the language to realise this. Very weak candidates were unable to work out the pronoun and the noun it refers to and did not give meaningful answers.

#### **Q 18-22: matching a list of words with a synonym**

Again weaker students with a limited vocabulary had difficulties finding synonyms. Most candidates, however, did attain at least some points here.

#### **Q 23-25: Answering short questions with information from the text**

As Text C is the most difficult text a number of candidates had difficulties finding and understanding the information in the text and extracting the correct information to answer the questions. With Q 24 many candidates did not realise that the name is Otfried Preußler and not Preußlers as they did not recognize the genitive ‚s‘ for possession.

**Q 25:** many candidates realized that Kai Haferkamp's profession is game author. If they were not able to extract the exact word from the text, few found other words to describe this. Lehrer was a common answer weaker candidates gave.

#### **Q 26-30: Connecting sentence halves**

Weaker candidates were not able to connect the sentence halves correctly because they did not know the correct syntax for main and subordinate clauses and/or did not understand the

cohesive devices. They also found it difficult to find the sentences in the text that correspond to the completed sentences to check that their answers were correct.

### **Q 31- 35: Gap filling exercise to complete the final paragraph of Text C**

The difficulty here was for many candidates to realise which type of word goes into which gap or using the word with the right meaning. Answers to gap 33 demonstrated this. Here a verb was needed but some candidates put *interessiert* instead of *mag*, i.e. weaker students had difficulties working out the meaning of the verb and the context in order to find the correct one. A common mistake weaker candidates made was to put *spielen* instead of *Spiel* for gap 34 and not realising that a noun was needed.

### **Q 36-38: Multiple choice questions**

The vast majority of candidates did not have many difficulties here. However, very weak candidates had difficulties with Q 38 equating '*weniger als eine Autostunde*' with '*unter 60 Minuten*'.

### **Written Response**

Strong candidates managed to find six details of the eight and thus achieve full marks, a handful of candidates found all eight correct details. Weak candidates had problems changing some of the information in the text into information about what they did in Zürich themselves. Some of the mistakes which occurred might have resulted from misunderstanding the text. Examples of this are *Zürcher* as inhabitants of Zürich, *Ausgangspunkt* and that the glass cabin was on the boat and part of the description of the boat trip. A number of candidates wrote irrelevant details which were not in the text such as going to a museum and shopping as activities they had done. Perhaps they confused the Written Response with a task from Paper 2. Some candidates were not able to integrate the details into the postcard. A number of candidates wrote about going skiing even though the task explicitly stated that the candidate is on his/her summer holidays in Zürich.

## **The type of assistance and guidance the teachers should provide for future candidates**

It is essential that teachers work through past papers with their students. The question types are the same every year and familiarity with the question would eliminate such mistakes as answering true/false but not a justification. Also some knowledge about the language such as different parts of speech is useful for gap filling exercises. Teachers should endeavour to do a lot of vocabulary building exercises so candidates do not find the synonym questions so challenging. The Written Response should also be practised so candidates learn how to integrate the details from the text into their own piece of writing. Candidates should be aware that the Written Response is not creative text production but about finding details from a text as part of the Text Handling paper.

## Standard level paper two

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 11	12 - 23	24 - 40	41 - 51	52 - 66	67 - 75	76 - 90

### General comments

The exam paper consisted of two main components, Part A and B, where candidates had a choice of 2 tasks for Part A and 3 tasks for Part B. The different types of text included:

#### Part A:

- an e-mail to a friend about a shopping trip
- a note to a friend about a trip to the cinema

#### Part B:

- an ending to a story
- a book review
- an information leaflet about animals as a present

### The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

Many candidates encountered various linguistic and comprehensive difficulties, such as using the appropriate register or genre, often with reference to task B, where a more creative, independent written text production was required. Frequent problems for all sections included using both basic and complex grammatical structures. Word order, vocabulary range, verb conjugation, cases and tense referencing, using the correct auxiliary verbs and in some cases past participles was also challenging for many candidates.

Many candidates demonstrated appropriate knowledge of the subject matter relating to the various tasks and were able to provide a comprehensive text presentation. However, in a few cases candidates only completed one part of the exam.

The predominant difficulty appeared to be the content matter and also the format of the texts, i.e. a lot of candidates did not use the appropriate format for composing an e-mail and titles or headlines were frequently omitted. Addressing the readers also appeared quite difficult for many candidates and the informal “du” and formal “Sie” were occasionally mixed up in the same piece of writing.

## The levels of knowledge, understanding and skill demonstrated

In most cases, candidates communicated most of the relevant information necessary to carry out the tasks. In part A, appropriate formats were used most of the time. In part B, most candidates lost marks for using formats which were not appropriate to the tasks. In some cases, candidates did not understand the questions.

## The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

**Part A 1:** This question was most popular. Candidates understood the question and formats were mostly appropriate.

**Part A 2:** Not many candidates answered this question. Those who answered it, lost marks in presentation as they did not write the date (format).

**Part B 3:** This was one of the least popular questions. Candidates did not completely understand the question. They were unable to give all the basic information necessary to carry out the task.

**Part B 4:** This was by far the most popular question in Part B. Though all the relevant information was provided, a number of candidates did not use the appropriate format e.g. a title.

**Part B 5:** Many candidates answered this question. Most candidates did not use the appropriate format, e.g., a title.

On the whole candidates seemed to have found Question 3 difficult, Question 2 average and Questions 1, 4 and 5 easy.

A lot of candidates scored higher marks for the shorter, more guided writing tasks in Part A than the longer, more creative tasks in Part B.

A number of weaker candidates seemed to have memorized a piece of writing, (e.g. a description of self, family etc.) and wrote it regardless of the question.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

**Language:** Teachers can guide students in using basic grammatical structures effectively and help them practise spelling. Students should also be taught to avoid sloppy mistakes such as not putting capital letters for nouns, omitting umlaute, putting ‚ei‘ instead of ‚ie‘ and vice versa, using straight translations from English such as ‚wie bist du?‘ and using ‚vor‘ instead of ‚für‘.

**Presentation:** Most candidates lost marks in presentation for using inappropriate formats. It would probably help students if they practise writing tasks on various topics with various

formats. Again, using past papers to practise is useful as the various formats used in the exam are the same every year.