

GERMAN

<p>Paper 8683/01 Speaking</p>

Key messages

- The Speaking Test begins with an uninterrupted presentation from the candidate, clearly relating to the culture or society of a German-speaking country, whilst also reflecting the candidate's personal interests.
- Presentations should last for around three minutes, up to a maximum of four minutes, and should be reasonably detailed.
- No questions should be included in the content of presentations, unless they are rhetorical.
- Candidates should ask the examiner at least two questions in both the topic conversation and the general conversation, ideally spontaneously. The examiner should prompt them to do so if necessary. No marks may be awarded for Seeking Information if no questions are asked.
- The two conversations should be of approximately equal length, at around eight minutes each and the whole test should be completed within twenty minutes.

General comments

Candidates were usually appropriately entered for this examination and most were aware of the requirements. Presentation topics mostly referred to issues in a German speaking society, as required by the syllabus, and many were interesting and informative. However, some presentations referred only briefly to Germany, Austria or Switzerland which was not really sufficient to achieve a high mark for Content. Some specific detail is expected, with ideas and opinions, as well as factual points. In some cases, candidates' presentations did not mention a German speaking country at all, and their marks for Content should have been lower to reflect this. Some centres allowed candidates to ask the examiner questions as part of their presentation, and some examiners even interrupted the presentation to ask questions themselves. Please leave any questions that may arise until the Topic Conversation, as candidates must deliver their presentations uninterrupted and for at least three minutes.

Not all candidates were aware that they must ask the examiner a minimum of two questions per conversation. Nor were all examiners aware that they should prompt them to do so if necessary. It was sometimes the case that candidates did not ask any questions spontaneously, and if they were not prompted to do so by the examiner, they were unable to access the marks available for Seeking Information. Some examiners did prompt their candidates but only at the very end of a conversation: questions should be integrated and should arise naturally during the discussion. There were some examiners who awarded marks for Seeking Information even though no questions had been asked.

Candidates were mostly very responsive and nearly all were spontaneous. If candidates rely mainly on prepared material, they should be placed no higher than 'satisfactory' for Comprehension and Responsiveness. Apart from some incorrectly awarded marks for Seeking Information, most centres used the mark scheme correctly and fairly accurately. As detailed above, some marks for the Content of the Presentation were slightly too generous, but the criteria for marking the linguistic categories were usually interpreted correctly.

Some centres allowed the tests to last too long, and so risked tiring candidates. Twenty minutes should be the maximum duration of a test. 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.

Specific comments on the sections of the examination

Section 1 (Presentation)

- If the presentation contains ideas and opinions, refers in reasonable detail to the culture or society of a German-speaking country, and is delivered in a fluent and confident fashion, nine or ten marks may be awarded for content.
- If there are only brief references to a German-speaking country a lower mark for content should be considered.
- Presentations that are far too long, even if confidently delivered, should not receive nine or ten marks for content as they cannot be considered to have been 'well organised', as in the 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. A 'reasonable range' of structures and (topic-specific) vocabulary is required, delivered 'fairly fluently', and without ambiguity of meaning.
- There was as usual a good range of interesting, up-to-date or relevant presentation topics, including the following:

Franz Kafka, Veganer-Ernährung, nachhaltige Mode, Naturschutz (die Jagd), der Verlust unserer Privatsphäre im internet, 'das Wunder von Bern', Hip-hop und Rap: Einfluss auf die deutsche Sprache, Hunde (die emotionale Unterstützung geben), die Automobilindustrie.

Section 2 (Topic Conversation)

- In this conversation, 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 additional to 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 to 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. If no questions are asked, even after prompting, the mark is zero.
- A maximum mark of three should be awarded for Providing Information if the candidate can deal with basic situations and concepts, but finds more complex ones difficult.

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 essential to cover mainly complex issues in order to allow candidates to access the higher marks available for Comprehension and 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 candidates will know specific information on a topic chosen by the examiner, even a significant topic such as the Corona virus pandemic. If a candidate is clearly unhappy with any topic suggested, the examiner should quickly suggest a different area of discussion.