



# **JUNIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS**

**1999**

***GERMAN***

**HIGHER LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT  
ORDINARY LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT**

## Junior Certificate – German

### HIGHER LEVEL

**10,911** candidates took the examination at Higher Level in 1999. Numbers at this level have dropped in the past few years, having peaked at 15,521 in 1994, whereas numbers are still showing a slight increase at Ordinary Level. The total candidature at Junior Certificate in 1999 amounted to 14,433. However the figures have to be considered in relation to the drop in overall pupil numbers at Junior Certificate level. The uptake of German has remained at 27% of total pupil numbers over the last three years.

#### Performance of Candidates:

Year	%	A	B	C	D	E	F	N/G	Total
1997	%	9.12	29.03	34.37	21.42	5.49	0.55	0.02	12,895
1998	%	9.13	29.26	31.93	21.87	6.99	0.8	0.02	12,044
1999	%	10.36	28.92	34.01	21.30	5.02	0.39	0.00	10,911

The above table indicates the following:

- • The percentage of candidates achieving a C grade or higher is 73.29%, which shows a slight increase on previous years. However the distribution across the A, B and C grades is in line with previous years.
- • The increase by 1% on the number of A grades can be attributed to candidates' performance in the Reading Section, in which they performed better than in previous years and to their performance in the Written Section of the examination.
- • The failure rate has decreased to 5.4%. This decrease, and the fact that there are no NGs, indicate that candidates are now opting to sit the Ordinary Level paper when appropriate.

*The detailed analysis of candidates' performance in the different sections of the examination, which now follows, is best read in conjunction with the published marking scheme.*

#### Section I: Listening Comprehension

Overall candidates managed this section very well. Time spent on Aural work does optimise candidates' opportunity to achieve high marks in this section. Candidates should be reminded to give complete answers; marks were at times lost due to lack of detail in answering. Teachers should train their pupils to carefully read the questions, emphasise that detail is really important in terms of gaining marks and encourage them to re-read their answers once completed.

**A:** Generally well answered by candidates of all levels of ability. Countries were well identified as were hobbies and dislikes. Many candidates wrote *wants to learn Spanish* instead of *learns Spanish*, not understanding that Judith was already learning the language. The verbs *kennenlernen*, *verbessern*, *teilnehmen an* were not properly understood here. Common errors included *July* for *June*, *writing* for *Reiten*, *strong* for *strict*.

**B: B1 Directions**

A surprising number of candidates were not familiar with *U-bahn* and either wrote the German word or a different type of station. Only about 50% got *underground*. All candidates understood *station*. The directions were completed well by a considerable number of candidates, but in order to get all the details right, it was necessary to focus not only on **nouns** and **places** but also on **prepositions** such as *entlang*, *bis zur*, *hinter*, etc. Main difficulty was caused by *am Fluß entlang bis zur Brücke*, which many understood as *over the bridge*. For this reason many scored only 1 or 2 out of a possible 6 marks.

In **B2** candidates sometimes had difficulties with compound nouns, a feature of the German language which they can cope with in a written text but which can be difficult to recognise in a listening text. *Kartoffel* is well known, but not necessarily recognised in *Bratkartoffel*. Similarly *Schweinekotelett*, *Zwiebelsuppe*, *Schokoladentorte* caused difficulty. Candidates may recognise only one element of the compound or not recognise a familiar word in its compound use at all. *Eiersalat* was particularly difficult. One of the drinks was usually given correctly.

**B3** was well answered with the majority of candidates achieving full marks. The missing jacket was described well. *Reißverschluss* however was seldom understood. *Reisepass* and *10 Mark Schein* were frequently given correctly, but *necklace* or *chain* were rarely mentioned. Most gave correctly the name Hoffmann and the telephone number.

- C. This part of the Listening was the least well answered by the candidates. Times caused problems - days of weeks/opening times presented difficulties for most candidates. C3 however was answered well.
- D. D1 and D2 were generally well answered. Candidates understood a considerable amount of detail. Anne's journey was well described. Answers which occurred less frequently included *crossing not pleasant, stormy, Anne was sick*. *Anrufen* did seem to cause most candidates difficulty. It was important to mention the fact that Anne wanted to speak and hear *a lot of German* not just *German*.
- In D2 the weather vocabulary was well known, with the exception of *trocken*. The number of the bus was often identified as the *4.20* as opposed to the *24* bus.
- E. This, the longest section in the Listening Comprehension, was extremely well answered by candidates. Familiarity with the countries and activities allowed candidates to gain marks. The very specific answer of *eine 5 im Zeugnis* occurred rarely, where candidates' answers were too vague and general to merit a mark.

## Section II: Reading Comprehension

- A. A. The vocabulary in this question proved too difficult and even the best candidates were not able to answer all three questions correctly here. *Feiertag, Gepäckausgabe* and *Fahrtreppe* were the most frequent incorrect answers. Candidates did guess rather than leave a blank.
- B. B. **Advertisements:** Very well answered. Only few candidates made errors because of the distracters. The most common mistake was to assume (5) referred to *pig pens*.
- C. C. **Deutsch Lernen Jugendprogramm:** Very well answered in general. The second detail in (I) tended to be absent, otherwise an abundance of information was offered, often far in excess of the required amount. In (iv) *Vollpension* and *Versicherung* were not widely understood – costs was a frequent answer, but too vague to merit awarding of marks.

- D. D. Classroom language:** Two out of three answers were usually correct. In (iii) (c) was often given, as candidates are accustomed to teachers using the du register. Even at this stage of their learning, pupils should be aware of teachers using *Sie* with their classes.
- E. E. Notices:** There was so much scope for gaining marks from the many details, that most candidates gave more information than was necessary. Details about the *ladies breakfast* were the most difficult, *kennenlernen* and *Gesundheit* and *Nachbarn* causing the difficulty there. *Frau* was quite frequently rendered as “wife”!! Surprisingly *Dienstag* was translated as *Thursday* by some candidates. (4) was well answered except for the title *flea market*.
- F. F. Surfen, Spielen, Freunde Finden:** Many candidates used their own knowledge of computers to answer the questions rather than using the text as a basis for their answers.
1. Most answered really well. *Zuhause* caused difficulty for some candidates.
  2. 2. *He presses a few keys* occurred rarely, but most candidates managed to understand *password*.
  3. 3. (a) Not many included *new friend* but most understood *15* and *USA*.  
(b) (b) Generally poorly answered. Few candidates understood the detail of how the two boys had gotten to know each other.
  4. 4. Most scripts carried the answers *earn a lot of money* and *work abroad*, fewer gave the third detail accurately. *Austria* was given for *Ausland* by some candidates.
  5. 5. Nearly all candidates understood the disadvantage, but the advantage was unclear to many or they gave insufficient details to merit marks.
- Insufficient information rather than incorrect answers caused a loss of marks in this section.
- G. G. Klasse 9A:**
1. This question was well answered by most candidates. There seemed to be a general understanding of the chaos – which required recognition of imperfect – but sometimes pupils were caught out on details. Many included the answer that a girl throws *a rubber*, understanding *Kaugummi* to be *Gummi*.
  2. 2. This question was well answered. Some candidates guessed however and painted an unsympathetic image of a teacher’s entrance e.g. she shouted at them to

shut up and take out their books! Some mistook *opened* the window for *closed* the window.

3. 3. Very well answered.
4. 4. Very well answered.
5. 5. Very well answered. All candidates could pick out a lot of detail but often got mixed up between the colours, in particular, green and grey. The most common error was *earring* for *Ehering*. Additional information in excess of the required amount was usually provided.

Candidates' performance in this Reading Comprehension section had improved on previous years.

### **Section III: Written Expression**

#### **A. Letter:**

Examiners stated that they were particularly impressed with the standard in the Written Expression section of the examination, with many candidates making very authentic use of idiom. In general the candidates had a wide vocabulary and were able for the variety of topics they had to handle. A lot of cultural awareness was called upon. While candidates at this level may be aware of these differences, they do find it difficult to express these differences in German.

**Content:** Very few candidates could manipulate-. *Was hat dir in Deutschland eigentlich am besten gefallen Und was für Wetter habt ihr gehabt?* Many failed to respond appropriately in the past tense and forfeited marks. Frequently the latter part of the question was often understood to be enquiring about weather in Ireland.

Despite the past tense difficulty, the letters were well attempted and marks were picked up where possible. Introduction and ending were well prepared by 90% of candidates. So were the answers to questions **(2)** *school* and **(3)** *uniform*.

Many candidates showed an awareness of differences between the Irish and German school systems. Unfortunately others saw it as an opportunity to regurgitate a learnt-off paragraph on *Schule* and didn't answer the question at all. Candidates need to be able to talk in general about school and about differences in schools.

The question about differences between schools in Germany and Ireland included most commonly the length of the school day, but some candidates managed to include remarks about *gemischte Schule und reine Mädchen-bzw. Jungenschule*. Almost every candidate was able to describe their uniform in detail, but articles and endings caused difficulties here and there were many misspellings of clothes vocabulary “*blouse, shue, schwartze, cravate*”.

A lot of candidates coped well with (4) in the letter on the language assistant. *Sprachassistentin* was often misunderstood as someone who worked in a German school. The concept of a language assistant was beyond many candidates. The question about the language assistant was often answered by talking about German as a subject in general and what candidates do in a typical German class. This was taken into account in the marking scheme. Candidates who understood the question often had difficulties with the verbs *geben* and *helfen* in the third person singular use followed by dative pronouns, i.e. *sie hilft mir. Sie gibt uns wenig Hausaufgaben*.

Question (5) of the letter about *Weihnachten* was understood by the majority of candidates. The most common answer referred to the “*große Essen*” and the “*Turkei*”, although a fair number of candidates knew *Truthahn*, with the second h often missing. Other misspellings include *Schinken* and *Geschenke*.

All candidates had been trained well to open and finish their letters correctly. Naturally many availed themselves of the possibility to copy phrases from the given letter.

**Expression:** The most common errors were as follows:

- • Agreement of person and verb endings was generally good, occasionally poor in the case of D candidates.
- • The capitalisation of nouns was frequently poor, as was agreement of adjectives (evident in the letter when describing the school uniform).
- • Lack of or wrong use of *Umlaut* very frequent.

- • Only 50% realised that perfect tense was required to answer question. Some candidates who did attempt the perfect tense had problems with “*haben sein*” and past participle “*essen gegehen*”.
- • Expression marks were lost most often for very bad word order and verb ending or no verb in the sentence.
- • A common error was writing *was* instead of *war*.
- • Time manner place “*Ich fahre zur Schule mit dein Bus*”.
- • Use of conjunctions *und, aber, weil, wenn* – these conjunctions were frequently used. However the verb was often placed incorrectly.
- • Verb in second place. “*In der Schule ich trage*”.
- • The phrases *Spaß machen/gefallen* were often incorrectly used.
- • Colours often spelt incorrectly – “*braue*” instead of *brauner*, “*schwartz*” instead of *schwarze*.

#### **B. B. Short Note**

Candidates performed reasonably well here. A number of candidates could not express the idea of the dog being lost. Word for lost *verloren* was not known. Some candidates used *kann nicht finden* to get around this. The idea of giving a reward or money to the finder caused problems as it seemed to demand a relative clause which was beyond this level. Candidates coped well with the description of the dog and indicating who the owner was. Some examiners felt there should be greater emphasis in the marking on simply getting the message across without being so tied to getting marks for specific words.

#### **C. C. Postcard**

Overall this task was completed well. Areas where difficulties did arise were:

- • expressing to plan/intend.
- • asking how much an overnight stay with breakfast costs
- • to hire bikes “*mieten*” and the plural of bikes.

## Junior Certificate – German

### ORDINARY LEVEL

**This report should be read in conjunction with the published marking scheme.**

**N.B.:** Pencil should not be used to answer any section of the paper. Tippex should not be used. A candidate wishing to invalidate an answer should put a stroke through it. In certain circumstances, an invalidated answer can be given marks if it is visible and legible to the examiner.

#### **Introduction**

The Ordinary Level German paper has three sections, viz.

Listening Comprehension	140 marks
Reading Comprehension	120 marks
Written Expression	60 marks

There is an optional oral component worth 80 marks if taken. In practice, few schools take up this option. A total of 46 candidates took the oral component at Ordinary Level; some 255 candidates took it at Higher Level in 1999.

#### **Performance of Candidates**

**3,522** candidates took the examination at Ordinary Level in 1999. The breakdown of grades awarded this year and in the two previous years at this level is as follows:

Year	%	A	B	C	D	E	F	N/G	Total Entry
1997	%	2.8	26.6	37.4	23.8	6.8	2.2	0.4	3,368
1998	%	3.6	28.5	37.2	21.9	6.4	2.1	0.3	3,543
1999	%	2.9	27.7	35.2	25.3	6.7	1.9	0.3	3,522

#### **Analysis of Paper**

In this year's paper, candidates did particularly well at reading comprehension and quite well in the listening section. Most candidates also attempted the Written Expression section.

#### **Section I: Listening Comprehension**

Candidates produced a good standard of answering. In many instances, the text offered more options than were required in the questions, so candidates had a safety margin.

A. The majority of candidates gained high marks in this question.

- • The months of the year were usually correct, some candidates wrote *July* for 'Juni'.
- • Most candidates successfully identified two countries.
- • Judith's hobbies were easily identified, i.e. *reads, computer, Internet*. Few wrote *TV* or *documentaries*.
- • Thomas' hobbies proved more difficult; many translated 'reiten' as *writing*, 'segeln' was seldom recognised.
- • The remaining three parts of the question posed few problems.

B.

1. 1. **(Getting directions) gained full marks for the majority of candidates.**

2. 2. **(In the Restaurant) Recognition of foods was patchy.**

(i) (i) Soup was recognised by most candidates. They often wrote ice-cream for 'Schlagsahne'.

(ii) (ii) Rice was the most widely recognised item; some identified chicken, very few got beans.

(iii)(iii) 'Weißwein' occasionally became iced water!

3. 3. **(Jacket mislaid in the café)**

1. 1. The jacket was well described; summer and blue were common answers, zip and size 38 were rarely given.

2. 2. There was some guesswork about the contents of the pockets – ticket to Ireland was an incorrect answer, as was souvenirs. Few wrote silver chain or jewellery, and while many wrote passport or travel pass, the German version 'Reisepaß' often appeared.

C. This question proved problematic for many candidates.

1. 1. **(The barbecue is cancelled) caused some confusion.**

(i) 'bei seinem Großvater' was rarely recognised, nor was 'erst um halb zwei'. Some candidates said Michael was in hospital.

(ii) Monday was the piece of information most often correct.

2. **(At the Lost Property Office) gave rise to some guesswork.**

- (i) Whistle frequently appeared, perhaps for 'Schlüssel'? The composite words may have proved difficult, most candidates got rucksack but very few got bracelet or jewellery.
  - (ii) Time: while most candidates got 12 o'clock correct, '10.15' tended to be understood as either ten or ten thirty.
3. **(Recipe)** was considered demanding for the level, so the usual 15 marks were reduced to 5
- • Many candidates got the numbers correct but omitted mention of *grams* in the two cases.
  - • *A pinch* and *1/4 litre* rarely appeared.
- D. Candidates answered more successfully on the second conversation, the first was problematic.
1. **1. (Conversation on the train)**
- (i) (i) The marking scheme allowed *morning* or the time (8.45) for two marks. The time was rarely given correctly. The means of travel were usually correct.
  - (ii) (ii) (a) was often correctly answered, (b) rarely so.
  - (iii) (iii) Many candidates got the most obvious answers correct, i.e. *speak/learn/improve German* and *eat German food*. *A trip on the Rhine* was rarely given; some candidates seemed to write what they might do, i.e. *meet fellas*, *go to discos*.
2. **2. (Plans for the weekend)**
- (i), (ii) The weather was well dealt with, but the temperature was often incorrect.
- (iv) (iv) The 'Minigolf' from the beginning of the conversation came back in at the end – *Also los, gehen wir erst mal zum Minigolf!* - and misled many candidates into writing that as the answer for (b) – Sunday.
- E. The questions on this conversation were well answered with the exception of 4.
- 1. **1.** Some gave general answer (*England* or *London*) and missed out on 2 marks for detail.
  - 2. **2.** Recognition of countries was good.
  - 3. **3.** (a) was easily recognised, many candidates had trouble with the second answer.

4. 4. Some candidates got only the marks for *English*, they didn't get any of the many variants acceptable for *doing badly in ...*. Others seemed to chance a stock answer such as *she stayed out late/ went to discos*.

The areas where candidates lost marks were:  
number and time, recognition of foods, hobbies, relations.

## Section II: Reading Comprehension

Parts **A, B** and **C** were very well answered.

**D:** Here, for picture C, some candidates inappropriately ordered their teacher ('Öffne das Fenster!') to open the open window. Pictures A, E and G also proved testing. Answers here were incorrect, mixed-up or omitted.

In Part **E** (postcards), performance was somewhat varied.

- • Occasionally, candidates gave the destination address in reply to *Postcard from where?*- i.e. *Germany* rather than *Donegal*.
- • 'Ostsee' was regularly translated as *Austria*.
- • *Staying with aunt* and *holiday home* were often omitted under *Staying in/with/...?*
- • A lot of candidates failed to recognise 'heiß'.
- • Most scored well on *things he/she does*.

In Part **F**, the Jumbled Dialogue, as in previous years, few candidates scored full marks. Many began well but then lost the thread of things. Due to an error in the introduction on the paper, many students switched the people in the conversation. The marking scheme compensated in a very fair way for this unintentional mix-up and candidates were not at a loss for marks as a result.

Part **G**, 'Neles Tag', was well answered. There were usually more options in the text than were required in the questions, and this worked to the benefit of candidates.

1. 1. Many candidates read 'Strömen' as *stormy* rather than the intensity of the rain, but had three other weather details correct and therefore got full marks.
2. 2. The good range of reasons allowed many candidates to get full marks. Some students got part of the meaning of options or they had the wrong context, i.e. she is not interested in football or her friend isn't there to play football. Fewer candidates answered her best friend is away/not there and it's too cold for the swimming pool. Some candidates wrote the pool was closed.
3. 3. Well answered due to good range of activities.



**C: Dialogue:** More candidates than in previous years attempted this question, which was relatively undemanding . The only difficulty many of them had was in saying that the item *was too dear*. This was often given in Irish.