2022 German Continuers Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2022 assessment cycle, gives an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

Across the Assessment Types for this subject, students can present their responses in oral or multimodal form, where 6 minutes is the equivalent of 1000 words. Students should not speed-up the recording of their videos excessively in an attempt to condense more content into the maximum time limit.

From 2023, if a video is flagged by markers/moderators as impacted by speed, schools will be requested to provide a transcript and markers/moderators will be advised to mark/moderate based on the evidence in the transcript, only considering evidence up to the maximum word limit (e.g. up to 2000 words for AT3).

If the speed of the recording makes the speech incomprehensible, it affects the accuracy of transcriptions and it also impacts the ability of markers/moderators to find evidence of student achievement against the performance standards.

School Assessment

Teachers can improve the moderation process and the online process by:

* thoroughly checking that all grades entered in schools online are correct
* ensuring the uploaded tasks are legible, all facing up (and all the same way), and remove blank pages, student notes and formula pages
* ensuring the uploaded responses have pages the same size and in colour so teacher marking, and comments are clear.

Assessment Type 1: Folio

This component is worth 50% of the school assessed grade. Students complete between 3- 5 responses, comprising an Interaction, Text Analysis and Text Production tasks.

Students demonstrate their ability to communicate their ideas effectively when speaking and writing in German. They demonstrate depth and breadth in their responses by elaborating, expressing opinions, arguing a position, and substantiating their argumentation. They analyse text for content and textual features, interpret and draw conclusions about ideas and perspectives expressed in texts and regarding a text’s purpose, context, and audience.

Interaction

The interlocutor’s questions should be succinct and open-ended to allow students to maximize their contributions. Over-rehearsed responses, where questions have clearly been practised exclusively and verbatim, may potentially not allow students to achieve at the highest level against some of the Performance Standards It is essential to formulate questions that elicit spontaneous and authentic responses. Regular coaching and practice are vital to enable less confident students to maximize their achievement.

The more successful responses commonly:

* flowed naturally
* encompassed a range of topics
* demonstrated student responses that were quick, fluent, and dealt with topic shifts and unpredicted elements confidently
* showed that students were engaged: responses were spontaneous, passionate, humorous
* featured questions that allowed students to ‘go deeper’ and elaborate, reflect, argue a point and substantiate their opinions
* demonstrated high levels of authenticity by using idiomatic language, modal particles, and interjections.

The less successful responses commonly:

* were limited in scope, focusing solely on aspects pertaining to ‘The Individual’ theme (i.e. the student’s personal world or: were based on a single topic chosen from one of the other themes)
* lacked challenging, probing questions, which limited the scope for students to demonstrate their ability to reflect, substantiate and argue a point
* relied on pre-prepared (often overly rehearsed) responses rather than spontaneous interaction
* exhibited frequent pauses and had difficulty elaborating on, or even responding appropriately, to simple questions
* relied on the interlocutor to take the lead
* featured formulaic, often single-sentence, answers
* demonstrated a limited range of vocabulary
* meaning was impeded by basic grammatical errors particularly with tenses, conjugation, declension and syntax
* were interspersed with some English.

Text Production

Context and task design are essential in facilitating and optimising student achievement as they allow students to reference their work against the explicit purpose, context, audience, text type and kind of writing that is required. It is equally critical that word limits are conducive to maximizing student achievement. If students complete more than one text production, these must differ in context, purpose, and audience.

The more successful responses commonly:

* were comprehensively planned, as evidenced in the depth and breadth of ideas and inclusion of detailed content
* demonstrated a clear understanding of the context, purpose and audience, text type, and kind of writing required for the task
* were cohesive and logically structured
* accurately used a range of sophisticated structures, vocabulary, and connective devices in their writing, such as relative clauses, passive voice, subjunctives, and, where appropriate, idiomatic expressions, metaphors, and similes
* reflected student engagement and related to a topic of student interest or a current issue, or a task which provided scope for imaginative and creative interpretation
* consisted of tasks designed to generate a range of ideas, supported arguments, and/or opinions

The less successful responses commonly:

* treated the topic superficially
* were often too brief to achieve sufficient depth and breadth
* lacked cohesion
* featured simplistic, repetitive structures or expression, and basic errors that impeded meaning
* consisted of several brief diary entries (often in response to a longer text, such as a film, story, or novel) that were either not at all or only loosely thematically connected and limited the scope for achieving an adequate level of breadth and depth.

Text Analysis

Beyond questions focussing exclusively on content, it is essential to include questions, which require reflection on and interpretation of content and textual features and ask students to draw conclusions about purpose, context and audience to ensure all relevant aspects of the Interpretation and Reflection Performance Standards are covered. Questions that prompt students to comment or reflect upon personal experiences associated with (aspects of) the topic of the stimulus text are not ‘Text Analysis’ questions. Translations are also not part of Text Analysis. Responses must be in English. Student achievement should be correlated with the Performance Standards rather than numerical.

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated a thorough understanding of text types and metalanguage, which allowed students to interpret meaning and draw conclusions about the purpose, style, and language of a text or texts effectively
* featured comprehensive and succinct analysis of content and textual features
* substantiated conclusions with detailed and pertinent examples
* analysed text/ (paired) text(s) on topics of contemporary relevance, addressing the various aspects of IR1, IR2, and IR3 effectively
* demonstrated critical and reflective thinking about cultural aspects portrayed in text(s).

The less successful responses commonly:

* were general rather than specific
* consisted of either brief, superficial answers or verbose, repetitive answers with only limited information or limited relevance to the question
* made only cursory reference to the stimulus text resulting in limited substantiation or examples from the text
* demonstrated limited understanding of text types, features of language, and subtext.

Assessment Type 2: In-depth Study

The In-depth Study comprises three assessment tasks: an oral presentation in German, a written response in German, and a reflective response in English.

The more successful responses commonly:

* had an explicit connection to Germany or another German-speaking country and its culture
* were adequately researched and contextualized, including (as relevant) their historical, political, social, contemporary etc. context
* consisted of topics that students clearly felt passionate about (e.g., migration, art, rise of neo fascism, women’s rights, environmental policies, Germany’s approach to dealing with Covid etc.)
* had contemporary relevance and/or a degree of controversy, which allowed students to inform, analyse, persuade, reflect, convey concepts, and explain different perspectives
* were clearly differentiated in terms of purpose, context, and audience between the oral presentation and the written response
* featured an oral presentation that was delivered in a lively, fluent manner and conveyed the student’s interest in and engagement with the topic
* featured an oral presentation that was well-prepared and therefore highly effective in engaging the audience by varying the content, expression and tone, pronunciation was clear and easy to understand
* featured a written response that was effectively prepared and carefully edited to ensure that the final product achieved depth and breadth
* ensured that both the oral presentation and the written response demonstrated a high level of formal accuracy and incorporated an extensive range of linguistic structures and expressions
* ensured that the reflection addressed all aspects of IR3
* made some reference, or drew comparisons to pertinent contemporary matters or issues
* made effective use of word and time-limits.

The less successful responses commonly:

* were often largely identical in terms of purpose (and often context and audience), and merely informational
* relied on a narrow range of research, at times superficial or simple information in one or both tasks
* featured presentations that appeared underprepared: containing many errors (grammar/syntax/pronunciation) and/or were poorly paced
* featured overly simplistic and/or repetitive vocabulary and structures
* contained limited, if any, reflection on cultures, values, beliefs, practices, and ideas
* focused primarily on the research process, not the impact of the research on self and others.

General Information on the In-depth Study

It is important to adhere to the time and word limits specified in the Subject Outline to allow students to maximize their achievement. Written IDS tasks or Interactions that fail to reach or significantly exceed those limits are not conducive to student achievement.

It is essential that LAPS, context sheets, reading texts and transcripts of listening texts are included with moderation material. Teachers should ensure that recordings are clear and intelligible.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Examination

The examination consists of two assessments: an oral examination and a written examination.

The majority of the 51 students who completed the examination were generally well prepared for the oral and written examinations.

Oral Examination

The oral examination consists of two parts: general conversation and discussion of the student’s in-depth study topic. In the conversation the students converse with the examiners about their personal world.

Orals were conducted in the now familiar online format, and students again benefitted from being in their familiar school settings and having the personal and technical support of invigilators. For both the conversation and discussion sections over 20% of marks awarded were full marks, and several examiners commented on pleasing preparation and performances in the discussion.

Section 1: Conversation

Most students were well-prepared for this section and interacted effectively and creatively. Students are encouraged to initiate conversation and take lead to share their topics. They should practise supporting and elaborating statements with relevant examples (e.g., *Ich bin ziemlich kontaktfreudig… ich habe einen ziemlich großen Freundekreis und spiele in verschiedenen Sportmannschaften mit* (plus examples!). Likewise in discussing familiar topics such as family, it is important that students are able to move beyond basic information such as names and ages, to demonstrate more complex ideas and language.

In more successful conversations, students

* had clear areas of personal interest to discuss in detail, and could go beyond rehearsed answers to familiar questions
* demonstrated the ability to interact well on topics such as family, self, hobbies, school life and exchange visits (or disruption thereof and future travel plans), and had thought about topics special to them
* were able to contribute authentically and independently to the interaction. Many students clearly enjoyed the conversation, independent of differing levels of fluency
* provided depth of treatment of information and ideas and supported their responses with detailed explanations, and could articulate why a topic was important to them and young people more generally
* were able to discuss topics in creative, natural and engaging ways. They were able to vary structures and use cohesive devices confidently to create flow
* engaged with follow-up questions, gave opinions and justified them. Expressed agreement/disagreement, to what extent and why
* were able to request clarification and respond to repeated or rephrased questions, without significant disruption to the flow of the conversation. Self-correction (expression) is also regarded as a positive skill.

In less successful conversations, students

* had not prepared sufficiently to be able to elaborate, perhaps assuming that this section of the exam was familiar/easier. Teachers should offer regular opportunity for students to express more sophisticated ideas, to expand and deepen their repertoire with personal world topics, especially given the weighting of this section of the exam
* ideas were shallow and basic or repetitive – often limited by language skills
* gave brief responses such as brief descriptive statements, or closed yes/no answers
* offered few opinions
* used a very limited range of vocabulary and basic linguistic structures, resorting to English and English sentence structures
* required frequent prompting by examiners to contribute, maintain the conversation
* showed difficulty understanding relevant high-frequency vocabulary and questions, including when these were reformulated and simplified
* needed more strategies and phrases to win time or redirect the conversation to areas of strength to maintain conversation.

Section 2: Discussion

This year’s pre-submission of the in-depth study outline again worked efficiently. Schools are reminded that IDS Study Outline forms (completed in English) are pre-submitted and from 2022 not to be brought into the exam by the student.

Although performances varied widely, many students were well-prepared and some were able to speak at length on their chosen topics, which were relevant and diverse. Examiners commend students’ preparation considering COVID’s impacts for this cohort.

Alongside a range of general and specific topics around environment (*Energiewende, Energiepolitik und der Krieg in der Ukraine, Nachhaltigkeit, Rolle der Wälder in CO2 Speicherung*), there were a number of historical topics around the Weimar Republic (Film, *Weltwirtschaftskrise*), DDR (Stasi) and also around SA German connections (*Familienrecherche*). There were also a range of topics around the arts/architecture/festivals and socio-political issues including migration, integration and nationalism/AfD.

Many students presented detailed and insightful accounts of their research with clear connection to German culture and comparisons with Australia. These students had clearly thought about their topic in terms of Interpretation and reflection with regard to both their own learning and interests and intercultural understanding. As part of this students should ensure that they are able to summarise their topic, highlighting their focus points, and are able to discuss aspects of their English reflection task in German (i.e., translating and expanding on the key points in German).

Examiners noted that topics should neither be too broad (e.g., covering a sweep of historical developments or abstract themes ‘Kunst’/’Kultur’) nor too narrow (focussing on detailed description without giving context or significance) or complex (very technical topics).

Teachers are encouraged to assist students in choosing and unpacking a topic that is commensurate with their linguistic abilities. Students are expected to be able to discuss their research in relative detail and cover at least 3 sub-topics in depth. Specific examples are of benefit here (e.g., specific pieces of art/film/design/music/language-dialect/historical figures or life stories/events/specific examples of social issues etc). For some topics photos can be a good support (without language captions), (e.g., relevant photos of architecture, artworks etc.)

Problems with expression (including command of basic grammatical structures as required for all productive tasks) are often more pronounced in the discussion, as specialised vocabulary is often less consolidated than that used for personal world topics. Students require ample opportunity to develop conversational techniques and confidence to flexibly discuss their research topics, including opinions, qualification, comparison. Teachers are encouraged to help students practise flexibly responding to questions about their topics: the focus is not on memorising ‘knowledge’ such as facts and dates, but rather being able to outline their research, its significance for their learning and intercultural insights they have gained.

As in past years, examiners noted that students who had a strong personal connection to their topic in general performed better and could express opinions and reflection well. One example united personal interest in design and technical innovation with the German auto-industry and the development of e-cars, which allowed the student to effectively explain how the IDS had provided opportunity to deepen their understanding.

In more successful discussions, students

* had a clear focus on the German-speaking world and often provided historical context
* knew and prepared their topic well (including topic-specific vocabulary); they had considered various aspects of their topic and formed opinions
* were able to give an overview and explain in detail what they had researched. It is recommended that students be able to respond when asked about their Präsentation/der mündliche Teil and also der schriftliche Teil der Intensiv-Studie
* were able to refer to their research processes and sources (formal and informal): e.g., readings including online conversations/interviews/correspondence; gave specific examples from texts/websites and why they were helpful/difficult etc.
* explained their topic choice, why their topic interested them personally or to what extent it was significant for young people in Germany and Australia
* did not rely on examiners to ‘fish’ for ideas, and could pick up and run with a question
* responded flexibly, elaborated, and gave opinions, and where appropriate, compared their findings with an Australian context.

In less successful discussions, students

* lacked depth and breadth in responses and provided superficial treatment of ideas. Some lacked basic information on their topic and could add little to their title and outline dot points
* were not able to explain the focus of their oral presentation, their written German text or their English reflection, and gave little evidence of research processes
* did not support or explain opinions
* relied on a limited range of vocabulary and language structures to convey meaning
* attempted topics that were overly complex or narrow for their level of fluency
* focussed on topics that did not lend themselves to critical reflection of their own and others’ values, beliefs, opinions and perspectives. They included description but little interpretation or reflection.

General Information for the Oral Examination

Depth of treatment of ideas, information, and opinion remains a key area for improvement. Preparation is essential for depth of coverage and students’ ability to speak flexibly. Teachers are encouraged to provide frequent opportunities for students to practise flexible responses re-stating or emphasising information in different ways, using a range of word order, and elaborating. Specifically, expanding on simple statements, giving examples, offering and qualifying opinions, expressing agreement and disagreement, giving reasons and making comparisons.

It is recommended that teachers ask ‘why’ more often to facilitate opportunities for students to explain, reflect, compare and draw conclusions. Students need to be comfortable to do this in both sections of the oral exam, with both general and topic-specific vocabulary.

In many cases expression/accuracy limited students’ ability to convey their ideas. Whilst errors which are incidental rather than systemic and do not impede meaning, do not preclude high achievement, repeated basic errors (see below) inevitably impact student performance and achievement.

Students need to be able to first use their vocabulary with simple German structures correctly and reliably, and then move on to master more complex structures.

Consolidation of the following aspects are required:

* subject-verb agreement
* use of correct word order - varying simple SVO structures
* use of coordinating and subordinating conjunctions with appropriate word order
* pronouns are an area requiring attention for many students, including appropriate and consistent use of formal and informal address forms
* correct use of tenses, in particular perfect tense – participles and correct auxiliary for high frequency verbs
* correct use of infinitive clauses, placement of *zu*.

Written Examination

German Continuers Examination format: online e-exam, 2-hours.

Section 1: Listening and Responding

There were two texts in German. For both texts, the questions and answers were in English.

Text 1

This text was a brief radio advertisement introducing the work of a volunteering organisation *Freizeithelden* and encouraging interested young people to get involved in social projects. These questions were well-handled by most students.

Question 1a

*More successful responses* explained the term using evidence from the text– that the term is used to describe young people who volunteer their free time to help others and support good causes (hence the connection to *Freizeithelden*).

*Less successful responses* did not explain the term but may have given some detail describing Lena’s specific example – the *Nachhilfeprojekt*.

Question 1b

*Successful responses* drew on text detail that illustrated why Lena’s work was nicer than a part-time job, including identifying positive aspects that are not usually part of paid work, such as fun activities like going to the cinema and eating with the family.

*Less successful responses* identified only some general information such as that Lena enjoys helping Jamila, or that you meet new friends and can get to know a different culture.

Text 2

This longer text was a dialogue between two friends, Julia and Stefan, discussing the merits and constraints of a Tiny House as an option for young people seeking accommodation.

Question 2

(a) Successful responses included the main point from the text that Tiny Houses are good for singles and couples. Supplementary detail may have included that they are not so good for families with children and pets or that they are good for those wanting to reduce consumption/environmental footprint.

(b) This question asked students to evaluate Stefan’s attitude towards living in a Tiny House.  
More successful responses provided an overall judgement on Stefan’s attitude, supported with text evidence of both the positive and the negative aspects he raised. Less successful responses described only one aspect of Stefan’s attitude or provided evidence of the text without interpretation/overall judgement.

Stefan outlined both concerns and benefits of a Tiny House and his ideas seemed to develop during the conversation – hence it was possible to argue his position in either the positive or the negative, as long as responses included detailed and relevant text evidence. Students could select from evidence as given below to support their judgement:

On the negative side: Stefan says that 40 sq. meters is too tiny, he is worried where you would put all your belongings, and that it would be stressful living with another person (in such a small space) even if you got along well. He says that it would be difficult having guests over, as there’s not enough room to cook and eat together, and that eating and barbecuing outdoors would not be a pleasant solution particularly in the German winter!

On the positive side: Stefan admits that tiny houses have lots of advantages – they’re cheap to build and don’t use much energy, he likes the idea that you only need 5 minutes to clean the whole house.

(c) This question required students to identify and explain the shift in Julia’s attitude, and was well-handled by most students, who identified and interpreted relevant text detail, supported by the speaker’s tone evident in the audio.

Successful responses correctly identified that Julia’s attitude seemed to change at the end of the conversation, when Stefan asked her directly whether she could really live in a tiny house herself; to consider how much people today own and to imagine what she personally might have to get rid of in order to live in a tiny house – just imagine, you’d have to get rid of your many clothes and shoes, and you’d only be able to keep a max of 10 books!

Some students perceptively suggested that Stefan might be being provocative/having a bit of a joke with Julia in making her think about the practicalities alongside the ideas of being environmentally friendly and reducing consumption.

Less successful responses did not explain the reason for Julia’s comment at the end of the conversation ‘Hmm, now I’m not so sure that a tiny house is a good idea…’

Section 2: Reading and Responding Part A

One text with questions and answers in English.

Question 3

(a) This question asked students to give at least two negative impacts of mass tourism using evidence from the text. Responses needed to be clearly based on material from the text rather than drawing on general knowledge external to the text.

More successful responses gave a number of points supported by specific detail from the text. Text evidence included: Tourism worldwide uses enormous amounts of natural resources such as water and energy; it produces mountains of waste from plastic bottles and leftover food; air traffic and the resulting CO2 emissions are worsening the climate (change) crisis; popular cities are overrun with tourists taking selfies.

Less successful responses described only one negative impact of mass tourism from the text or gave a general answer lacking clear connection to the text.

(b) This question required students to demonstrate understanding of the author’s attitude towards the impacts of the pandemic on tourism, and that both positives and negatives are covered in the text.

*More successful responses* included both positive and negative aspects raised by the author, and included the author’s overall position, that the pandemic (despite the hardships for the tourism sector), offers us an opportunity for reflection and positive change.

Evidence from the text included: The author sees the enforced break (*Zwangspause*) that travel restrictions have brought as especially difficult for those who depend on tourism for work, popular cities are now devoid of tourists. However, the author also states that the pandemic offers a chance for reflection; whether we should continue to accept the negative aspects of travel, or whether we want a new type of ethical and sustainable tourism.

*Less successful responses* covered only one aspect of the author’s attitude or provided only partial or general text evidence.

(c) This question required students to describe the reforms that the author believes are important for the future of tourism, based on a careful reading of the text.

*More successful responses* identified the three main areas of reform the author outlined, giving relevant select text detail:

Reforms that make tourism more sustainable, such as tourists reducing their environmental footprint, by travelling domestically and choosing environmentally friendly accommodation and activities.

Reforms that offer future-proof solutions to make tourism better equipped to withstand external challenges such as pandemics and climate change.

Reforms that make tourism more socially responsible/ethical; being a better partner to destination countries, supporting fair payment for local products and workers.

*Less successful responses* identified two or fewer reforms and gave only partially relevant detail from the text, or made general statements not based on the text.

(d) This question required students to reflect on the way that the author argues for change – they needed to consider both language and text level strategies and to give examples from the text to support their answer.

*More successful responses* described both language and text features giving several examples.

Language evidence may have included: word choice, positive and negative language/description (mass tourism versus sustainable ethical ‘good’ tourism) and the use of superlatives/hyperbole to emphasise points. The impacts of mass tourism are negatively described as causing cities to be overrun with tourists and bringing massive problems, using huge amounts of resources and creating mountains of waste, damaging the environment: total *überlaufen*, massive *Probleme, Unmengen an Naturresourcen, Müllberge, die Krise verschärfen, die Umwelt belasten*.

The author juxtaposes this with what travelling ideally should be like, using positive language – *nachhaltig, verantwortungsbewusst, sozialverantwortlich, zukunftssicher*.

Imperatives are used to appeal to the reader and rhetorical questions with modals (*sollen, dürfen, müssen*) encourage the reader to think and agree with the author (*Sollten wir weiterhin die negativen Aspekte des Reisens akzeptieren, oder wollen wir…?*)

Textual features may have included: The title (emphasising the need for reform *Die Tourismusindustrie braucht dringend Reformen!*), the structure of the text (juxtaposing negatives of mass tourism then presenting the opportunities and benefits of change), the use of a rhetorical question as a turning point in the text; the use of expert evidence and statistics for credibility; the conclusion links back to the title, with an appeal and a repetition of the author’s support for a new sustainable tourism future.

*Less successful responses* did not consider both parts of the question, or only partially described language or text features with few or no relevant examples.

General Observations on Receptive Tasks:

Overall, the Listening and Responding tasks were well-handled by most students, the Reading and Responding Part A was also competently handled. The main challenge was again effective use of evidence from the texts.

Students need to:

* Read the questions carefully and ensure that they address all aspects of the question.
* Understand the question type and depth required: does it ask the reader to identify simple information? to compare perspectives? to evaluate and interpret? Tip: Check the marks allocation as a rough guide to the amount of detail expected.
* Use evidence from the texts to support their judgements/answers rather than giving general responses, which may reflect background knowledge from other external sources. Responses should be succinct and clearly demonstrate a connection to the text.
* Select relevant evidence from the texts to support their answers – language used, key words or phrases that give information or demonstrate the author’s position. Some questions invite comment on the language strategies of the speaker or writer e.g., use of positive or negative language, emotive language, superlatives, wordplays, idioms, rhetoric questions, imperatives, and exclamations.
* Demonstrate understanding by providing evidence from the texts in English – students should not include untranslated passages directly taken from the text in their answers. Students should translate or paraphrase their text evidence and embed it in their answer (typing out the German original will cost unnecessary time). If quoting a specific phrase or word in German students need to provide an explanation in English.

Section 2: Reading and Responding Part B

Question 4

Students responded to Nijo876’s blog with a post-comment addressing Nijo’s concerns and questions.

The text invited opinions, advice, and argument for and against the points raised as below:

* Studying somewhere else (e.g., Melbourne or Sydney)
* Studying in one’s hometown where everything is familiar
* Moving out or continuing to live at home
* Living in a student college or in a share house
* The concept of Hotel Mama – its advantages (e.g., comfort/food/car) versus disadvantages (e.g., more freedom and independence)
* Friends’ differing opinions.

Students were required to demonstrate socio-linguistic appropriacy in their writing (language register, tone and style).

The text-type blogpost/comment was informal, and the stimulus provided significant scaffolding. Relevance of ideas was rarely a problem.

Some students however, misread the stimulus and argued the case for coming to Australia to study or studying abroad, more than responding to Nijo’s dilemma of whether to move away/shift out after school.

Depth and breadth of content was variable, but a number of students produced extended texts with interesting detail and offered insightful ideas about independence and the value of developing new abilities, some drawing on their own plans and aspirations and the experiences of friends/family members.

Accuracy of expression continues to be challenging for many students.

More successful responses

* well-imagined the scenario
* comprehensively addressed questions and concerns raised in the stimulus text, demonstrating relevant ideas and arguments, and good depth and breadth of information
* developed a convincing and authentic response, using appropriate register and style
* gave relevant advice
* expanded on the general concerns with additional creative, individualised details and examples
* gave detailed opinions
* included agreement and disagreement *Ja, es stimmt, dass… , aber…*
* showed good organisation and structure with cohesive and logical progression of ideas
* were engaging and used a range of language strategies including direct address, idioms, exclamations, rhetorical questions and imperatives
* demonstrated a good level of competency with basic grammatical structures
* used appropriate (informal) address form consistently
* used cohesive devices and varied sentence structure for natural flow
* used text-type features appropriately and creatively, including greetings and closing statements.

Less successful responses

* relied too heavily on the stimulus text, staying too close to its structure and language, and adding little additional information or copying sections of the stimulus text almost verbatim
* addressed only a few of the aspects mentioned, e.g., became focussed on one argument only such as cost
* tended to answer in brief sentences and in sequence (of the stimulus), rather than creating a cohesive text
* ideas were not clearly relevant – in some cases students talked about their own (imagined) experiences, without referring to Nijo
* incorrectly used pronouns, frequently switching from formal to informal forms of address
* had incorrect word selection (dictionary use) and used direct translation from English/English structures
* text lacked cohesion, structure and organisation
* demonstrated significant difficulties in German expression, errors impeded communication - see further comments below (observations on productive tasks)

Section 3: Writing

This section continues to present the most challenge for students, largely due to problems with expression and accuracy, which are exacerbated under time pressure.

Time management is crucial to allow enough time for this section and for review and editing of work. Students need regular practice writing under exam conditions (similar time and text length requirements and effective dictionary use). They should also be familiarised with the e-exam format and keyboard (particularly Umlauts, which were often omitted), and also take care with German spelling and capitalisation conventions.

Question 5

Option 1

This question required students to write an article for a youth magazine giving their opinions on whether young people today should own their own car, with reference to personal, financial and environmental reasons. Students were not required to cover all aspects raised in the question in equal depth but needed to demonstrate a range of ideas.

Students often referred to their own experience. Arguments against car ownership included cost of purchase, petrol and other costs, the necessity of a part-time job; pollution, emissions and climate change, and environmentally friendly transport alternatives or car-sharing with family. Arguments for car ownership included freedom, independence and convenience for commuting to sport, school and work, and also saving for and buying an e-car.

More successful responses

* created an engaging and convincing response to the question, informed and appealed to the reader
* used text type features effectively, and appropriate (semi-formal) register and style
* reflected on the aspects raised in the question and gave relevant examples/details
* tailored content that they had learned during their studies to the actual question
* enriched the text with their personal experiences and perspectives
* developed arguments towards their conclusion on the benefits or otherwise of car ownership for themselves and their community
* used varied language, structures and cohesive devices effectively
* showed good text organisation and structure (introduction, main body and conclusion)

Less successful responses

* showed little evidence of planning before writing
* used inappropriate register, style and/or text type features
* did not develop ideas fully and used simple statements without expansion
* did not develop a range of ideas resulting in a repetitive text
* gave few opinions and did not justify or qualify statements and conclusions
* problems with expression significantly limited the response and reader comprehension (see overall comments below)

Option 2

This question was popular. It asked students to imagine the scenario that they have a new part-time job and are working quite a lot of hours per week. It required them to write an email to a friend describing their typical workday and their experiences and impressions, positive and/or negative.

The text type and informal register were generally well-handled, and the topic was clearly relatable and allowed for many creative responses. A number of students used humour effectively to create an entertaining and engaging response. Several related experiences with difficult customers.

Students are encouraged to use *W-Fragen* to imagine a situation and develop description and ideas, such as here for a typical workday; *Wo?* (Where do you work?) *Wann?* (When do you work?) *Was?* (What do you do?), *Wer/Mit wem?* (Who… do you work with?... bosses/customers) *Wie?* (What is it like?). The question encouraged students to select what they would like to talk about and relate interesting or entertaining experiences; as always, opinions and examples enrich the response.

More successful responses

* were appropriate to audience (informal), purpose (describing, informing, engaging) and text type (email)
* showed planning
* reflected on the scenario and elaborated ideas
* described typical workday with a range of aspects and talked about their experiences and impressions
* gave interesting opinions
* successfully adapted topics covered in studies, such as the world of work, to create an engaging and convincing text
* used language to engage and entertain, including descriptive language, direct address.

Less successful responses

* did not plan and structure the response or apply appropriate register or text type features
* struggled to develop relevant ideas – addressed few aspects e.g., described the job without relating experiences and giving opinions or described daily routine but not the workday with the new job
* used a collection of simple statements, rather than creating a cohesive text with logical flow
* had difficulty relating experiences due to problems with past tense
* problems with expression significantly limited the response and reader comprehension (see overall comments below)

Option 3

This questioned prompted students to reflect on the statement ‘Get involved. It’s great for health and wellbeing!’ and to write a speech for a school assembly encouraging other students to get actively involved in clubs and special-interest groups. Students were prompted to give some examples and to outline the benefits (health/social/other).

Students were able to reflect on their personal world and experiences, and to develop a speech according to their selection of clubs or interest groups. Examples included a range of sporting, music, drama or environmental action groups. Students were required to inform but also to use language strategies to appeal to and persuade the audience.

More successful responses

* used text type effectively including formal features (greetings/closing) and appropriate register and consistent form of address (informal for peers or formal for teachers and peers — used consistently — were both acceptable)
* used language strategies to engage and appeal to the audience: used descriptive and persuasive language including exclamations, imperatives, rhetorical questions (e.g., *Verbringst du viele Stunden am Tag vor dem Computer?... Mach doch mit! Beweg dich!*)
* showed creative and original ideas - considered what would be useful and interesting information
* connected ideas to their own experience (e.g., well-known activities) and considered the benefits for students e.g., relaxation, fitness, balance to studies and life online, learning new skills, meeting others
* clearly justified the choice of clubs and gave relevant detail on the benefits.

Less successful responses

* did not demonstrate appropriate text type features, register and style
* used significant amounts of pre-learned material without clearly connecting and adapting it to the question and context
* used superficial ideas, including listing clubs and activities, with little expansion
* used repetitive ideas and language
* used only a few, simple and often repetitive opinions: ‘it is great/interesting/fun’
* did not comment on why the club/group is so rewarding or why students should become involved
* problems with expression significantly limited the response and reader comprehension (see overall comments below)

General Observations on Productive Tasks

Writing in German

It is important that students are provided with as many opportunities as possible to practise how to structure a successful piece of writing. Alongside the teaching of text types and features, students need to be able to develop strategies for unpacking questions and elaborating on their ideas. They should use a range of cohesive devices to link statements and provide flow at the textual level, gradually expanding their repertoire from familiar conjunctions (coordinating and subordinating) to include use of connecting adverbs (e.g., *außerdem, trotzdem, jedoch* etc) with correct word order.

Expression and accuracy are essential in conveying ideas, and this continues to be an area for improvement.

Students need to develop confidence and accuracy with grammatical basics (for further detail see comments above under General Information for the Oral Examination). They also need to develop confidence and accuracy with standard German spelling and punctuation. Students should regularly practise structures learnt in class by adapting them to different topics. Only when grammatical basics are mastered can they proceed to more complex language.

It is recommended that students avoid overreliance on the dictionary under exam conditions and word-for-word translation using English structures. It is recommended that they regularly practise word selection/dictionary skills in their course work.