

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
THE MATRICULATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION
ADVANCED LEVEL

GERMAN

MAY 2007

EXAMINERS' REPORT

MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATIONS BOARD

**AM GERMAN
MAY 2007 SESSION
EXAMINERS' REPORT**

Of the 45 candidates registered for Advanced Level Examinations, and achieved the following results:

Table 1: Distribution of Grades – May 2007

Grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	Abs	Total
N of Grades	11*	9	9	7	4	3	2	45
% of Total	24.4	20.0	20.0	15.6	8.9	6.7	4.4	100

* some of them showed native knowledge of German

Distribution of Grades – May 2006

Grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	Abs	Total
N of Grades	9*	9	7	3	4	3	1	36
% of Total	25.0	25.0	19.4	8.3	11.1	8.3	2.8	100

*) at least one native speaker of German

All scripts were seen by three markers. A marking scheme was used. Both the new and the old orthography were accepted.

The best students, i.e. candidates achieving Grade "A", showed good knowledge in answering the questions as well as writing essays which would deviate from repetitive statements. Of the essay titles offered 23 candidates chose "Ich freue mich auf die Sommerferien" (I am looking forward to the summer holidays), 9 chose "Meine Zukunftspläne" (My plans for the future), 7 chose "Was kann die Jugend fuer die Umwelt tun?" (What can be done by young people for the environment?). Some made real nice reading. Quote from the Zukunftspläne: "Ich will ein hubscher Mann treffen und ich will drei Kinder haben." (I want to meet a pretty man and want to have three children.)

As from Grad "B" on, replies gradually became more meagre and difficulties in expression in German were obvious.

Paper II dealt as usual with listening and reading comprehension. Generally the listening comprehension tests were answered fairly well. Dealing with the reading comprehension was acceptably good as far as questions on the text were concerned. However, in answering the grammar questions, a number of candidates showed that they had either not read properly the requirements for the particular exercise or had not understood it. Seeing that previous examination papers are used in class during the year, it would be more a lack of reading attentively i.e. adhering to what they are supposed to do. For example when the request is to answer "in ganzen Sätzen" (in full sentences), a reply in form of one word is not acceptable.

Exercises on "Passive Voice" were generally answered very weakly, same applies to "Indirect Speech". Some candidates showed no comprehension in these grammar areas.

And there is the word "Klamotten" (casual, very much worn clothing, rags). Apparently this word occurs in one of the teaching books for German, hopefully in direct speech amongst youngsters, where it would be acceptable. The word "Klamotten" is jargon, colloquial, slang, should not occur in a written text and certainly not to be used for the woollen / fur cloaks of the Germanic tribes (of this year's comprehension text), or any decently dressed person! (See DUDEN where "Klamotten" is stated as used for *old* clothing) It would be an utter insult to say: "Sie können Ihre Klamotten hier aufhängen, Herr Schmitz" (You may hang up your *rags* here, Mr. Smith) referring to his Euro 2.000 Designer Leather Coat.

Précis: There are teachers who insist, a “Précis” should always be rendered in the present tense. Surely this was a “must” some decades ago. Other teachers accept a Précis in the past tense. Today both are acceptable, as long as the pupil does not mix the tenses within his single Précis.

Basis for the questions in Paper III was the prescribed book “Dreimal Deutsch” as well the prescribed books from German literature. Especially in *Landeskunde* (geographical and general knowledge about Germany) no questions were asked to which the answers were not mentioned in the relevant chapter of the book “Dreimal Deutsch”. Contrary to what was said under Paper II (replying in one word where full sentences were requested), for *Landeskunde* a number of candidates replied in full sentences where only the name of the river, the city... would have been sufficient. This is a rather time consuming exercise for the candidate.

In this context: a great number of students have problems with the words “die Stadt” und “der Staat” (the city and the state). Equally difficult appears to be the meaning of “das Industriegebiet” and “das Industrieprodukt” (industrial *area* and *product*). Perhaps a third or more of the candidates answered vice versa, resulting in no marks. Problematic seems also the grasp of geographical directions: South and North are fairly often mixed up, i.e. Bavaria becomes a “northern state” and Schleswig-Holstein gets placed in the South.

As far as handling the actual examination papers is concerned – and this refers to Advanced Level as well as Intermediate Level – it was noted that quite a number of students replied to the questions in a self chosen sequence. In these cases it is of great importance that they adhere properly to the numbering in the paper, as searching for the right question to fit a certain badly numbered answer should definitely not be the norm. This habit also lends itself for a pupil to simply overlook one question, giving no answer, consequently resulting in no mark. Only one candidate used the undesired red pen. No smudgy correcting fluid was used at all.

A few further points are of general nature and apply to Advanced Level as well as Intermediate Level of May 2007 and candidates should be made aware of the following items:

- a) Although handwriting is a personal matter, candidates should be made aware of the fact that an official exam paper should be legible by the official examiners. Badly written text may lead to misinterpretations and lower / no marks. One candidate's writing was *larger* than the space of two of the printed lines of the script paper, while a few others wrote in miniature with most letters well *under 2* millimetres. Both are equally disturbing.
- b) Candidates should number their answers strictly and clearly in accordance with the questions.
- c) Candidates should be encouraged to make sure that they have answered *all* the questions.
Some students seemingly forgot to answer a question, or skipped part of a question, consequently losing the respective marks.
- d) Certain questions regarding history are asked “in *which century...*” or “name an important ...personality of the *twentieth century*”. Wrong replies are given by 70 to 80% of the candidates for the simple reason that they obviously cannot handle the word “century – Jahrhundert”. If reference is made to e.g. the 19th century in the text, they reply with events of e.g. 1939.
- e) Candidates should be urged NOT to copy from the given German texts (Leseverständnis), but use their own words and expressions.
- f) As pointed out in last year's report, the provided booklets for the candidate's scripts contain an ample number of pages. Therefore, it is not necessary at all that students squeeze their answers of a Section onto *one* page. They may leave some lines of spacing at least between Sections and the individual chapters.

Oral Examinations: In general the oral examination yielded the same average result as in previous years, some candidates obtaining high marks. However, there are still a number of candidates trying to cite texts off by heart, showing a reluctance or disability to answer in own sentences. Pupils should definitely be discouraged from learning any text off by heart as this will not yield the anticipated result. They should be able to converse even in short and simple but relevant sentences, only those will be evaluated for marks.

Chairperson
Board of Examiners,

July, 2007