

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
THE MATRICULATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION
ADVANCED LEVEL

GERMAN

MAY 2009

EXAMINERS' REPORT

MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATIONS BOARD

**AM GERMAN
MAY 2009 SESSION
EXAMINERS' REPORT**

The 24 candidates who set for the MATSEC Advanced Level Examination in German achieved the following results:

Grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	Absent	Total
No. of candidates	6	3	2	4	6	3	0	24
%	25.0	12.5	8.3	16.7	25.0	12.5	0	100

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

The candidates achieving Grade A generally answered the questions well and showed a good command of the German language expected at Advance level. What is interesting in this context is also the fact that these candidates practically none of them overlooked a question or did not finish the paper. Moreover, in their answers to the questions regarding "Landeskunde", they also showed a generally good understanding of the conditions and whereabouts in Germany.

This positive trend became lesser in the work presented by candidates who got grades B and C and obviously became next to obsolete further down the scale of marking. Many reasons would play a role here. First and foremost, of course, a declining lack of language skills. Secondly, the way some of these candidates approached and attempted to answer questions of the papers. They picked out questions to which they thought they knew the answers, thus mixing up chapters and sections and numbers of grammar exercises. These lead candidates to overlook questions, obtaining no marks for the missed questions.

As far as the general essays are concerned in **Paper I**, it is interesting to note that all six titles given have been chosen. Remarkably was the fact that the title "Warum ist Lernen wichtig?" (*Why is learning of importance?*) was chosen by 12 candidates, and the title "Tiere als Geschenke" (*Animals as presents*) was chosen by 5 candidates. The other titles were chosen by two candidates each, while: "Sind Sie mit den gebotenen Fernsehprogrammen zufrieden?" (*Are you satisfied with the TV programmes offered?*) was chosen only by one candidate.

In these essays as well as in the chapter "Guided Writing", the weaker candidates showed great deficiencies as far as declensions, plurals, spelling etc. were concerned. One example taken from the essay "Kleider machen Leute" (*a saying "The tailor makes the Man"*) reads like this:

Ein fröhliches Mädchen oder Mann, können Klieder machen mit ihrem Stimmung bilden.

This – unfortunately – is untranslatable!

Paper II "Listening Comprehension" was well answered by those receiving upper Grades. One of the short (80 words) stories read out concerned bees in the garden. Two rather funny replies were given:

Wenn ein Bienenschwarm kommt ins Garten auf das Baum ...

Or:

Ein Bienenschwarm aus 10000 Beinen...

Here a small spelling mistake gives a rather funny different meaning to the sentence, namely a bee swarm consisting of 10,000 legs. This means, however, that watching spelling is of utmost importance.

On the whole, one could say that the grammar questions in Paper II were answered in the same style as last year. Candidates who were weak in answering other sections experienced greater difficulties here; while those students achieving an "A" grade showed better skills.

As in last year's examination, basis for the questions in **Paper III** was the prescribed book "Dreimal Deutsch" for **Landeskunde**, as well as 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". The following statistic shows an interesting, though somewhat sad result:

In *Landeskunde* each candidate had to answer five questions for which s/he had a limited choice. This means 24 candidates times 5 questions would result in 120 answers. Each answer could be awarded with a maximum of 10 marks. The fact is that a total of 44 answers reached either 0 or 1 or 2 or 3 marks only.

As far as **literature** is concerned, the candidates could choose *one* question out of two, pertaining to the book/s they had studied. Candidates with higher grades did well and wrote interesting essays (150 words). They showed having followed the book and understood the problems of the times as well as of the protagonists. Out of the 20 possible marks, 12 candidates got 10 or more marks, and in order to compare with *Landeskunde*, only 6 candidates received 3 marks or less. Many students lost marks due to lack of the most basic and elementary rules of German grammar, which the following example may demonstrate:

Jedes Tag Sabine weißt nicht wer sie leben müssen.

Apart from the fact that the meaning of this sentence is unclear, practically every ending is wrong.

The Oral Examinations showed fairly good results, as if the candidates had been speaking more German during their school time. Merely six candidates got marks lower than 20 out of 30.

The following points are of general nature and apply to **Advanced Level** as well as **Intermediate Level** of May 2009. Candidates should be made aware of the following aspects:

- a) Candidates should be encouraged to make sure that they have replied to *all* the questions to avoid getting a zero mark while in fact they would have known the answer.
- b) As pointed out in reports of previous years, the provided booklets for the candidates' 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, making finding end and start between sections or questions sometimes difficult. They may leave some lines of spacing at least between sections and the individual paragraphs.

Chairperson
Board of Examiners,

30th July, 2009