



Pearson
Edexcel

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel GCE

In German (9GN0) Paper 02

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

Summer 2024

Publications Code 9GN0_02_2406_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2024

Pearson Education Limited. Registered company number 872828
with its registered office at 80 Strand, London, WC2R 0RL, United Kingdom

General comments

The strongest candidates provided an accurate translation and essays which answered the question and demonstrated some thoughtful, well-argued critical analysis expressed in varied, articulate and coherent language, suitably adapted to the question. Most candidates were able to translate some elements accurately. Most were able to offer some interesting thoughts, ideas and interpretations in the essays, usually with some arguments, although at times on a related topic rather than precisely addressed to the question. Most demonstrated some variety of language leading to at least sections of articulacy and coherence.

At the lower end of the range, some candidates were able to produce only one or two accurate sections in the translation, if that. In the essays, some candidates tended to narrate or describe rather than engaging in critical analysis, whilst others tended to write about the characters with a few comments attempting to link to the question. Some produced simple, accurate sentences and were able to express some critical analysis with some articulacy and coherence. However, at this lower end of the range, candidates tended to attempt complex language but use word order similar to English, and to struggle with verb formation, which sacrifices articulacy and coherence.

There were instances where candidates with varied, accurate and coherent language merely told the story of the works they had studied. There were other instances where candidates with simple or highly inaccurate language nevertheless managed to make critical points.

Overall, there were some strong responses demonstrating effective understanding of literary critical analysis and ability to manipulate the language. Even at the lower end of the range there was merit and clear progress from earlier stages.

There were, however, some points for improvement.

The translation is worth 20 marks on a 120 mark paper. Candidates should allow sufficient time to write effective essays.

The translation would be improved by candidates having a solid understanding of German word order, competence in verb formation and verb-subject agreement and by candidates learning genders and plurals of nouns. In some cases there was a need for an understanding of where adjective endings were and were not required.

Short, focused essays are usually of higher quality than six-page long essays which often do not select appropriate evidence or omit irrelevant material. Candidates are encouraged to select and focus on what is relevant. However, examiners do not count words and candidates should certainly not omit good, relevant points because they are worried about exceeding the suggested word count.

Candidates could improve by preparing short segments which can be adapted to the question which is asked, allowing more relevance, rather than preparing whole essays, which are harder to adapt to the question. Another improvement would be that candidates should avoid easy, safe ground and find scope for discussion, disagreement and deeper evaluation.

If a work is of sufficient depth to be studied for A-Level, no statement is likely to be true for all of the characters for the whole length of the work – there will be change and nuance. Sweeping statements should be replaced by observation of that change and nuance.

Evidence and examples are necessary for strong critical analysis, but they are not sufficient. There must also be discussion, explanation and exploration.

One useful structure is PEE(L) – Point, evidence, exploration, (link to the question). Another is argument, counter argument and response to the counter argument. For example: (Argument:) It could be argued that freedom is a key theme in *Das Leben der Anderen* because the work depicts a regime which does not allow freedom and shows how that affects the characters. For example, Dreyman feels free so long as he writes what the state allows but does not have the real freedom to write what he wants without surveillance or penalty. (Counter argument:) Of course, we could see this as evidence that the work is about how people deal with repression rather than freedom. (Response to counter argument:) And yet we see that writing about suicide in the GDR gives Dreyman a form of freedom within the repressive state, so it can still be said freedom is key to the work. This structure can be used carefully as the exploration within the PEE structure, or to structure the argument across the whole work, with more development than suggested here.

Where candidates offer introductions which lay out what they intend to do, they should then do it. New material should not be included in the conclusion.

In terms of variety of language, the marking criteria prioritise variation which leads to articulacy – that is, candidates being able to say what they want to say rather than saying what they can say. This of course needs to be understood in the context of A-Level candidates and their limitations. Examiners are looking for variety which leads to articulacy and coherence. However, examiners saw many examples of pre-prepared variety which did not add to the critical analysis and which had the effect of making the essay seem more stilted and less articulate. For example, *nachdem ich das Werk gelesen habe, wusste ich sofort, dass...* or, *hätte Hanna keine Bücher gelesen, wäre sie immer noch Analphabetin*. These feel more like grammatical exercises than language appropriate to literary or cinematic critical analysis, as required by the marking criteria.

In some instances, errors can make such sentences meaningless. For example:

Vielleicht hätten die Güllener nicht so viel auf dem Geld fokussiert, wäre Ill nicht von ihnen getötet geworden.

Here, the examiner can cope with the lack of reflexive pronoun, the case error and the misformed passive. But the incorrect word order – the placing of *vielleicht* at the beginning of the sentence – completely changes the (presumably intended) meaning such that the sentence means nothing sensible at all.

What would be better? Take the sentence from *Der Vorleser*. Perhaps the candidate could learn something like: *Erst durch das Lesen versteht Hanna, was es ist, Mensch zu sein*. It would be possible to modify this in exam conditions to: *Erst durch das Lesen, versteht Hanna, was es ist, moralisch zu sein*. Or: *Erst durch die Zeit im Gefängnis, versteht Hanna, was es ist, Mensch zu sein*. Candidates might go with: *Erst durch das Lesen wird Hanna eine moralische Figur, weil sie lernt, was sie wirklich getan hat*.

The point here is not to offer a template, but to suggest that candidates focus on sentences which have meaning, are suitable for literary critical analysis and are easily adaptable depending on the exam question with which they are faced – and where a word order error does not render the sentence meaningless.

Really understanding word order and verb formation would help many candidates to significantly improve their language. Knowing the gender and plural of key terms relating to the work or theme would also be useful.

Finally – *vorschlagen* was widely misused this year. It does not mean suggest in a literary critical sense. It means to offer a suggestion or (perhaps) a solution or alternative. Candidates would be better off using: *zeigen, auf etw hindeuten, verdeutlichen, veranschaulichen usw.*

Q1

Section 1. This was generally well done.

Section 2. A significant proportion of candidates offered *in die Schweiz* instead of *in der Schweiz*. There were a number of variant spellings, particularly of Austria and Switzerland.

Section 3. Some candidates wrote *eigene* instead of *einige*, used English word order and/ or used *mehr* to make the comparative

Section 4. Many candidates felt that this needed a different ending from *einige* in Section 3. It often appeared as *Anderen* or *anderen*.

Section 5. Candidates were split on what gender they thought tradition should be. Examiners saw almost as many neuter and masculine versions as feminine. Most candidates used an adjective ending and many picked an ending which was correct for the gender they had guessed. Examiners felt that, as there is a whole topic on traditions, candidates should know this gender.

Section 6. This section was often in the accusative case rather than the dative.

Section 7. Most candidates noticed that the stimulus text had given them the word for cross and its gender, but a significant proportion either used *die/der Kreuz* or guessed at a related word such as *Brücke / Cross / Kross / Kreis*. Where candidates used the correct word and gender, most also used the correct adjective ending, although some wrote *grosses*.

Section 8. A significant proportion of candidates realised which structure they needed and many of these accurately produced it. However, examiners saw variations such as: *gesehen kann wird/ gesehen sein kann*.

Section 9. Most candidates selected the correct preposition and noun, and of these, many also correctly used the dative case, including the dative plural -n on the noun. Examiners saw incorrect alternatives such as: *Burg/Bürg*.

Section 10. *Ago* caused difficulties for many candidates. Some selected *seit her* or *seither* and even where *vor* was correctly chosen, word order was often English. A significant minority used an adjective ending on *religiös*, even though it came after the verb and hence did not need one.

Section 11. Many candidates successfully translated this section, although examiners also saw: *Gewitter* (which was almost certainly not the weather people were praying for!), *Got/God* and *aus* instead of *von/vom*.

Section 12. Most candidates were able to cope with the inversion following *Jedoch*. However, many forgot or misplaced the reflexive pronoun. Some offered *Meinung* or *Zeitung*.

Section 13. 19th Century posed problems for many candidates.

Section 14. Many candidates correctly translated this section. Most candidates knew *Macht*, and the case ending and gender were often correct. However, examiners also saw *Strom* and *Kraft*.

Section 15. Some candidates correctly translated this element. Most candidate recognised that they needed to rephrase due to the English -ing. Most produced a relative clause, although often using the present tense, and a smaller proportion offered variations on *die von einem Krieg zurückkommenden Männer*.

Section 16. This was generally well managed, including the word order. A few candidates wrote *das* instead of *dass*. This is a grammatical error.

Section 17. Although many candidates translated this accurately, many others omitted *wieder*, used *nach* instead of *zu*, or didn't recognise the need for *zu* before the infinitive.

Section 18. A significant proportion of candidates was able to translate this accurately, getting both word order and pronoun correct. However, a significant minority used the English word order and / or *ihnen* or *ihren* instead of *sie*.

Section 19. Some candidates used *Wahrzeichen* which was acceptable. The plural of *Symbol* was often not known.

Section 20. The question word proved challenging for many, as did the choice and conjugation of the verb. Examiners saw *wem* and *wo*, *mochte*, *wollen*, *möchte*, *mochtet*, *wollet* and *willst*. *Nicht ein* which was accepted, was more common than *kein*.

Sections B and C

2a There were several perceptive interpretations in response to this question, showing a deep knowledge of the text: collective and individual guilt, difference between *Sein* and *Schein*, and legal and moral guilt (I just did my duty), references to WW2 and how war criminals got off free, how people can avoid guilt if they are part of a larger crowd, the *Verfremdungseffekt* makes people concentrate on prejudices and guilt. Where candidates performed less well it was usually because they ignored the quotation in the question and talked about whose fault it was that Andri died.

2b There were few responses to this question. Candidates generally talked about the three female characters and their roles being used to represent different elements of women in a conservative society, i.e. Switzerland. All suffer from misogyny and are victims.

3a Most candidates were able to address the question with some critical comments and the strongest produced focused, thoughtful essays. A significant proportion of candidates assumed that justice and loyalty were the same as morality without arguing for this interpretation. Almost all were able to talk about morality and materialism (or at least money) and the strongest made some perceptive points about the relationship between them. Some argued that Ill was already immoral before the start of the play because he had treated Claire so badly, so it can't only be money or materialism leading to the immorality of the Gullener. Some argued that it is bitter need rather than greed or materialism which led the Gullener to accept Claire's offer. Most tracked the gradual capitulation of the townspeople to the lure of Claire's money. Some showed that if even the teacher and the priest succumbed, materialism must have strong corrupting power.

3b Candidates were able to link the work to its background. For example, candidates argued that the figure of Claire shows the growing influence of women, Dürrenmatt set the play somewhere in Europe because he wanted to concentrate on themes, The *Wirtschaftswunder* showed increasing prosperity, with the Marshall Plan, Gullen should be prosperous but it isn't, so something is wrong. The

Verfremdungseffekt means it could be equally relevant today, so the background is not so important because the message is timeless.

4a There were too few responses to comment.

4b There were very few responses, but those there were showed a strong understanding of alienation.

5a Candidates offered some nuanced and detailed explorations of the question. For instance, Hanna calls Michael 'boy' all the way through. Candidates commented that Hanna's learning to read leads to *Mündigkeit*, and an awareness of what she's done, but were divided on whether this was enough to make her a moral figure. Her prison sentence was regarded by some as atonement for her deeds from a legal aspect but it's not enough, because recognition of guilt doesn't bring absolution. In the eyes of some candidates she becomes moral rather than amoral once she is literate, and because she wants Michael to go to school so that he can learn about the history of Germany in WW2.

5b Most candidates were aware of the different time frames and why this was important although a significant minority responded along the lines of, 'things happen, and people change as time goes by'. Candidates commented that it is a *Bildungsroman*, not always written chronologically and Michael is an unreliable narrator because it is written retrospectively.

6a There were too few responses to comment.

6b There were too few responses to comment.

7a There were too few responses to comment.

7b There were too few responses to comment.

8a Candidates approached this question in a variety of ways. Some had a tendency to concentrate on Kafka's own life – which can be relevant but needs to be explicitly made so as part of a broader response. There was discussion of Schopenhauer, samsara and eternal rebirth. More commonly candidates argued that Gregor is held prisoner because of ignorance and alienation from the rest of society. Some suggested that death sets him free. Many felt that he is held prisoner by his body, family, society and type of work as a travelling salesman - it's not just his body; he's a prisoner in his own mind. At the lower end of the range, candidates made a few comments about the story or the characters.

8b There were too few responses to comment.

9a There were too few responses to comment.

9b There were too few responses to comment.

10a The strongest candidates offered insightful responses, using the historical context to show feelings, for example, whilst recognising that the work is primarily a textbook. Some candidates replied in generalities without much evidence of deep knowledge of the text.

10b There were too few responses to comment.

11a There were too few responses to comment.

11b There were too few responses to comment.

12a There were too few responses to comment.

12b There were too few responses to comment.

13a There were too few responses to comment.

13b There were too few responses to comment.

14a There were too few responses to comment.

14b There were too few responses to comment.

15a There were few responses to this question. Those responses that there were tended to view identity in black and white terms which are unsupported by the nuances of this work. More needed to be done to justify whether identity was the most important theme rather than merely talking about it.

15b There were few responses to this question. Those responses that there were tended to make sweeping generalisations

16a Strong responses demonstrated insightful critical analysis of the theme of freedom in the work. Some discussed different types of freedom, and there was emphasis on repression as the reverse of freedom, linked to characters, artistic freedom, or life, in general examples. Some suggested that von Donnersmarck shows his idea of a good man because people do the right thing in spite of a lack of freedom. Some responses contained had too much information on the DDR in general with little or no application to the film.

16b Strong responses covered the music and sound techniques with thorough exploration and perceptive comments about their effects on the emotions of the characters and / or the audience. Candidates commented on Dreyman's voice over, the Sonata, and in some cases diegetic and not diegetic music. The loud music in Hauser's flat, for example, shows his fear of being watched, whilst the lack of music at Jerska's funeral makes Dreyman very sad and spurs him on to do something against the regime. Less successful responses talked about the techniques without reference to emotions or spent more time on camera than sound techniques.

17a There were too few responses to comment.

17b There were too few responses to comment.

18a There were too few responses to comment.

18b There were too few responses to comment.

19a There were too few responses to comment.

19b There were too few responses to comment.

20a There were too few responses to comment.

20b There were too few responses to comment.

21a There were a range of approaches to this question. Some candidates argued that although Karo's resistance wasn't fully effective, it's important because it made the movement end earlier. Some suggested that her resistance is important for viewers because it shows that there is always hope even with themes like fascism and Nazis. Other argued that her effectiveness varies - as time goes on, she just becomes more isolated, or that she's not effective enough because Tim still shoots himself (which seems like a lot of responsibility to put on one teenager). Others argued that rebellion doesn't work, and movements have to be brought down by leader decisiveness. It was suggested that Karo is seen

by fellow students as selfish, that shows us how effective her rebellion is because we see the part played by gender stereotypes (i.e. Wenger listens to Marco, not her).

21b There were too few responses to comment.

22a Strong responses considered both *Gemeinschaft* and *Individualität*, mostly linking these thematically to East and West Germany and showing changes throughout the film. Some candidates merely listed differences between East and West with little reference to the key ideas in the question. A significant minority of responses veered off into *Ostalgie*.

22b Strong responses fully addressed the question referencing historic footage, camera, colours, props, music etc. Some repeated the idea of fast change without really developing an understanding of what it was or how it was shown. Others gave detail on the technical aspects of the film without relating them to the atmosphere of fast change.

23a There were too few responses to comment.

23b There were too few responses to comment.

24a There were too few responses to comment.

24b There were too few responses to comment.

25a There were too few responses to comment.

25b There were too few responses to comment.

26a There were too few responses to comment.

26b There were too few responses to comment.

Tips for the future

- Emphasise word order and verb formation
- Learn genders and plurals of key words for each work and theme
- Use what you know to address the question
- Select only what is relevant to address the question
- Think, argue, discuss, explore!
- Focus on articulacy and coherence rather than grammatical exercise-type variety
- Use relatively simple language effectively rather than over-complicated language incomprehensibly