



AP[®] German Language 2005 Scoring Commentary

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**AP® GERMAN LANGUAGE
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Composition

Overview

In selecting topics for compositions, the Development Committee looks for areas of relevance and interest to AP students. Topics and subtopics are chosen to allow candidates to demonstrate a broad range of vocabulary and structure. For higher scores, candidates need to write a good answer to the question and show a sustained control of structural features of German. High-scoring compositions normally employ complex sentences, linked by cohesive discourse strategies. The 2005 question asked students to take a position on the issue of school uniforms and also to give counterarguments. The prompt contained language that was understood by almost all exam-takers, even the weaker ones. Since the topic was school- and clothing-related, the students had sufficient vocabulary to discuss the issue.

Sample: C-07

Score: 9

This composition is a great example of what appears to be a nonnative speaker who demonstrates excellent use of the language. The essay shows a broad command of structure, syntax, idiomatic usage, and vocabulary ("*Sie finden es undenkbar, jeden Tag das Selbe zu tragen,*" "*Sie meinen, dass das Schulsystem ihnen Unrecht tut, wenn es Uniformen fordert,*" "*Wenn ihre Eltern erlauben, dass sie etwas tragen können, warum soll die Schule das Recht haben, „nein“ zu sagen?*"). There are few significant errors. Lack of the German Umlaut ("*dass diese Idee ihnen überhaupt nicht gefällt,*" "*Jeden Tag in der Schule höre ich Gespräche über Kleider*") does not detract in any way from the obvious fluency, very good transitional elements, and natural flow of the composition.

Sample: C-05

Score: 6

The student demonstrates acceptable use of the language. The essay shows basic competence. Although the vocabulary is good, there is no flow. Despite a range of subordinate clauses, the number of errors, awkwardness ("*Wo bin ich, ein Kommunismus oder in einer Schule?!*"; "*weil Schuler passen sich auf kurze Hose*"), idioms that are out of context ("*Unterricht ist für nichts und wieder nichts*"), and forced interpretation ("*Das Bild ist der Meinung von vielen Schulern*") keep the essay out of the 7 range. The essay does not clearly demonstrate a "good command" of the language.

Sample: C-55

Score: 3

This essay demonstrates weak use of the language. There is some sense of syntax, albeit frequently non-German, with numerous errors especially in subject-verb agreement ("*Leute sieht,*" "*In die Schule viel Leute noch die selben Kleider trägt,*" "*Alle unterricht,*" "*Aber Kleider kann,*" "*Ein paar Leute kann hasst dich nur für deine Kleider*"). Frequent use of non-German syntax ("*Man musst lernt die Unterricht,*" "*Wenn est ist langweilig, Schuler wollen zu lernen nicht*"), fewer vocabulary sources, and limited use of connections and transitions are further evidence of weak use of the language.

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Directed Responses

Prompt 1

Overview

The committee intended the first prompt to be a relatively simple task, designed to ease students into this part of the exam. Often a list is acceptable as an answer. In this case, the student could have given a list of activities she or he does every day.

Sample 1A: T-17

Score: 6

This natural and meaningful response suggests excellence: *“gehe ich zur Fußballtraining. Wir rennen immer und spielen ganz viel.”* Ease of expression with minimal strain is also characteristic of the upper end of the scale.

Sample 1B: T-13

Score: 4

This response successfully demonstrates competence in the language but does not exhibit more complicated structures that warrant a higher rating. Sentences like *“Ich habe ein Auto,” “Ich fahre mit dem Auto,” “Mein Auto ist grün”* exhibit a moderate range of vocabulary but make no use of more advanced syntactical structures such as inverted word order. These sentences also lack transitional elements that would allow for a more natural sounding response. This is a good example of an acceptable response.

Sample 1C: T-60

Score: 2

Although the student picks up on the word *“Schule”* in the prompt and does talk about her school, she does not respond to the question asked.

Prompt 2

Overview

This prompt provided an opportunity to suggest at least one outside activity and offered more advanced students the opportunity to use more advanced structures like the subjunctive.

Sample 2A: T-14

Score: 5

The student initiates his response with *“eigentlich mit so einem Wetter nicht viel draußen machen.”* Instead of outside activities, he states that he might like to go to a museum. He offers an appropriate and meaningful response with minimal strain and stumbling. One of the signs of excellence can be found in his use of the expression *“Aber ich will ansonsten nichts machen,”* which is limited only by his pronunciation. This is a good performance.

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Directed Responses (continued)

Sample 2B: T-2

Score: 3

This adequate response suggests competence. The student states: "*Schlägst dich vor, was ich machen jeden Tag.*" He continues by speaking of the weather and going to the park with friends. There is a lesser range of vocabulary present, and errors are evident in the basic structures ("*Sonne ist sehr warm, geh ich mit mein Freunde auf die Park.*").

Sample 2C: T-58

Score: 2

Although the student initially appears to understand and answer the question with his "*Das Winter sind sehr, sehr schlecht,*" he continues with "*ich werde in den Sommer gehe ich zum Deutschland zu spiele Fußball und es will,*" which does not clearly respond to the prompt. There is limited vocabulary and limited command of basic structure.

Prompt 3

Overview

This item provided an opportunity for students to use the past tense.

Sample 3A: T-13

Score: 5

In this response the student shows a good range of vocabulary and minimal strain and stumbling. The past tense is used correctly, giving evidence of command of more complicated structures: "*Gestern ich habe ein groß Problem gehabt. Mein ... Auto war kaputt.*" The passive is attempted ("*Es wird reparieren*") but not successfully. "*Es tut mir so Leid*" provides a nice idiomatic flavor. Overall, this is an appropriate and meaningful response to the prompt.

Sample 3B: T-24

Score: 3

This one-sentence response demonstrates competence with a moderate range of vocabulary. Although it is an acceptable performance, 1 point was deducted due to its shortness.

Sample 3C: T-27

Score: 1

The student's complete response consists of 13 words: "*Gestern ... finde ich ... kann nicht mein ... meinen Schloss gefunden, und meine Mutti hat.*" The verb combination given ("*kann ... gefunden*") is incorrect. Above all, the answer is not readily comprehensible as a response to the question; the use of "*Schloss*" for "*Schlüssel*" compounds the confusion. Since the language sample is under 15 words, a final point was deducted, resulting in a score of 1.

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Directed Responses (continued)

Prompt 4

Overview

Students could use their imaginations in answering this prompt.

Sample 4A: T-18

Score: 5

This is a good response with a corresponding range of vocabulary. The correct use of the separable prefix verb “*aussehen*” gives evidence of more complicated structures: “*Ich sehe sehr cool aus.*” The student unfortunately mistakenly self-corrects on the final subordinate clause: “*wenn . . . wann ich Motorrad fahre.*” Vocabulary use falls into the good range, which together with the minimal signs of strain and stumbling give the student a score of 5.

Sample 4B: T-8

Score: 3

While describing her love for what she calls a “*Motorfahrrad*,” the student continues with “*und gehen zu Park und bringt meine Freunde und die Motorfahrrads.*” She provides an adequate response, suggesting competence.

Sample 4C: T-27

Score: 2

The student’s response to the prompt provides just enough evidence to suggest competence in the target language: “*Meine Auto gefällt mir nicht, und ich liebe meine neue Motorrad.*” Verb forms are correct, but there is a lesser range of vocabulary. One point was deducted for insufficient length.

Prompt 5

Overview

The prompt offered an opportunity to narrate about an unusual situation.

Sample 5A: T-7

Score: 6

The student gives a very natural response that convincingly and idiomatically explains why he is no longer watching TV. The successful use of modal verbs gives evidence of command over more complex structures: “*Man muss spazieren oder rennen oder etwas im Sonnenschein . . . machen.*”

Sample 5B: T-8

Score: 3

The student responds to the question with “*Ja, das ist dem Wahrheit.*” Vocabulary is, however, in the lesser range (“*Problem*,” “*Idee*,” “*Hausaufgaben*”). She continues to explain why this situation is problematic for her “*weil ich gehe zu Schule*” and completes this response adequately.

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Directed Responses (continued)

Sample 5C: T-3

Score: 2

The student initially answers with “*Ja, das ist treu*” but seems to continue to explain that she certainly has not gone again with her friends to the movies. There is also an insufficient evidence of basic structures. This weak response is clearly not addressing the prompt when the entire sample is considered.

Prompt 6

Overview

The intent of the final item was to give the students a positive conclusion to the section. They were asked to list things that still need to be done for the party.

Sample 6A: T-13

Score: 5

The student interprets the prompt as suggesting that the “*Abschlussfeier*” will take place at her home, which is acceptable in the context of the question. The response then shows a good range of vocabulary by listing several activities that the student will conduct to help prepare for the party: “*Ich muss einen Kuchen backen*” [not “*Küche*,” as many students stated in their responses]... *Zimmer aufräumen* ... *Gras mahen* [mähen], ... *Essen kaufen*.” Successful use of modal verbs also gives indication of command of more complicated structures.

Sample 6B: T-20

Score: 4

In this acceptable response, the student demonstrates his competence with “*ich muss viel Personen einladen, es ist meine Arbeit, zu die Kuchen zu bringen auch*.” The student displays a moderate range of vocabulary with some structural errors.

Sample 6C: T-60

Score: 2

Although the student picks up on “the last day of school” from the prompt, she does not respond directly to the question by providing examples of things to prepare for a party. Instead, she mentions swimming. It is a weak sample with a limited command of basic structures: “*Das ist letzten ... Schultag ich lernen Deutsch und Physical Science*.” A second English word in this sample (“important”) is noted after the sound of the tone and does not affect the overall performance.

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Picture Series

Overview

This section is designed to elicit a narration by the student using six pictures. Unlike the directed responses, in which spontaneous creativity is sometimes required to come up with answers to the questions posed, this section requires students to tell the story after a period of reflection. The facts of the story are given. This presupposes an ability to name objects in the pictures, describe activities depicted, and use cohesive discourse strategies to form a narrative.

Sample: 7A: T-38

Score: 6

The student provides a very good to excellent story that is complex, well related, and easy to follow. She uses appropriate transitions, e.g., *“Wenn sie zum Flughafen kommen.”* Her range of vocabulary and idiom is very good (*“Sie gucken auf eine Karte von Deutschland. – Wenn sie zum Flughafen kommen ... da sind nur 14 Kinder, aber da sollen 15 sein. – Dann kommt er ins Flugzeug und niemand ist sauer auf ihn, weil er spät war.”*) Even though her level of fluency is moderate, she compensates with a very high level of grammatical accuracy.

Sample: 7B: T-6

Score: 3

The language sample is adequate. The story is cohesive and shows signs of fluency by using transitions, for example: *“aber der Junge mit der Hut nicht nicht da sind ... Und es ist halb ... halb neun, und der Flug in nur ein ... eine Stunde nach Deutschland gehen.”* The student’s vocabulary is moderate, and she is able to do some self-correction. Her sentences show numerous errors when using the vocabulary and verbs (*“um der Junge anrufen, ... dann endlich die Lehrerin sehen der Junge”*). The language sample suggests competence, but recurring questions about the ease of expression and control of basic structures remain.

Sample: 7C: T-46

Score: 1

The language sample is weak and suggests incompetence. The story is disjunctive, and the listener is confused about whether the students are already on a tour or still at home as well as why the student who does not listen is even mentioned. The student produces a narrow range of vocabulary and idiom: *“Die Lehrerin bringt die Studenten an einem AP Tour von Deutschland, aber die das Kind mit der Hut hört nicht. Sie, die Lehrerin, redet über Deutschland, über Berlin, Frankfurt und München.”* The student addresses only the first three pictures, so 1 point was deducted from the original score.