

3.4 GERMAN (502)

German is examined in the following three papers;

Paper 1 (502/1) - This paper tests Listening and Writing Skills (functional and creative)

Paper 2 (502/2) - This paper tests Grammar and Reading Comprehension

Paper 3 (502/3) - This paper tests Reading and Oral skills (communication skills) this includes Intonation and Pronunciation.

3.4.1 CANDIDATES' GENERAL PERFORMANCE

The table below shows the performance of candidates in German in the years 2012 and 2013.

Table 13 Candidates Overall Performance in German for the last two years

YEAR	PAPER	CANDIDATURE	MAX SCORE	MEAN SCORE	STANDARD DEVIATION
2012	1	514	35	23.34	4.62
	2		40	26.22	6.64
	3		25	17.08	3.30
	Overall		100	66.61	13.11
2013	1	524	35	21.21	5.33
	2		40	18.88	7.04
	3		25	16.85	3.59
	Overall		100	56.86	14.63

The following observations can be made from the table above:

- There is a decline in the general performance of the candidates in the year 2013 when compared to 2012.
- In all the three papers the mean grade has gone down. Paper two being the most affected. The performance decreased by a margin of 7.34.
- The candidature continues to show some improvement. There is evidence of a steadily increasing candidature. This could be attributed to the introduction of German Language as a subject in new schools.

3.4.2 German Paper 1 (502/1)

Paper expectations: This paper tests listening skills, writing skills and vocabulary. Section I tests various levels of listening skills. These include: general, selective and detailed listening. This year candidates were expected to listen to four audio passages and answer the accompanying questions. Section II tests writing skills and vocabulary. In section II, the candidates were expected to write a composition. They had a choice between a friendly letter or a creative essay of **about 250 words**. The paper had a **maximum of 35 marks**.

Weaknesses

In section I, the responses given by the students showed lack of attention to details. Simple answers were missed out because they required keen attention. This shows absence of listening practice. The major challenge this year with the candidates in section II was the length of the compositions written. Candidates tended to write very long essays up to 450 words. This can be attributed to length memorised introductions. Many essays had poor coherence. There were fewer exceptional cases in this paper this year. The performance in the paper reduced.

Advice to teachers

Exposure to more audio exercises is encouraged to develop an ear that recognises the details required in the various levels of testing listening skills. Learners should exercise writing within given word limits. Teachers need to train the students on plot development when writing creative essays.

3.4.3 German Paper 2 (502/2)

Knowledge and application of the grammatical rules of the German language are tested in this paper. This forms section I. Section II the ability to comprehend the passages and extract information as required is tested. Higher levels of cognitive domain are also readily tested in this section. In section I, the candidates are expected to fill in blanks in given sentences, combine or change sentences according to their grammatical structure and/or rewrite sentences in accordance to the instructions. In section II, candidates are expected to read and respond to questions on a fictional and non-fictional text.

Weaknesses

In Section I, candidates demonstrated weaknesses in the application of the grammatical rules. This is due to lack of exercises. The inclusion of new areas in grammar for instance subjunctive II, which the students need at this level but are not proficient in, could have elucidated the general poor performance in this paper.

In Section II, the performance was better compared to the first section. Some candidates however did not seem to understand the questions asked especially in the higher level of the cognitive skills.

Advice to teachers

A wider range of grammar exercises ought to be given to the candidates to give them practice and experience in tackling grammar items. Students need to internalize the rules that govern the formation of sentences in various situations. Teachers should also expose students to a wide range of reading materials and foster a reading culture among them.

3.4.4 German Paper 3 (502/3)

A passage to be read aloud to the assessor forms the part A of this paper. It includes the typical German sounds. Part B is made up of topics from which the candidates select one and talk on. Articulation, pronunciation and intonation are tested in part A and in part B all the language skills are tested.

Weaknesses

Intonation of vowels, sentences, diphthongs, umlauts were read wrongly by weak candidates. There were not many outstanding candidates in this year's performance. Sentence structures had errors and many candidates translated English sentences into German.

Advice to teachers

Authentic texts need to be supplied to learners to work with at their own time as debates or in the club hours. This will provide practice of the typical German sounds and improve vocabulary mastery. Students should also be encouraged to speak German Language always in the classroom and with other students in other classes for practice sake.