

## GERMAN A1

### Overall grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	E	D	C	B	A
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 7	8 - 15	16 - 22	23 - 28	29 - 36

### General Comments

Generally, most supervisors commented on the work of their respective candidate(s) in an informative manner. There were, though, still some who did not write any comments at all, simply signing the EE cover. Supervisors also need to make sure that they do not spend an excessive number of hours with an individual candidate – five hours is the recommended maximum.

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

The range of literary works and research questions was on the whole interesting and varied although the usual suspects (Fontane, Frisch etc.) appeared. Most topics and research questions were suitable, but Wilhelm Busch and der „Struwwelpeter“ found avid takers...again.

Some extended essays discussed poetry which is usually hardly ever chosen – and they did very well, too. There was an interesting mix of trusted conventional literature and a few unusual works which only very good students could manage well. Apart from this, many candidates chose to write about a relatively small number of 20th century works. These works are, of course, of literary merit and candidates were able to write good essays. Nevertheless, these topics are sometimes well worn and unimaginative.

Supervisors need to advise candidates against using only literary works that were part of their DP reading list. Works such as “Andorra” and “Biedermann und die Brandstifter” are not necessarily a good choice. Some candidates based their EE entirely on works that had been translated into German. Although it is permitted to use one work or works in translation for a category 2 essay, the essay must be a comparison of at least one literary work originally written in German.

Candidates need to be dissuaded from writing lengthy summaries of the plot of the works discussed, biographies of authors and historical overviews. Very rarely does this add to the understanding and analysis of the literary work(s).

Fairy tales came up again, also Wilhelm Busch’s “Max und Moritz”. Supervisors should advise candidates strongly to stay clear of these works as they are hardly ever treated as worthy of literary analysis but are mostly paraphrased and/or interpreted from a psychological angle only.

On the whole, examiners felt that this year more candidates than before chose a topic / research question that was not suitable for literary analysis. Supervising teachers should discuss these topics with candidates and direct them towards a different choice.

## **Candidate performance against each criterion**

### **Criterion A: research question**

The research question is of great importance for writing a successful extended essay. The *EE Guide* states that it does not have to be expressed as a question necessarily. Experience shows, though, that a candidate usually focuses more clearly on the task of research and critical analysis when reminded by a question rather than a statement.

This year's research questions were particularly complex, often investigating 3 or 4 aspects of the topic. The essay itself then only expanded on one aspect. Another issue was that research questions sometimes seem to be added after the essay was written and had very little or no relevance to the essay. It is of great importance that the research question gives the essay a focus and guides the investigation.

Supervisors should advise carefully on a well-chosen research question at the beginning of the writing process.

### **Criterion B: introduction**

Some introductions did not show the validity of the RQ, though most put it into context. Some candidates left out an introduction altogether.

This session`s introductions often neglected the IB guidelines and used it as a vehicle for a standpoint or a personal opinion or to describe the general life of the author or content of the work. Candidates should ensure that the introduction clearly states a research question and places it in the academic context and explains why the topic is of importance.

### **Criterion C: investigation**

Most essays did show evidence of planned investigation with appropriate sources. However, the range of sources varied greatly. In some cases, Internet sources seem to be used indiscriminately. Sadly, secondary literature was often not well investigated; just summarized without critical engagement.

Many candidates did not investigate their topic but rather collated knowledge from Internet sources. Also, some candidates made use of just a few sources, others of far too many, sometimes nowhere to be found in the actual essay itself.

### **Criterion D: knowledge and understanding of the topic studied**

The majority of this year`s candidates had good knowledge and applied it well, but the academic context was too often neglected.

**Criterion E: reasoned argument**

Some students were capable of excellent reasoning, others were rather weaker. Generally it is true to say, that the better the structure of the essay, the better the argument.

Many students or supervisors seemed confused about what constitutes a reasoned argument. In order to gain points in this criterion it is necessary to present arguments/ideas in a logical and coherent manner. These arguments/ideas then need to be supported through text references or their own explanations.

Very often ideas are stated but not explained, developed or supported. Several EEs made excellent statements and arguments but there is something badly missing if within 4000 words there is not one quote from the text to support their argumentation.

**Criterion F: application of analytical and evaluative skills**

Analytical and evaluative skills seem to be in decline. Some essays read like a summary of findings on the Internet without an individual thought or any critical evaluation. Arguments were stated and not evaluated. Even if the research question was of an analytical nature, the essay simply described content, but never developed critical analysis. Candidates need guidance here.

**Criterion G: use of language**

Most EEs were written clearly but not always precisely. Some candidates struggled with the correct register and syntax. In addition in the age of the spellchecker it was surprising to see several essays containing so many careless errors. The use of specific terminology to demonstrate understanding was only demonstrated in very few EEs.

**Criterion H: conclusion**

Most EEs had at least a partially consistent conclusion. In a few EEs the conclusion was used for personal, emotional statements without any reference to the RQ. A novelty this year was a conclusion within a conclusion which does not seem to make much sense.

**Criterion I: formal presentation**

Formal presentation has improved over the last few years and most EEs reached a satisfactory level in this criterion. Some candidates struggle with a consistent format for the bibliography or footnotes. Supervisors should watch out for these errors and give advice on a consistent referencing style.

**Criterion J: Abstract**

Most EEs included an abstract within the word limit. However only a few essays stated the methods, scope and conclusion. Some schools still do not seem to understand the clear guidelines of the abstract.

### **Criterion K: holistic judgment**

Generally, the essays were good to excellent, but only a few showed outstanding qualities.

### **Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates**

The teachers need to be clearer – in some cases – about what is expected of them and how they can help their students along without spoon feeding them. It is useful to explain the criteria to the students in detail. There is no need to lose points for formal elements of the essay. Also, some teachers need to give more guidance on the topic:

- read the EE guidelines; give candidates access to these
- select a RQ, which gives a clear focus and can be answered in the conclusion
- guidance should be given for a more specific table of contents
- help candidates to construct arguments, which are clearly explained, supported either by secondary sources or from the work chosen
- encourage candidates to edit the EE for consistency between the abstract, introduction, main part and conclusion.
- cite all sources carefully especially Internet sources.
- check Internet sources as not all are suitable for an academic essay
- make sure the abstract has a word count.