

## Sprachpraxis English 1 – Grammar and Writing (new format)

*(This document has been compiled and agreed on by all the Sprachpraxis lecturers)*

### Task

**Grammar section:** Complete three exercises testing grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling.

**Writing section:** Write a 250 to 300-word short essay answering one of four questions.

The 120-minute exam is designed to test your language accuracy as well as your ability to write clear, concise, and precise English.

The final grade is made up of:

- Grammar section (40%)
- Writing section – language (30%) and content (30%)

## Section 1 – Grammar

### Things you need to know

The grammar section may test any area of English grammar. You are expected to have mastered the basics of English grammar and, in addition, studied these areas in particular: tenses, relative clauses, adverbs vs adjectives, adverb word order, conditionals, verb complementation, modals, passive, countable/uncountable nouns, and inversion.

You should have a broad vocabulary with correct spelling and be aware of common errors German native speakers in particular make in English grammar and vocabulary.

You are expected to know how to use punctuation in English correctly.

The grammar section consists of three tasks:

1. Fill in gaps in a text with the correct tenses of verbs.
2. Rewrite sentences using a particular starter word or phrase. The sentences should be rewritten in such a way that they remain as close as possible in meaning to the original sentence and are grammatically accurate.
3. Find and correct the mistakes in individual sentences.

## Section 2 – Writing

### Things you need to know

You are given four questions and asked to write a short essay of 250-300 words in response to **one** of these. You may be asked to argue, explain, or discuss, for example.

Read the question you have chosen to answer very carefully. Structure and write your essay according to what that type of question demands.

Start with a short introduction. Include a clear thesis statement.

Aim for one or two main points which you explain, discuss or argue, depending on the question.

Present each point in a paragraph of its own.

Ensure that everything included in your body paragraphs is relevant and in line with the topic..

End your essay with a brief conclusion.

Aim for an academic register: avoid colloquialisms and 'chatty' expressions such as *get* and contractions (e.g. *can't*, *won't*, *doesn't*, etc.)

Proofread your work to check for language accuracy, punctuation etc.

Include an accurate word count.

## Grading

The grade for the writing section is made up of two halves: **language/style** and **content/structure**.

### Language and style (30% of overall grade)

This grade is largely based on the error quotient of your work. The number of errors you make in relation to the number of words you write allows us to calculate an error quotient (*Fehlerindex*), which in turn suggests a grade.

Errors are calculated as follows and repeat mistakes in the same context are only counted once.

#### 1.5 points

- a structure (e.g. a clause or phrase) that is incomprehensible or poorly worded
- a very basic mistake

#### 1 point

- grammar, word order, and vocabulary

#### 0.5 points

- punctuation
- spelling (as long as the meaning does not change)
- prepositions (as long as the meaning does not change)

HESSEN



The error quotient (%) is then converted into points. This table is provided by the *Hessisches Kultusministerium*.

| Points   | 15      | 14      | 13      | 12      | 11      | 10      | 9       | 8       | 7       | 6       | 5       | 4       | 3       | 2       | 1       | 0     |
|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| % errors | bis 0,7 | bis 1,0 | bis 1,3 | bis 1,6 | bis 1,9 | bis 2,3 | bis 2,6 | bis 2,9 | bis 3,2 | bis 3,5 | bis 3,8 | bis 4,1 | bis 4,4 | bis 4,7 | bis 5,0 | > 5,0 |

We may then diverge from this grade by a maximum of 3 points up or down depending on style.

This is decided based on:

- variety of sentence structures
- variety of grammatical structures
- appropriate, idiomatic and varied vocabulary
- register is appropriate to the audience and purpose as well as being consistent
- style is clear and concise

### Content and structure (30% of overall grade)

This is an impressionistic grade based on how logical and clear your short essay is and how well your essay is put together. Be aware that a poor grade for language usually leads to a similarly poor grade for content and structure, above all because large numbers of language errors almost always have a negative effect on the clarity of your writing.

Here are examples of what the content and structure grade is based on:

#### Content

- the topic and purpose of the essay are well-introduced
- the topic chosen is logically presented
- each paragraph has one clear point with adequate and relevant supporting detail

#### Structure

- overall organization into paragraphs
- an introduction with thesis statement and a conclusion are present
- paragraph organization and unity
- cohesion and use of transition expressions

#### Possible penalties

- The essay must be between 250 and 300 words. The content/structure grade will be penalised by up to 2 points if the essay is significantly longer or shorter than this.
- If the word count is missing, 1 point will be deducted from the content/structure grade.

### Final grade – Pass/Fail criteria

The exam consists of three graded parts. The grammar section (40%), the language of the essay (30%), and the content of the essay (30%). Once the marker has awarded all three grades, s/he will work out the overall grade. Half grades or more are rounded up, less than half is rounded down.

The final grade must be at least 5 points to pass. If any of the three elements are 2 points or fewer, though, the exam will fail and a maximum of 3 points overall can be awarded. Examples:

| Grammar (40%) | Essay – Language (30%) | Essay – Content (30%) | Overall  |
|---------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| 10            | 8                      | 6                     | 8 (pass) |
| 5             | 6                      | 9                     | 7 (pass) |
| 3             | 3                      | 10                    | 5 (pass) |
| 2             | 10                     | 10                    | 3 (fail) |
| 2             | 3                      | 2                     | 2 (fail) |

#### Points conversion table

|         | Passing grades |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | Failing grades |     |     |     |     |     |
|---------|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Lehramt | 15             | 14  | 13  | 12  | 11  | 10  | 9   | 8   | 7   | 6   | 5              | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1   | 0   |
| BA      | 0,7            | 1,0 | 1,3 | 1,7 | 2,0 | 2,3 | 2,7 | 3,0 | 3,3 | 3,7 | 4,0            | 5,0 | 5,0 | 5,0 | 5,0 | 5,0 |