Sprachpraxis English 3 – Persuasive Essay and German-English Translation

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

Task

Translate a news article of between 180-200 words from German into English.

Write a persuasive essay of between 400-600 words in response to one of two recent news articles that will be provided to you. The articles will each be approximately one and a half pages in length.

Marking criteria

A combined mark of **5 points or above** is required to pass and is made up of:

- Translation (1/3)
- Language and style of essay (1/3)
- Structure and content of essay (1/3)

Translation - German into English

The translation is graded according to how well it renders the meaning of the source text and how accurate, idiomatic and appropriate the language is. Please assume in your audience the same context-specific knowledge that the German author assumed in their audience. Poor stylistic choices, such as unnecessarily clumsy or wordy phrases or register-inappropriate lexis or grammar, will be penalised; good stylistic choices will be rewarded. Errors receive the same weighting (0.5, 1 or 1.5 points) as in the essay, with the following additions:

- Mistranslations count as 1 error per word or phrase
- Leaving a gap (i.e. failing even to attempt to translate a word) counts as 1.5 errors
- Omitting whole phrases, clauses, sentences or paragraphs leads to the maximum number of errors that any of the other candidates made in that phrase / clause / sentence / paragraph – at least 1.5 errors.
- Arbitrarily changing the paragraph structure of the original may be penalised.
- If alternative versions of a word are given, only the first one will be considered.
- Changing direct speech into indirect speech (or vice versa) automatically counts as an error.

There is no error quotient for the translation. The final grade for the translation is based on the distribution of the number of error points (adjusted for style) of all the students who took the exam. So, in effect, an average number of mistakes leads to an average grade.

Persuasive Essay

Things you need to know

Pick a side. This is not a pro/con or evaluative type essay. Instead, you need to argue your case as convincingly as possible in an attempt to convince your reader.

Start with a short introduction.

Include a clear, strong thesis statement.

Aim for <u>at least three main points</u> to provide reasoning for your overall thesis.

Present each point in a paragraph of its own (topic sentence, examples/details, analysis).

Ensure that your arguments are not contradictory AND that they are all in line with your thesis statement.

Do not summarise the text of the article you are responding to.

End your essay with a brief conclusion.

Use your own words and ideas and do not quote extensively from the text.

Any quotations must be brief and acknowledged correctly (i.e. with quotation marks).

Proof-read your work to check for structure, language accuracy and punctuation etc.

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

Include an accurate word count.

What is on-topic?

The argument of your essay must have a strong connection to the main topic of the article. For example, in an article about giving guns to teachers in the US, your argument must have a clear connection to this issue. Writing about guns or teachers in general would not be regarded as a sufficient connection. Off-topic essays will be penalised.

What more is expected compared to English 1?

- A strong essay at this level will consider obvious counter arguments and offer a rebuttal.
- The essay should be longer and include more detailed examples and a more nuanced analysis.
- Effective paragraph structure should have been mastered and there is less tolerance of structural errors.
- More variety in language and fewer register errors are expected.
- There is generally less tolerance of ambiguous language mistakes.

Language and style

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

Language

Errors are calculated as follows and repeat mistakes in the same context are not counted twice.

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

Style

This is decided on (for example):

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

Content and structure

This is an impressionistic grade based on how convincing, logical and clear your argumentation 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 argumentation. Examples:

Content

- topic chosen has a logical connection to the article
- each paragraph has one clear point with adequate and relevant supporting detail
- arguments are logical and based on a correct understanding of the article

Structure

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

Final grade

Once the marker has awarded all three grades, s/he simply adds them together and divides by three to reach a final grade. Half grades or more are rounded up, less than half is rounded down. If any of the grades are 2 points or fewer, only a maximum of 3 points overall may be awarded. Examples:

Translation	Language and style (essay)	Content and structure (essay)	Overall
10	8	11	10 (2,3)
5	6	9	7 (3,3)
3	5	7	5 (4,0)
2	7	10	3 (5,0)
2	3	2	2 (5,0)

Points conversion table

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

Possible penalties

- The essay must be between 400-600 words. The content/structure grade will be penalised by up to 2 points if the essay is significantly longer or shorter than this.
- The essay must not be a pro/con essay. In this case, it will be an automatic fail.
- If the topic chosen for the essay is off-topic, this will be penalised in content/structure. In severe cases, this can lead to a failing grade.
- If the word count is missing from the essay, 1 point will be deducted from the content/structure grade.
- Copying whole structures from the article without acknowledgement (i.e. quotation marks) will incur penalties and may result in an automatic fail if this is excessive.