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MACMILLAN
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German

GCSE

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BETTY PARR

M
MACMILLAN

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Series Editor's Preface

Work Out German has been planned for adults and older teenagers with a basic knowledge of spoken and written German and a wish to become more proficient in the language and better informed about those who speak it. The book and cassette are intended for students working, with or without a teacher, to attain a good grade in the General Certificate of Secondary Education. The Course will also serve the needs of students of more modest linguistic ability, who aim at lower grades in the examination and wish to concentrate on understanding and using the spoken language, or learning to read with confidence rather than to write.

Work Out German has two main objectives. The first is to provide a sound and interesting programme, in which the study of authentic materials will serve as a basis for studying the language in a realistic context and will give an insight into different aspects of life in West Germany, with a glimpse of other German-speaking countries. The second is to offer specific help to students preparing for an appropriate public examination, in the belief that the development of sound standards of work in the language skills will bring success in examinations to those who work effectively.

All the teaching, including the grammatical explanations and exercises, is based on carefully selected texts and recorded conversations, which exemplify the correct use of spoken and written German, and illustrate important elements of grammar and syntax. Every care has been taken to use the language in sensible situations and to avoid the bizarre statements often evoked by ill-judged questions posed out of context. A key to the exercises and an excellent grammar summary, with its invaluable index, are contained in Part II. A guide to pronunciation and the accompanying cassette will help the student to understand and use the spoken language with greater confidence.

One section of the book concentrates on the General Certificate of Secondary Education, about which much authoritative information is now available. An account of methods of assessment and of different types of oral and written tests is followed by sample materials and by much clear and helpful advice for those preparing for the new examination.

The author's very full and clear introduction gives details of the book and cassette, and suggests effective ways of using them. This section deserves the most careful attention of all who intend to benefit fully from this new and stimulating Course.

Betty Parr

Author's Preface

As has already been made clear in the Series Editor's preface, this book is intended for adults and older teenagers with some knowledge of written and spoken German, and a wish to practise and improve their command of the language to a standard sufficient for a good grade in the GCSE examination.

Although the primary aim of the book, with its accompanying cassette, is to provide the student with a complete revision programme for the examination, which may be used by the student alone or with a teacher, it is also intended that language should be presented in a real context, and not in the isolated and artificial sentences which often serve as the basis of examination preparation. In addition to a 'real' language context, the subject matter of the chapters is also authentic, and offers reading and listening materials which are concerned with issues in the societies where German is spoken. In this way the book seeks to assist the achievement of a high level of language skills, and, at the same time, inform readers about aspects of life in German-speaking societies, and give some of the flavour of reading authentic texts and hearing real conversations.

Because of national criteria and the syllabuses of the various Examination Groups, the types of test in the examination show more uniformity than was the case with the old GCE 'O'-level examination. Even so, it would be difficult for any one book to claim that it offered specific preparation for all the Boards. What can be claimed, however, is that this book offers a sound basis in all the language skills, and will help to bring the students up to a level of performance where they may confidently tackle the tests offered by the examination, the requirements of which are set out in Part III of the book, together with some sample materials. In addition, many of the exercises in each chapter are modelled on common forms of tests, using comprehension questions, multiple choice questions, letter-writing, etc.

In the ways explained above, it is hoped that the twin aims of language improvement based on the living language and on practice in specific examination skills will both be met. The following section gives more detail about the organisation of the book and suggests ways of working with it.

Organisation of the Book

The book has 14 chapters, of which Chapter 14 contains three reading passages with associated exercises. All the other chapters are divided into two parts – Reading Materials and Listening Materials. Within each section, there are a number of texts offering the chance to practise reading and listening skills at several levels. These include the Basic or General Level, which is the common core to be taken by all candidates in the new examination, and the Higher or Extended Level, which will be taken by candidates aiming at the higher grades. Reading and listening texts at the Basic Level are usually followed by exercises which test recognition and comprehension. The more extended written texts are followed by two sorts of exercises – Section A, concerned with comprehension and recognition, and

Section B, containing more formal exercises designed to practise certain key grammatical points, of which the text contains examples. For the information necessary to understand the grammar and carry out the exercises, reference is made to the detailed Grammar Summary in Part II of the book. Section B exercises also contain many opportunities to practise letter-writing, the most widespread examination test in the writing of the foreign language. The more extended dialogues in the section of Listening Materials are tested by comprehension exercises or multiple choice questions, and develop towards role play, important for the preparation of the Oral Examination.

Each of the texts in the sections of Reading and Listening Materials is followed by a select vocabulary and explanations of idioms and expressions. The texts themselves are all authentic, taken from German sources, or written by native speakers of German. In terms of difficulty, there is a general progression throughout the book, with Chapters 12–14 containing the most difficult texts.

After Part I, which contains the 14 teaching chapters, follows a Reference Section with a Key to Exercises, a Grammar Summary with all examples drawn from texts in the book, and a Guide to Pronunciation. Part III then gives information and guidance about the examinations, including sample materials. Accompanying the book is a cassette containing the Listening Materials from all the chapters and the Guide to Pronunciation.

Throughout the book, because of space limitations, the cases may be abbreviated N, A, G, D or Nom., Acc., Gen., Dat.

How to Use this Book

It is expected that students will normally work through the book, although it is quite possible for a chapter to be taken out of sequence if practice is needed in the vocabulary of a particular topic or on a specific point of grammar. Start first with the reading texts and try to understand as much as possible before turning to the explanations of vocabulary or grammar. Texts which at first sight seem difficult will appear less so if you consider the information given in the introductory English paragraph, and if you try to deduce the meaning of unknown words and phrases from the context of the passage. When first encountering an unknown text in a foreign language, you may be baffled by apparent difficulties which can disappear if the context is used to help understanding. Above all, do not be put off by one particular word which is unfamiliar, and do not feel that you should know every word in the passage before you have a fair understanding.

Having made your first effort to understand the text, try the exercises which are concerned with testing recognition and comprehension. Treat this whole process as one of detection and deduction. These are important skills to develop in any work with a foreign language. Check your answers with the ones given in the Key, and then study the lists of vocabulary and expressions. The vocabulary is selective and you may need to use a dictionary for unknown words which do not appear. Note in the lists of vocabulary that the plural of each noun is given in a shortened form after the word: for example, *der Ball* (∴ *e*) means that the plural in this case is *die Bälle*. Note also that the vowel changes of strong verbs are given in parentheses after the infinitive: for example, *schwimmen* (*a, o*) means that the Imperfect tense is *schwamm* and the past participle is *geschwommen*.

The Section B exercises are intended to provide intensive work on particular points of grammar. Of course, texts of an authentic kind, such as are used in this book, contain a wide range of grammatical features, and the technique here is to choose texts which highlight particular structures or parts of speech, and then help you to understand the use of that point of grammar in context. Reference is

made to particular paragraphs of the Grammar Summary, which should be studied in conjunction with the text and the exercises. The detailed index following the Grammar Summary is an important aid to learning, as it provides cross-references between the texts and the reference section.

After dealing with the passages in the section of Reading Materials, turn to the passages for listening comprehension. It is important that the dialogues should be listened to on tape before the written version of the text is studied. The comprehension questions after the listening passages should be used, rather as in an examination, to test your powers of listening comprehension. The written text can then be used to confirm and consolidate your understanding. Besides offering practice in listening comprehension, the exercises move on to provide the chance to build up your own dialogues by participating in role play, thereby developing skills necessary for the Oral examination.

German has the particular advantage for learners, that it is a language spoken in four European societies – the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Democratic Republic, Austria and Switzerland. This offers not only a wide area for travel, but also a great cultural diversity. In the choice of texts this book tries to capture some of this diversity. It is hoped that, in this way, the book will not only help towards acquiring competence in the language, and towards success in the examination, but also help the student to find out more about contemporary German-speaking cultures.

Exeter, 1987

E. J. N.

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