



General Certificate of Education

German 1661 *Specification*

GERM1 Listening, Reading and Writing

Report on the Examination *2009 examination - January series*

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Unit 1

General comments

Most candidates attempted all questions; however a small number of candidates did not finish their answer to Question 10, suggesting that they had spent too long on the listening and reading sections. Future candidates are advised to divide their time between questions in proportion to the number of marks awarded, using the guidance on the front page of the examination paper. It is not necessary to answer the questions in strict numerical order, although it is good practice to complete the listening and reading sections before tackling the writing task because candidates may be able to make use of some of the ideas and/or vocabulary from the listening and reading sections.

In this and all future GERM1 papers, AQA is printing the CD track numbers for each question in addition to the length of each recording. It is hoped that this will enable candidates to use their time more efficiently.

Question 1

Most candidates performed less well in this transfer of meaning task than in the non-verbal questions. Some – presumably native speaker – candidates appeared to have understood the German well, but used spurious words in their answer such as ‘rebellic’ and ‘worldopen’, for which no credit could be given. Unfortunately a few candidates wrote their answers in German, despite clear instructions in the rubric to answer in English; no credit could be given for such answers.

- (a) Many candidates gained at least two out of the three available marks. A few misunderstood *Freiheit* and wrote ‘free time’ instead of ‘freedom’. Given that the question was worded ‘three characteristics of snowboarders’, i.e. what kind of people they are, the answer ‘it’s a way of life’ was not acceptable.
- (b) Well answered.
- (c) Almost all candidates scored both marks.
- (d)(i) This answer, which required comprehension of *Kommerzialisierung* and *zunehmen wird*, eluded all but the most able candidates.
- (d)(ii) Surprisingly few candidates gave an acceptable rendering of *Leistungssport*.
- (e)(i) Well answered. It was acceptable for candidates to write ‘phone’ instead of ‘mobile’.
- (e)(ii) This question produced a wide range of answers. Some candidates referred only to ‘staying safe’, which was not an acceptable answer in itself, while others translated the key phrase *auf den markierten Pisten* with varying degrees of success: answers such as ‘designated ski slopes’ and ‘staying on the pistes’ were acceptable, but ‘advised lanes’ or ‘labelled places’ were not.

Question 2

Marks were relatively high in this question. Items (d), (e) and (h) caused the least difficulty and items (c) and (f) caused the greatest difficulty.

Question 3

This question produced a wide range of attainment. Items (c) and (d) caused the greatest difficulty.

Question 4

Most candidates showed that they had grasped the gist of the recorded interview. Many were able to select relevant words and phrases from the recording and use them appropriately in their answers. Some weaker candidates attempted to transcribe lengthy sections of the recording but included so much irrelevant or spurious material that they failed to convey the essential information with clarity. In future, candidates are advised against trying to write down every detail unless they are absolutely sure that the material is correct and appropriate; in some instances a simple paraphrase is likely to produce the best answer.

- (a) Well answered.
- (b) Many candidates used the verb *kennen lernen* appropriately but did not seem to know *vertrauen*.
- (c) Most candidates gave the correct answer. A few weaker candidates failed to gain credit because they wrote *für* instead of *vor*.
- (d) Well answered. A sensible approach here was for candidates to use their own words, e.g. *Der Vater arbeitete in vielen Ländern*, rather than attempting to transcribe the possibly unfamiliar construction with *aufgrund* + genitive.
- (e) Well answered.
- (f) Many candidates seemed not to know *Ausstellungen*.
- (g) This item discriminated well at the higher end of the ability range, as candidates had to convey both the idea of Teresa's family being far away and the idea of her friends substituting for her family. The word *anderswo* frequently caused difficulty, with some candidates writing *anders vorlebt* or similar instead of *anderswo lebt*. A few candidates lost potential credit by lifting the first person pronoun *ich* from the recording, rather than writing in the third person as was required by the wording of the question.
- (h) Well answered.

Question 5

This question was well done by many candidates, with no particular item causing greater difficulty than the others.

Question 6

More able and some middle-ranking candidates often scored full or nearly full marks in this question, while less able candidates struggled to produce more than one or two correct answers. The words whose correct placement caused the greatest difficulty were *Allgemeinbildung*, *Nutzung* and *Grund*.

Question 7

Many candidates tackled this question well. Where there were problems, it was generally with items (h) and (j), perhaps because the words *vermeiden* and *zubereiten* were unfamiliar. A few candidates wrongly thought that item (b) was false, perhaps because they did not know *Flüssigkeit*. A small number of candidates infringed the rubric by crossing more than five items; in such instances their mark total for the question was reduced by the number of additional – i.e. more than 5 – crosses that they made.

Question 8

Fairly well done. Parts (b) and (c) caused the least difficulty and parts (i) and (j) the greatest difficulty.

Question 9

Candidates generally performed less well in this question than in the listening and reading sections. However a good number of candidates scored full, or nearly full, marks. The most accessible items proved to be parts (b), (f) and (j), while the least accessible were parts (d), (h) and (i). A number of otherwise able candidates wrote a plural verb form in part (i), perhaps because they had misread *Diskussion* as *Diskussionen*. In future, candidates are advised that they must fill all the gaps in the sentences, i.e. if there are two gaps, then two separate words are required. The addition of modal verbs, e.g. *wollte ... anfangen* instead of *hat ... angefangen* or *ging ... an* in part (g), is not acceptable.

Question 10

Candidates' responses ranged widely in quality from those who wrote eloquently with a good depth of treatment and a well-organised structure to those who struggled to produce more than one or two coherent sentences. A few candidates wrote far in excess of 200 words but did not gain maximum marks for content because they tended to ramble; conversely it was good to see several candidates fulfilling all the requirements for a top content mark while writing little more than 200 words.

Most essays were structured to some degree, although not all had proper paragraphing. A number of candidates did not use the planning sheet at all, while others wrote lengthy notes in English which they were then unable to transfer into good German. A useful strategy was that of noting key vocabulary next to each paragraph idea. Less able candidates tended to mention a large number of points which they then failed to develop; the marking criteria make it clear that content points must be 'well expressed and justified'. The suggested content points in the mark scheme are neither prescriptive nor definitive; any answer that fully meets the marking criteria will be highly rewarded.

Candidates who chose option (a), on the topic of advertising, produced responses which ranged widely in quality. Good answers tended to address in some detail the differences between the advertising media, e.g. printed, radio and internet, as well as the differences between the dangers of alcohol, tobacco, fast food and other products, mentioning practical limitations as well as matters of principle. Some less able and middle-ranking candidates either wrote too generally about the topic of advertising or focused too heavily on health issues with minimal references to forms of advertising.

Option (b), on the topic of music, produced some well-planned and thoughtful responses, often using appropriate examples from the German-speaking world – although this is not a requirement of the specification – to support and exemplify their ideas. The range of content points used by candidates was very broad and included negative associations such as funeral music, the benefits of playing as distinct from listening to music, Germans learning English through pop music, and even Mozart helping plants to grow! Some less able candidates did little more than repeat the ideas expressed in the boxes on the question paper.

Option (c), on the topic of holidays, proved to be less popular than options (a) and (b). However those candidates who chose this topic tended to produce a well-considered and appropriately phrased response, with lots of relevant ideas and suitable justification for those ideas. In addition to the possible content points listed in the mark scheme, candidates referred to benefits of mass tourism such as ‘being with similar people who want similar activities’ and ‘it’s useful to have everything laid on for you’ as well as to its drawbacks such as ‘antagonising the locals’ and ‘having to overhear marital arguments because people are hemmed in close to each other’. One good starting point for this question was for the candidate to compare her/his own holiday experience with that of Axel, mentioning both similarities and differences.

In all three options, the better candidates used an impressive variety of topic-specific vocabulary and of grammatical structures, often including appropriate subjunctive forms and complex constructions such as *einer der wichtigsten Gründe*. However, many less able candidates produced language that was no better than what might be expected at GCSE. In some cases grammatical errors were so frequent as to make comprehension difficult; this then impacted on the content mark too. It is better for less able candidates to concentrate on getting basic accuracy right – such as subject-verb agreement and common usage of cases – rather than striving for a high level of complexity. Even middle-ranking candidates often had difficulties expressing the passive, especially when combined with a modal verb such as *sollte ... erlaubt werden*.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Listening Section

For each question in the Listening section, both the duration of the heard material and the track numbers on the CD which correspond to that material will be printed in the Question and Answer booklet and on the transcript, eg

Length of passage: 55 seconds

Tracks: 10-18

Please draw this to the attention of all candidates.

It should be pointed out that there is no longer a requirement for candidates to manipulate language in the Listening / Reading sections of this paper as the marks are awarded for comprehension only.

Annotation of Scripts from Summer 2009 onwards

The following conventions will be used by examiners on scripts when assessing Content.

✓	Point made
Irr	Irrelevant material
Rep	Repeated point
?	Lack of clarity

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR RESPONDING TO THE WRITING QUESTION

Are candidates expected to include an introduction and conclusion in their essay? If so, how many words approximately?

Candidates are not expected to include an introduction or conclusion, but it enhances the structure if there is a brief introduction and a concluding short paragraph, possibly including a personal response. One of the criteria is for a logical structure and this would enhance the overall structure of the essay.

Is a personal opinion valid as a point in the argument?

Yes, we gave ticks for personal opinions in the January session as we considered them valid as developments.

Should each point/opinion be backed up with an example?

Generally, yes. There must be plenty of justification of points/opinions in order to gain marks in the higher bands.

Are the examiners looking for a certain number of points/opinions plus examples, eg 3 arguments for one point of view with evidence and 3 against with evidence?

This would be sensible but we have no hard and fast rule on this since a limited number of points very well illustrated and developed would also be considered for the higher mark bands.

How does the marking scheme work in practice? Is there a list of relevant points, some of which the examiners are expecting to be included? If so, how many represents poor versus sufficient/very good?

There is a list of relevant points for the guidance of examiners but these are by no means prescriptive and candidates will get credit for well-argued points not in the list. Examiners tick every relevant, clearly expressed point and give further ticks for development / examples / opinions etc. Thus a list of bullet point type arguments with no development cannot access the highest mark band. In order to access the highest mark band, candidates must also ensure that they meet all the other criteria, eg clearly expressed, logical structure and have answered fully the question set.

Is it just an instinctive overall rating of logical sequence and therefore individual points are not counted up?

There is no mathematical guide to Content marks - examiners have to make a decision based on the descriptors in the assessment criteria.

Are there any other questions which teachers should be asking to get a better understanding of how candidates are to be assessed in the essay question?

Yes, there are two sets of exemplar materials for the Writing section of Unit 1 as part of the Teacher Resource Bank. The Teacher Resource Bank materials are available on the AQA website.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.