



General Certificate of Education

German 1661 *Specification*

GERM1 Listening, Reading and Writing

Report on the Examination *2009 examination - June series*

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Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

Unit 1

General comments

Most candidates had sufficient time to complete the paper, although a few did not manage to write 200 words in the extended writing question and some would have benefited from spending a few minutes checking the accuracy of what they had written. Rubric infringements were relatively few; a small number of candidates answered Question 1 in German.

Question 1

As in January, many candidates performed less well in this transfer of meaning task than in the non-verbal questions. Nevertheless, full marks were achieved by some.

- (a) Some candidates mistook *ändert sich* for *endet* and wrote answers such as 'fashion comes to an end'.
- (b) While many candidates coped well with the difficult phrase *Die Kleidung stellt ... einen wichtigen Teil ihrer Identität dar*, some mistook *Marken* to be a form of the verb *mögen* and therefore did not gain the third marking point. Not all candidates took account of the word *sollte* in the phrase *dass man sich in seinen Anzihsachen wohl fühlen sollte*.
- (c) Well answered, although a few candidates muddled 'identity' and 'individuality'.
- (d) Quite well answered. Less able candidates often did not give enough detail, e.g. they wrote 'jeans' instead of 'tight jeans'.

Question 2

Marks were relatively high in this question. Items (c) and (e) caused the greatest difficulty.

Question 3

This question proved to be very accessible, with many candidates scoring full or nearly full marks. Where errors occurred, it was often because of confusion between *Befragten* and *Befragung* or between *Sendungen* and *Sender*.

Question 4

This question was quite well tackled by most candidates.

- (a) Well answered.
- (b)(i) Some candidates had difficulty with the expression *Wer nicht raucht, ist kein Mann* and failed to gain the mark because they wrote *er* instead of *wer*. A few less able candidates wrote the English word 'man', for which no credit could be given in this answer.
- (b)(ii) Well answered, although a few candidates seemed not to recognise the verb *glauben*.
- (c)(i) Most candidates gained the first marking point, although a few omitted referring to the essential phrase *letzten Jahres*. For the second marking point, some candidates were unable to render the phrase *an meinem Geburtstag* in the third person.

- (c)(ii) Quite well answered, although the phrase *da ging es mir so richtig schlecht* was sometimes misunderstood.
- (d) Few problems.
- (e) Some candidates appeared not to understand the question and therefore gave an inappropriate answer.

Question 5

This question produced a wide range of attainment. Items (b) and (e) caused the least difficulty and items (a), (d) and (f) the greatest difficulty.

Question 6

As in the previous question, candidates' attainment varied considerably. The most elusive correct answers proved to be items (b), (f) and (g). Many candidates wrongly selected item (m), perhaps because they did not understand the complex syntax of the sentence *Wir kaufen ... verteilen können*.

Question 7

Many candidates showed that they had grasped the gist of the stimulus passage, but their success in answering the individual questions was variable. Those who copied out lengthy sections of the text often missed out key words or included superfluous and confusing material, which meant that no mark could be given. Although the use of candidates' own words is not a requirement in a question of this type, it is often better to write a few well-chosen words than a long sentence.

- (a) Some candidates omitted the significant word *über*.
- (b)(i) Again, the omission of detail – in this instance *unmittelbar* – cost some candidates the mark.
- (b)(ii) Well answered.
- (c) Some candidates omitted the pronoun *sie*, giving the sentence a completely different meaning. A few candidates carelessly wrote *leben* instead of *lieben*.
- (d) Some good answers, but also some excessively lengthy quotation from the text, not always conveying the intended meaning clearly. A single word answer such as *Machtkämpfe*, or even just *Kämpfe*, was fine here.
- (e) Again, less able candidates tended to resort to copying a lengthy section of the text.
- (f) Some good answers here, although a number of candidates omitted the initial phrase *Sie sollten sagen/betonen, dass ...* with the result that they did not answer the question set. Some abler candidates reformulated the sentence from the text in simple but effective language of their own, e.g. *Es ist nicht ihre Schuld*.

Question 8

Fairly well done. Parts (b), (c) and (g) caused the least difficulty and parts (a) and (i) the greatest difficulty. Candidates for future examination sessions are reminded that in this question type they should follow the rubric and write only 'R', 'F' or 'NA' as appropriate.

Question 9

Many candidates performed poorly in this question. Items (b), (c), (d) and (g) proved to be particularly difficult. Future candidates are advised that they must fill all the gaps, i.e. if there are two gaps in a given sentence, then two separate words are required. The addition of modal verbs, such as *sollen* in part (h), is not allowed.

Question 10

Candidates' answers ranged widely in quality. Many displayed an impressive grasp of the German language as well as a thorough response to the question set. The most able candidates presented a range of relevant points, arranged them into a logical sequence and elaborated on them. However some answers were superficial and repetitive, especially where the film topic – option (b) – was chosen. A relatively small number of candidates wrote less than the specified minimum of 200 words.

Option (a) on mobile phones was well done by many candidates, who considered a variety of uses for the technology – communication, entertainment, personal safety, etc. – and addressed the points raised in the stimulus letter about cost, the risk of theft and the restriction on freedom if parents can always get in touch. Some candidates complimented Sigrid on her courageous decision, while others thought that she was round the bend; both reactions were equally valid. Less able candidates often resorted to simplistic statements which showed little or no progression from GCSE.

The film review option (b) was chosen by many candidates who performed weakly on the paper as a whole. Poor responses to this option were characterised by a lack of ideas, by too much story-telling and by the inclusion of irrelevant material such as comparisons between going to the cinema and watching a film on DVD. There were, however, also some good responses to this question. Stronger candidates summarised the plot succinctly, explained why they thought the film was good, bad or indifferent, and commented in detail on some of the aspects mentioned in the stimulus such as the characterisation, the actors' skill, the special effects or the camerawork. They also remembered to comment on the most suitable audience for the film, again with reasons. Most reviews gave a favourable verdict on the film, but it was perfectly possible to write a convincing piece about a film which had not been enjoyed and give the reasons for its perceived lack of success.

Good answers to question (c) on families again gave a range of ideas, perhaps including a historical perspective on the importance of the family, offering some opinions on different types of family – one or two parents, adopted children, homosexual couples, etc. – and going on to justify those opinions. Some candidates obviously wrote from personal experience, but it was equally good to take a detached, objective stance. A few less able candidates relied excessively on lifting ideas and vocabulary from Question 7; while it was acceptable to use those ideas as a starting point, it was important to develop them. As there are no marks for 'knowledge of society' in the current specification, it is not necessary for candidates to give detailed evidence relating to German-speaking countries.

Useful essay plans tended to be concise, perhaps with numbered points to indicate the order in which they would be tackled, and often included a few key phrases or vocabulary items too.

High marks for range of vocabulary were awarded where candidates used topic-specific vocabulary beyond what might normally be encountered at GCSE and where they made sensible use of more general essay-writing phrases. Less able candidates often misused words such as *fantastisch* and *unglaublich*; some evidently misunderstood *enttäuschend* in the film review stimulus. A number of candidates were unaware of the difference between *andere* and *verschiedene*.

More able candidates used an impressive range of structures, including modal verbs in different tenses, *zu* and *um ... zu* clauses, varied subordinate clauses, subjunctive verb forms, and adverbial constructions. Weaker candidates tended to use a single construction repetitively, often *weil* plus subordinate word order.

Accuracy levels were sometimes very good, with some candidates showing mastery of the German case system, while weaker candidates were often apparently unaware of what ideas they could successfully express in German, perhaps because they were thinking in English and trying to translate literally into German. Common errors included the misuse of *meiner Meinung nach* as if it meant 'my opinion on ...', confusion between *muss nicht* and *darf nicht*, and wrong spellings and noun genders even where words were supplied on the examination paper.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Listening Section

From the January 2010 series onwards all centres will be supplied with two types of CD. One will be a single CD which will not be tracked and which will be suitable for downloading onto mp3 players, language laboratories etc. One CD of this type will be supplied per centre. The other CD will have individual tracks recorded so that candidates using individual CD players will be able to rewind and fast forward, using these tracks. Sufficient numbers of this CD will be supplied for all candidates entered at the centre. Centres can then choose which type of CD best meets their needs.

For each question in the Listening section, both the duration of the heard material and the track numbers from the tracked 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

Listening/Reading Sections

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.

Writing Section

Annotation of Scripts from Summer 2009 onwards

The following conventions are 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 Section

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 their ideas are clearly expressed, there is logical structure and they 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 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.