



General Certificate of Education

German 1661 *Specification*

GERM1 Listening, Reading and Writing

Report on the Examination *2010 examination - June series*

Further copies of this Report are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

Copyright © 2010 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334). Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX

Unit 1

General comments

As in January, most candidates seemed to have adequate time to complete the paper. Indeed, some candidates wrote much more than they needed to in Section B.

Also as in January, a number of otherwise able candidates answered Question 1 in German, for which no marks could be given. It was disappointing to find answers such as T and V in Q7 when the rubric quite clearly stated that the only possible answers were R, F and NA. In the non-verbal questions, a few candidates wrote one answer on top of another in a given sub-question, so that the marker could not tell which answer was intended, resulting in a mark of 0. A small number of candidates failed to answer both parts of certain sub-questions, such as Q1(c) where they did not answer 'and why?'.

The mean mark was 71.2.

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates grasped the gist of the recording, even if they did not understand all the detail.

A few candidates were let down by poor English.

- (a) (i) Reasonably well answered, although a number of candidates surprisingly seemed not to understand *Kosten*.
- (a) (ii) The hardest item in this question. A number of candidates wrongly wrote 'sparing energy' for *Energiesparmaßnahmen*.
- (b) Most, but not all, knew *Benzin*.
- (c) A fair amount of confusion here, as some candidates did not take account of the negative and wrote answers such as 'they have to use public transport'. Many candidates did not know the word *ländlich*.
- (d) Well answered.
- (e) Very well answered.
- (f) Almost all candidates gave the correct answer here.

Question 2

Well answered on the whole. The most accessible item was part (g), and the least accessible item was part (f), presumably because the word *abwechslungsreich* was unfamiliar.

Question 3

This question was generally well answered. Parts (f) and (g) attracted the largest number of correct answers, while part (d) attracted the least credit, perhaps because candidates did not know either *Unterstützung* or *unvermeidlich*.

Question 4

The marks in this question tended to be lower than in the other listening and reading tasks on the paper. Most candidates showed the correct technique of giving only the required information, although a few attempted to transcribe lengthy sections of the recording, which often resulted in confusion.

- (a) Many candidates identified the two key words *Kabel-* and *Satellitenanschluss*, but in some instances the wrong inclusion of *ohne* from the recording invalidated their answer. No credit was given for the English spelling 'cable'.
- (b) Well answered by most candidates, but some omitted the reference to speed.
- (c) Even though candidates could gain credit for any three out of five possible points, marks were generally middling to low in this sub-question. Many candidates could not transcribe *ARD* and *ZDF* correctly and some omitted *über* in the phrase *über 50 TV-Sender*. There was some confusion between *Sender* and *Sendung*.
- (d) Marks tended to be low here, mainly because the sense of *weder ... noch* was not grasped.
- (e) Quite well answered, although those candidates who attempted to transcribe from the recording ran into difficulties with *die laufende Fernsehsendung*. The phrase *fünf Sekunden* was occasionally transcribed wrongly as *fünfzig Kunden* or similar.

Question 5

Quite well answered.

Question 6

This question discriminated particularly well at the lower end of the ability range. All but the least able candidates gave the right answer in parts (a) and (d), while the greatest difficulty was caused by items (f) and (b).

Question 7

Attainment ranged widely in this question. The most accessible item was part (a), and the least accessible were parts (f) and (g).

Question 8

Many candidates seemed to have understood the text well, but their ability to identify and convey in German the relevant points ranged widely, even though the quality of their written language was not being assessed.

- (a) Many candidates gave only one part of the answer, i.e. either the general point or one of the examples, but not both as required. There was some confusion between the correct *Es wäre schwerer* and the incorrect *Es war schwerer*.
- (b) Very well answered.
- (c) Quite well answered, provided that candidates took account of the *nicht* in the question when constructing their answer.
- (d) Not all candidates appreciated the need for detail here, i.e. either *50 Minuten am Stück* or *50 Minuten durchhalten* was required.

- (e) Fairly well answered.
- (f) Again, fairly well answered, although some able candidates wasted effort trying to explain *Dosis* in their own words. There is no expectation for candidates to use their own words in the listening and reading sections of GERM1.
- (g) Well answered. Some candidates omitted the reference to *Risiko (für diverse Erkrankungen)*.

Question 9

This question produced a wide range of attainment – and the lowest average mark out of all questions on the paper. However, some candidates who appeared not to be native speakers did manage to score full marks. Conversely, some otherwise strong candidates failed unnecessarily to gain marks in this question because their handwriting was not clear enough. This is the only question in GERM1 in which each word must be spelt correctly in order to gain credit and, if an ending is unclear, it will automatically be marked wrong.

- (a) Most candidates gave a wrong answer, usually with *-a-* instead of *-ä-*.
- (b) Fairly well answered, although some candidates wrote a capital *Ö* which deprived them of the mark. The wrong ending *-e* was quite common.
- (c) Well answered.
- (d) Well answered, although some candidates took *Kleidung* to be a plural noun.
- (e) Poorly answered. Errors occurred with the endings, e.g. *trage werden*, and/or with the word order, e.g. *werde tragen*.
- (f) Well answered. A capital letter was of course allowed here.
- (g) Some candidates gave *fettig* a masculine rather than a neuter ending, or a dative rather than an accusative ending. More surprisingly, some gave it no ending at all, i.e. *fettig Essen*.
- (h) Some candidates wrote *ausgewogen* instead of *ausgewogenen*.
- (i) Poorly answered, with many answers in the wrong tense despite the clue from the phrase *als wir jünger waren*.
- (j) Errors tended to occur with word order, e.g. *mich verlasse*, or with the reflexive pronoun, e.g. *verlasse sich*.

Section B: Writing

As in the January session, most candidates wrote a sensible response to their chosen question. Instances of blatantly irrelevant material were rare. Huge variations in word count were noted, with many candidates writing well in excess of the required minimum of 200 words but a few failing short of that target. A longer essay did not necessarily gain a higher mark; on the contrary the quality of some of the lengthier responses deteriorated towards the end. While essay plans are not marked and should not be sent off with the script, it was notable how those candidates who used the essay planning sheet tended to produce work which was more logically structured and easier for the reader to follow. Many essays began with a suitable introductory paragraph, but on the whole conclusions were weaker, with some otherwise strong candidates either stopping in mid-air or merely reiterating previously made points.

Candidates' knowledge of appropriate vocabulary ranged widely from those who had successfully learnt many topic-specific words enabling them to express themselves precisely to those whose knowledge barely rose above GCSE standard. Among the most common lexical errors were:

- *halten* instead of *aufhören*
- *schauen* instead of *zeigen*
- *bekommen* instead of *werden*
- inappropriate use of *unglaublich*
- *jemand* instead of *jeder/alle*

Candidates' level of grammatical awareness and accuracy also varied hugely. At the top end were those who perhaps made a few mistakes but showed such a confident grasp of AS structures that they gained full marks for both range of structures and accuracy. In the middle range were candidates who tended to use subordinate word order correctly but whose sentence structure was generally repetitive, with few or no examples of different constructions such as infinitives with *zu*, phrases with the genitive and conditional sentences. At the lower end of the attainment range, a sizeable minority of candidates seemed unable to form a basic subordinate clause with *weil* and rarely produced an adjective or article with the correct case ending. Notable errors in this year's answers included:

- English sentence structure which would scarcely be comprehensible to a non-English speaker, such as *Die Eltern müssen machen sie essen gesund* or *Eltern sollten ihre Kinder weniger Fernsehen sehen*
- literal translations of English idioms such as *Wir essen einen Chinesen*
- the misuse of *bei* to mean 'by (doing something)' such as *Wir bekämpfen dieses Problem bei besser essen*
- the misuse of *mehr* to form a comparative, such as *mehr effektiv*
- the mis-spelling of *oder* as *order*

Some candidates began a subordinate clause but forgot to write the verb at the end, such as *Es ist wichtig, dass wir unseren Lebensstil*. Other examples of carelessness were the indiscriminate use of capital and small letters, and instances of a single word being spelt in two or more ways within the essay. It was good to note fewer instances of candidates misusing *meiner Meinung nach* in this session.

Question 10

This was a fairly popular option. The overall standard of responses was slightly lower than in Questions 11 and 12, with relatively few candidates scoring a content mark in the 17-20 range. A typical performance from a stronger candidate began with a brief introduction stating the overall importance of advertising in our everyday lives, continued with one or two paragraphs analysing the main features of a good advertisement followed by one or two paragraphs justifying the candidate's choice of 'best medium for advertising', and finished with a brief conclusion drawing together the main points mentioned in the essay. Another successful approach centred on a detailed description of a particular advertisement with an analysis of its good and bad points. A few brave candidates questioned the question and argued convincingly that there is no such thing as a good advertisement.

Less able candidates tended to rely excessively on lifting the phrases from the question paper and on merely citing examples of advertisements that they liked or didn't like but without suitable justification. Some candidates failed to address the second part of the question, while a few did not answer either part of the question but instead wrote an essay on the pros and cons of advertising, for which little credit could be given.

Question 11

This was the most popular of the three options. It also tended to produce the strongest responses, as many candidates found it relatively easy to think of several factors affecting young people's health and make sensible suggestions as to how it might be improved. The main basis for discrimination between strong and less strong performances was the quality of the candidate's argument: did the candidate present the various factors in a well ordered fashion with good justification, or did (s)he merely write a list of ideas with no clear sense of direction? Markers had no preconceived list of valid points, but among the issues raised appropriately by many candidates were the lack of sport (both in terms of poor facilities and lack of interest), poor diet (often linked with the busy-ness of parents and the ease of eating fast food) and, less frequently, eating disorders and the temptation to abuse alcohol or other drugs. Popular suggestions for solving the problem were better provision of sporting facilities (though very few candidates stated where the money would come from), the banning of advertising for unhealthy food and better Personal Social and Health Education in schools. As in Q10, a few candidates took issue with the premise of the question and denied that young people have a health problem; this was a valid approach provided that the candidate gave suitable justification.

Less able candidates tended to devote too much of their essay to describing their own lifestyle, without relating it to young people in general. A few candidates lifted phrases and sentences from the Q8 stimulus text in a way that suggested they had not understood them. In some cases, language errors prevented candidates from conveying the required information, especially in the second part of the task where a natural answer required the use of *sollte* + infinitive or a similar construction.

Question 12

This was the least popular choice. It produced a wider range of attainment than either Q10 or Q11, with a good number of truly excellent responses but also some where it was difficult to find creditable material. The stronger candidates covered a number of relevant aspects, perhaps sympathising with Katja but also asking whether the situation was partly her fault, and perhaps relating a similar personal experience and explaining how they overcame it, before going on to suggest ways in which bridges could be built with Katja's friend and/or new friendships formed. This question tended to attract a chattier style than Q10 or Q11 and that was entirely appropriate, as long as the ideas were clearly expressed and justified.

The poorer responses to this question were often extremely superficial, barely going beyond the observation that 'a good friend doesn't behave like that' and sometimes falling well short of the minimum word count. It was also notable in this question how basic language errors prevented communication from taking place, such as the confused use of *sie* or *Sie* to mean both 'you' (i.e. Katja) and 'she' (i.e. the friend). As a general point, it should be noted that the misuse of common pronouns and possessive adjectives in German can seriously undermine communication.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

On-screen marking was used for this unit and candidates should be reminded that they must answer the questions in the spaces provided, as instructed on the front cover of the question paper. It is also very important that the instruction to candidates to write in black ink or ballpoint pen is adhered to, as answers written in blue ink or pen are very difficult to mark on screen. Unfortunately, a few candidates were careless in their writing and some of the letters they used in answering the comprehension questions were very hard to decipher.

Writing Section

Question Paper and Answer Booklet

Candidates must write using single line spacing when writing their answer for this section. Double line spacing (i.e. writing on alternate lines) must not be used. Those candidates who cannot complete their answer in the answer booklet must use additional answer sheets; they must not use the essay planning sheet for this purpose as it is not sent for marking.

Essay Planning Sheet

The Essay Planning Sheet must be used for the plan only and will not be assessed. Essay Planning Sheets, together with any questions on inserts, must not be enclosed with the question paper and answer booklets when they are despatched for marking.

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 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.