



**General Certificate of Education**

**German 1661**  
*Specification*

**GERM1      Listening, Reading and Writing**

**Report on the Examination**  
*2011 examination - January series*

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## Unit 1

### General comments

Most candidates seemed familiar with the range of task types on the paper and tackled the various questions appropriately. The overall standard was rather higher than in previous series, especially in those questions that required answers in German. The mean mark for the paper was 81.6. There was little evidence of candidates having run short of time; on the contrary some candidates wrote at far greater length than was necessary in Section B. Rubric infringements were, thankfully, rare. However, as noted below in individual questions, the quality of candidates' handwriting was sometimes a cause for concern, as was a tendency to make careless spelling mistakes. Candidates for future examination series are advised to allow sufficient time to check their work thoroughly before handing it in.

### Section A

#### Question 1

Most candidates coped well with this transfer of meaning task. As in previous series, a few were let down by poor English. A very small number of candidates wrote answers in German, for which no credit could be given.

- (a) Most candidates gave the correct figure. A few misunderstood the preposition *unter* – which meant 'among' in this context – and wrote 'under 2,500'.
- (b) Again, most candidates gave the correct figure '78%', but a few wrote '87%'.
- (c) Almost all candidates referred correctly to 'quality'.
- (d) Many candidates understood the reference to clothing being a 'status symbol'. The phrase *ermöglicht den Eintritt zu bestimmten sozialen Gruppen* was an effective discriminator at the top end of the range; less able candidates tended to translate individual words but not convey the overall meaning.
- (e) Many candidates omitted the 'more than' in this sub-question, which meant that they did not gain the mark.
- (f) Very well answered.
- (g) A wide range of attainment. Many candidates understood the recommendation that parents should not wear branded clothing, but the phrase *einen monatlichen Betrag ... festlegen* caused difficulties and some did not realise that *Flohmarkt* was a kind of market.

#### Question 2

Well answered on the whole. Almost all candidates gave the correct answer in parts (a), (b), (c) and (d). The hardest item proved to be part (f), perhaps because candidates did not spot the link between *Kinder reagieren unterschiedlich* in the question and *Das passiert nicht bei jedem Kind* in the recording.

#### Question 3

Most candidates coped successfully with this question. It was not necessary to write the letters of the correct answers in any particular order.

**Question 4**

This question proved to be the most accessible on the paper, with a good number of candidates scoring eight or more marks out of ten. Although the answers had to be written in German, marks were awarded for successful communication only. However, no credit was given to those candidates who merely attempted to transcribe lengthy sections of the recording without showing evidence of comprehension.

- (a) Most candidates gave the correct answer *Wind*, but a few invalidated their response by including the negative *keinen*.
- (b) Almost all candidates conveyed at least two out of the three points correctly.
- (c) Well answered, but no credit could be given for serious distortions of key words such as *Halle* (or even *Holle*) instead of *Halle*.
- (d) The term *Fitnesssteiger* discriminated effectively between those who understood the sense of the word and those who merely relied on transcribing the sounds. Some of the former chose to express the idea in their own words, e.g. *Fitnessanfanger*; such rephrasing is not a requirement of the task but is a wise approach where there is a risk that faulty transcription may result in ambiguity.
- (e) Most candidates referred correctly to *Kalorien*, but some used inappropriate verbs such as *verlieren* or *brauchen* which invalidated the response.
- (f) Well answered, but a few candidates got the countries the wrong way round and stated that Speedminton was an American invention.
- (g) Well answered, although some candidates transcribed a sequence of words from the recording which did not make sense, such as *werden die Spielgerate in 26 Lander*. A better approach was to look at the wording of the question – *Wo ... ?* – and then phrase the answer to match that wording, e.g. *in ...*.

**Question 5**

Most candidates coped well with this question. The least accessible items proved to be part (b), where some candidates homed in on the word *Geld* and answered '8' instead of '10', and part (g), where some candidates gave the wrong answer '7', perhaps because they did not understand *faulenzten* or *Freude bringen*.

**Question 6**

This question discriminated well throughout the ability range. Although it was primarily a test of comprehension, candidates were able to use grammatical clues, such as the adjective ending -es indicating a neuter noun.

**Question 7**

This question discriminated well at all levels. The fact that candidates were asked to identify false statements, rather than true statements as in Question 3, seemed not to cause any confusion. The answers that candidates most commonly failed to identify were A and J.

### Question 8

Most candidates seemed to have understood the text well, and indeed many scored high marks, but sometimes potential credit was lost when the wording of the answer did not match the wording of the question. Candidates for future examination series are advised to revise the meaning of common question words such as *Woher... ?* and *Welch(es)... ?* and make sure that their answers fit the question precisely.

- (a) Well answered, but those candidates who chose to use the word *Bezeichnung* from the stimulus text sometimes mis-spelt it in such a way that its meaning was unclear.
- (b) Many candidates understood the required section of text. It was equally acceptable to lift the exact wording of the text, i.e. *aus den Anfangsbuchstaben ihrer Vornamen*, or to rephrase the key idea e.g. *von den ersten Buchstaben ihrer Namen*. A few candidates betrayed a lack of understanding by starting their answer with the phrase *in den Sinn ...*
- (c) Many correct answers, but some candidates either did not understand the question *Woher stammten ... ?* or did not realise that Bautzen was the name of a town.
- (d) Well answered.
- (e) A good discriminator. Some candidates gave the wrong year 2001, perhaps because they did not understand *weitere Erfolge* in the text. Another common wrong answer was *drei Monate später*, with no reference to the formation of the band.
- (f) Fairly well answered, but some candidates did not mention the important point that JAST played alongside the Puhdys. Distortions of *Vor(gruppe)* were surprisingly common, e.g. *Sie spielten vor den Puhdys*.
- (g)(i) Many correct answers, but some candidates referred to the name change here.
- (g)(ii) Well answered, but a few less able candidates seemed not to have understood *beschloss* and *deswegen* in the question and referred wrongly to the number of albums sold.
- (h) Very well answered. Some candidates were brave enough to use their own words, e.g. *Sie waren fleißig*, although it was equally acceptable to lift the appropriate phrase from the text.

### Question 9

As in previous series, this question produced a wide range of attainment – and the lowest average mark out of all questions on the paper. It is worth emphasising that this is the only question in GERM1 where even the smallest spelling error automatically invalidates the response. Poor handwriting costs some candidates dearly.

- (a) Many correct answers, but a few candidates seemed not to pick up on the feminine ending of *eine*.
- (b) Not all candidates seemed to know that *Frühstück* is a neuter noun. Mis-spellings of *reichhaltig* were not uncommon.
- (c) The wrong ending *-e* was fairly common here.
- (d) A number of candidates mis-spelt *anstrengend*. Many gave the correct ending, but a few wrote *anstrengendem* even though it is a relatively straightforward rule that after an article ending in *-m* the adjective ends in *-n*.
- (e) Poorly answered. Many candidates appeared not to recognise the past tense clue *als ich jünger war* and wrote *haben*.
- (f) Only a small number of candidates knew the past participle of *streiten*. This was the least successfully tackled item on the paper.

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- (g) Many candidates omitted the umlaut on *erzählt*.
  - (h) Again, the umlaut was a common source of error.
  - (i) Well answered.
  - (j) The verb *fernsehen* continues to cause widespread difficulty, even though it is such a key word in the media topic. Faulty answers such as *fern sieht* (2 words), *fernseht* and *fernsehen* were widespread.

### Section B: Extended writing questions

Overall, the extended writing tasks produced a wide range of performance. It was pleasing to read the work of candidates who were apparently not native speakers but who showed a secure grasp of the German language and were able to express relevant ideas in an articulate and sophisticated way. Often the strongest performances were between 200 and 300 words long, consisted of clear sections with a concise introduction and an equally concise conclusion, and included plenty of thoughtful analysis rather than a long list of points. Many candidates made effective use of the planning sheet, judging by the coherent structure of their work. A worrying trend in this series was the poor handwriting of some candidates: examiners will always do their best to read what they see, but sometimes their best efforts are defeated.

Candidates' linguistic knowledge varied widely. Not infrequently it was the limiting factor in their ability to express ideas and justify opinions. Some candidates appeared to be thinking in English and then translating more or less word for word into German, resulting in a confused message. Where candidates really struggle with the language, it is better for them to stick to German that they know to be correct even if this restricts the content of their writing. It was disappointing to find some candidates unable to use *meiner Meinung nach* correctly; this is such a versatile phrase that all future candidates are advised to learn it. At the other end of the scale, it was pleasing to see many examples of rich lexical knowledge and sharp grammatical awareness, with candidates avoiding the repetition of common words and managing to use AS/A2 structures such as conditional sentences confidently.

### Question 10

This was by far the most popular of the three options. It also produced the widest range of attainment. The strongest responses were precisely tailored to the wording of the question, which used the complaints of adults about their children's TV watching habits as a starting point. A good way of beginning the essay – although by no means the only way – was for the candidate to agree or disagree with that statement. Most candidates chose to present both the benefits and the drawbacks of children watching TV, often with clear paragraphing and with simple but effective linking words such as *trotzdem* and *also*. Less strong performances tended to be characterised by lots of ideas which were scarcely developed, by the unnecessary repetition of key ideas and, in some cases, by personal accounts such as 'what I watched last night' which are not appropriate at this level. Some candidates made sweeping statements such as *Man sollte das Fernsehen verbieten*, which they were unable to justify, and others made deductive leaps such as *Das Fernsehen verursacht Übergewicht* without an explanation of the link. Confusion between *fernsehen*, *Fernsehen* and *Fernseher* was – perhaps understandably – widespread, but it was disappointing to see candidates writing *das Fern* or *im Fern* as if *Fern* itself were a noun. A common lexical error was *gewaltig* instead of *gewalttätig* and many candidates had difficulty distinguishing between *Gefahr* and *gefährlich*.

### Question 11

A small but significant number of candidates opted for this title. The strongest responses were those that showed a good understanding of the stimulus – an e-mail from Jasmin asking for advice on how she should help her friend Luise – and offered sensible ideas backed up by sound explanation and reasoning. Examiners had no particular expectation in terms of content, but many candidates gave suitable advice on diet and exercise and some also suggested possible reasons for Luise’s problems, perhaps relating to a difficult situation at home or school. A few also suggested contacting Luise’s parents directly. Less able candidates tended to fare badly if they chose this question, partly because they often struggled with the basic content of their response – even to the extent of confusing Jasmin with Luise – and partly because their linguistic knowledge was insufficient. There was much confusion between *sie* (she) and *Sie* (you), and between the possessive adjectives *ihr*, *Ihr*, etc. A few candidates successfully recycled key vocabulary from Question 9, but others relied largely on GCSE lexis and it was disappointing to see invented words such as *(das Problem) sorten*. Some candidates used specialised vocabulary inappropriately, resulting in far-fetched statements such as *Sie wird Lungenkrebs bekommen, wenn sie keinen Sport treibt*. Many candidates made good use of modal verbs, especially *sollte*, although there was some confusion between *muss nicht* and *darf nicht*.

### Question 12

This question, focusing on the differences between love and friendship, was the least popular title of the three. However, almost all those who attempted it did so with confidence and skill, resulting in some very high marks. The strongest candidates showed impressive maturity and clarity of thinking in their approach to the topic and question, using a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical structures. Some were able to use rhetorical questions to good effect and a few even discussed the different interpretations of the word *Liebe*. However, where less able candidates tackled this question, their responses were usually superficial and rarely went further than describing the qualities of a good friend. Some candidates in the middle range started well but did not deal satisfactorily with the second part of the question – *Was ist Ihrer Meinung nach wichtiger ... ?*. A careful reading of the question is always advisable before candidates put pen to paper.

## **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.

**Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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

**Web pages**

Centres are reminded that a wealth of support documents can be found on our web site at ([http://web.aqa.org.uk/qual/gce/languages/german\\_materials.php?id=09&prev=09](http://web.aqa.org.uk/qual/gce/languages/german_materials.php?id=09&prev=09)).

These include the latest version of the specification, past papers, reports on the examination and the Teacher Resource Bank (TRB). For GERM1 the TRB includes for the Writing Section additional specimen questions (to supplement past papers from previous series) and candidate exemplar work; this is an invaluable resource for preparing candidates for future examinations.