



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
June 2012**

German

GERM1

(Specification 2660)

Unit 1: Listening, Reading and Writing

Report on the Examination

Further copies of this Report on **the Examination** are available from: aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2012 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Copyright

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges 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 schools/colleges 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.

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

The spread of performance in this paper was very similar to that of June 2011. As always it was a pleasure to read the work of non-native speakers who nevertheless showed a secure grasp of the German language and used its complexities to good effect. A small number of students seemed to have been inappropriately entered for AS level German. Rubric infringements were, thankfully, rare, although a few students answered Q1 in German instead of English. Very few students seemed to have run out of time. Poor handwriting was occasionally a problem and sometimes it was not clear which of two responses a student wanted the examiner to mark: it is always better to cross out a word and write it again rather than trying to write one letter or word on top of another.

Section A

Question 1

Most students coped well with this transfer of meaning task, which included a fair amount of statistical information. A few students struggled to express themselves in clear English.

- (a) Well answered, with just a few wrong numbers such as '76'.
- (b) Mostly well answered, although some students wrongly wrote 'every two' for *jede zweite*.
- (c) Many students gave both elements of the required answer. Some omitted the comparative conveyed in the German by *früher*. A few students mis-rendered *in festen (Partnerschaften)* as 'invest (in partnerships)'.
- (d) Most students referred correctly to saving money, but the other points were more elusive. In particular *Wäsche* and *gebügelte* were not widely known.
- (e) Fairly well answered. The main pitfall was the temptation to translate *Mittelfeld* too literally, e.g. 'mid field'.
- (f) Well answered.

Question 2

This non-verbal comprehension task was generally well handled. The most accessible items proved to be parts (g), (d) and (h), while the hardest item was part (e), perhaps because the word *Gemeinschaften* was not known.

Question 3

This multiple-choice comprehension task was fairly challenging. Most students gave the correct answer in parts (a) and (b), showing comprehension of *immer mehr Besucher* and *vielen Regionen Europas*. The least accessible item was part (c), perhaps because students had to understand both *Ausnahme* and *Silvester* to reach the correct answer.

Question 4

This listening task on the topic of eating disorders required students to show comprehension of the recording and express their answers in German. While no marks were allocated to grammatical accuracy, nevertheless students had to convey the correct information without ambiguity. On the whole students coped well with the task, albeit with varied success from question to question. It was good that not too many students attempted a word-for-word transcription of whole sentences from the recording; such an approach rarely works.

- (a) Well answered.
- (b) The word *rundlich* caused difficulty here. A safer option for students who did not know *rundlich* was to adapt the phrase *wegen meines Gewichts*, changing *meines* to *ihres*.
- (c) Very well answered.
- (d) Many students gave the correct information, but credit could not be given for answers that included wrong words such as *tätlich* for *täglich*.
- (e) The hardest item in this question. Most students referred correctly to a hospital visit, but the phrase *wo die Ärzte mich ausführlich untersuchten und behandelten* caused widespread difficulty. No credit could be given for answers that included wrong words such as *erste* for *Ärzte*, nor for the lifting of the first person pronoun *mich*.
- (f) Many students identified the correct section of the recording, but the word *Gruppentherapie* had to be spelt in a recognisably German form for the mark to be awarded, and not all were able to do this.
- (g) Well answered. A few students invalidated their answer by using the adverb *normalerweise* instead of *normal*.
- (h) A testing question, which required comprehension of the whole phrase *keine Verbindung zwischen Schlankheit und Erfolg*. A number of students wrote *Krankheit* instead of *Schlankheit*, and some did not seem to know *Erfolg*.

Question 5

This gap fill task was a particularly good discriminator among the ablest students, who were able to use grammatical as well as lexical clues to reach the correct answers. The most challenging item was the third gap, where option I (*sieht*) was a tempting distractor for the correct answer G (*läuft*).

Question 6

This matching task on the topic of advertising produced a wide spread of attainment. Parts (a) and (b) proved to be the most accessible, and parts (c) and (g) the hardest.

Question 7

This question on the topic of family and relationships required students to pick the six correct statements from a choice of twelve. Most students scored a high mark overall. The most tempting incorrect answers proved to be options C, G and I.

Question 8

In this question, as in Q4, students had to write phrases or sentences in German in order to show comprehension of the stimulus text. Most adopted the correct approach, but a few wrote answers that were too vague or were based on inference rather than identifying the precise information in the text. In a task of this type students must always look carefully at the question word: it was disappointing to see some otherwise strong students answering a *Warum?* question with *als...* or even a *Wo?* question with a time phrase. Students should also beware of copying lengthy sections of the text verbatim, as this can sometimes distort their answer and then the mark cannot be awarded.

- (a) Some good answers, but also some confusion, especially among those students who tried to lift the phrase *sieht ihm sein Alter nicht an* without understanding it. A simple answer such as *jung* or *jünger als er ist* worked well here.
- (b) Most students identified the number *fünf*, but a few did not convey the idea of 'at the age of' clearly.
- (c) Fairly well answered. Where confusion occurred, it was usually the omission of the crucial word *als* in the phrase *als Puck dienten Tennisbälle*.
- (d) A good number of correct answers, although some students seemed confused between the different stages of Karl's life, i.e. his schooling and his employment.
- (e) Some students did not make the connection between *Beruf* and *Ingenieur*. Some thought that Karl's career was in sport.
- (f) Not an easy item. Even among those who identified the correct word for the answer, *Firmenmannschaft*, there were some instances of wrong transcription such as *Firmenschaft*, for which no credit could be given.
- (g)(i) There was a good number of correct answers, but the misuse of the prepositions *vor* and *seit* sometimes caused confusion.
- (g)(ii) In similar fashion to part (a), a simple 'own words' answer such as *Er spielte gut gegen jüngere Spieler* was just as effective as the copying out of the whole sentence from the text. Those who lifted the word *Figur* sometimes misunderstood it, thinking that it referred to Karl's physical appearance.
- (h) Very well answered, apart from those who inappropriately lifted the conjunction *bis* from the text. As in part (f), careless miscopying such as *Knieverletzung* instead of *Knieverletzung* sometimes cost students a mark.

Question 9

The overall standard in this grammar test was higher than in previous series. Most students appeared to be using appropriate techniques to identify verb tenses and case endings. There were still some costly instances of miscopying such as *perfect...* instead of *perfekt...*; this is the only question in GERM1 where the spelling must be 100% correct for a mark to be awarded. Umlauts count, too!

- (a) This was the most accessible item in Q9. Only a few students were confused between the verbs *hören* and *gehören*.
- (b) Disappointingly, a number of students chose the correct ending *-t* but miscopied the word, e.g. they wrote *endeckt* instead of *entdeckt*.
- (c) The vowel change from *-ei-* in the infinitive to *-ie-* in the past participle caused difficulty. Very few students gave the correct answer *erschiene*.
- (d) Fairly well answered, but some students gave the feminine ending (*die*) *erste* instead of the plural (*die*) *ersten*.
- (e) The past participle *gebracht* was by no means universally known.
- (f) Fairly well answered. A number of students wrote *guten*, which would have been correct if the previous word had been *keine* rather than *nicht (unbedingt)*.
- (g) Again, fairly well answered. It is a useful 'short cut' rule that an adjective ends in *-en* if the article before it ends in *-en* (or *-em*).
- (h) Generally well answered, although some students wrote an infinitive form, perhaps because the verb came at the end of the sentence.
- (i) This item was difficult because students had to identify the correct gender as well as the correct case. Unfortunately some students gave the correct ending but miscopied the word, e.g. they put the umlaut on the wrong vowel or they missed out the *-r-*.
- (j) Although this was a fairly standard example of a conditional sentence, some students seemed to be unfamiliar with the construction and inappropriately wrote indicative forms such as *hat* or *haben*.

Section B: Extended writing questions

Overall, the standard of students' writing was slightly higher than in previous series. Most students fulfilled the basic requirement of addressing the task set, rather than writing generally about the topic area. A small number of students produced elegant German that bore little relation to the task in question, perhaps because they were re-using previously learnt material. A significant number of essays stretched well beyond the recommended word count; in many cases this was useful because it allowed the student to incorporate a larger number of points, but sometimes it led to rambling and inaccurate writing and in those instances students' time would have been better spent concentrating on quality rather than quantity.

In awarding the mark for Content, examiners were looking not for specific points but for a well-balanced, fully relevant response to the title with good depth of treatment. They gave

more credit for a few fully developed and exemplified points than for a long list of briefly stated opinions. Clarity was also important, both in terms of legibility – examiners always did their best to decipher instances of poor handwriting but were sometimes defeated – and in terms of appropriate choice of vocabulary and structures. For many students the skilful use of complex language enhanced not only their Range of Structures mark but also their Content mark because it enabled them to convey nuances of meaning. Some students still pay insufficient attention to the quality of their conclusion; the strongest conclusions are those that summarise the content of the essay without introducing new points.

The marks for Quality of Language – Range of Vocabulary, Range of Structures and Accuracy – were not always consistent with the mark for Content. Generally the mark for Range of Vocabulary was the highest of the three Quality of Language marks, although there were a few exceptions. It was good to see evidence of students having learnt a substantial list of topic-specific vocabulary which they were able to use effectively. Similarly, many students seemed comfortable with using a wide range of structures, although in some instances the repetition of the same sentence type – such as a main clause followed by a *weil*-clause – was an issue. Among the most frequent errors with vocabulary and structures in Section B were:

- *(das) Fern* instead of *Fernseher* or *Fernsehen*
- misuse of *überall* instead of *im Großen und Ganzen*
- faulty renderings of *meiner Meinung nach* such as *in meiner Meinung* or *meiner Meinung nach Freundschaft ist dass es...*
- *Zeit spenden* instead of *Zeit verbringen*
- *eine gute Ahnung* instead of *eine gute Idee*
- confusion between *gesund* and *Gesundheit*
- confusion between *übergewichtig* and *Übergewicht*
- confusion between *werden* and *bekommen*
- misuse of *hilfsbereit* when referring to a measure or a situation
- *nur* misused as an adjective, e.g. *die nur Sendungen*
- misuse of possessive adjectives, especially *dein* instead of *sein* or *ihr*

Question 10

This question, relating to the TV viewing habits of children, was by far the most popular of the three options in Section B. It was on the whole well tackled. Many students either made sensible use of the suggested areas on the question paper or they provided suitable ideas of their own. Students were not expected to refer repeatedly to the suggested maximum viewing time of 30 minutes, but for many it provided a useful point of focus, including the pertinent point that many individual programmes are more than 30 minutes long. The question lent itself well to ‘for and against’ treatment and many students opted for that approach. However, examiners were equally impressed by some very strongly argued essays either against or in favour of the suggested time limit on TV viewing. Weaker responses tended either to try to deal with too many aspects of the TV topic in a superficial way or they wrote too generally about the benefits and dangers of TV with insufficient reference to young children. Another pitfall was unwarranted diversion into other topic areas: while it was acceptable to state that TV takes time away from other activities such as sport or family conversations, it was not appropriate to write whole paragraphs on those activities.

Question 11

The relatively few students who tackled this question, focusing on the feasibility of lifelong friendships, usually produced a pleasing response that contained plenty of relevant ideas and strong lines of argument. Although it was not necessary to include personal evidence, some students managed to include examples from their own families, such as the long-lasting friendships of their grandparents. Many students dealt adequately with both parts of

the question, either in discrete sections or in tandem. A number of students made appropriate reference to the role of technology in helping geographically distant friends keep in touch with each other. A few students questioned the premise of the question: Why should we even try to have a lifelong friendship? Weaker responses tended to deal too generally with the nature of friendship, sometimes doing little more than reciting the qualities of a good friend such as ‘someone you can rely on’, ‘someone who listens’, and so on. There was a place for such comments but they needed to be related to the title.

Question 12

This question produced a wide spread of responses in terms of quality. At the top end of the attainment range were those responses which focused fully on the question asked and sought to explain the popularity of holidays. Commonly suggested explanations were the greater availability of cheap flights, the ease of online holiday bookings, the need to escape from ever more stressful work places, and – more subtly – a greater awareness of cultural diversity which encouraged people to travel. Some students made specific reference to the economic crisis affecting many people in Europe and a few did so effectively, perhaps by explaining how holidays were even more greatly valued when money was short than in times of plenty. It was interesting to see references to the economic contributions made by holiday-makers, such as helping to create jobs: while not an obvious point in the context of this question it was possible to include it alongside other arguments. It was not necessary for students to refer specifically to the German-speaking world but it was often refreshing when they did so. Less good responses often wandered from the task: no credit could be given to lengthy paragraphs about the drawbacks of holidays and little credit was awarded for detailed comparisons between two types of holiday destination. Students could justifiably refer to personal experiences to support their arguments, but essays which consisted merely of ‘what I did last summer’ fell short of expectations at this level.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

On-screen marking was used for this unit and students 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 students 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 students 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

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

Students 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 students 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, students 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.

Convert raw or scaled marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below.

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion

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).

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 student exemplar work; this is an invaluable resource for preparing students for future examinations.