



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

German

GERM3

(Specification 2660)

Unit 3: Listening, Reading and Writing

Report on the Examination

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Unit 3

General Comments

Students were, on the whole, entered appropriately for this examination and there were some very strong performances across the range of questions.

The paper was completed by the vast majority of students. Despite some blanks in the translation, all students attempted the question and the length of many answers in Section B was not only encouraging but also evidence of the accessibility of the paper.

A few scripts were difficult to read because of very small or poor handwriting and students would be well advised to pay attention to the legibility of their work in a written paper.

Section A

Question 1

The first two questions caused some difficulty for some students. In (a) they might have confused numbers and the frequency of Axel's violent acts and in (b) they might have been unsure of vocabulary such as *Mitleid* or *bereut*. The remaining four answers were well done.

Question 2

Students were asked to identify six statements which did **not** correspond to the audio report. A handful of answers did the opposite and this highlights the need for careful reading of the rubric in every question. It is pleasing to report, however, that many students correctly identified four or more statements.

Question 3

This question was very well done with over 90% of students scoring at least five of the seven marks available.

Question 4

Students performed very well on this question, too. They showed a good level of comprehension and were able to identify from the report statements the social worker would have uttered herself.

Question 5

Students were asked to identify **two** correct answers from a list of four and the statistics show they were able to do so successfully. No student failed to register marks on this question.

Question 6

Some difficulty was caused by (b) and it might be assumed that *Bodenfeuchtigkeit* was not widely known, although in terms of comprehension, the first part of the phrase should have helped. The vocabulary was specialised but it was specific to the topic.

Question 7

The marks for this question suggest that students found it relatively straightforward. A very high percentage scored four or more of the six available.

Question 8

Again, students found this question very accessible and the vast majority were able to identify correctly whether a statement was true, false or not given. The rubric asked for *R*, *F* or *NA* to be entered in the answer box, but a handful of students entered *T*, *F* or *?* or entered symbols $\sqrt{\quad}$, x . Whilst this was accepted on this occasion it does highlight the need for schools and colleges to emphasise the importance of careful reading of the rubric.

Question 9

It is very pleasing indeed to report that all students registered marks for the translation, although some were admittedly low. The excellent and good translations showed knowledge of vocabulary, tenses and structures and were written in clear English. Examiners noted there were fewer blanks and gaps this year and where a word was not known, many students still offered a translation. Some vocabulary did cause problems, notably *Stau*, *lassen sich beobachten*, *Bürgermeister*, *halten für*, *erforderlich*, *Ausbau*. Schools and colleges are reminded that marks are awarded if the sense of the German is expressed in acceptable English, but key vocabulary cannot be ignored. For example, *mehrere Millionen* must be **several** Million and not **many Millions**. Similarly, *Sondersitzung* is a **special meeting** and not merely a meeting.

Question 10

Each sentence has four elements, each worth one mark, but if candidates are to score highly, they must be aware of the need for grammatical accuracy. This is a demanding exercise and accuracy in this question includes capitalisation, so it is important that students are encouraged to clearly distinguish between upper and lower case. In this question paraphrases are rejected (*e.g es wäre sinnvoll* but **not** *es wäre eine gute Idee*) This year the paper tested the comparative, imperfect tense of modals + infinitive, conditional, adjectival endings, perfect tense of reflexive verbs, relative clauses.

- (a) On the whole this was well done. Often the umlaut was missing from *kürzer* and there were English spellings of *Kilometer*.
- (b) *Der Verkehrsminister* was not widely known, in contrast to *die (An)zahl* and some candidates added *zu* before the infinitive after the modal.
- (c) The conditional was well translated by the vast majority of students and *sinnvoll/vernünftig* were widely known.
- (d) This was the most problematic of the five sentences. Many students could not accurately translate the perfect tense of the reflexive *sich verbessern*.
- (e) Many students successfully translated all four elements of this question, although a handful did begin their answer with *da ist* for “there is”. The relative clause was very well done, on the whole.

Section B

A small number of students still do not enter the number of the question in the box provided, or enter the wrong number. They should be reminded of the importance of this very simple administrative procedure. Attention should also be drawn to the rubric in the introduction to Questions 13 and 14.

Students are generally well prepared for these questions but it is still worth pointing out points that could help in future.

Some students try to be too adventurous in their use of language and get themselves into difficulty, which has led to the meaning becoming blurred. Examiners realise that students are trying to make an impression but credit cannot be given if the point is not communicated. Pre-learned phrases do have their advantages but when it comes to whole paragraphs there can be problems. There must be some adaptation to the requirements of the question set. For example, there were some very good introductory paragraphs outlining the intended approach but these were not followed up logically.

As recommended in last year's report, the bullet points at the start of the Section should be reinforced by teachers as it clearly advises students on how to gain the highest marks. Students need to be aware that the content of the essay will have a bearing on the marks awarded for vocabulary, structure and accuracy.

Question 11

Some choices do not really constitute a "region". Teachers and students should be aware that named towns, some of which are relatively small, inevitably restricts the scope for a full and detailed response. In **(a)** Bavaria and Berlin were popular choices again this year. The highest-scoring answers were those which recognised it is not sufficient to describe where the area lies or its geographical features – although these are relevant considerations – but an analysis of the effects on aspects such as tourism, business and commerce, population etc was important here. Question **(b)** gave students the opportunity to express opinions and make judgements. There were some very good answers which justified their choice by referring to history, culture, and educational, recreational and employment opportunities in the region. Specific examples revealed a thorough knowledge of the region and an understanding of the task at hand.

Question 12

Schools and colleges are free to choose the period studied but in the time available in the examination an answer that deals with an extensive period (e.g 1945 -89) is less likely to be as detailed and analytical as a more concentrated one (e.g 1945-61, 1961-89).

In **(a)** many students chose to discuss two personalities – and some even three. This is perfectly acceptable providing the answer explained **why** the things their chosen *Persönlichkeit(en)* had done were important. The most successful responses evaluated the impact of their actions and did not merely document **what** they had done. Gorbatschev, Hoenecker and Ulbricht were popular choices this year.

There were some very impressive answers in **(b)**, especially those dealing with 1961-1989 in the DDR. Students showed a sound knowledge of life at the time and an impressive level of analysis contributed to a convincing commentary.

Question 13

Question **(a)** was a more popular choice but did not necessarily produce the most convincing answers. Whilst some were really outstanding, there were those which merely described the characters or narrated the plot rather than analysed their importance to the work as a whole. These answers scored marks, of course, but were too general to be placed in the higher bands for content. The more impressive answers in **(b)** covered a range of points - the author's technique, characterisation, imagery, plot, humour – supported by close reference to the text and a good level of evaluation. On the whole this question was well done.

Question 14

Andorra, *Der Besuch der alten Dame* and *Die Physiker* were very popular choices and lent themselves very well to (a) in terms of an optimistic/pessimistic debate. Some students concentrated on one aspect and others considered both sides of the argument before coming to a well-justified conclusion. Students showed a very thorough knowledge of the plays and there were some outstanding answers, which scored full marks. In (b) students had the freedom to choose any aspect of the work and, again, there were some very impressive answers where opinion was supported by close and accurate reference to the work studied. Students could be reminded that direct quotation does indeed reinforce points made but is not a pre-requisite for high marks for content.

Examiners reported that a large number of students referred to the plays as *ein Spiel* rather than *ein Stück* and, perhaps, attention should be drawn to this.

Question 15

Most students wrote about a film director with *Das Leben der Anderen*, *Goodbye Lenin* and *Die Welle* the most common choices. In (a) there was a tendency to narration at the expense of saying **what** impressed them and **why**. Occasionally, students did not actually name the Director or film they were discussing and this caused some concern amongst examiners. Answers were not entirely restricted to film directors and there were a few answers on musicians or artists – but only a few. In (b), however, the architect Hundertwasser was the subject of some very good essays. Students clearly linked his philosophy of architecture to individual projects and explained how he translated his ideas into his designs.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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