

# **Report on the Units**

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**January 2009**

**3862/7862/MS/R/09J**

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Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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**Advanced GCE German (7862)**

**Advanced Subsidiary GCE German (3862)**

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## 2661 Speaking

### General Comments

#### Role-play

The three role-plays set for this series each contained a range of difficulty, from easier parts designed for weaker candidates, to more difficult parts aimed at the stronger end of the ability range. A tiny minority of candidates treated the role-play as a translation exercise, and read out their attempted translations, often awkwardly, written down in the 20-minute preparation time. Most candidates used their preparation time well, and were able to convey what they could of the stimulus material at least adequately. Some teacher/examiners listened carefully and, where candidates omitted details, elicited further information from the stimulus material. Unfortunately, other teacher/examiners simply followed the Examiner's Sheet, ignoring what the candidates were saying. Candidates who do not attempt considerable proportions of the text, or simplify it and omit significant details, cannot be rewarded with high marks on Grid 1A. Most candidates were aware that the initial two statements have to be changed into questions. Timing of the role-play was good in the majority of cases. Centres now seem to be fully aware that assessment of the role-play ceases after five minutes.

### Comments on Individual Questions

#### Role-play A: Hotel Pods

Being the first in the Randomisation sequence, this role-play was the one most frequently used. The text, based on a newspaper article, dealt with the growth of eco-tourism and possible future ideas on accommodation. The language of the article was not topic-specific, and the four most difficult items of vocabulary had been glossed.

Some candidates chose to ignore much of the first paragraph, or over-simplified it. Many found £1bn industry and the idea of a dramatic increase difficult. Some experienced difficulties in expressing all the ideas of a given sentence. Often, candidates would express some of the ideas, and skilful teacher/examiners would encourage them to add details. In the third paragraph, the year 2030 produced all kinds of interesting variations, and some candidates seemed unfamiliar with the terms Australian, rainforests and Antarctic. Only the best coped with the passive 'would be dismantled'. In the final paragraph, a few misread 'mobile-free beaches' and talked of mobile beaches. Many scored 3/5 for criterion 1A. Candidate response (final bullet point) to the ideas in this thought-provoking text was interesting: some thought Ken Thompson's ideas were crazy, others thought they might be feasible in years to come. Many seemed genuinely interested in saving the planet. One candidate spoke of *hitzefreie Strände*. Quality of language was in line with all other speaking tests at this level from the excellent to the very poor.

#### Role-play B: Gainsborough Old Hall

This role-play, the last in the Randomisation sequence, was attempted only by those centres with five or more candidates. As most centres have small numbers in the January series, it was the one least frequently heard. Those candidates given it made at least adequate attempts to convey the information involving a visit by the exchange partner's father / mother to a visitor attraction near Lincoln. The text itself contained a mixture of easier and harder elements. Weaker candidates tended to ignore the more difficult elements such as 'one of Britain's most impressive' / 'one of England's richest families' / 'it has counted several kings among its guests'. '59 steps', if known at all, was often *59 (or 95!) Treppe(n) or 59 Steppen*. The word 'magnificent'

was often rendered as *schön*, 'tower' was not always known, and candidates on the whole did not suggest what the 'unusual gifts' or even 'delicious Christmas specialities' might be. Statements such as *man kann ein mittelalterlich Dezember sehen* were not always clear. Some, including teacher/examiners as well as candidates, seemed to confuse Lincoln with Gainsborough.

### **Role-play C: Thames Dinner Cruises**

Candidates offered this role-play were able to express in German many of the details in the stimulus material dealing with a restaurant ship. The text itself proved accessible and offered a variety of information, although some difficulties with the details in the first paragraph were noted. Typical problems were numbers (19.15 was often 19.50) and 'four course meal' seemed beyond most (*4 Kurs Essen / 4 Essen / 4 Etage Essen*). Some items were not always clearly expressed: 'international cuisine' was sometimes *international Lebensmittel*, and in one case the 'dress code' was *die Männer muss eine Krawatt tragen und das ist alles*. These are exceptions, however, and many were capable of gaining at least 3/5 on Grid 1A. Not all mentioned the 'luxurious atmosphere' of the dining room or 'enjoy live music'. Good examiners tried to encourage their candidates to supply further details. This will become increasingly important in the new specification, as more marks are to be awarded for use of the stimulus. Many candidates made sound suggestions as to what the parents might also do in London in response to the final bullet point stimulus.

The OCR AS role-play has proved to be an excellent test of what candidates are able to do after one year of study post GCSE. It offers weaker candidates the chance to express some basics, whilst allowing stronger candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their linguistic strengths, as well as put their initiative and imagination to good use. Although not a great deal of initiative or imagination was in evidence this series, the quality of language heard was comparable to that of previous series. Weaker candidates tend to express themselves in simple sentence patterns only. They do not attempt to use ambitious language, restrict themselves to *es gibt* forms of the verbs *sein/haben* and often have difficulties with basic verb forms, modals and word order. Stronger candidates have not only a sound command of the basics, but also impress with their use of complex structures such as relative clauses, subjunctives and even passives.

## **Topic**

Most candidates were well prepared for this part of the examination. Very few were over-prepared. Most presentations were well-timed at between two and three minutes, a few still exceeded the time limit. Centres are yet again reminded that in such cases teacher/examiners **must** intervene after three minutes. The discussion part of the topic should last 7-8 minutes and follow the candidates' headings on the Oral Topic Form, starting with the first heading, unless this has been the subject of the presentation. It is recognised that the presentation is likely to be learnt by heart, but once the presentation is over, the discussion should contain a great deal of spontaneous language. Teacher/examiners should react to statements made by candidates and challenge what is being said, especially if it contains generalisations. The best discussions are those where a great deal of genuine interchange takes place. This occurs naturally when discussions have not been over-rehearsed in preparation for the speaking test. Pre-rehearsed "mini-monologue"-style recitations do not demonstrate spontaneity, and candidates penalise themselves on criterion 1E. Disappointingly, a tiny minority of centres persists in offering non-spontaneous "discussions" in various guises, even after previous critical centre reports. Thankfully, mini-monologues were the exception and topics were almost entirely related to a German-speaking country. Headings on the Oral Topic Form were mostly well presented, although some are still far too detailed. They should be headings, not sentences, and limited to a few words. Their function is to remind candidate and teacher/examiner what the candidate would like to focus on in the discussion. Timing of the topic was mostly good. Where topic discussions exceed the time limit, assessment ceases after ten minutes.

Topics chosen by candidates were mostly familiar. It is pleasing when candidates from the same centre offer different topics. Weaker candidates still struggle with the usual problems of accuracy, subject/verb agreement, verb second idea and word order in subordinate clauses. Most recordings were good. Surprisingly few centres sent CD recordings rather than cassette. It is essential that centres check that recordings are audible before sending them to markers and moderators. A few recordings this series could only be heard at full volume. It is always rewarding to hear successful interchanges of ideas and opinions. The most successful discussions are always lively, spontaneous, accurate and pleasingly peppered with solid factual information on the chosen topic.

## 2662 Listening, Reading & Writing 1

### General Comments

This is the penultimate examination for this particular specification, and the candidature of some 420 tackled the paper on the whole in a competent and pleasing manner. There were almost no rubric errors and it is particularly satisfying to be able to report that there were many scripts of a really high standard. The marks obtained covered the whole range from the teens to the maximum, but very poor scripts were few and far between. Candidates have become quite sophisticated in organising their time round the varying demands of this paper, and it was rare to find a script incomplete because of lack of time. Candidates found the paper accessible, and tackled it with a degree of confidence. A general comment would be that their understanding of spoken and written German is at a high level: problems arise with their construction of written German, in particular with case, gender, prepositions and word order.

### Comments on Individual Questions

#### 1 Unfall eines Radfahrers

This listening passage proved accessible to most candidates, although completely correct answers were not all that common. Few candidates were aware of the precise meaning of *anderthalb* (d) and a significant minority put a letter v instead of a w in *Lkw* (c). The numbers in (a), (b) and (e) were generally well-known, but again it is worth pointing out that candidates penalize themselves by writing numbers in full, which is actually in contravention of the rubric. Examiners will accept numbers written in full, but not if they are spelt incorrectly. These early questions have to be tested in a non-verbal way: therefore examiners are likely to make frequent use of numbers and the alphabet.

#### 2 Die CD von Babaji

This passage differentiated well, with fewer candidates than normal scoring high marks. Where difficulties were encountered, it tended to be with questions (a) and (e).

#### 3 Der Figur-Coach

This question proved very accessible with most candidates scoring well. Once again it is pleasing to note that no candidate put more than 10 ticks. The vocabulary was accessible to most candidates, with perhaps *abnehmen* in alternative (r) proving to be a little difficult.

#### 4 Ein Haus, das richtig zum Wohnen ist

This question proved to be more challenging than corresponding ones in some recent years. It proved to be a very effective discriminator of its type, with only the most able candidates scoring highly. Candidates seem to find this type of exercise difficult, probably because many of them lack the very accurate knowledge of German that this requires. Although (f) starts *Die*, many wrote *Haus*, while the answer to (j) was often *Kühlschrank*, despite the word *viele* which obviously required a plural form. In (e), candidates often showed a lack of awareness of word order by adding *fotografieren* or *kaufen* in the middle of the sentence. In (a), *angenehm* was used as a past participle because many candidates did not know *gesiegt*.

## 5 Frau Spielmann am Telefon

This question tackles both the listening skills of the candidates, and their ability to communicate the answers in German. The first part of the exercise they achieved with relatively little difficulty, whereas the second part proved more challenging. Examiners are mindful of the fact that this is a listening exercise, and are therefore prepared to accept versions that a sympathetic native speaker would be prepared to understand. Some excellent responses to this question in mature and fluent German showed a firm grasp of AS structures as well as a good understanding of spoken German in a world-of-work context. *Hannover* in (a) was generally recognized, but not always accurately spelt. Questions (b) and (c) did not prove difficult, but in (d), whereas most candidates grasped the idea of *einen Kunden*, few successfully rendered the fact that this customer had to be attributed to *der Firma Spielmann*. Vague possessives did not help in this case. Question (e) proved surprisingly accessible, perhaps because only 3 of 4 possible answers were needed for maximum points, or more likely because the German on the tape rolls along at this point in clauses which are readily understandable. Question (f), however, eluded all but the strongest candidates, who successfully rendered the necessary *wir* in the answer. Vague references to either *sie* or *Sie* were not acceptable. Question (g) was well understood, but few candidates scored full marks on (h). Almost all candidates recognized *in der Stadtmitte*, but few stated correctly that the firm **owned** the flat or that it was *möbliert*. In question (h) a significant minority of candidates failed to recognize that the question referred to salary, and that it was stated to be adequate (*passend*). Grammatically the most successful candidates are those who can manipulate persons and adjectives effectively as in questions (d) and (f). Time spent practising such skills on such questions would be well spent. Nevertheless there were many pleasing answers, and in general candidates are able to cope with this challenging type of exercise.

## 6 World of Work – Reading

The format of this type of question is now well-established. Candidates are always asked to write a memo for their employer **IN ENGLISH**. Almost all, but not all, candidates observed this essential requirement of the rubric. Although candidates are not penalized for translating, it allows the rendering to flow much better, and therefore be more cogent, if the memo style is adopted. It was very marked again this year that some candidates, even some quite able ones, disadvantaged themselves by giving a rendering that was much too free. Examiners have a very precise mark scheme which follows the text exactly, and candidates who miss out whole chunks, or who change the order without good reason lose a significant number of marks. This question accounts for a quarter of the marks for the whole paper and, on this evidence, a significant number still need to spend more time on practising this skill. Candidates are again reminded that they should put in all the relevant information, and should practise beginnings and endings of formal letters in English. The first 4 marking points were generally well-understood, although often “elements” and “espresso machines” were put in the singular. Most candidates understood that the new model needed to be in the shops by March, although a large number of candidates, perhaps up to 40%, translated ‘February 5<sup>th</sup>’ as February 15<sup>th</sup>! The word *günstig* was not as well known as it should have been, but most candidates realized that it was hoped that the new model would be popular (*beliebt*). Some candidates really went over the top here, saying that customers would fall in love with their new coffee machine. Perhaps it was all linked in their minds with the abovementioned February 15<sup>th</sup>, and its proximity to Valentine’s Day! Examiners insisted on a clear understanding of **further** elements (*weitere*), and also of *sich verlassen auf* (rely on) in the final sentence of the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph. Most candidates understood the possible confusion between the two towns called *Alfeld* and the impact of the final paragraph. It is worth pointing out again that only meticulous attention to detail will result in high marks. Many candidates, however, were able to combine the necessary accuracy from the foreign language with the high level of



competence in English grammar, punctuation and spelling required here. Overall the standard on this question seemed similar to that of previous years.

## 7 Letter to Herr Stöbler

This letter is invariably topped and tailed for the candidates, and they do themselves no favours by inserting their (sometimes incorrect) beginnings and endings. It cannot be stressed too much that this question is always part of the 'World of Work' section of the paper, and thus this letter **must** be written in the polite form. It is appreciated that pupils are taught *du* and *dein* from a very early age, but 6<sup>th</sup> Form study requires the mastery of a more formal genre. As this is invariably a business-orientated letter, revision of the adjectives and pronouns associated with the polite form (*Sie, Ihr, Ihnen* etc.) will pay dividends. Small is beautiful, and the most successful candidates can answer the task very well by constructing the bare minimum of perfectly formed sentences. This is not primarily a vocabulary exercise: candidates can find most of the words they need in question 6. In this respect there has been a significant improvement over the last few years. It was very heartening to see that most candidates managed to thank for the letter. This has been mentioned in almost all examiners' reports over the past few years and it seems that the message has been heeded. 'Sorry' in the second bullet point was not always adequately rendered and the German for 'post code' was often not known. Most candidates managed to extract 'consignment' from Question 6 and succeeded in finding the correct vocabulary for 'order' and 'more' (4<sup>th</sup> bullet point). It is worth reiterating that candidates disadvantage themselves by quoting pre-learnt sentences and formulaic constructions of doubtful relevance to the task in hand. There were, however, quite a number of delightfully concise and accurate answers. It was pleasing to note that all candidates managed to produce something that a sympathetic native speaker would be able to recognize.

## 2663 Reading & Writing

### General Comments

The paper this January produced candidate responses over the full mark range. The vast majority of candidates are re-taking this examination and are therefore quite familiar with the format, thus making rubric infringements a very rare occurrence. The standard of the candidate responses was more varied than in the previous January series but, as usual, there were some well-written and thoughtful essays.

### Comments on Individual Questions

#### Section A

Both questions in this section were good predictors of performance in Q.3.

#### Question 1

This gap-fill task was a good test of comprehension and only the best candidates gained full marks. Most completed 6 and 8 correctly, but the distractors *motivierend* and *arbeitet* caught out the unwary in 2 and 3.

#### Question 2

The matching of beginnings and ends of sentences is a challenging task but on average the scores for Q.2 were higher than for Q.1. There was little detectable pattern to the marks scored, although 6,7 and 8 were more often correct than the first four.

#### Question 3

The text explored a new area: the theatre. Most candidates found the text fairly accessible and nearly all managed to convey 5 or 6 points. As usual there were 14 content points available, of which the candidate had to convey 10 to gain full marks on Grid B. However there were two questions: 8 points were available for defining 'Theater Undercover' and another 6 for describing one of the 'actions'. Some candidates ignored this and just summarised the whole text, which meant both 'actions'. They were not penalised for this but could only score points for the first 'action' they described.

In part (ii) of Q.3 the candidates were asked to give their own response to 'Theater Undercover' and to more conventional theatre as well. There was a surprisingly positive reaction to this type of theatre, which a number of candidates referred to as *Art Theater*, having slightly misinterpreted the question (*Was halten Sie von dieser Art Theater?*). Some pointed out the similarity to some shows on the television and many indicated a willingness to get involved in a project like this. Conventional theatre fared less well: apart from some enthusiasts, most agreed that the theatre was boring, expensive and only for old people! Points are awarded on the basis of the ideas expressed and the development or justification of those ideas and then matched with the criteria in Grid C.

Grid A is used to award marks for Quality of Language over both parts of the question. Most candidates were more than adequately equipped with vocabulary to express their ideas and opinions. There were some well-expressed essays but there were also the usual range of careless errors: singular / plural, basic word order, random punctuation and capital letters. These mistakes of a very basic nature can bring down the marks of candidates who otherwise have an extensive vocabulary and know a good range of structures. The level of language is often uneven between the two parts of the essay: some candidates are good at manipulating the language of the text in (i) but go to pieces when they have to improvise, others struggle with the

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text but can express their own ideas quite fluently. Very few candidates overstep the 5 word lifting limit but some at the opposite end of the spectrum go to extreme lengths to avoid the charge of 'lifting'. They should be reminded that they are expected to manipulate and not reinvent.

There were few recurring problems particular to this series.

**Section C**

The marks for the Cloze Test appeared to be a more accurate reflection of the Language marks in Q.3 than is often the case. There was little observable consistency to the pattern of error.

## 2665 Listening, Reading & Writing 2

### General Comments

Examiners reported that the level of difficulty of the paper was appropriate. All sections produced a good spread of marks. Candidates performed fairly evenly throughout the paper and there was no evidence that there was insufficient time for candidates to complete the paper. Many made good use of the blank spaces provided, using them also for writing out tables of case endings as well as their rough work. As is usual in January, there were far fewer candidates than in the summer. There was quite a high proportion of native speakers this January, but there were also some impressive linguists who performed well without having that natural advantage. At the other end of the scale there were candidates who were clearly not yet quite ready for the demands of an A level examination, as their rather poor comprehension and vocabulary betrayed.

### Comments on Individual Questions

#### Section A Listening

Weaker candidates lost comprehension points and language marks by simply writing down what they thought they heard, whether it answered the question or not. Candidates' marks were similar on both tasks, indicating that both passages were equally accessible to them.

1d and e caused difficulty, with some candidates not understanding or reading the questions carefully enough.

1f: Some candidates lost the mark by being tempted by the distracter 50%.

1g: This required careful listening and was not an easy point to get.

1h: Some candidates failed to mention *in Deutschland*, which was a necessary part of the answer.

Otherwise, questions appeared to cause no great difficulty.

2a: Most candidates gained this mark, losing it if they failed to demonstrate understanding of *Expertin*. *Expartin* and *Expatin* were the most common misspellings, revealing a lack of comprehension.

2c: Candidates often failed to answer the question directly but were nevertheless awarded the comprehension point. Several candidates included the percentage (95%) and some lost the mark by writing 59%.

2d: Many candidates simply tried to transcribe what they heard or wrote *sie werden angegriffen*, which was ambiguous, and lost the mark.

2e: This was a transcription exercise, and most candidates managed to get at least one point.

2f: *unauffälliger* proved difficult.

2g: Many candidates lost the point by not giving a direct answer.

2h required some thought and a direct answer, which weaker candidates were unable to give.

## Section B Reading

Both texts appeared to be accessible.

### Aufgabe 3

Candidates generally coped well with this task and were able to manipulate the language successfully, if not always perfectly, to gain comprehension points. Weaker candidates were unable to change *mich* to *ihn*, with a number writing *sich* or *er*.

### Aufgabe 4

Again, candidates coped well, with many gaining at least 7 out of the 9 points. One or two tried too hard to find synonyms when it was not necessary, and lost points because of that. 4h is an example of this, as *die Klugen* is not the same as *die überdurchschnittlich Ausgebildeten*. The question that caught many candidates out was 4c.

### Aufgabe 5

This task caused a number of difficulties, which was surprising because this type of task appears in every paper. Some candidates did not know the vocabulary but perhaps they need more training in approaching this task.

5a was perhaps the hardest, but disappointingly few candidates were able to say *sind stärker geworden* or *sie sind schlimmer geworden* for 5b; or *freie Arbeitsplätze* for 5c; or *im normalen Leben* for 5d.

### Exercise 6

This produced a wide spread of marks. Not surprisingly, native speakers often performed less well in this section, but native English speakers also lost points through not expressing themselves sufficiently clearly. 'School forms' in English has a different meaning, for instance. Some general and topic-specific vocabulary was clearly not known: e.g. *Ausbildung* (often rendered as 'education'), *das dreigliedrige Schulsystem*, *Behinderungen*, *Herkunft*, *sich um Asyl bewerben* (some thinking 'Asyl' was also an English word, and some candidates writing about living in asylums), *wechseln*.

Apart from this, marks were lost for 6a, for candidates understanding *zehnjährigen* as 'for ten years' or for reading *Schulformen* as *Schuluniformen*; for 6b, if candidates did not say that Austria was the *only other* country to have this system; for 6g, if they failed to mention that the *parents* were illegal immigrants.

Some candidates clearly failed to read the questions carefully enough and gave the answer 'immigrant children' for 6c or 6g, or repeated the information in the question as their answer to 6h.

### Section C Writing

It was disappointing that the majority of candidates did not make any markings on the English text. Those who had been well trained marked the paragraphs and key phrases that went with the appropriate questions.

- (i) Some candidates appeared to think that *Filme* was singular, despite the fact that it appears as *einen guten Film* in (v), and just talked about *Das Leben der Anderen*, ignoring the second paragraph.
- (ii) It was interesting that some candidates did not appreciate the meaning of 'was a joke' and talked about all the German comedies before 1998. Nevertheless most candidates managed to convey something of relevance.
- (iii) A number of candidates did not think of using  *kreativ* or  *artistisch* but used  *künstlich* thinking it meant  *künstlerisch*. Weaker candidates often found it difficult to express this point.
- (iv) Most candidates mentioned the Nazis, but not all were able to express the 'Cold War' or even 'a divided Germany'.
- (v) Every candidate managed to have something relevant to say on this subject, and it was a good chance for them to demonstrate their linguistic skills and show off the phrases they had been taught in order to express their opinions.

# Grade Thresholds

Advanced GCE German 3862 and 7862  
January 2009 Examination Series

## Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
2661/01	Raw	60	47	41	36	31	26	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2661/02	Raw	60	47	41	36	31	26	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2662	Raw	80	66	58	51	44	37	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2663	Raw	60	50	44	38	32	26	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2665	Raw	80	63	56	49	43	37	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0

## Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (ie after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
3862	300	240	210	180	150	120	0
7862	600	480	420	360	300	240	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
3862	24.4	45.5	66.0	91.7	100.0	100.0	157
7862	50.0	83.3	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	6

**163 candidates aggregated this series**

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:  
[http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums\\_results.html](http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums_results.html)

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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