



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

**German**

**GERM1**

**(Specification 2660)**

**Unit 1: Listening, Reading and Writing**

***Report on the Examination***

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## General Comments

The spread of performance in this paper was very similar to that of previous January series. Most students seemed to cope well with the various question types and almost all students finished the paper. However there were more rubric infringements this time than previously, especially the answering of Question 1 in German instead of English. Poor handwriting was an issue for a few students in Question 9; for example markers sometimes had difficulty distinguishing between the endings *-er* and *-en*.

## Section A

### Question 1

Most students completed this task to a satisfactory standard, showing sound comprehension of the spoken German and conveying key points successfully in English.

(a) The phrase *das Wohlbefinden steigert* was generally well understood. Not all students included all the required elements for the second part of the answer, which targeted the phrase *das Risiko von Herzerkrankungen reduziert*.

(b) Well answered, although some students did not seem to know the word *Erfahrung*.

(c) Many students correctly identified four features of the sport and therefore scored full marks for this sub-question. The plural noun *Bälle* was occasionally misinterpreted as 'bells', leading to wrong answers such as 'when the bell rings'.

(d) Well answered, despite the difficulty of finding a suitable English equivalent for *hält ... länger durch*. Some students misinterpreted *in der Regel* as referring to the rules of sport.

### Question 2

This non-verbal comprehension task was generally well handled. The most accessible items proved to be parts (d), (e) and (f), while the hardest item was part (a), perhaps because the phrase *sie haben es nicht so eilig* was not known.

### Question 3

Most students identified the majority of the correct statements. The most frequent omissions were statements A and L.

### Question 4

This listening task on the topic of online advertising required students to show comprehension of the recorded text by answering questions in German. As is always the case with questions of this type in GERM1, no marks were awarded for grammatical accuracy, but students had to convey the correct information without ambiguity. Some students who transcribed lengthy sections of the recording did not score marks because they included too much irrelevant, and therefore confusing, material.

(a) In part (i) the phrase *fünf Milliarden Euro* caused more difficulty than expected. A lot of students wrote 'millions' and/or omitted the currency. In part (ii) almost all students gave the correct answer.

(b) Well answered. Some students did not seem to recognise the term *Breitband(anschluss)*.

(c) Well answered.

(d) In part (i) the phrase *fühlen sich dadurch gestört* caused some difficulty, especially where students tried to transcribe all four words without necessarily having understood them. Part (ii) was often well answered, with many students conveying all three of the required elements 'acceptance', 'financing' and 'website'.

### Question 5

This non-verbal task on marriage proved to be accessible. Almost all students gave the correct answer in parts (c) and (d). Parts (a) and (e) were less well answered, perhaps because students homed in too quickly on the negative words *nicht* and *gegen* and did not grasp the meaning of these items as a whole.

### Question 6

Most students showed good comprehension of the text and accompanying statements on the topic of TV. Parts (b), (e) and (f) attracted the greatest number of correct answers, while part (g) proved to be the most difficult item, perhaps because students did not make the connection between *übergewichtig* and *Gesundheit*.

### Question 7

This item on the first showing of a new film in Berlin proved to be quite challenging overall. Most students gave the correct answer in parts (a) and (c), but many had difficulty with parts (b) and (e), perhaps because the words *besetzt* and *enttäuscht* were not familiar.

### Question 8

This question with answers in German was marked on the same lines as Question 4, i.e. for communication only. Students' responses varied widely in quality. At the top end of the range some students managed to write concise answers conveying all the required information. A few students betrayed incomplete comprehension by including inappropriate words from the text, such as *ersetzt* after the phrase *Fastfood vor dem Fernseher*.

(a) Fairly well answered.

(b) Many good answers, either using appropriate words from the text e.g. *Freunde machen Witze über ihn* or using their own words e.g. *Er wird gehänselt*.

(c) Fairly well answered, although some students seemed to have difficulty with the wording of part (ii) and included an inappropriate reference to unhealthy eating habits in their answer.

(d) A good number of correct answers. A few students copied inappropriate phrases from the text such as *schaftt sie es* in part (i) or *Pizza oder ein anderes Fertiggericht* in part (ii).

(e) It was pleasing that many students correctly identified the two things that were now forbidden, namely *Limonade* and *Süßigkeiten*, rather than copying out the whole list of food and drink items from the text.

### Question 9

On the whole students coped well with the demands of this question. Only a very small number of students misinterpreted the rubric, e.g. they wrote a synonym for the given word

instead of writing the correct grammatical form of the given word. Careless slips were in evidence, however, especially with the Umlaut.

(a) Well answered.

(b) A surprisingly large number of wrong answers here, mainly *schönen* instead of *schöne*.

(c) Fairly well answered.

(d) Fairly well answered, but some students did not read the first sentence carefully enough to realise that the *sie* was singular.

(e) Fairly well answered.

(f) Many correct answers, but a number of students gave the infinitive form, perhaps because of the position of the verb at the end of the sentence.

(g) A relatively difficult item, perhaps because *wer* in the sense of ‘the person who’ was not familiar.

(h) Only a minority of students seemed to know that *reisen* is a weak verb.

(i) This proved to be the hardest item in Question 9. The subjunctive form *könnte(n)* was often incorrectly given.

(j) Well answered.

## Section B

Overall, the standard of students’ writing was similar to that seen in previous January series. Many essays exceeded the recommended word count, some of them by a substantial margin. Often this was helpful because it enabled the student to express a wider range of ideas, but sometimes excessive length resulted in repetition and a lack of focus, which then had a negative effect on the mark for Content.

As in previous series, the best responses tended to be those that were based on a small number of points, with ample justification and exemplification of each point. Many students structured their response well by making appropriate use of paragraphs. It was good to see concise, relevant introductory paragraphs which whetted the reader’s appetite for what came next; less good were simplistic opening statements such as *Ich glaube, das ist richtig* or *Der Satz stimmt*. Many students then used suitable adverbs and conjunctions to help the reader to follow their train of thought, e.g. *außerdem, trotzdem, auf der anderen Seite*. A few students included irrelevant material, perhaps because they were trying to re-use ideas from an essay they had previously written on a slightly different topic. Some students fulfilled most of the criteria for a high Content mark but lost potential credit because of a lack of clarity in places. Over-literal translations from English sometimes resulted in attempts at German that a native speaker would not understand; in such instances the mark for Content was affected as well as the mark for Accuracy.

In terms of the three Quality of Language marks – Range of Vocabulary, Range of Structures and Accuracy – it was good to see plenty of evidence of students having progressed beyond GCSE and, in some cases, well on the way to A2 standard. Most students made a conscious effort to introduce variety, both in terms of sentence patterns and vocabulary. Some students made extensive use of generic idioms, such as *Es lässt sich nicht leugnen, dass...* and *Es*

*muss erwähnt werden, dass...* . Such idioms are fine as long as they are genuinely appropriate for the context, but not if they are used indiscriminately.

Among the most frequent errors with vocabulary and structures in Section B were:

- invented words e.g. *responsabilität*
- misuse of *überall* (instead of *im Großen und Ganzen*)
- misuse of *halten* (for all meanings of 'to stop')
- misuse of *dafür* (instead of *also*)
- misuse of *bekommen* (instead of *werden*)
- misuse of *nur* as an adjective, e.g. *die nur Antwort* (sic)
- misuse of *dürfen* (instead of *erlauben*)
- *eine große Probleme* (sic)
- confusion between *Gewalt* and *gewalttätig*
- confusion between *Gesundheit* and *gesund*
- confusion between *sitzen* and *setzen*
- confusion between *ermutigen* and *fördern*
- confusion between *einige* and *einzig*
- poor use of personal pronouns and possessive adjectives

#### Question 10

This question, which asked to what extent parents should monitor their children's use of computers, was the most popular choice in Section B. The strongest responses focused clearly on children, rather than on teenagers or adults, and referred consistently to the question of parental monitoring. Among the sensible suggestions were: placing the computer in the family room, setting time limits, blocking certain sites, checking the search history and so on. Less good responses were those that dealt generally with the pros and cons of computers, perhaps only mentioning parental monitoring in the last paragraph. Some students clearly interpreted *kontrollieren* in the sense of the English verb 'to control'; however in such instances their response was usually still relevant to the question set. An example of irrelevance was a response that dealt with the problem of online credit fraud, while some students spent too much time discussing the specific dangers to health that might arise from a sedentary lifestyle.

#### Question 11

A good number of students tackled this question, which focused on the positive and negative influences of celebrities. On the whole students responded appropriately, giving suitable examples and explaining the reasons for their choice. Among the specific celebrities mentioned were Mo'Nique, Jessica Ennis, Wayne Rooney and Amy Winehouse. The positive influences included promoting a healthy lifestyle, giving to charity, setting high standards of self-discipline, inspiring young people to succeed and so on. Examples of negative influences were excessive drinking, drug-taking, and achieving fame simply by being rich. A few responses veered rather too far into other topic areas, such as detailed accounts of the consequences of unhealthy eating and drinking habits. Conclusions varied in quality: the best conclusions were generally those that returned to the wording of the question and gave a direct answer to it, based on the evidence given in the body of the essay. Weaker conclusions tended to lack coherence: for example they referred only to the positive influence of celebrities whereas the body of the essay dealt with both positive and negative aspects equally.

## **Question 12**

This question, inviting a response to Laura's letter about friendship, was the least popular of the three options, but it was often very well done by those who tackled it. The strongest responses took account of all aspects of Laura's situation as described in her letter, offering sympathy as well as specific advice. Perhaps Laura might try to get back in touch with old friends, or try to make new friends by taking part in different activities. A number of students made the point that an overtly unhappy person is unlikely to attract new friends, so Laura ought to try to be as cheerful as possible. As always, markers had no preconceptions about the viewpoint that students might adopt; what counted was whether their response made good sense and formed a coherent answer to the question set. A few students wrote too much about friendship in abstract terms, perhaps using material that they had prepared in response to a question on 'What makes a good friend?'.

## **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](http://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](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.