



General Certificate of Secondary Education

German 46653

46653/S Speaking Controlled Assessment

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - June series

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Speaking Controlled Assessment – June 2010

General Comments

This was the first year that centres could submit work for this Unit. Because most centres entered their candidates for the final exams of the Legacy Specification (A or B) this year, entry numbers were fairly small and the candidature may not be representative of the full entry expected for next year.

It was, however, pleasing to see that many students (including some from Year 9) coped well with the demands of this Unit, though others were clearly entered too early.

2. Preparation for Unit 3

2.1. Choice of assignments

Quite understandably most centres were cautious and chose 'safe' titles/tasks, i.e. tasks, which could build on already existing Schemes of Work, needed only slight adaptation and were familiar to students. Moderators observed a limited range of tasks; most centres relied on slightly adapted AQA exemplar tasks. A clear favourite seemed to have been 'An interview with a celebrity'. Other tasks were based on 'Healthy lifestyle' and 'School'.

Some centres devised their own tasks; not all of these, however, were successful. Centres are encouraged to run their planned tasks past the Controlled Assessment Advisers.

Moderators noted that most of the centres set the same task to a whole teaching group. Especially in mixed ability groups this approach did not always lead to the best outcome. It was clear that the vocabulary and structures used by higher achieving students simply could not be emulated by the less able ones. A more differentiated approach, which would give all students the chance to perform at the level appropriate to them, is recommended.

Furthermore, the whole set approach also led to some very similar answers from most of the students within a teaching group. More creativity and individuality would be desirable and could be achieved by setting more differentiated tasks.

2.2. Presentation of tasks

As the latest exemplar materials demonstrate, one possible format for the task would be:

Context: ...

Task (title): ...

Scene setting ending in "... your teacher **will** ask you the following:"

- main bullet points
- ! (= unpredictable bullet point)

! Remember, at this point, you will have to respond to something you have not yet prepared.

The dialogue will last between 4 – 6 minutes.

2.3 Bullet Points

Most centres submitted tasks with 5-6 main bullet points plus the unpredictable. In many cases the number of main bullet points was adequate and allowed the candidates to give sufficient information to get to the minimum of 4 minutes. Where students fell short of the 4 minutes, centres could have prepared some follow-up questions and/or given students sub-sections to their bullet points. Performances short of 4 minutes cannot gain full marks; the most a candidate could achieve is 29/30.

In some case, although there were only 5-6 main bullet points, candidates spoke very slowly and were allowed to go beyond 4 minutes. Centres are reminded that any new utterance starting after 6 minutes cannot be given any credit.

Centres are reminded that the main bullet points are the task and that all bullet points therefore have to be asked. The formulation of the bullet points is therefore very important, because they need to reflect the assessment criteria. However, when bullet points are sub-divided only the main bullet points (and not the sub-divisions) are compulsory. This is another reason to seek assurance from the Controlled Assessment Adviser.

2.4. Unpredictable bullet point

Most centres handled this well. The unpredictable bullet was the last question, occasionally followed up if the initial answer was very short. It is regarded as good practice to initiate the unpredictable question by saying "Und nun kommen wir zur letzten Frage" (or something to this effect), though candidates need to be briefed that it might not be the very last question because follow-up questions can be asked.

If the candidate does not give an answer or the answer is incorrect, the unpredictable bullet point must be classed as 'not covered' and the table in the Controlled Assessment Handbook and published Mark Scheme comes into force.

Only one unpredictable question should be asked (+ possible follow-up). Centres should have a bank of unpredictable questions and should vary the question from candidate to candidate (or after a small group of candidates, eg. after every third). Centres must not put the same question(s) to all candidates.

2.5. Task Planning Form (TPF)

AQA encourages the use of a TPF for each candidate. To make the use of a TPF efficient, it needs to be practised in Stage 1. Moderators reported seeing TPFs with words scribbled all over the box. This was clearly not helpful to the candidate, because when a question was asked, (s)he clearly could not find the word(s) needed for the answer. Good practice would have the words in line with bullet points.

Although the instructions on the TPF clearly state that candidates can use up to 40 words, must not use conjugated verbs nor codes, this was not adhered to by some centres. Centres are reminded that the TPF needs to be checked prior to Stage 3 and must be aware that any utterance based on a conjugated verb form or code is disregarded for assessment.

3. Conduct of the assignment

3.1. Recordings

Most of the recordings were of a good quality and the assignments were conducted in circumstances conducive to getting the best out of the students. However, there were incidents where background noise or opening and closing of doors to the examination room clearly disturbed the student in his/her performance.

Centres are reminded of the various ways in which the students' performances can be recorded and have to be labelled (see Instructions for the June 2011 AQA Examinations – New GCSE Specification and Controlled Assessment Handbook).

3.2. Question technique

Many centres did well in conducting a 'natural' conversation, asking the candidate a wide opening question (depending on the bullet point) and then followed this up where necessary. There were, however, also examples of teachers going through the same question sequence for all students irrespective of their ability and not taking the student's answer into account. Often these centres had prepared their students too narrowly and the answers were all very similar. Centres should note that an individual response to the task is required. Furthermore, the sequence of questions did not get the best out of less able students.

4. Candidates' performance

As might be expected, candidates' performances varied a lot and covered virtually the whole spectrum, although top performances were few and far between.

There were performances which clearly showed that the candidates had been drilled into a fairly narrow range of answers. Often these were well done by higher achieving students, but clearly were too difficult for less able students.

Some students were given the chance to demonstrate their best through skilful teacher questioning, others were struggling unnecessarily because they were not asked the right (follow-up) questions.

In the topic 'Celebrity' answers to more familiar concepts (family, hobbies, daily routine) were usually done well. Answers to more demanding bullet points, e.g. how the celebrity copes with his/her publicity were often less successful.

This was mirrored in the other topics, e.g. 'Healthy lifestyle' and 'School'. Material referring back to KS3 was usually well handled, but new aspects of the current specification (drugs/smoking/alcohol and consequences for one's health; comparison of school systems; social problems at school) proved to be more challenging and clearly needed further preparation.

5. Assessment

Whilst centres' administration in many cases left a lot to be desired, moderators noted that the marking of most centres was well in line with AQA standards.

There was generally a tendency to be slightly lenient, especially in the mark for Communication. Centres' attention is drawn to the feedback form, which will give them clear guidance on the application of the assessment criteria.

5.1 Communication

There was a tendency to be slightly generous, mainly because centres tended to accept too readily what candidate had intended to say rather than what he/she actually said. Also, errors in pronunciation which affected the meaning were often ignored and the utterance was given credit. (see below)

5.2 Range and Accuracy

There were fewer problems with this criterion. Centres should, however, want to note the following:

- Using two different tenses does not automatically place a candidate in the top two bands; it merely gives access to the higher marking bands provided that it is backed by evidence of satisfying other descriptors in these two bands.
- In order to be awarded a mark of 7 or higher, there must be evidence of **attempts** at a range of vocabulary, structures and verb tenses. There may be errors, but the message is **clear**. To achieve this wider range there must be evidence of at least some out of the following:
 - tenses
 - inversion
 - modal + infinitive
 - infinitive constructions
 - linking words (adverbs, coordinating and subordinating conjunctions)

5.3 Pronunciation and Intonation

Generally, candidates' pronunciation sounded 'German', but there was also evidence of some persistent errors, which often affected the meaning and therefore have a bearing on the Communication mark, e.g:

ich feinde, viel, veile.

Also lack of clarity in the pronunciation of some vowels also causes problems:
mochte/möchte, wurde/würde/werde.

5.4 Interaction and Fluency

Generally, this criterion caused little problems. If anything, some centres tended to be severe, e.g. by placing their students in band 2 because there were a few hesitations in an otherwise reasonable flow of language.

Terminology – a glossary

Task Sheet	The sheet containing the main bullet points in English which forms the task.
Main bullet point	The number of bullet points which make up the task and which candidates must address.
Unpredictable Question / Unpredictable main bullet	The last question asked by the teacher, which the student has not prepared in advance. Shown as ! on the Task Sheet.
Task Planning Form	Downloadable from the AQA website, this is the form that a student uses as a prompt during the task. It is not compulsory.
Centre Mark Form	There are 2 of these, one for the recorded task and another for the unrecorded task. There are 3 copies, white, yellow and pink. Before May 7 in the year of entry, the marks for all students are entered on the form. The white copy goes to AQA and the other two go to the centre's moderator, who will then select a sample.
Recorded Task	The recording of this task is sent to the moderator. Only one task is sent for moderation.
Unrecorded Task	This is the second task (which may in fact have been recorded) but only the marks for this task are sent to the moderator, not the recording.
Candidate Record Form	This form is available on the AQA website and must be filled in for all students. It includes the breakdown of marks for the recorded and unrecorded tasks.
Centre Declaration Sheet	This is also available on the AQA website and is a declaration by the centre that the work is that of the students and has been carried out in line with the regulations.

The moderation process – a quick guide

1. Before 7 May, complete the Centre Mark Forms (SR for recorded task and SU for unrecorded task) and send the appropriate copies of both forms to AQA (top copy) and to your moderator (pink and yellow copies).
2. Receive the Centre Mark Form from your moderator highlighting the students whose recorded tasks are needed for the moderation sample, indicated by the letter S alongside the candidate name.

If your centre has 20 candidates or fewer, you should send the recorded tasks of all candidates to the moderator with the pink and yellow copies of the Centre Mark Forms. The top copy should be sent to AQA.

3. Send to the moderator the following:
 - Centre Mark Form (pink and yellow copies)
 - A recording of the Recorded Task for all students in the sample
 - A completed and signed Candidate Record Form for all candidates in the sample
 - The Centre Declaration Sheet (signed)
 - The Task Sheet for all tasks used by any candidate in the sample
 - A copy of the unpredictable questions for all tasks used in the sample
 - The Task Planning Form for each candidate (if used)

Please ensure that the recordings are clearly labelled (see Instructions for the June 2011 AQA Examinations – New GCSE Specification)

Marking Issues

1. Timings

Timing begins as soon as the teacher asks the first question relating to the first main bullet point. From that point, the task should last between 4 and 6 minutes.

If the task lasts for less than 4 minutes (even 3' 59"), a student cannot get full marks for Communication. It would still be possible to achieve a mark of 9 for Communication. There is no impact on the other assessment criteria. If the task lasts for over 6 minutes, marking stops at 6 minutes.

2. Coverage of bullet points

In order to be able to score full marks for Communication, students must be able to give information on all main bullet points on the task sheet. If there are any sub-divisions within the bullet points, these are **not** compulsory.

If one or more main bullet points are not covered by the student, for any reason*, this will affect the **maximum** mark available for Communication, as follows:

Total number of main bullet points in task	Number of main bullet points <u>not</u> covered	Maximum mark for Communication
2-3 + ! task	1	7
2-3 + ! task	2	5
4 + ! task	1	8
4 + ! task	2	7
4 + ! task	3	5
5 or more + ! task	1	9
5 or more + ! task	2	8
5 or more + ! task	3	7
5 or more + ! task	4+	5

*The reasons for a main bullet point not being covered are:

- i) The teacher fails to ask anything about that bullet point within the allotted 6 minutes.
- ii) The bullet point is mentioned by the teacher, but the student cannot answer.
- iii) The student gives an answer, but it is unintelligible or not relevant to the bullet point.

3. The unpredictable question

In order to accomplish the unpredictable bullet point, the student must answer the question by using a verb. If that is not the case, then the bullet point is not covered and the table above must be used in order to arrive at a mark for Communication.

If a student has developed fully answers to the main bullet points and gives a short answer, including any part of a verb (eg present participle, infinitive) to the unpredictable question, he/she will still have access to full marks for Communication provided the response is complete.

If a teacher asks more than one unpredictable question, the first one that is asked is the one that is considered when deciding whether it has been answered appropriately, using a verb. Any other unpredictable questions, (eg to make the task last at least 4 minutes) are taken into account when awarding an overall mark.

Once the candidate gives an incorrect answer (either target language or English/any language other than the one being tested) then no credit is given for further attempts.

If the candidate gives a partially correct answer in the target language and the teacher asks more questions to elicit further information so that the bullet point is fully covered, such information is marked.

If a candidate says, in the target language 'I don't understand' or 'please repeat' (or equivalents) then this counts as a request for clarification and the teacher is allowed to repeat or rephrase. This does not count as an answer. (If this were said by the candidate in English/any language other than the one being tested, then it would be an incorrect answer and no more rephrasing would be allowed).

If the candidate says, either in the target language or in English/any language other than the one being tested, 'I don't know' (or equivalents) then this counts as an incorrect answer and no more rephrasing is allowed.

If the candidate says nothing in response to a question then the teacher can repeat or rephrase until the candidate does respond (or until the 6 minutes are up)

4. The criteria for assessment

All of the criteria should be considered when deciding on a mark, but the following guidelines may prove particularly useful.

(a) Communication

Must the teacher ask extra questions for the candidate to gain the highest marks for Communication?

No. If the candidate develops fully his/her answers to each main bullet point there will be no need for extra questions to allow the candidate access to the highest marks for Communication.

Can students get a high mark in a Speaking task even if there is little interaction with the teacher?

Yes. Interaction and fluency are a global concept. Students can have access to full marks with minimal teacher input as long as they have provided full and developed responses. This is still true even if there is little interaction with the teacher.

In Speaking, if a student answers a bullet point eliciting reference to future events by using a present tense verb, will he/she be penalised under Communication?

No, not if the response successfully communicates what the main bullet point required. However if aiming for a high mark for Range and Accuracy, the student must make sure he/she uses at least two different tenses over the task as a whole.

What do moderators do if it is clear that the wording is identical to model answers in a text book or to the wording of the tasks of other candidates at the same centre?

Such work is referred to the Irregularities and Malpractice department.

Communication Criteria

9-10 marks

- Students can speak with confidence and narrate events where appropriate. In order to do this, they will have to develop their answers well.
- They will have to offer ideas / opinions / points of view (minimum 2) and be able to explain them.

7-8 marks

- The answers will be regularly developed, even though some of them may not be. However, for the award of a mark in this band, most answers will show some development.
- There is a requirement to give opinions (minimum 2).

5-6 marks

- There will still be evidence of an ability to develop some answers.
- There is a requirement to give opinions (minimum 2).

3-4 marks

- Few responses are developed, but for some questions you can expect replies to go beyond the minimal, even if this is in the form of lists or very simple sentences.
- There is a requirement to give opinions (minimum 2).

1-2 marks

- Very few appropriate responses are developed, but therefore there has to be evidence of development, however basic, in at least one reply.

0 marks

- No relevant information is communicated, but a student could still give some very minimal replies and still score 0 if there was no development at all.

(b) Range and Accuracy of Language

- A present tense verb with a future time marker (eg *Nächste Woche fahre ich...*) does not count as a future tense.
- The present subjunctive does not count as separate tense from the present indicative.
- A construction using the present tense to refer to the past (eg *ich spiele Klavier seit 2 Jahren*) counts as the present tense.

9-10 marks

- A variety of **tenses** must be used. This means two or more. The tenses could come from the same time frame (for example the perfect and the imperfect) but a greater range of tenses will add to the complexity of the language used and most students getting marks in this band will probably use three or more tenses, unless the nature of the task does not allow it.
- There will be complex structures, as appropriate to GCSE level, e.g. ranging from simple inversion to using linking words, co-ordinating and sub-ordinating conjunctions. Complexity will also be achieved by variety of expression, for instance *auskommen mit, sich verstehen mit*.
- There needs to be a wide range of vocabulary. This means that students will not be too repetitive in the words they use.
- Errors usually appear in complex structures, or they may be minor errors, for instance of gender, which do not appear too often.

7-8 marks

- Two or more tenses must be used.
- Some complex structures will be used, but the note about what constitutes complexity for the 9-10 band will apply here.
- There must be a range of vocabulary, so students in this band will again be trying to avoid repetition of the more common words.
- Errors occur, but the message is clear, so that the type of mistake made will not prevent communication.

5-6 marks

- There is no need for students to use more than one tense to be awarded a mark in this band.
- Sentences are generally simple but occasionally more complex. There will be more repetition of simple constructions here, but sometimes a more unusual structure will be used.
- Errors are quite frequent, but the language used is **more accurate than inaccurate**.

3-4 marks

- The sentences are short and simple and probably there will be quite a lot of repetition of the more common verbs, such as *haben, sein*.
- The vocabulary is very limited, so there will probably be quite a lot of repetition of the same words.
- Errors are very frequent and it will be more inaccurate than accurate, or there will be relatively little said, so the lack of evidence means it cannot go into a higher band.

1-2 marks

- There are only isolated words of vocabulary with the occasional short phrase. It may well be that there is quite a lot of silence.
- Errors often impede communication, or there is very little evidence to enable an opinion to be formed.

(c) Pronunciation and Intonation

5 marks

- Consistently good accent and intonation are required. 'Accent' means 'pronunciation'.

4 marks

- Generally good, but not flawless. Occasional errors, especially with the sounds that students traditionally find more difficult, may occur, eg 'ch', o, ei-ie.

3 marks

- Generally accurate, but there is some inconsistency. As well as the more common mispronunciations, there may be problems with vowel sounds (*möchte/mochte* or *würde/werde/wurde*) and anglicised words.

2 marks

- What is said is understandable, although comprehension is sometimes delayed. On occasion it is necessary to listen very carefully to what is being said in order to get the intended meaning.

1 mark

- What is said is barely understandable and comprehension is difficult. There may well be very little evidence, because not much is said by the student.

(d) Interaction and Fluency

5 marks

- The student responds readily, without significant pause before answering the questions.
- There is initiative, as the student is able to fully develop answers to the questions.
- The conversation is sustained at a reasonable speed, but clearly not at native speaker pace.

4 marks

- The student will again have to answer without hesitation.
- The replies will go beyond the minimum, although there will not be as much development as in the top band.
- There is some flow of language, even if from time to time there is some pausing for thought.

3 marks

- There are ready responses, where the student can answer reasonably promptly most of the time.
- There is little if any initiative, so the student may not develop answers to any great extent.
- There is an ability to sustain a conversation, so that any hesitation does not break up the interchange of information too much.

2 marks

- There is some reaction to the teacher's questions, but the student is sometimes hesitant. In practice, there will be more sections of the test where the student is thinking what to say or can't answer.
- There is little natural flow.

1 mark

- There is little reaction to what the teacher asks and the student is so hesitant that the conversation becomes disjointed. There will in all probability be lots of silence during the task.

(e) Limiting marks

- It is not possible to go more than one **band** higher than the band in which the Communication mark was given when awarding marks in the other categories. For instance, if 5 is awarded for Communication, the highest mark that can be awarded Range and Accuracy is 8, and for Pronunciation and Intonation and Interaction and Fluency the maximum mark would be 4.
- It is possible to give marks in lower bands for Range and Accuracy, Pronunciation and Intonation and Interaction and Fluency than the band in which the mark for Communication was given.
- If one mark or more is awarded for Communication, at least one mark must be given in all other categories.
- If 0 is awarded for Communication, 0 must be given for all other categories.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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

Annual Teacher Support Meetings

Centres are reminded that language-specific Teacher Support Meetings for the Speaking Controlled Assessments will be held in Autumn 2010. These meetings will be half day meetings and free of charge. Further details can be obtained from the AQA website (www.aqa.org.uk) in due course.