

GCSE GERMAN

Unit 4 Writing
Report on the Examination

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The standard of the work presented for assessment compared very well with previous years in terms of both quality and overall outcome. The majority of students produced work which was either very good or good with relatively fewer marks in the lower ranges. Most students had obviously been made aware of the demands of Controlled Assessment in terms of offering and explaining at least two opinions and many were quite ambitious in their range of more complex language.

APPROACHES TO CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT

As has been the case in previous years there appeared to be five different approaches adopted by schools/colleges and it was not uncommon to find two different approaches used within the same school/college or, indeed, between Task 1 and Task 2.

1 - Students were left entirely to their own devices to produce their work. That rarely happened.

2 - Students were given some stock phrases and clauses at Stage 1 which they then adapted for their own purpose at Stage 2 and reproduced at Stage 3. That notwithstanding it was inevitable that less able students were rightly advised to adhere more closely and carefully to the common phrases with which they felt more comfortable and confident. This enabled them to produce a reasonable standard of work.

3 - Students were given quite an extensive template as a resource at Stage 1 which they then fleshed out with their own details at Stage 2 and Stage 3. In some cases, thankfully fewer this year, the template was detailed and the same for all students and only a few words were different at Stage 3.

4 - Students were expected to produce a draft model at Stage 2 (often lengthy) which they were then expected to learn by heart and reproduce under test conditions at Stage 3.

5 – Students were thoroughly prepared at Stage 1 with detailed exploration of the topic then encouraged to develop the material in their own individual way at Stage 2. Key features were learnt for Stage 3 and developed further. This approach was more in evidence this year and that was pleasing to note.

The first approach, on the very few occasions that it was used, tended to produce work at the lower end of the mark range.

The second approach usually produced adequate work which lacked any real development.

Both the third and the fourth approaches produced work of a varying standard and, in many instances, it became not only a test of the student's German but also of their memory. Where words, phrases, clauses and, in cases, whole sentences had been omitted from the piece it either lacked any form of focus or parts of it became opaque. These two approaches did the students no real favours unless they had a good memory. Examiners often felt that some students did not know the full meaning of what they were writing. It should be noted that the use of a complete and detailed template for all students is not supported by the principles which underpin Controlled Assessment.

The fifth approach tended, on the whole, to produce the best work and pieces which were fluent and coherent. This was perhaps because the students felt empowered and in charge of their own work.

As a general point schools/colleges are reminded that there should be a clear break between Stage 1 and Stage 2. At Stage 2 students have access to all resources **except** their teacher, language assistants and translator software.

CONTENT

Many well prepared students were able to score marks in the Very Good band and there were many scripts with well organised, detailed and developed responses to the Task title and in which all or nearly all the information was clearly conveyed. It was a real pleasure to read and mark these. It was characteristic of the best work that students were able to manipulate language independently under test conditions without resorting to word by word rote learning.

Although material was almost invariably fully relevant there were three main things which held students back from achieving a mark in the top band.

Firstly, for the highest marks (13-15) there is a requirement to give a detailed response in which all or almost all of the information is developed and also to include the explanation of at least two opinions/ideas **in some detail**. Students often sold themselves short by using a series of simple *weil* clauses to provide only a rudimentary explanation of their opinions. These students also tended to try to include a lot of information and to move from point to point without really taking time to develop any of them. Although many pieces of work of 500+ words met all the criteria for a mark in the Very Good band others of that length were let down by the efforts made to include an over-abundance of information without it being developed to any great extent. In those cases there was a definite imbalance between length and quality. It was often noticeable that native speakers or those who had lived in a German-speaking country, while producing some excellent language, could not access the top Content band because they had failed either to offer opinions or to develop their ideas in a sufficiently detailed manner.

Secondly, there is also a requirement that all or almost all information has to be **clearly** conveyed. In many instances this was not the case and attempts to develop information foundered on faulty grammar and/or on the omission of words and clauses. For a mark in the top band students were expected to make their meaning clear rather than to have meaning read into what they had written.

Thirdly, a well organised structure is also needed for a mark in the top Content band. Although this does not mean a formal essay structure it does mean that the piece has to be able to be read as a coherent whole with information and ideas well linked both within and between paragraphs. Students were not helped by the numbering of paragraphs and, to a greater extent, by heading each paragraph in English with the bullet point or, as in some instances seen, with Question 1, Question 2 etc. Such an approach almost invariably led to a loss of focus and meant that the response to the Task could be followed only by reference to the Task sheet.

Similarly there were things which meant that the work was placed in the Sufficient rather than the Good band for Content.

The following cannot be stressed enough: a lot of information should be conveyed clearly for a mark in the Good band and if a lot of information is **not** conveyed clearly it effectively rules out a mark in the top two bands.

There is a requirement for two opinions/ideas to be expressed and explained. On many occasions the ideas/opinions were given but with no explanation or with only one explained adequately or in a clear way. Even where two opinions/ideas were expressed and explained it was quite often the case that a distinct lack of clarity in other areas of the piece resulted in a mark in the Sufficient rather than the Good band.

For a mark in the Good band there had to be a lot of clear information which had been generally developed. Even though it was less noticeable than in previous years, many students still relied on lists, whether of rooms in their house, facilities in their town or holiday hotel and resort or their weekend or holiday activities. *Am Montag sind wir zum Strand gegangen. Am Dienstag sind wir nach Barcelona gefahren* could easily have been expanded by adding something like *wo wir uns gesonnt haben* after the former and *Wir haben dort la Sagrada Familia besichtigt. Das war wirklich wunderschön* after the latter. Similarly a list of facilities in a town could have been enhanced by saying how often the student visits each one and what they do there.

Something which created confusion in several Tasks placed in the Sufficient rather than the Good band was the shifting between a past and the present tense in the same paragraph, and on some occasions in the same sentence, when describing recent weekend or holiday activities or work experience.

Another factor which impinged upon clear communication in scripts rated Sufficient was the lack of clear punctuation in places. It was not unusual for students to succumb to stream of consciousness moments and to run sentences together. This meant that information was certainly not clearly conveyed.

Most of the less able students were able to gain a mark in the Limited band for Content as they were able to offer two simple opinions and offer some slight development of what they had written in an albeit simple manner.

Very few students were given a mark in the Very Limited band and those who were placed in this category were still able to produce some snippets of comprehensible material. As a consequence hardly any students were given a mark of zero.

An overarching consideration in the awarding of the Content mark was the question of balance when there were two or more strands to a Task. Students who wrote about Home and Local Area or Education and Future Career for example would have been expected to strike a balance between the two. In some cases the second part of the Task was sketched over in a few lines and, as a consequence, the mark was in a lower band than it might otherwise have been.

RANGE OF LANGUAGE

There was clear evidence that students had been encouraged to demonstrate their ability to use a wider range of language and structures than in previous years, even if their efforts did not always meet with success.

The majority of students were able to use two or more tenses and most included the present, perfect, imperfect and future. Although the pluperfect was not much in evidence it was seen more frequently than in previous years and where it did appear it was, on the whole, well used, especially in conjunction with *nachdem*. In the best scripts the use of different tenses blended well together and produced a satisfying and coherent whole. In others the selection of the scenario for

the use of certain tenses seemed rather forced and contrived and did not naturally fit in with the whole picture. Nonetheless, the use of the present tense for a past event was quite frequently observed.

Students who were awarded a mark of 9 or 10 for Range of Language were able not only to use a wide range of structures and vocabulary but also combine them into a fluent and coherent whole. Beautifully written sentences with two or more dependent clauses linked by a mixture of different subordinating and co-ordinating conjunctions appeared in a pleasing number of pieces. In addition to that the correct use of tricky items such as *so dass* and *damit* as well as correlative conjunctions such as *einerseits...andererseits*, *entweder..oder*, *weder...noch*, *nicht nur...sondern auch*, *sowohl...als auch* or even *sei es...sei es* was very striking. There were also well written pieces which showed the student's ability to use reflexive verbs and both *um...zu* and *zu* correctly with separable verbs. The passive voice in a variety of tenses and even, on occasion, combined with a modal verb (not demanded for active use in this Specification) was nevertheless a feature of the work of students scoring 9 and 10 as was the use of relative clauses in various cases and also those introduced correctly by *was*. The imperfect subjunctive was also well used in conjunction with *wenn* with, in many cases, the *wenn* clause opening the sentence. Where this occurred the word order was almost always correct in the full sentence. There was also good use of interrogative pronouns and *ob* as subordinating conjunctions.

It cannot be stressed enough that the above is **not** a menu of the requirements for a mark in the 9-10 band; it is merely a record of some of the things observed. What is being looked for is a wide variety of vocabulary wholly appropriate to the Task and a wide range of well used more complex structures which are not overworked and which come together to create a coherent piece of writing.

A mark in the 7–8 range was not uncommon because most students were able to attempt a lot of what was required for the highest marks but without the same degree of success. For instance, the inversion of subject and verb after an adverbial opening to a sentence and word order in subordinating clauses were correct on only a few occasions and/or the *um* was omitted from *um...zu* constructions. This militated against the overall fluency and coherence needed for a mark of 9-10. Nonetheless the range of structures enabled effective communication.

The other main contributory factor to a mark of 8 rather than higher was the **overuse** of albeit good structures. Repetition of clauses introduced by *weil*, *obwohl* and, to a lesser extent, *wenn* did not demonstrate the wide range needed for a mark in the top band. In particular, at this level more use could have been made of the various alternatives for *weil* such as *denn* and *da* or *deswegen* and *deshalb* for example.

The range of vocabulary used by students awarded a mark of 7 or 8 for Range of Language, although appropriate to the Task, was in most cases not as extensive as that used by those who were given a top band mark.

Even students who scored 6 for Range of Language attempted some more complex structures but with no real success and their efforts were often undermined by clause and sentence construction elsewhere in their work. For a mark of 7+ for Range of Language students were required to communicate with some degree of precision. The flaws meant that this was not always the case.

Students awarded a mark of 5 demonstrated that they could use simple connectives like *und* and *aber* and occasionally *weil* to create compound sentences. They were also able to vary their vocabulary to some extent although there may have been some poor dictionary use on occasion.

Work where a mark of 3 or 4 was given was characterised by more simple sentences which were rarely or not linked together and also by poor dictionary use. Some information was communicated using a limited vocabulary which met the basic needs of what the student was trying to convey.

A mark of 1 or 2 for Range of Language was quite rare because most students had at least some rudimentary grasp of sentence structure. What tended to pull the mark down to this level was the use of English or other languages or the leaving of gaps where the appropriate German word was not known or both.

ACCURACY

There was a good standard of accuracy in very many scripts and this was very pleasing to note.

As there is a range of only five marks for Accuracy which has, of necessity, to cover eight grades any mark covers a performance which embraces more than one typical grade outcome. If this seems somewhat crude it should be remembered that the accuracy of writing also has an impact on the Content mark. A mark profile of 12-8-5, which represents a high “B” standard, was not uncommon.

Examiners were expected to bear in mind the above and were not expected to look for perfection or near perfection before awarding a mark of 5.

For a mark of 5 the work had to be **largely** accurate so the occasional major error in a complex sentence or a minor spelling error or mistake in gender did not automatically disqualify students from the top Accuracy mark. Word order was very good but not necessarily error-free at this level.

A major consideration in the awarding of a mark for 5 for Accuracy was the **secure** use of verbs and tenses. This meant the use of correct verb endings and the use of the correct auxiliary in the formation of the perfect and pluperfect tenses. In many cases it was the failure to get those right on a *consistent* basis that meant a lower mark.

Some very accurate pieces could not be given a mark of 5 because, in striving for accuracy, the students had limited themselves to a series of statements couched in generally comparatively simple language with either no or hardly any development of ideas. This had a limiting effect on the Content mark, something which impacted on the Accuracy mark. In many cases it was felt that the student was possessed of sufficient language skills to have been more ambitious in their approach to the Task.

A mark of 4 for Accuracy indicated that the piece was **generally** accurate and thus allowed for a few more major errors, but again in complex sentences, and a few more minor errors than would have been allowed for a mark of 5.

It was also expected that verb and tense formations would be mostly correct. This meant that, provided there were not too many instances, the use of a wrong auxiliary a wrong verb ending or the use of a past part participle with a modal did not immediately carry the mark down to 3.

Where a mark of 3 was given it meant that major errors were starting to appear in less complex clauses and sentences. Word order errors and spelling mistakes were the order of the day but nevertheless the work was comprehensible with sympathetic reading as the intended meaning was usually clear.

Two particular word order errors which were seen with increased frequency this year were the inversion of subject and verb after both *und* and *aber* and subordination after the same two words. The former had the undesired effect of turning a statement into a question, thus altering the sense of what the student was trying to convey.

At this level more problems with verbs and tenses appeared. Verb endings were quite often wrong with the most common mistake being the use of the *ich* form no matter who or what the subject of the sentence was. Attempts at the perfect tense either omitted or had the wrong auxiliary or the past participle was wrong. Yet again, the most common mistake in that respect was *gegeben* instead of *gegangen*. Attempts at the future tense combined *werden* with a past participle rather than an infinitive. A similar use of past participles occurred on a less frequent basis with modal verbs. Where students attempted the imperfect subjunctive the Umlaut was quite often omitted from *möchte*, *würde*, *hätte* and *könnte*. Such errors impacted on clear communication by altering the sense of what they were trying to express. Conversely, the addition of an Umlaut where it was not needed on *hatte* and *konnte* in particular also altered the sense of what was written.

A mark of 2 indicated that there were many errors which often impeded communication and that, even with sympathetic reading, little clear information could be gleaned.

Verbs were rarely used accurately and even the most common forms were misspelt.

A mark of 1 was rarely given and where it was the student had offered very little in terms of Content as well. The piece was just about accurate enough for some snippet of information to be communicated.

In general the accuracy of a piece of work became worse towards the end, often in a very striking way, with evidence of a very good opening paragraph but a very poor closing one. In such cases it was essential to make a judgment about the whole piece.

Finally, handwriting is a real problem for some students. Although students will never be penalised for work which is difficult to read there were cases where it was actually impossible to clearly identify some of the words set down on paper even with the aid of a magnifying glass. Some Centres acknowledged this problem and allowed students to word-process either one or both Tasks. This, however, sometimes created its own problems in that typing errors made some messages unclear. The omission of Umlauts was a particular problem in work produced in this manner.

THE TASK PLANNING FORM

A well thought out and constructed plan served as a vital resource to students at Stage 3 and provided a map of vocabulary which supported the production of the whole piece of work. That, however, applied only to a minority of students. For many others the plan often seemed random in nature and was sometimes ignored completely. The best organised plans grouped together appropriate vocabulary for each paragraph. That not only avoided repetition of words on the plan but also enabled the student to focus more fully on the task.

The vast majority of students who used the form listed 40 German words but some still persisted in filling it in a scattergun fashion with English words. In the vast majority of cases this did not help them to produce work of anything other than a low to mid-range standard.

It was noticeable that many teachers were vigilant and diligent in requiring their students to obliterate conjugated verbs from the plan. Nonetheless, the odd conjugated verb was missed. This seldom had an impact on the assessment outcome.

Despite the above, conjugated verbs on the plan still remain a problem. Sometimes the addition of an “n” – often in a different colour/underlined or in upper case or, on occasion, both – to the conjugated verb represented an inadequate attempt to solve the problem. This was and will always be regarded as a code. By the same token, in too many instances the conjugated verb merely had a line put through it but it was still legible. That is not acceptable. Any conjugated verb **must** be obliterated, preferably with a black marker pen.

Much more seriously, in some cases a whole list of conjugated verbs remained on the plan and that was usually catastrophic for the student, especially if that list included *ist*, *sind*, *war* and *hat* for example. It should be remembered that all clauses which include conjugated verbs listed on the TPF are disregarded for assessment purposes. The use of *ist*, *sind* and *war* often meant that opinions could not be credited.

Möchten and *würden* appeared quite frequently on the TPF. Students should be made aware that these are not infinitives but conjugated verb forms.

Many schools/colleges chose to opt out of the TPF completely.

Whatever is the case schools/colleges **must** complete the associated paperwork properly so that the examiner knows if a plan has been used and not sent or simply not used in the first place.

TASKS AND TITLES

The following needs to be stressed: it is the student’s response to the **title** which is assessed. Bullet points have the status of guidance. They are obviously useful in that sense but they do not have to be adhered to absolutely as they must be in the Speaking Controlled Assessment.

It follows from this that examiners need to know clearly what the title is. It was not unusual to find titles worded differently in three different places. This was not helpful, although the student’s response was assessed on a “best fit” basis. In some cases the title was not supplied at all and examiners had to ask AQA to pursue the matter before marking could begin.

There are two further consequences arising from the above.

Firstly, the question of relevance and balance of relevance in the response is critically related to the title addressed. Therefore a title with a broad sweep, *Holidays* or *My Town* for example, was the preferred solution. A further solution involved the inclusion of different dimensions in the title with the students advised to address each aspect in a balanced way. This produced some of the best work.

Secondly, bullet points need to home in on the focus of the title and in the vast majority of cases they did so. There were, however, several instances where some bullet points steered students **away** from the focus of the title and although this was not treated unsympathetically, because it was not the fault of the student, it **was** unhelpful.

It is also worthwhile making two general points.

Firstly, it is understood and accepted that students may wish to introduce themselves but this introduction should not be disproportionately lengthy if the title is, for example, *Holidays*.

Secondly, there were instances where the bullet points led to a considerable overlap of material between the two tasks. As the same material cannot be credited twice where this happened it was disregarded for assessment purposes in the second one.

SOME TITLES USED

Healthy lifestyle/living
Am I fit and healthy?
My diet and views on healthy and unhealthy living
Health and well-being
Family and relationships
Relationship and choices
Home and family life
Teenage life/My life as a teenager
My life in England
My life as a sportsman/sportswoman/A day in the life of a famous sportsperson
My life as a celebrity
All about me
A first letter to a German exchange partner
A letter to a problem page
A problem and its solution
An article about homelessness
Leisure
Entertainment
My weekend
(Free time and/or pocket money) and shopping
Free time and hobbies
Media (and new technology)
The advantages and disadvantages of (new) technology
Media in our lives
A film review
My favourite film
Holidays/My holiday
A holiday blog
A holiday review
A letter of complaint about a holiday
My town
Home and local area
Home town and (local) environment
(An article about) the environment
Selling a house
Local area and free time
Helping at home and in the local community
A job application for a post as head teacher
An application for a work placement in Germany
Educational experiences and future plans
School (and future plans)
A script for an interview

My part-time job/Part-time jobs
Work experience
Work (and me)
My future

The above is by no means an exhaustive list of all the titles and variations on those titles which were seen. It merely gives a flavour of the diversity of work presented for assessment. The most popular titles were those which involved holidays and lifestyles.

It goes without saying that all the above titles could lead to a complete range of outcome issues. Some general observations can, however, be made.

- Very open-ended titles (e.g. *Holidays, All About Me, My Town*) gave students a good opportunity to develop a response in keeping with their learning and ability. Nevertheless, more able students should be encouraged to develop ideas and opinions and to use a variety of vocabulary and structures.
- Some titles (e.g. *Am I fit and healthy? Money and jobs*) tended to limit the scope and ambition of the response and structures were relatively simple and repetitive. It was not uncommon to see *um fit zu bleiben* and *um gesund zu bleiben* repeated several times in the former task. That was not always the case and there were some very good response to such titles.
- Other titles (e.g. variations on *Home and local area*) tended to lead to repetition and the use of lists to make up the number of words. There were, however, some examples of excellent work where ideas and points of view were developed in detail. In the example given more able students put forward suggestions for improving their local area and advanced cogent arguments for the suggested improvements.
- There were some outstanding pieces of work which dealt with environmental issues or the use of various media in modern life. The linguistic demands of titles which incorporated the above themes did, however, prove a notable challenge for many students.
- The most successful work (and at different grade ranges) was where students had been encouraged to and had strived to develop an individual response and had obviously tried hard to find and use the vocabulary and structures appropriate to their personal point of view. Titles such as *A Film Review, A Holiday Review, A Holiday Blog* and *My Life As A Sportsman/Sportswoman* prompted some very good responses. The former three in particular encouraged the expression, explanation and development of opinions in some detail.

It should be noted that Writing titles can be anything – they do not have to adhere to the specification Content. Necessarily there can be differentiation by task.

All schools/colleges have a named Controlled Assessment Adviser who can provide advice on task design and planning.

ADMINISTRATION

Schools/colleges should observe the following:

- Each task should clearly show the Centre number, the Candidate number and Candidate name. There were several instances where only the student's name and form were shown.
- Keep each student's work together along with the CRF/plan.
- Use treasury tags to keep portfolios together. (Many thanks to the increasing number of schools/colleges which do this.) Paper clips and plastic wallets cause significant handling problems.
- Some schools/colleges made no effort at all to attach students' work together and simply sent a pile of paper. **This is not acceptable.**
- Make sure that the examiner receives the **full** Controlled Assessment Task relevant to the student or group. Marking cannot begin until the examiner knows what task s/he is marking.
- Translator software is not allowed at Stage 2 and obviously not at Stage 3.
- Students should write in black ink, as for other external examinations.
- Task Planning Forms should be checked carefully to ensure that the Specification requirements have been met in respect of conjugated verbs and the number of words. Students themselves should obliterate unauthorised items and can re-write their plan if they so wish. The plan should not extend to a second page. Failure to follow this routine can seriously disadvantage students.
- The school's/college's work should be assembled in entry order with the attendance list and an indication of absentees. There were instances of work being arranged according to sets or in no particular order.
- The task number should be written clearly at the top of each piece of work.
- Work should reach the examiner by 7th May. Many schools/colleges failed to adhere to this deadline.

Assessment issues

1. Task Planning Forms (TPF)

If more than 40 words have been used, examiners will ignore when awarding a mark, the parts of the student's response (ie the phrases or clauses) which use words noted on the TPF beyond the first 40.

If a conjugated verb appears on the TPF, examiners will ignore the clause(s) where that verb is used when awarding a mark for Range of Language and Accuracy. If the sentence (with the conjugated verb discounted) still communicates, then it may be counted towards the mark for Content. The same applies to the use of codes.

Visuals on Task Planning Forms are not permitted.

2. Exactly what do examiners mark?

- They mark the student's response **to the title**.
- They do **not** mark a response to the bullet points which have the status of guidance. The student may choose to ignore the bullet points completely.
- The response must be relevant to the title.

3. Must the title relate directly to the Contexts defined in the specification?

No. The title can be anything.

4. How do examiners identify the title?

- The title is the task.
- The task and the scene-setting may seem blurred or merged together. The focus is the task.
- See examples in *Additional Exemplar Tasks: Controlled Assessment Writing and Speaking* on our website within Example answers for your language at <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/german/gcse/german-4665/past-papers-and-mark-schemes> where the task and scene setting are clearly separated.

5. What is a relevant response?

- The response must be relevant to the task.
- Students are not penalised for not responding to the scene setting details.

6. And what if there is a significant amount of irrelevant material?

- It would affect the mark for CONTENT.
- Only the material which is relevant should still be assessed for RANGE OF LANGUAGE and ACCURACY.

7. What if a student has omitted an entire aspect of the title?

A student with the task 'Home, local area and special occasions' who writes nothing about home area, for example, could be considered to have completed two thirds of the task. The piece could therefore be eligible for the 10-12 band for Content, assuming the piece fulfils the criteria for that band in other ways. This would still allow the student access to all mark bands for language.

8. What if there is a significant duplication of material across the two pieces of work submitted?

- The same material cannot be credited twice.
- Incidental and occasional overlap do not count as duplication.

9. What if it is clear the student's entire response is identical (ie exactly the same, word for word) to model answers in a textbook or to the wording of tasks from other students at the same centre?

The work would be referred to AQA's Irregularities/Malpractice Department.

10. Does the number of words affect assessment?

- The quality not the quantity of work affects the assessment outcome.
- 200-350 words across both tasks if aiming at grades D-G, 400-600 if aiming at grades A*-C, is for **guidance** only.
- Obviously, the shorter the assignment, the more difficult it becomes to meet the upper bands of assessment criteria for CONTENT (and therefore other categories).

- There is no *upper* limit on the number of words. The whole piece will be read and marked by the examiner.

11. How does the CONTENT mark affect the marks for RANGE OF LANGUAGE and ACCURACY?

Content Mark	Maximum Mark for Range of Language	Maximum Mark for Accuracy
0	0	0
1–3	1–4	1-2
4–6	1–6	1-3
7–9	1–8	1-4
10–12	1–10	1-5
13–15	1–10	1-5

12. The criteria for assessment

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

(a) CONTENT

GENERAL OVERVIEW

If the descriptor fits the piece exactly, then the examiner will award the middle mark in the band. If there is strong evidence of the descriptors and/or the examiner had been considering the band above, the highest of the three marks would be awarded. If there is just enough evidence and/or the examiner had been considering the band below, then the lowest mark in the band would be awarded.

13-15 marks

- Students provide a **fully relevant** and **detailed** response with **almost all** information conveyed **clearly** and **developed**.
- They must offer ideas / opinions / points of view (minimum 2) and at least two of them must be explained or justified.
- The piece should have a well organised structure, ie a sound ordering of ideas but **not** necessarily a formal essay structure or an introduction, conclusion, etc.

10-12 marks

- The response will be **mostly** relevant and **a lot** of information will still be provided and conveyed **clearly** and will **generally** be developed.
- There is a requirement to give **and explain** ideas / opinions / points of view (minimum 2)

7-9 marks

- The response will be **generally** relevant with **quite a lot** of information conveyed **clearly**.
- There will still be evidence of an ability to **develop** ideas.
- There is a requirement to give opinions / points of view (minimum 2).

4-6 marks

- The response is **limited** but **some** relevant information will be conveyed.
- There will be **some development** of basic ideas.
- There is a requirement to give opinions (minimum 2). These could be very simple, eg: 'I like French. I like Spanish. France is good.' = 3 simple opinions.

1-3 marks

- The response is **very limited** with **little** relevant information conveyed.
- There will be **no real structure**.

0 marks

- No relevant information is communicated in a coherent fashion. If zero is awarded for Content, zero must also be awarded for Range of Language and Accuracy.

DETAILED CONSIDERATION OF ISSUES

- i) **Relevance** This refers to relevance to the title (ignoring scene-setting, etc). Examiners look out particularly for the following scenarios:

- The piece on a specific topic that strays into other areas (eg *My School Routine* should not have long digressions on work experience or future career).
- The piece with a title covering a range of topics which only mentions one of them (eg the title is *School and Future Career* but the student only mentions 'school').
- The piece which starts with a long preamble about the student which is not relevant to the title.
- Work where there is a significant duplication of material across the two tasks submitted. The same material cannot be credited twice. Examiners do not count incidental and occasional overlap as duplication.
- Examiners are aware of the principle of balance. The piece on *My holiday last summer* which includes a couple of sentences on what the student generally does/will do next year is perfectly acceptable but if the student takes $\frac{1}{3}$ of the piece talking about what (s)he usually does and $\frac{1}{3}$ of the piece dealing with next year's plans then the work should not be judged 'fully relevant' unless the student has been able to link this material clearly to the title. Similarly with the task on *My Work Experience* where a large part of the piece is taken up with what the student will do next year.
- Irrelevant material in the work is taken into account in awarding the marks, even if there is sufficient relevant material to meet the recommended word length. For example, if a student has written 600 words and 300 words are relevant to the title, the examiner cannot simply ignore the 300 words of irrelevant material and deem the piece to be fully relevant.

In practice, the vast majority of tasks will be fully relevant but many will not score in the top band for Content because of other limitations. However, any piece which is not judged fully relevant cannot be awarded a mark in the top band. Where it is obvious from the task sheet that the bullet points have led the student into including irrelevant material, the examiner will treat the lack of relevance as leniently as possible. Material which is deemed irrelevant will be discounted when assessing Range of Language and Content.

ii) Information conveyed

- It is necessary to consider the amount of information given and the extent to which it is developed. (Development of information/ideas means going beyond a basic response to give additional detail.)

Note that a piece which does not reach the recommended length specified in the specification (minimum 200 words across both pieces for grades G-D, minimum 400 words across both pieces for grades C-A*) is unlikely to score highly for Content, ie a piece of less than about 100 words is likely to fall into the Limited or Poor band, a piece of less than about 200 words is unlikely to score above the Sufficient band. However, a piece of 200+ words will in theory have access to the full mark range. The examiner is assessing primarily quality rather than quantity and precision and clarity of expression are more important than the number of points made.

- There is no *upper* limit on the number of words. The whole piece will be read and marked.

iii) Expression and explanation of ideas/points of view/opinions

- Ideas, points of view and opinions must be viewed as one notion and are the same for assessment purposes.
- To score 4+ for Content there must be at least **two** opinions/points of view/ideas expressed.

- To score 10+ for Content, at least **two** opinions must be expressed **and explained / justified**. At a basic level, explanation of an opinion is most likely to consist of a statement of the opinion followed by *weil ...*, but more able students may find more subtle ways of justifying their opinions. For example, the explanation may come before the opinion (see below).

Information/Opinions – Examples

13-15 marks	Detailed response – almost all information developed . A number (at least two) opinions expressed and explained in some detail.	<i>York ist eine schöne, historische Stadt in Nordengland. Ich wohne gern hier, da es viel zu tun und viel zu sehen gibt. Um York wirklich zu geniessen, muss man ein Interesse an Kultur und Geschichte haben aber für junge Leute gibt es auch viele andere Unterhaltungsmöglichkeiten, obwohl sie manchmal teuer sein können. Wenn ich es mir leisten kann, gehe ich mit Freunden ins Kino in York, weil ich Filmkunst besonders liebe.</i>
10-12 marks	A lot of information- generally developed . At least two opinions expressed and explained .	<i>York ist eine schöne, historische Stadt in Nordengland. Ich wohne gern hier, da es viel zu tun gibt. York ist immer interessant, weil Kultur und Geschichte überall zu finden sind. Es gefällt mir auch, dass ich leicht ins Kino, ins Theater oder in die Kneipe gehen kann, obwohl das teuer ist. Ich gehe besonders gern in die Kneipe in York, weil ich dann immer Spaß mit meinen Freunden habe.</i>
7-9 marks	Quite a lot of information. At least two opinions. Some development of information and opinions.	<i>Ich wohne gern in York. Die Stadt ist schön und interessant und es gibt viel zu tun. Ich gehe gern mit meinen Freunden ins Kino im Stadtzentrum. Ich mag Horrorfilme am liebsten.</i>
4-6 marks	Limited response – some information – some development . At least two basic opinions expressed	<i>Ich wohne in York. York ist gut und interessant. Ich mag York. Ich mag ins Kino gehen.</i>
1-3 marks	Very limited – little information. Few or no basic opinions	<i>Ich wohne in York. York ist in England.</i>
0 marks	No relevant information communicated.	<i>York is grub. Leeds was better.</i>

- iv) **Clarity of expression** In order to gain a mark of 7+ for Content, there is a requirement that information, opinions and development of points be conveyed **clearly**. The following are the factors most likely to affect clarity of expression:

- incorrect choice of vocabulary/dictionary errors (eg *was* for *war*, *grob* for *groß*, *Fete* for *tun*, etc)
- gross grammatical errors which hinder communication. Errors with verb endings, particularly the wrong person of the verb, are particularly important here.
- omissions of words, phrases or whole sentences. These generally occur where the student has attempted to learn by heart a draft version of the task and remembered it imperfectly so that the sense of the sentence or paragraph is impaired.
- (occasionally) gross errors of punctuation

v) **Organisation** For the top Content band there is a requirement that the piece should have a **well organised structure**. Pieces scoring in the bottom band may have **no real structure**. Note the following points:

- A well organised structure means a sound ordering of ideas but not necessarily a formal essay structure with an introduction, conclusion, etc.
- Students are, however, required to produce a continuous piece of writing rather than a series of answers to the bullet points on the task sheet. A piece which cannot be fully understood without reference to the task sheet is unlikely to demonstrate a well organised structure.
- In the vast majority of cases, the requirement for a piece placed in the top band for Content to have a well organised structure will not be an issue. It will be other factors which determine whether it scores in the top band and many pieces placed in lower bands will also be well organised.

13-15 marks	Well organised structure	<i>In den Ferien fahre ich normalerweise im August mit meiner Familie nach Mallorca. Wir verbringen zwei Wochen da in einem Ferienhaus am Strand. Trotzdem haben wir uns letztes Jahr entschieden nach Frankreich zu fahren und wir haben in einem Hotel gewohnt.</i>
10-12 marks (and below)	(Structure less well organised – can only be fully understood by reference to the task sheet)	<i>In den Ferien fahre ich normalerweise im August mit meiner Familie nach Mallorca. Wir verbringen zwei Wochen da in einem Ferienhaus am Strand. Wir sind nach Frankreich gefahren und haben in einem Hotel gewohnt.</i>
1-3 marks	No real structure	<i>Ich fahre nach Mallorca. Wir sind nach Frankreich gefahren. Ich fahre mit meiner Familie. Ich war in einem Hotel.</i>

CONTENT – SUMMARY

- **Content not fully relevant** Examiners will not award a mark above 12
- **Structure obviously not well organised** Examiners will not award a mark above 12
- **Fewer than 2 opinions explained** Examiners will not award a mark above 9
- **Only one opinion or no opinions expressed** Examiners will not award a mark above 3
- **Deciding on a mark within the Content band** If the descriptor fits the piece exactly examiners will award the middle mark in the band. If there is strong evidence of the

descriptors and/or examiners considered the band above, then examiners will award the highest of the three marks; if there is only just enough evidence and/or examiners considered the band below, then examiners will award the lowest mark.

In the top (Very Good) band, a performance which matches the descriptor **exactly** will be awarded the middle mark of 14; the top mark (15) **comfortably** fulfils all of the criteria and may even go beyond them.

	Relevance	Information conveyed	Opinions expressed / explained	Clarity of expression	Organisation
Very Good 13-15 marks	Fully relevant	Detailed response – almost all information developed	A number (at least two) opinions expressed and explained in some detail.	Almost all information conveyed clearly	Well organised structure
Good 10-12 marks	Mainly relevant	A lot of information - generally developed	At least two opinions expressed and explained	A lot of information conveyed clearly	(Structure less well organised – can only be fully understood by reference to the task sheet)
Sufficient 7-9 marks	Generally relevant	Quite a lot of info - some development	At least two opinions. Some development of opinions.	Some information conveyed clearly	
Limited 4-6 marks	Some relevant information	Limited response- some information – some development	At least two basic opinions expressed	Clarity of expression generally a problem	
Poor 1-3 marks	Little relevant information	Very limited - little information	Few or no basic opinions expressed		No real structure
0 marks	No relevant information communicated in a coherent fashion				

(b) RANGE OF LANGUAGE

GENERAL OVERVIEW

9-10 marks

- A variety of **tenses** must be used **successfully**. This means two or more tenses and a minimum of one instance of a tense use which is other than the default tense used. 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. An overall judgement needs to be made as to whether “verb tenses are used successfully.” There needs to be evidence that the student can communicate messages successfully in more than one tense. There may be minor spelling errors and occasional word order errors but provided they do not prevent communication they can be credited.
- The use of different tenses is not a ‘passport’ to the 9-10 band.

- There must be evidence of **successful use of complex sentences**. This could be:
 - use of coordinating conjunctions, especially *denn, sondern*
 - use of subordinating conjunctions
 - use of subordinating conjunctions combined with coordinating conjunctions (eg: *obwohl....wenn ...weil ... und*)
 - use of adverbial conjunctions (eg: *also, daher, deshalb, außerdem, trotzdem*)
 - use of correlative conjunctions (eg: *entweder....oder, weder.... noch*)
 - use of relative clauses
 - use of infinitive constructions (eg: with modal verbs, *um...zu*, etc)
 - use of different tenses, especially in a single sentence
 - use of reflexive, separable and inseparable verbs (possibly in different tenses)
 - use of (mainly) correct word order in all the above
 - use of imperfect subjunctive (*möchte, hätte, wäre, könnte*)
 - good adverbial constructions (eg: *gestern mit dem Auto dorthin*)

However, this is GCSE so even in the highest mark band examiners are not necessarily looking for use of the subjunctive or similar grammatical structures.

- There needs to be a **wide range of vocabulary**. This means that students will not be too repetitive in the words they use.

7-8 marks

- **Mainly successful** use of complex sentences. The note above about what constitutes complexity for the 9-10 band will also apply here.
- No specific requirement to use more than one tense but the use of different tenses may constitute evidence of 'more complex sentences.'
- There must be a **good range** of vocabulary, so students in this band will again be trying to avoid repetition of the more common words.

5-6 marks

- There will be some attempts made at longer sentences using appropriate linking words. At this level this will often mean repeated dependence on simple connectives such as 'and' / 'but', though 'because' will also be found fairly frequently when students attempt to explain ideas and points of view. Use of other forms of complex sentences will often not be wholly successful.
- There should be **some variety** of vocabulary, though students will generally be using a more basic range of vocabulary than in the higher bands and there may be more repetition.

3-4 marks

- Language will be basic, with **short, simple sentences**. Attempts at longer sentences and more difficult constructions will usually not be successful.
- Vocabulary will generally be appropriate to the basic needs of the task but will be **limited**, with a lot of repetition and overuse of a few common verbs such as *to be, to have, to like, to go*.

1-2 marks

- Little understanding of language structure shown with just the occasional short phrase which is correctly used.
- Vocabulary will be very **basic**, with only isolated words correctly used. Vocabulary will often be anglicised.

DETAILED CONSIDERATION OF ISSUES

i) Variety of vocabulary Consider particularly:

- use of synonyms, eg *angenehm*, *fabelhaft*, *spitze* rather than *gut/sehr gut*, *halten für* rather than *meinen*, *dass*, *vorziehen* + infinitive rather than *lieber mögen*.
- use of 'Higher Tier'/more sophisticated vocabulary – though this may vary somewhat from centre to centre depending on course books used, etc.
- dictionary use – frequent poor dictionary use is likely to have a limiting effect on the mark available

ii) Variety of structures Consider:

- good (and idiomatic) use of prepositions eg: *vor einem Jahr*, *auf dem Lande*
- reflexive, separable and inseparable verbs
- infinitive constructions, eg: *um Fußball zu spielen*, *es gefällt mir Fußball zu spielen*, *ohne es zu sehen*
- use of relative clauses
- Subordinate clauses introduced by interrogatives, eg: *die Stadt, wo ich wohne*
- use of **different** modal verbs in one piece of work
- use of a **variety** of subordinating conjunctions – not just *weil*
- use of a variety of adverbial conjunctions with inversion of subject and verb
- use of comparative and superlative
- use of complex sentences and a range of tenses (v below)
- idiomatic use of language; for example a native speaker may use a limited range of connectives but use idiomatic language throughout.

iii) Use of complex/longer sentences Consider:

- use of several subordinate clauses linked together with main clauses
- use of *wäre*, *hätte*, *könnte*, *sollte* linked with *würde* + infinitive in *wenn* clauses
- use of relative clauses.

iv) Use of tenses

- To score 9 or 10 marks for Range of Language a variety of **tenses** must be used **successfully**. This means two or more tenses and a minimum of one instance of a tense use which is other than the default tense used. The tenses could come from the same time frame (for example the perfect and the imperfect). A greater range of tenses will add to the complexity of the language used.

An overall judgement needs to be made as to whether “verb tenses are used *successfully*.” There needs to be evidence that the student can communicate messages successfully in more than one tense. There may be minor spelling errors but provided they do not prevent communication they can be credited.

- A construction using the present tense to refer to the future counts as the present tense.
- A construction using the present tense to refer to the past counts as the present tense, eg: *ich wohne seit drei Jahren hier*.
- The present subjunctive does not count as a separate tense from the present indicative.
- The passive voice is not required for active use in this specification but should be credited if used.
- The use of different tenses is not a ‘passport’ to the 9-10 band.

- Below the 9-10 band, use of a range of tenses is a factor to take into consideration when judging use of a variety of structures/complex language.

RANGE OF LANGUAGE – SUMMARY

- **Only one tense used** Examiners do not award a mark above 8
- **Only one or no longer/complex sentences** Examiners do not award a mark above 4
- **The Range of Language mark must not be more than one band higher than the mark awarded for Content.**

	Variety of vocabulary	Variety of structures	Use of complex / longer sentences	Use of tenses
9-10 marks	Wide variety of vocabulary. Avoidance of repetition. Use of 'Higher Tier'/more sophisticated vocabulary	Wide variety of structures used successfully	Successful use of complex sentences – handled with confidence to produce a fluent piece of coherent language	At least two tenses used successfully
7-8 marks	Good variety of vocabulary – some attempts to avoid repetition	Good variety of structures used with some success, enabling the student to communicate with some degree of precision.	Mostly successful use of complex sentences	No requirement to use more than one tense, but, when used, a range of tenses can be considered under variety of structures
5-6 marks	Some variety of vocabulary but repetition of some common words	Some variety of structures, though more difficult structures may not always be used successfully	At least two attempts at longer sentences using appropriate linking words (eg <i>und</i> , <i>aber</i> , <i>weil</i>)	
3-4 marks	Limited vocabulary but appropriate to the basic needs of the task. A lot of repetition. Overuse of common words such as <i>ist</i> , <i>habe</i> , <i>es gibt</i> , <i>gut</i> . There may be poor dictionary use.	Basic language using simple structures which are rarely linked. Attempts at difficult constructions will often be unsuccessful	Sentences mainly short and simple. Attempts at longer sentences may be flawed	
1-2 marks	Very limited vocabulary, often anglicised or containing many cognates. Incorrect use of some words. Sometimes, only isolated words used correctly.	Little understanding of language structure. An occasional short phrase or sentence may be correctly used.		
0 marks	No language produced which is worthy of credit			

Examples

9-10 marks	<i>Als ich letztes Jahr mit meiner Familie in Mallorca war, bin ich fast jeden Tag auf den Strand gegangen, wo ich mich gesonnt habe, weil ich auf Urlaub faul sein möchte. Wir haben auch zwei schöne Ausflüge gemacht. Was mir besonders gefiel, war der Besuch in Palma, da ich gut einkaufen konnte. Wenn ich sehr viel Geld hätte, würde ich ein Ferienhaus in Mallorca kaufen, damit ich regelmäßig dahin fahren könnte.</i>
7-8 marks	<i>Als ich letztes Jahr mit meiner Familie in Mallorca war, bin ich fast jeden Tag auf den Strand gegangen. Ich habe mich gesonnt, weil ich auf Urlaub faul sein möchte. Wir haben auch zwei Ausflüge gemacht. Am besten war der Besuch in Palma, da ich gut einkaufen konnte. Ich muss mein Geld sparen, um wieder nach Mallorca zu fahren.</i>
5-6 marks	<i>Ich war letztes Jahr in Mallorca und ich war oft auf dem Strand. Ich mag in der Sonne liegen aber ich war auch in Palma und ich habe Souvenirs gekauft. Ich möchte wieder gehen.</i>
3-4 marks	<i>Letztes Jahr ich gehe zu Mallorca. Der Strand ist gut. Die Sonne ist gut. Palma ist gut und ich Souvenirs kaufen. Ich zurück gehst.</i>
1-2 marks	<i>Ich flug zu Mallorca. Strand was gut. Sonne is super. Palma was super. Ich gekauft Souvenirs. Ich zurücke.</i>
0 marks	<i>Mjorca is gud. Sonn shins every day. Parma is da.</i>

(c) ACCURACY**GENERAL OVERVIEW**

NB. Range of tenses is assessed under RANGE OF LANGUAGE. The range of tenses is not considered when assessing Accuracy.

5 marks

- **Largely accurate.**
- Major errors only usually appear in complex structures.
- There may be some minor errors (eg gender).
- Verbs and tenses are **secure**.

4 marks

- Errors occur but the piece is **generally accurate**. Mistakes made will not generally impede communication.
- Verbs and tenses are **usually correct**.

3 marks

- **More accurate than inaccurate**, though there will often be fairly frequent errors.
- The intended **meaning is clear**.
- Verbs and tenses are **sometimes unsuccessful**.

2 marks

- **Many errors.**
- Mistakes **often impede communication.**
- Verbs are **rarely accurate.**

1 mark

- **Frequent errors.**
- Mistakes **regularly impede communication.**
- **Limited understanding** of basic linguistic structures.

DETAILED CONSIDERATION OF ISSUES

- There are only 5 marks available to cover the whole range of ability (ie 8 grades). Each mark will therefore cover a relatively wide range of performance and a mark of 5 will represent more than an A* performance.
- The mark awarded for Accuracy must not be more than one band higher than the mark awarded for Content.
- Examiners are not over-influenced by the standard of accuracy in the last part of a piece – this will probably be the most inaccurate bit. If in doubt, they re-read the whole piece.
- A repeated major error (ie one where communication is impeded) should be considered each time it occurs. Repeated minor errors will incur no further penalty after the first occurrence.

		Major errors	Minor errors	Verbs/tenses
5 marks	Largely accurate	Hardly any, usually only in attempts at more complex sentences	A few (eg mistakes of gender, minor spelling mistakes)	Secure
4 marks	Generally accurate	A few, usually only in attempts at more complex sentences	Some	Mostly correct
3 marks	More accurate than inaccurate	Some gross errors but the intended meaning is clear	Fairly frequent	Sometimes correct
2 marks	Many errors	Many – communication is often impeded	Many errors – most sentences contain mistakes	Rarely correct
1 mark	Frequent errors	Frequent – errors regularly impede communication	Frequent – Limited understanding of basic linguistic structures	Limited understanding
0 marks	No language produced which is worthy of credit Little, if any understanding of the most basic linguistic structures			

Examples

5 marks	<i>Die Schule war ein Gymnasium und die erste Stunde hat um halb acht begonnen. Ich finde das war früh. Die pause war um halb elf. Ich finde dass das in Ordnung war. Am mittag habe ich bei meinem Austauschpartner zu hause gegessen und am Freitag habe ich eine AG gemacht für eine Stunde.</i>
4 marks	<i>Wir durften um zwei Uhr nach Hause gehen, weil die Schule dann aus war. Ich habe mittags bei meinem Austauschpartner gegessen. Es war schön. Ich musste kein AGs gemacht aber ich habe golf mit meinem Austauschpartner gespielt.</i>
3 marks	<i>Ich versuche überreden mein Freundes zu mull trennen und recyceln altpapier. Ich hoffe werdst du machen mein Beispiel und werdst du Energie sparen. Wir haben die welt verletzen aber wir können befestigen die welt.</i>
2 marks	<i>Ich versuche überreden mein Freundes zu mull trennen. Ich hoffen du gemachtst mein Biespiel und gerettet Energie. Wir bin können befestigen die welt.</i>
1 mark	<i>Ich besuchen überreden freunds zu mull. Bist du hoffen mein Exemplar is gut. Wie musst rettet das planet.</i>
0 marks	<i>I schinken gut with frends ablehnen. Wie can zervalatwurst das weltbank.</i>

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