



General Certificate of Secondary Education

German 4662 *Specification B*

Module 3 46603

Report on the Examination

2007 examination - January series

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Module 3

General comments

This was the first round for Module 3 of the Revised specification and moderators were pleased to report that the majority of centres had tackled the new requirements efficiently and successfully.

Compared to the legacy specification, the absence of the speaking component clearly had a positive effect on Module 3. Centres and candidates could obviously devote more time to the two writing tasks and moderators generally noted an increase in the standard of candidates' performances. The administration of this module also seems to have been made easier, although there are still some areas for improvement (see below).

The moderation process

Most centres dealt efficiently with the administration of this module. The following points, which they observed, may therefore be noted as good practice and in future be taken on board by all centres in order to assist in the smooth running of the moderation of this module:

Administrative Issues

Good practice ensured that:

- both the pink and the yellow copy of the CMS were sent to moderators and that these arrived by the deadline set by AQA (i.e. the 13th of January).
- small centres (20 candidates or less) sent the work of all their candidates directly to the moderator.
- in centres with more than 20 candidates, where a sample was requested it was sent to the moderator within 5 days, using first class post (please do not use any other way of sending the parcel to the moderator).
- the Centre Declaration Form was included with the sample and that this form was signed by all teachers involved in the marking and by the Head of the centre.
- the Candidate Record Form was signed by both teacher and candidate.
- candidates' work was not marked or corrected, i.e. nothing was written on the candidates' work.
- written tasks were properly labelled (i.e. centre name & number, candidate name & number, indicating which tasks the candidate is attempting);
- only the final total was rounded up.

AQA wishes to provide the following clarification to the regulations concerning the rounding up of half marks in Module 3.

It is not intended that candidates' individual assignment marks should be rounded up. The final grand total for Module 3 should not contain any half marks and should be rounded up if a half mark is left over after the two individual assignment marks have been added together. Therefore the instruction on the Candidate Record Form that "Only whole numbers should be used" refers only to the total box. The 2008 Candidate Record Form will be amended to make this clearer.

AQA regrets that the Teacher Support Materials published in autumn 2006 for German Module 3 did not reflect this practice and wishes to apologise to centres for any confusion or inconvenience caused.

Choice of topics and assignments

It was most pleasing to note that no centre had rubric infringements (i.e. chose two assignments from the same topic area). Moderators also noted that most centres worked to the right Specification (i.e. 2007 onwards); there was, however, occasional evidence that some centres had not yet adapted to the new specifications. Consequently some of their candidates' writing was irrelevant to the chosen assignment title and these candidates will have suffered loss of marks for both Communication and Quality of Language.

Candidates' performance

Most candidates made every effort to produce and present work to the best of their ability. Even in the lower range of ability most candidates were able to produce some successful communication, although some candidates only produced one assignment.

Presentation

Hand-written assignments varied a lot in legibility and candidates must be reminded that untidy, i.e. illegible handwriting can lead to loss of marks if the moderator is unable to read what the candidate had intended to convey.

On the other hand, moderators noted an increased number of word-processed assignments. Whilst this improves legibility, they also noted that many candidates did not carefully check their work and that word-processed assignments seem to have more (and often very strange) spelling mistakes/typos than hand-written ones, sometimes rendering the sentence nonsensical. Candidates need to be reminded that spelling mistakes which result in a change of meaning cannot be credited.

Moderators also noted that many assignments seem to lack punctuation, thereby leaving it to the moderator to identify the end of a sentence. This can have an adverse effect on the mark for communication as the moderator might not be sure where one idea finished and the next one started.

Candidates are also invited to use paragraphs as this may help them to structure their thoughts more effectively, whether by following the suggested bullet points in the Specification or using their own.

Length

The Specification (p. 86) suggests, "each assignment should be up to approximately 200 words in length". Obviously, length as such is not a criterion, and there have been many examples of excellent performances with less than 200 words, mainly from candidates who are able to structure their writing logically and write succinctly. It is, however, equally obvious that an assignment which is considerably shorter is unlikely to offer the wider range of vocabulary and structures which are required to access the top two mark bands.

Time frames

Centres and candidates must be congratulated here. Moderators noted that many candidates seem to have been well prepared in using at least two time frames; indeed, many offered all three.

The accuracy of the verb forms in the different tenses, however, could still improve. Special attention must be given to a couple of modal verbs: *möchte/mochte* and *könnte/konnte*. The auxiliary *würde/wurde* also falls into this category.

Quotation: “in die zunkunft ich *mochte* deise job nicht machen” – apart from the spelling mistakes the verb form *mochte* is past tense and causes ambiguity in a sentence intended to express a future event. Similar: “nächtes woche ich *konnte* esse mehr Obst” and “das Arbeitspraktikum war eine gute Erfahrung, aber ich *wurde* diese Arbeit später nicht machen”. Candidates should watch out for these pitfalls, as they are more than just a spelling mistake.

Assessment

Moderators felt that centres’ marking was generally in line with AQA’s guidelines. Where moderators disagreed with centre marks it was almost always because centre marks were deemed to be over-generous. Assessment towards the top and bottom of the scale was usually more accurate, but consistency suffered in the mid-range.

Communication

Most centres assessed the mark for Communication fairly accurately, if slightly generously. Where discrepancies with moderators occurred it was mainly for the following reason:

- centres tend to accept too readily what a candidate intended to say rather than what he/she actually wrote (see comments about presentation above).

Quality of Language

Many centres also fairly accurately assessed the Quality of Language, but some did not observe the grade descriptors carefully enough. Centres are reminded of the following points:

- Using two time frames does not automatically place a candidate in the 7/8-band; it merely gives access to the higher marking bands, that is to say that the rest of the language must also justify higher marks.
- In order to be awarded 7 or 8 marks, there must be attempts at longer sentences, with appropriate linking words, successful opinions (plural) and verb forms must be more accurate than inaccurate.
- Many candidates successfully used a ‘weil’-clause to enable them to formulate a reason (= justification of an opinion). Often this led to ‘over-using’ this conjunction. If, however, ‘weil’ remains the only subordinating conjunction a candidate uses, he/she is unlikely to fulfil the criteria for the 9/10-band, which requires a “wider range of ... structures” and the “use of subordinate clauses”.

Topics and Assignments

The vast majority of centres worked to the topics and assignment titles as stipulated in the 2007 Specification (also see 2.2. above). Most candidates seem to follow the suggested bullet points, but centres are reminded that this is not a requirement. The assignment titles, however, are prescriptive and must not be changed.

All assignment titles were attempted.

Topic A – Assignment 1, Topic A – Assignment 2, Topic D - Assignment 1 were less popular than the other topics, whilst

Topic B – Assignment 2, Topic C – Assignment 1, Topic D – Assignment 2 emerged as clear favourites.

Topic A – Assignment 1: Home Life in the UK and a German Speaking Country

Amongst those who chose this assignment there were some excellent performances, which offered good knowledge about life in a German speaking country. There were, however, also some very poor performances, which clearly indicated dated knowledge about a German speaking country. Most candidates followed the bullet points and therefore had no problems in covering at least two (most actually covered three) time frames.

Topic A – Assignment 2: A Festival or Special Occasion

Not many centres chose this topic. Quite often it was chosen by candidates whose religion is Islam and 'Eid ul Fitr' featured very frequently. There was generally little attempt to compare these celebrations to those in a German speaking country.

Centres are advised that from 2008 the comparison with a German speaking country has to be offered by candidates, if they are to access the top mark bands. This is true for both Assignment 1 and 2. A note to this effect will also be published on the AQA web site.

Topic B – Assignment 1: Keeping fit Topic B – Assignment 2: Healthy Lifestyle

Many centres did not seem to differentiate between these two topics, although they clearly demand a different approach as mentioned in the 2006 Support Material. Furthermore, paragraphing would certainly have helped candidates here. In dealing with B2, many candidates wrote within the first few lines ideas on what they eat, what is healthy, what is unhealthy and how they are going to improve their diet, only to repeat these ideas in similar (sometimes identical) language several times over in their following text. A clearer structuring of ideas (paragraphs) would have been desirable and would have improved their performance.

Topic C – Assignment 1: Work experience

This assignment was very popular and usually well done. Many candidates could clearly draw from real life experience and there were some excellent examples of highly specific vocabulary appropriate to the candidate's work placement.

Topic C – Assignment 2: Part-time jobs

Far fewer candidates than expected attempted this assignment. Those who did dealt with it in a routine way and there were fewer examples of really interesting pieces than in C1.

Centres are advised that the plural in the title is the indefinite plural 'any job' – in a couple of centres candidates seemed to have thought that they need to write about more than one part-time job. This is not the case.

Topic D – Assignment 1: Television

Candidates who attempted this assignment usually followed the bullet points and generally did well. The least successful point was usually bullet point four, because the specific vocabulary that would have been needed was often beyond that of GCSE vocabulary lists and/or the candidates' ability.

Topic D – Assignment 2: A day out

Almost all candidates approached this assignment in the correct way, i.e. they wrote about **one** day. Unfortunately, there were still some examples where candidates wrote about several days and even some who wrote about a holiday. This is not accepted.

The assignment title was very popular and many candidates did well to give a detailed account of a day trip, including opinions and justification. By nature, this topic encourages candidates to write in the past tense. Unless candidates followed bullet points and wrote something to point five (future), there was the danger that **only** past tense was used.

Topic E – Assignment 1: Shopping in my home town

In many ways this assignment title is an 'old hand', reminiscent of the old Topic E, B1 task. It was quite a popular choice again this year and many candidates coped well with the topic. With those candidates who followed the suggested bullet points, point five was least successfully handled or often omitted. Some centres seemed to link this assignment with Assignment 2 (Money Matters) and had their candidates write an introductory paragraph about where they got their money from, which does not really come under the title for assignment 1.

Topic E – Assignment 2: Money matters

Similar to E1, this title, too, has a long history, being reminiscent of the old speaking topic E and writing task B2 in Topic E. It relates to the young person's area of experience and was popular again in this first round of the new Specification.

Most candidates followed the bullet points and not surprisingly, the one new bullet (number three) was the least successful one. Overall, however, candidates coped well with this title.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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