



A-Level **German**

7662/3 Speaking

Report on the examination

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General

The majority of students this year had clearly benefitted from effective guidance concerning the format of the tests. Most had prepared appropriately for each of the elements. As has been noted in previous reports, visiting examiners reported high levels of enthusiasm. Students taking the V option test generally overcame the challenge of interacting with a visiting examiner well. Indeed, the face-to-face exchanges with a stranger gave rise to many good examples of spontaneous use of language. Genuine attempts to engage in meaningful discussion throughout the test were frequently observed, and examiners reported no cases of student distress. Arrangements and accommodation for the visiting examiners were of a very high standard. Chaperones were welcoming and supportive of both students and examiners, with no issues reported. Centres are to be thanked for their careful preparation and organisation to ensure that the tests ran smoothly.

On the whole, examiners felt that the overall standard of student performance was at least as competent as that reported in 2024. The broad range of marks awarded reflects positively on the accessibility of the specification and the efforts of teachers in classrooms. Once again, however, the administration of the T option presented some challenges. Recordings were submitted without supporting Candidate Record Forms (CRFs), which results in an unwelcome delay in carrying out the assessment and many centres did not meet published deadlines for submission. Centres are again reminded of the importance of adhering to all aspects of administrative procedures.

Teacher Examiner Conduct

It was gratifying to hear that many teachers were able to conduct tests to a good standard. This enabled students to complete tasks well and achieve marks in the higher Mark Scheme bands for all Assessment Objectives. There was clear evidence that these teachers had prepared effectively for the tests. Their students were also well aware of what was expected of them in each of the three elements of the test. It is, however, disappointing to have to report yet again that teacher-examiner conduct in numerous tests was often inadequate in terms of helping students develop their responses and student performance was thereby negatively impacted. It is strongly advised to make use of the training materials, information and guidance which the Board makes available to teachers. Consistent references in this report and printed instructions for the conduct of the examinations issued to centres make these requirements clear. Notwithstanding this, there remained in 2025 many examples of wide-ranging shortcomings in teacher-conducted tests which often resulted in students underperforming in the respective parts of the examination. Indeed there was evidence that students sometimes seemed more conversant with the test than the teachers conducting it. This is hard to comprehend in the eighth year of the specification. For the attention of teachers planning to conduct the tests in future series, some key points to consider are listed below. All of these can, and regularly did, result in limitations on marks awarded to students.

Some of the most frequent issues included:

- Many teachers did not follow up student responses to the first printed question on the stimulus card. This question is designed to allow students to introduce information given to the discussion of the card content. A large number of teachers ignored the points made by the student and moved immediately to the second printed question. Opportunities to seek further clarification, explanation and to check understanding of elements on the stimulus were missed, and often no real discussion took place. Following up student responses with unpredictable questions – even the briefest *Warum denn?* – means that students can demonstrate their ability to react spontaneously and thereby meet the requirements of the criteria for AO1.
- Insufficient exploitation of the material on the card was widely evident in teacher-conducted tests. Where students simply read out material from the stimulus card, no matter how enthusiastically, this does not per se evidence understanding. This understanding of the material is required to gain marks for AO2. It must be the role of the teacher-examiner to explore the content of the card in greater detail. Too many teachers continued to ask all three printed questions on the card in succession. It has been reiterated in previous reports to avoid this practice. Printed instructions on the front cover of the Examiner's Material booklet also make the need for supplementary questions explicitly clear. Unfortunately, teachers who did not follow these instructions inadvertently disadvantaged their students.
- During the short preparation time students are expected to consider their responses to the printed questions. For this, they can of course fall back on ideas and material they had learnt in lessons. However, students need to be aware that delivering pre-learnt lengthy monologues as answers does not come across as spontaneous participation in the discussion. Many teachers accepted pre-learnt responses without challenging the information given. Probing for evaluation of often valid points would represent far better practice and on the whole benefit students.
- The frequent use of closed questions should be avoided. These often mean that the teacher-examiner says more than the student and they may also feed them vocabulary. Some teachers commented on material from the stimulus card themselves, which naturally restricted its use by students.
- The third printed question on the stimulus card is designed to allow the student to demonstrate wider knowledge and understanding required for AO4. All too frequently, teacher-examiners failed to maintain a focus on the German speaking world in this discussion. Personal questions to the student *Bist du auch Gamer?* (Card B); *Was für Musik hörst du am liebsten?* (Card C) are not advised as they do not qualify for AO4 marks. Allowing the student to include references to other countries outside the German-speaking world or inviting the student to do so is also counterproductive since such content cannot attract marks for AO4. It is accepted that adhering to AO4 matters is more difficult to achieve for sub-themes on Card A, B and C. Effective preparation by the teacher is therefore vital and will bring rewards for the student. Stimulus cards from previous years can also serve as a means to introduce evidence from German-

speaking society/culture.

- As has been mentioned consistently in this report in previous years, teachers often alternated between *Sie* and *du* forms during the test. Within the discussion of the stimulus card, supplementary questions were often phrased using *du* forms and directly followed printed questions with the *Sie* format. While this regular switching between two forms of address has no bearing on marks it can hardly be considered an example of good practice. It is perfectly acceptable to use *du* forms throughout the test and printed questions on the Examiner's Material should simply be adapted to reflect this. In their own questions, students are free to use either *du* or *Sie*.
- Another area of concern in this year's examination was the selection of cards by teachers which appeared to be arbitrary and did not follow the instructions as printed at the back of the Examiner's booklet. Pairs of cards are listed in the grid and this sequencing is to be followed by both visiting and teacher-examiners alike. Any possible overlap of content with the student's IRP topic must be avoided by skipping the 'offending' pair. But in centres with one student taking the test such overlaps are limited and it is difficult to justify a student being offered the fourth pair of cards in the grid. The Board considers all cards to be of equal difficulty. Centres can expect to be challenged when there is no obvious reason for not following the prescribed sequence.

On a positive note, timing issues were less frequent and less serious this year. Many teachers managed to heed advice from previous reports and adhere to the correct timings. A few tests were excessively long: marking stops at 18 minutes, so exceeding the time limit by more than a few seconds should be avoided. Similarly, there were a few examples of tests which were unduly short; clearly this is self-penalising. This suggests that teachers had not prepared sufficient questions to facilitate a meaningful discussion. This applied to the stimulus card discussion and/or the IRP.

Students' Performance

AO1 (Stimulus Card): The criteria for AO1 refer to two aspects: fluency and response to unpredictable elements. The majority of students demonstrated both of these qualities, developing points made and reacting well to supplementary prompts. Marks in the top two bands were pleasingly frequent. However, as referenced on the previous page, this was not always the case. In numerous teacher-conducted tests a lack of engagement by the teacher did not allow students the opportunity to react spontaneously. Some teacher-examiners returned to discussing the content of the card after asking the third printed question. Some credit was given where this was appropriate. However, this often curtailed and/or muddled the genuine discussion of the wider sub-theme.

AO2: In general, students demonstrated pleasing levels of understanding of the material on the stimulus cards as required under AO2. Responses to questions seeking clarification of information were often handled well and contributed to the standard of the exchanges between examiner and student. However, as noted above, there was much passive acceptance by many teachers of regurgitated information lifted verbatim from the stimulus card. This often had a limiting impact on marks at AO2. Students are required to prepare two

questions to ask the examiner during the discussion of the card. Visiting examiners remind them of this during the briefing at the start of a session. Students' questions must have a conjugated verb, must be relevant to the sub-theme on the card and must not repeat any printed questions on the card. They also cannot repeat questions already posed by the examiner. Where only one question is asked, the mark for AO2 is capped at 4. Where no questions are asked, the mark for AO2 is capped at 3. Feedback to centres reminded teacher-examiners that a student's questions must be asked within the time allocated to the stimulus card. On numerous occasions, teachers left this element until the end of the discussion. Any question asked after the allowed time of six minutes could not be credited.

AO3: As is always the case, the linguistic challenge of the test reveals the broad spectrum of performance amongst students. In 2025 examiners reported fewer instances of students struggling to express themselves. As a result, marks in the bottom two bands were uncommon. Indeed, examiners found examples of highly accurate use of grammar and wide-ranging vocabulary in ambitious performances. The paraphrasing of material on the card is a crucial element for awarding marks for both AO2 and AO3. Such language demonstrates not only understanding but also creativity and initiative. The more able students showed confidence with a variety of tenses, subordinating and relative conjunctions. Occasional pre-learnt gems added flair and panache to their performance. It is appropriate and expected that students will use rehearsed elements in this way. However, less able students often come unstuck when pre-learnt mini-presentations were challenged by examiners. At times, even basic supplementary questions from the examiner were either ignored or insufficiently answered. It is important to consider that 'use of language' primarily concerns contributions in genuine communication, and marks at AO3 must reflect this. Overall, pronunciation was found to be good and there many examples of excellent pronunciation. Students' intonation, assessed as part of AO3, was found to vary between very good and fairly good. A noticeable feature was the way in which intonation often became flat and monotonous during pre-learnt monologues. Students were clearly concentrating on memory over everything else.

Common grammar errors:

- dative verbs *helfen* and *folgen*, dative plural endings e.g. *von andere Leute*;
- confusion of *zu* and *nach* with verbs of motion e.g. *sie kamen zu Deutschland*;
- confusion of *verstehen* and *verstanden*;
- confusion of *konnte* and *könnte*, and other modal verb forms
- confusion of *für* and *vor*;
- confusion of *wann* / *wenn* / *als*
- word order in sub clauses e.g. *weil gibt es . . .*; *dass es ist . . .*; *als ich habe gesagt*;
- *überall* in the sense of overall.

Common pronunciation errors:

- *gefährlich*, *später*; *notig*, *für* without umlauts, and occasionally *ünd* with one;
- *Nation* as nat-shun, and *international* as internat-shunal;
- *Generation* with English soft g; *Image* with a German hard g.

AO4 (Stimulus Cards): Marks awarded for AO4 assess students' knowledge of the wider sub-theme related to the German speaking world. Where no specific reference is made to a German-speaking country, information presented by the student cannot be credited. This fact has been pointed out in this report every year. Teacher-examiners often asked general

questions, and accepted answers without prompting students to focus on a German-speaking country. Marks for AO4 were often negatively impacted by this. Personal questions directed at the student should also be avoided. In numerous teacher-conducted tests, the discussion after the third printed question returned to the material on the card. Teachers often ran out of questions to ask on the wider sub-theme as they did not pick up on student responses. The most successful questioning followed a logical line of development which the student could readily follow. This avoided random questions on various aspects of the sub-theme which tended to catch the student off guard.

Stimulus Cards

Card A: Kampf gegen Kinderarmut

This card was quite popular, and most students had a good understanding of the material. Some students were well informed about family benefits available in the German-speaking world, whilst others simply read from the card. Where questioning was good, students generally scored highly for AO2. Some misinterpreted the quotation of *Bundeskanzler Scholz* as a negative comment about parents, but generally the content of the card was accessible. For the third printed question, some students drifted into a general discussion about families. Others listed various family models without directly relating them to the German-speaking world.

Suggested points for the wider discussion included: financial pressures on families from the rising cost of living; balancing career and family life for women, and the role of men in this; the provision of good and affordable childcare.

Card B: Die besten Computerspiele

Due to the prescribed sequence, this card was not often chosen. When it was, students did not always grasp the economic and cultural significance of computer games. Reactions to the prize money were generally appropriate. In the wider discussion, students were not always able to develop a conversation focused on the German-speaking world. They were often not helped by teacher-examiners asking personal questions.

Suggested points for the wider discussion included: the use of the internet in everyday life; the impact of playing computer games on social development; measures to keep children and young people safe online.

Card C: Eine Erfolgsgeschichte aus Oberösterreich

With its easily accessible material, this card was quite a popular choice, but many students seemed to run out of things to say after the second printed question. As with card B, for some it proved quite difficult to maintain a focus on the German-speaking world in the discussion.

Suggested points for the wider discussion included: popularity of music lessons, instrumental lessons in schools; popular groups and artists in German-speaking countries; attitudes towards the use of English by German-speaking musicians and bands.

Card D: Das große Fest am See

The prescribed sequence limited the availability of this card for students, but it was almost always well done by those who had the opportunity. Most dealt with the environmental issues quite successfully, and commented favourably on the initiatives. Despite the frequent citing of *Oktoberfest* and *Karneval*, students had a generally good knowledge of other festivals. Most responded well to questioning to elicit further information.

Suggested points for the wider discussion included: the importance of regional festivals; examples of well-known festivals and their social and economic significance; new festivals being introduced by communities from ethnic backgrounds.

Card E: Ein Symbol für Frieden

A popular choice for students going first in the exam session and generally well done. Some students confused the information about how long it had taken to rebuild the *Frauenkirche*. More able students handled the discussion about the role of architecture well. Many were able to cite good examples of styles, movements, and famous buildings to support their answers.

Suggested points for the wider discussion included: examples of important architecture e.g. *Kölner Dom*, *Schloss Neuschwanstein*; important modern architecture and architects e.g. *Bauhaus*, *Hundertwasser*; open door events to invite people to view the architecture of their town/city.

Card F: Tempel der Moderne

This was not a popular choice, and some students seemed to struggle with the idea of it being a concert venue in the past. Many thought the cost of renovation was not worth it; because of the very accessible third question, quite a few students listed Berlin's attractions albeit with little evaluation or development which tended to restrict marks for AO4.

Suggested points for the wider discussion included: the large number of museums and art galleries in Berlin; famous venues for classical music and other performance venues; music and culture from the many ethnic backgrounds in Berlin.

Card G: Zwei Gesichter des Einwanderungslandes Deutschland

A popular card which was largely well-handled by students who picked up on much of the information provided. Most then added their own knowledge of both historical and more

recent aspects of immigration. Many made good contributions to the discussion about issues concerning migration to German-speaking countries.

Suggested points for the wider discussion included: opportunities for growing the economy and addressing skills shortages; benefits for a country with a multi-ethnic society; financial costs of providing housing, education, social welfare etc. for migrants.

Card H: Frauen helfen Frauen

This was a popular choice and well covered by the majority of students. Some did not know *ehrenamtlich* and in many teacher-conducted tests it was simply ignored. Many commented effectively on the importance of integration for female migrants and the issues and challenges they face. Most demonstrated good knowledge of the wider topic.

Suggested points for the wider discussion included: integration classes at schools and schemes to help young immigrants into training and employment; availability of language classes; cultural and religious events to bring communities together.

Card I: Rechtsextremismus in der Schweiz

Another popular choice that was generally well done. Students seemed to enjoy the layout of the bullet points and exploited the material effectively, including gender and social media. Many had a good knowledge of racist events and anti-racist measures, as well as the current state of political affairs, notably in Germany. However, others stated that some contemporary political parties were racist without offering more detailed supporting information.

Suggested points for the wider discussion included: examples of attacks by right-wing extremists/Neo-Nazis; the debate about the AfD nurturing racist and extreme right-wing views; anti-racist demonstrations in many cities across the German speaking world.

Card J: Junge Lobby für Europa

Another popular choice for students, this card was generally well done. A lot of material was given, and students made generally good use of both the information and the quotes. Many students had a good grasp of Germany's position in the EU, and the importance of giving young people the opportunity to influence the European ideal.

Suggested points for the wider discussion included: central role of Germany due to its population size; Germany as a major financial powerhouse in Europe; Germany's partnership with France as a driving force within the EU.

Card K: Politiker der Zukunft

The prescribed sequencing placed this card for the eleventh test, which meant it was hardly ever chosen by students.

Suggested points for the wider discussion included: the existence of youth parliaments; attitudes to Europe amongst young people; the most important issues for young people in German-speaking countries.

Card L: Wiedervereinigung – mit etwas Verspätung

Paired with card E at the start of the testing session, this card reappeared for the sixth test and was quite popular. Despite this, students' performances were varied. Quite a few did not deal well with the concept of *Verspätung* or why the inhabitants of Wernigerode felt *isoliert*. Most students had a good knowledge of the history but failed to use it well in the wider discussion. Rather surprisingly, not all appreciated that both West and East Germans were impacted by reunification.

Suggested points for the wider discussion included: the difficulties faced by the East in transitioning from socialism to capitalism; measures taken by the government to manage the transition e.g. *Solidaritätszuschlag*, *Treuhand*; immense changes in the personal lives of former GDR citizens.

Independent Research Project

In the eighth year of the current specification, it was clear that the great majority of students saw the IRP as a positive feature of the test. The opportunity to have a virtually unlimited choice of topic within the constraints of the German-speaking world continues to be popular. Many students had chosen less well-known areas for research. The opening exercise of presenting the research has become established as a pre-learnt monologue and this year the majority of students responded positively to the challenge.

Whilst most of the titles were phrased appropriately, there were still instances where the scope was simply too broad. For some projects, the focus of the research was too vague. Examples included titles such as 'The life of x,' or simply the name of a historical figure. Titles of this type often result in a discussion which is rather superficial in nature and based too much on factual knowledge. The focus of the research must clearly be on the German-speaking world. For example, German-born actors, artists or scientists whose career has taken them to America would not automatically qualify for IRP unless the overwhelming part of the research and discussion deals with German-based matters. Centres are again reminded that guidance concerning the suitability topics and phrasing of titles is freely available on the AQA website as well as from one of the IRP advisors.

Administration requirements for the IRP have not changed since the introduction of the specification. Students must complete a Candidate Record Form (CRF) which must be signed by both them and a centre representative, usually their German teacher. The title and up to eight bullet points to facilitate the discussion must be listed in English on the reverse. Centres are reminded that it is not good practice to complete the form using only website addresses. To do so does not help visiting examiners to assess the scope of the student's research and to prepare for the IRP discussion. Where centres use the teacher-conducted option, CRFs

needed to be uploaded to the AQA Digital Media Portal with the recordings. Numerous centres failed to do this which resulted in unnecessary delays for marking examiners.

As indicated above, the range of IRP titles this year was pleasing in its scope. This included familiar topics:

- Grimms' fairy tales
- German football / RB Leipzig / Bayern Munich / Schalke 04
- German motor industry / specific manufacturers
- Science / Maths focused projects e.g. Haber-Bosch process / Leonhard Euler / Emmie Noether
- Various aspects of the Nazi period / WWII

and the welcome appearance of more idiosyncratic projects, including:

- To what extent does care for the elderly meet the needs of the aging population in Germany?
- Why is Base Jumping so popular in Switzerland?
- The Culture of Memory and its influence on German society
- Is the *Frankfurter Buchmesse* still relevant in today's digital age?
- Is Germany secretly behind the modern sound of digital music?

IRP Presentation

The majority of students rose to the challenge and delivered a good or very good presentation, occasionally in spite of some obvious nervousness. Good presentations related closely to the project title and covered the main findings of the research. Brief explanations and personal observations made it easy for visiting examiners to start the discussion and teacher-examiners are advised that starting the discussion with points mentioned during the presentation is considered good practice. It is perfectly acceptable for students to learn the presentation verbatim to make best use of the two minutes. A good number of presentations came to a surprising end after one minute thirty seconds or so. This is often self-penalising in terms of 'thorough knowledge and understanding of the area of study' (Mark Scheme). A few presentations ran over the two minutes allowed. As guidance for students preparing for the test, centres should encourage them:

- to deliver their presentation at normal speed;
- to ensure that the presentation closely relates to the title of the project; largely irrelevant presentations cannot score highly;
- not to give a lengthy introduction explaining why they chose the topic; this wastes time and does not attract marks;
- not to give exclusively factual details and to include development in the form of explanation and evaluation;
- not to list sources in the presentation; there is no need as these are on the CRF.

Teacher-conducted tests occasionally featured interventions from the teacher during the presentation. This is a fundamental error, as explained in the detailed Guidance for the Conduct of the Tests issued to centres. There were also rare instances where students referred to photos and other material during the presentation. According to instructions this is inappropriate.

It is good practice followed by visiting examiners to ensure that each part of the test is clearly defined. The stimulus card letter, the move to the presentation and the discussion should be clearly announced as such on the recording. This gives a sense of clarity to the student and examiner alike, and makes the timing of each element easier to manage. During tests where the teacher examiner asked questions during the presentation, it was difficult to ascertain at what stage the test was. At the same time, teacher-examiners should avoid wasting time between the separate parts, for instance shuffling of papers, repeated re-setting of timers or lengthy introduction to the IRP discussion. Marking examiners time the test as a whole and stop marking at 18 minutes.

IRP Discussion

Visiting examiners reported that the great majority of students had completed thorough and effective research into their chosen projects. This allowed them to demonstrate mostly good and often excellent knowledge and understanding of their chosen area of research. Most were able to respond to questions with appropriate and at times impressive reference to their topic. Many supported their answers to questions by supplementary evaluation of their own. When challenged they gave reasoned opinions and justified their views using sound evidence gained from their sources. Overall, visiting examiners were pleased by the level of engagement shown by students. AO4 requires that students are able to demonstrate understanding of the society or culture relevant to the chosen topic by selecting appropriate information as evidence. A good number of teacher-examiners have clearly heeded advice from previous reports. Their students undoubtedly benefitted from solid preparation on the part of their staff. This was evident in the following situations:

- where teachers had a small bank of introductory questions already prepared to be able to move the discussion on;
- where teachers listened carefully to student responses and followed up what they said;
- where teachers used open questions to challenge what students said: *Warum? Wie meinen Sie das? Woher wissen Sie das?*
- where teachers used brief questions so as to explore the response further;
- where teachers rephrased questions when the student asked for clarification.

However, it is unfortunate to have to reiterate the message from previous years that this has not been the case everywhere. Examiners who assess teacher-conducted tests have still reported that issues with conduct have disadvantaged students on several occasions this year. The principal reasons for this are as follows:

- Teachers often began the discussion by asking the largely irrelevant question why the student had chosen the topic. The almost always detailed response used considerable time that should have been available for analytical and evaluative discussion.
- Teachers failed to interrupt and challenge lengthy pre-learnt answers to questions. Some of these were so long that they had a severely limiting impact on the discussion and the resulting mark for AO1 had to reflect this.
- Teachers simply restyled the bullet points on the CRF as questions and allowed the student to deliver answers in the manner above.
- Teachers failed to react to students' answers and simply moved on to the next question on their own list. This manner of testing failed to acknowledge the efforts of the student and did not enable them to engage in a real exchange.
- Teachers insisted on covering each of the bullet points on the CRF, even where the student had filled all eight lines. Visiting examiners use these sub-headings as a starting point, but exploit student responses as fully as possible. Thereby a meaningful exchange is achieved rather than a superficial treatment of every point.
- In some particularly concerning cases, the impression was that teachers had not prepared effectively for the test or did not appear to be familiar with the format of the test. The worst cases involved a combination of the two. Thorough preparation for all aspects of the speaking test is indispensable and will ensure that students are not unnecessarily disadvantaged.

In summary, the overall picture in 2025 was, on balance, a positive one. Good practice was evident in many tests. Areas for development and improvement remain the same or similar as previously reported:

- increased use of specific questions to maintain the focus of the discussion and help to avoid lengthy general/generic answers;
- frequent use of targeted questions which give students the opportunity to develop their answers more fully. They should be encouraged to give examples, offer reasons and evaluation and provide basic analysis;
- enhanced preparation on the part of teacher-examiners; both they and the students only get one chance to take the test.

As in previous years, this report must acknowledge and pay tribute to the hard work and commitment of students taking the test. It goes without saying that the efforts and engagement of those conducting the test for both the visiting and teacher-examiner options are very much appreciated.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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