



GCSE

German

8668/LF Paper 1 Listening Foundation Tier

Report on the examination

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General Comments

This was the final time that this GCSE specification was examined, and examiners were once again very pleased to see the progress that students had made in their German studies. The Listening examination differentiated well between lower-attaining and higher-attaining students but much of the exam was within the reach of a large majority of them; it was clear that they understood much of what they had heard and were able to respond successfully to the comprehension questions set on it.

The mean mark on the paper was over 29/40 (about 73% of the total mark), an increase of over 3 marks when compared with the 2024 examination. This suggests that this year's examination was more accessible than the examination in 2024, but also that students responded very positively to the challenges that the examination posed. As in previous years, handwriting was generally legible although there were instances when it could sometimes be very small and difficult to read. There was very little evidence of students leaving questions unanswered. However, there were once again some examples of poor English spelling when students were required to give a verbal answer; thankfully, comprehension was rarely affected by this.

Questions 1 – 2

The first two questions on the Foundation Tier paper were a very gentle start to the examination and nearly all students got both marks here. The vocabulary used in these questions was very straightforward and it was clear that teachers had trained their students very well to listen carefully for the distractors and then to discount them. It should be noted that in the new specification for first examination in 2026, single lexical items can be tested in Listening comprehension exercises, unlike in this outgoing specification, where it was not permitted to test single lexical items in isolation.

Questions 3 – 5

It is often the case that questions requiring verbal answers have a lower success rate than non-verbal questions, and it was encouraging therefore to see how well students responded to this suite of questions. The subject targeted in Question 3 (*Englisch*) was very well known, with nearly all students gaining a mark here. A few were distracted by *Deutsch* and there were a few who had guessed, but these answers were rare. Question 4 was also very well done with nearly 85% gaining the mark for being able to understand *sprechen*. Examiners accepted the singular 'friend' but answers that did not refer to talking or speaking, such as 'meeting' or 'hanging out with' were not credited. Question 5 was the least successful question in this section but over 80% still managed to score a mark. Although nearly all students understood the *Sport*-element of *Sportstunden*, some contaminated their answer by adding in incorrect material, for example 'sports facilities,' 'sports hall,' 'sports teacher.'

Question 6

Question 6.1 was answered correctly by over 80% of students who understood what *viel Geld verdienen* meant, although examiners did not insist on a translation of *verdienen* and accepted 'money' on its own. A small number of students referred to the material that was targeted in Question 6.2 in this answer and wrote 'working on a computer' or 'working in a hospital,' these answers were not creditworthy. Question 6.2 was reasonably well done with over 55% of

students scoring 2 marks and about another 30% scoring 1 mark. Many students referred successfully to 'working with computers,' or a similar phrase that suggested working in IT; 'computers' by itself was considered to be too vague and did not receive credit. The second answer provided a choice – either 'doctor' or 'working in a hospital.' Some students wrote 'work as a nurse,' either because they did not know what *Krankenhaus* meant (presumably confusing it with *Krankenschwester*), or because they were too specific in their answer; 'nurse' was not credited. Unfortunately, examiners saw a good number of answers where the correct answer was then contaminated with the wrong answer: 'doctor or nurse'. As is made clear in General Principle 1b at the start of the mark scheme, a correct answer presented with a wrong answer will not score. Teachers should note that this general principle will apply to the new specification for first examination in 2026.

Questions 7 – 9

In this suite of questions, Questions 8 and 9 were more successful than Question 7. Approximately 55% of students were able to understand *auf der Straße schlafen* and choose working with homeless people whereas over 80% of students realised that collecting rubbish in the park was working with the environment. The key item of vocabulary in Question 9 was *Jugendklub* and it seemed that 'youth' was very well known, with almost 95% of students gaining a mark here. These items were designed to be of medium demand and success rates were therefore generally pleasing.

Questions 10 – 14

This suite of questions could also be found on the Higher Tier paper, and they were therefore aimed at higher-achieving Foundation Tier students. It was pleasing to see very good success rates for these overlap questions, particularly given the inclusion of some distractors in the options table.

Question 10 was successfully answered by over 85% of students who discounted option B (bad weather) and chose option F (poor accommodation) because they understood *schmutzig*, *klein* and *laut*. Question 11 was answered correctly by about 80% of students, and the slightly lower score here reflects perhaps the more challenging vocabulary in this question – *Flug*, *Verspätung*, *verpassen*. Although Question 12 contained the past participle *gestritten*, it was very satisfying to see over 90% of students get this question correct; the inclusion of *Freunde* will certainly have helped. In Question 13, over 90% of students correctly understood that the passport and money had been stolen (rather than option E, luggage being lost); although *Dieb* is not a straightforward item of vocabulary at this level, *gestohlen* and *Polizei* were clearly well known by many students. The inclusion of *Sonne* in Question 14 might have led some students to choose option D ('getting sunburnt') as their answer, and this was the least successful question in this section, but about 65% realised that the weather was bad – words such as *Regen*, *Wind* and *Gewitter* pointing these students to the correct response.

As always, the key to success on this type of question is a clear understanding of the key vocabulary in each section and an ability to discount the distractors in the options table. Students are clearly being well trained by their teachers to do this. This question type is one of the prescribed question types in the new specification for first examination in 2026, and so these teaching techniques will remain relevant in the future.

Question 15

Question 15.1 was answered correctly by about 80% of students who knew the meaning of *einkaufen*. Examiners accepted 'buying' rather than 'shopping' and allowed answers such as 'buying clothes' since it was felt that the addition of 'clothes' did not contaminate the key idea of going out shopping. It was a little surprising, however, that about 20% of students were unable to give an appropriate translation for such a key item of vocabulary as *einkaufen*. There was some guesswork at times with a range of other pastimes popular with young people given, such as going to the cinema, going to a café, or just hanging out with friends.

Question 15.2 was not answered well with only about one-quarter of students being successful here. It was clear that the two items of vocabulary which were alternative answers, *Schach* and *Karten*, were not well-known. Perhaps fewer young people play chess or cards nowadays, with screen-based hobbies more prevalent. A lot of students clearly took a guess at *Karten* with 'go-karting' a very frequent incorrect answer.

Question 16

This was a lower-demand item and Question 16.1 proved very accessible indeed with nearly all students being successful; the inclusion of the cognates *Filme* and *Videos* made this question very straightforward. Question 16.2 was also accessible, although two of the options included the word 'blog' and students had to work out, therefore, that Armin writes his own blog – about 85% of them were able to do so, whereas over 10% did not understand *schreiben* and incorrectly chose option A.

Question 17

This question was also low demand with a very high success rate of over 95%. *Stadion* is a near-cognate, and this was the reason for this high degree of success, although a small number of students chose the distractor (*Bahnhof*) instead, despite the clear negation of this word. Teachers are reminded that negation is one of the key methods of providing distractors, even at the lowest grades, and therefore students should be trained to recognise *nicht* and *kein*.

Question 18

These questions were also targeted at medium-demand, and they met with a strong response. In Question 18.1, about three-quarters of students were able to discount the distractor of *Sportsendungen* and choose *Nachrichten* instead. Similarly, in question 18.2, about three-quarters of students were able to understand *blöd* and chose the correct answer; a few heard *spannend* and chose the mistranslation of this word ('relaxing') instead.

Question 19

Question 10 was a higher-demand verbal response item, and it met with mixed success. In Question 19.1, the phrase *im Freien* was not as well-known as examiners had hoped. Although about half of the students were able to translate it correctly as 'outside' or 'in the open air,' quite a lot thought it meant 'on the field' or 'on the pitch' or wrote another overly specific place. A smaller number of students chose the place where the athlete trains in the winter ('sports centre'), even though the correct answer was clearly signposted with *im Sommer* in front of it.

Question 19.2 had about a 65% success rate, which was a little surprising given the straightforward nature of the vocabulary here. Some students thought *Sonne* meant 'summer,' which was not creditworthy, and some of them wrote a very general answer indicating that he liked the weather. These answers were rejected.

Questions 20 – 21

These two overlap questions also appeared on the Higher Tier paper and were aimed at higher-achieving Foundation Tier students. Students are very familiar with the format of the question which tests their ability to understand different time frames and to listen for detail. The example given for each question indicates the level of detail that students are required to give.

About 10% of students scored both marks for Question 20 and just over another 50% scored one mark here. The first part of Question 20 was much better done than the second part. Many students were able to understand *Solarzellen* and write an answer referring to solar panels, solar cells, or solar energy. Examiners did not insist on 'install' for an answer to be correct. The second part was less well done, and it was clear that many students did not know what *öffentliche Verkehrsmittel* meant. There were incorrect answers which mentioned 'using the electric car' or 'replacing his old car with a new one'; other incorrect answers were clearly guesswork with a range of general environmental issues and solutions such as 'picking up litter', 'improving energy efficiency' and 'reducing pollution' offered.

On Question 21, just under 20% of students scored both marks and a further one-third scored one mark. *Autoabgase* proved too challenging an item of vocabulary for many students at this level with many of them understanding 'car' but not the pollution that their exhausts fumes produce. There were lots of general answers referring to 'too many cars.' *Wasserverschmutzung* was better known with both 'water pollution' and 'dirty water' being acceptable. 'Lack of water' was not accepted, however.

Question 22

This question contained a longer piece of German, and it was targeted at higher-achieving Foundation Tier students. It was pleasing to see a reasonably good success rate, especially as there was some challenging vocabulary contained in the question. In Question 22.1, students had to listen to a number of different foods before discounting the ones that Nurat did not like to eat – just over half of the students managed to do this successfully. Question 22.2 was a little less challenging, with two-thirds of students successful; this is pleasing given the more challenging item of vocabulary *Bewegung*. There was a clear distractor in Question 22.3 (*Rauchen*) and many students went for this, not realising that Karl has already given up smoking; the correct answer centred on students knowing the verb *abnehmen* and this was a tough question for many students with about one-third gaining a mark here.

Question 23

The first question in Section B was as usual a selection-style question where students had to choose the four correct answers from eight possibilities. The passage heard was a longer one and the options were all mentioned, some as foods that Fabian liked and some as foods that he did not like to eat. This question had a high success rate with just under 65% scoring all four marks, over 25% scoring three marks and about 6% scoring two marks. Virtually no students scored fewer than two marks. The one lexical item which proved challenging was

gekochte Eier; a common wrong answer was *Fleisch*, perhaps because it was the food item mentioned immediately before the boiled eggs that Fabian liked to eat. There were a few instances where students had not attempted to complete all the boxes or where they had written the same answer more than once.

Question 24

Question 24.1 was well answered with over 80% of students scoring the mark here, even though *Fotos* appeared in two of the options. It was pleasing that the majority of students realised that she likes to upload her own photos but does not like looking at her friends' photos.

Question 24.2 was straightforward with over 80% of students getting the correct answer, *Großeltern*. Over 15% of students chose *Eltern*, perhaps because this word was heard after *Großeltern* and lower-achieving students sometimes choose the last word that they hear.

Question 25

The final question on the Foundation Tier paper was well done with over 75% scoring a mark on Question 25.1 and two-thirds scoring a mark on Question 25.2. All four options were mentioned in the utterances, and therefore students had to listen very carefully and reject the options that were not correct. The vocabulary here was more challenging and students also had to interpret what they heard and match it with the options, for example *einen Job finden* with *eine Arbeit finden*, or *viele Länder in der Welt sehen* with *um die Welt reisen*. Although this question was designed to be a more challenging item at the end of this question paper, it was very pleasing to see a good level of success here.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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