



GCSE **German**

8668/WH

Report on the examination

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General Comments

As expected, the quality of answers for Higher tier students was considerably better than for Foundation tier, suggesting that students were, for the most part, entered for the appropriate level.

There were some impressive responses to the overlap questions, many scoring full marks, and most students were also able to make a reasonable attempt at the translation, but as in previous years the increased demands of question 2 proved challenging for many. Handwriting was, at times, a major issue, and students should be reminded that whilst examiners will endeavour to read what the student has written, credit cannot be given for work that is unclear or illegible.

It was noticeable that many students at Higher tier, even those who struggled with grammatical accuracy, were able to use a good range of subject specific vocabulary.

On rare occasions on both questions 1 and 2 a small number of students chose to write about issues such as selling or taking drugs and bullying, which gave rise to concern. Such responses are always taken seriously and will be forwarded to AQA's safeguarding team.

The mean mark on the paper was just over 41/60 (just over 69% of the total mark) which is a considerable improvement on last year.

Question 1

As at Foundation tier, question 1.2 (Your Town and Region) proved by far the more popular choice with over 75% of students choosing this option.

Whilst Higher Tier students are for the most part far more skilled at writing in the past or future tense, omission of the auxiliary verb or past participle was at times a problem as well as the omission of umlauts on *würde* and *möchte*. In line with Foundation Tier, these were accepted with an infinitive for coverage of the bullet point but not credited as a successful attempt at a future tense and opposing tenses e.g. *Ich möchte... gewohnt* could not be credited. Students should be reminded that umlauts are not optional and omitting or adding them to a verb incorrectly significantly alters the meaning. A future tense with *werden* is not required however, and many students were able to express their future intentions with a range of expressions.

Students at Higher tier should be encouraged to aim to write the number of words required, not least because they need to leave time for the longer writing question. An answer of 90 words, fully relevant, is likely to score higher marks than a longer piece which includes less relevant material.

Question 1.1 (Money)

Most students who chose this option were able to respond fairly successfully to the first bullet point about how they get money, although surprisingly few referred to pocket money, referring more often to part time jobs or professions, which were, of course, perfectly acceptable. Those who attempted to write about receiving money from parents/relatives often struggled to express themselves adequately. There were, however, some good opinions about the pros and cons of working.

Examiners were surprised by students' choice of favourite shop, with a large number choosing supermarkets and bakeries also featuring quite highly. Restaurants and *Imbissstuben* are, however, not shops and could not be credited.

Students should ensure they read the question carefully and ascertain precisely what is required. On bullet point 4 in particular, a significant number of students did not state what they would do with their money, instead responding to '*in der Zukunft*' and writing about future career/study plans, as well as holidays and dining out. Examiners gave credit where possible.

Performance on this question was pleasing, with just over 51% of students attaining top band marks for Content and 71% achieving top band marks for Quality of language and represented a considerable improvement on the equivalent question in 2024.

Question 1.2 (Your Town and Region)

Many students who chose this option were not able to distinguish between the first two bullet points and wrote in general about their town or region. In most cases there was sufficient detail for examiners to credit both bullet points, but some positive aspect did need to be mentioned for bullet point 1. Some students struggled to manipulate '*die positiven Aspekte*' in their responses, but most were able to write about friendly people etc. Negative comments alone could not be accepted, and students are reminded of the importance of answering the bullet point. Some students produced pre-learnt material about environmental factors in their town or region, which was not always relevant.

As with question 1, on bullet point 4 students often did not read the word *wohnen* in the question and wrote about future travel plans instead, and whilst some responses could just about be credited (e.g. reference to going to university in a different city) many could not. Those who were able to successfully express the future tense often struggled with appropriate prepositions and sentences such as '*Ich möchte nach Deutschland wohnen*' were not uncommonly seen.

Performance on this question was, however, pleasing, with just over 55% of students attaining top band marks for Content and 71% achieving top band marks for Quality of language, again a marked improvement in 2024.

Question 2

Both questions were clearly felt to be accessible with Question 2.1 (Friendship) proving slightly more popular (53%) whereas option 2.2 (Mobile phones and technology) was chosen by 47% of students. Both questions produced some passionate responses and students often had a lot to say, although attempts to express complicated ideas often led to a lack of clarity and errors, and students must remember the importance of developing their answers as well as giving and justifying opinions for access to the top mark bands.

Relevance continues to be an issue at times, but the majority of students managed to keep their answers pertinent. The opinions of family members and friends are unnecessary, and some students seemed determined to bring the environment into their answer as they were clearly hoping for a question on this topic. There were also some exceptionally long pieces, which often prove to be self-penalising as they tend to lead to some irrelevance and affect the overall coherence of the piece. An answer of 150 words, fully relevant and varied, is likely to score higher marks than a longer piece which includes less relevant material.

Students should also be reminded that in order to achieve a mark in the top three-mark bands for Content, communication must be clear. Where messages start to break down, often because a student is trying to express something for which they do not possess the necessary vocabulary, marks are limited to 6 and below.

Whilst most students are well trained in using complex structures in their work, these need to be both varied and successful if they are to achieve a mark in the top two bands. The best responses contained a variety of complex structures and vocabulary, used confidently and correctly to bring fluency and coherence to the writing.

Question 2.1 (Friendship and Marriage)

Some students were inspired to write enthusiastically and from the heart about one or several friendships, and the best answers explored the nature of friendship. Many students described their friend's physical appearance and personality traits, often using simple language, and focused on activities that they had done or were planning to do with their friend(s) to develop their response. On occasion this led to some irrelevant material where students chose to write more about free time activities or future plans. A surprisingly large number named a family member as their best friend, and there were some poignant responses about not having friends either now or in the past, which were, of course, accepted.

Most students were also able to respond successfully to the second bullet point, often producing pre-learnt material about marriage and children and many rejecting both for a range of perfectly acceptable reasons which, by and large, they were able to express in German.

Just over 23% scored a mark in the top band for Content, and just over 30% for Range of language, with just under 40% scoring 4 or 5 for Accuracy. There were fewer limited responses, with around 7% scoring between 1 and 6 on Content and around 22% achieving only 2 for Accuracy.

Question 2.2 (Mobile phones and Technology)

Not unexpectedly, responses to both parts of this question tended to focus on mobile phones and the internet, and the majority of students who chose this question could write at length about their mobile phones and their use, many considering both the positives and negatives of phones. Some students, however, developed their answers to bullet 2 to include technology in general and explain how this governs almost every aspect of modern life. There was often no direct response to the bullet point, however, and examiners sometimes had to make a judgement about whether what was presented demonstrated whether technology has improved life.

This option was slightly less popular and produced slightly lower scores, with 20% achieving between 13 and 15 marks for Content. Range of language scores were similar to option 1, with just under 28% scoring between 10 and 12. The scores for Accuracy were also similar, with just under 38% scoring 4 or 5 out of 5. There were, however, some limited responses, with around 10% scoring between 1 and 6 on Content and around 5% achieving only 2 for Accuracy.

Question 3

In general, performances on the translation were considerably lower than in 2024, with only just over 3% of students achieving full marks for Conveying key messages and just under 22% achieving 5 or 6 marks. For Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures, only 21% scored in the top two bands.

The passage is made up of elements of language which present different levels of challenge. Many students struggled on the first sentence with 'in a small town in the countryside', often translating small town with *Dorf* and countryside with *Landschaft*, neither of which could be credited. The second sentence was similarly problematic with only the best students able to produce *seit* with a present tense, although some successfully avoided the tense issues *seit* presents with '*wir haben 10 Jahre hier gelebt*'.

The third and fourth sentences were more successful, although 'environmental problems' was a stumbling block for some. Few students were able to produce the third person plural of 'like' and examiners were surprised that 'shopping centre' was often not known. 'Book' also caused problems, and examiners frequently encountered 'Buche' which could not be credited, and as always with a past tense the past participle was often omitted from the last sentence.

Students should be aware that in a translation they are required to translate every word, and care should be taken not to omit words or carelessly supply a wrong word, such as 'week' for 'weekend' or an incorrect number of years on the second sentence. Handwriting was also an issue on this question, often because it was so small that examiners were unable to clearly read a word, in which case it could not be credited.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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