



GCSE

German

8668/LH Paper 1 Listening Higher Tier

Report on the examination

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General Comments

In this final sitting of the 8668 specifications, examiners were very pleased to see the progress that had been made by many GCSE German students. The Higher Tier paper differentiated well between lower-attaining and higher-attaining students. The mean mark on the paper was just over 36/50 (just over 72% of the total mark); this figure was a small increase on the mean mark in 2024, suggesting that this exam paper was slightly more accessible in terms of demand than in the previous year. As in previous series, the most able students responded well to all questions, including those in Section B where some written answers in German were required. These questions proved to be more challenging for lower-attaining students who also struggled with some of the questions in Section A where detailed listening skills were tested; these questions are targeted at the higher grades. Overall, the standard of responses was very pleasing and there was very little evidence of questions being left blank or of students being entered wrongly for the Higher Tier examination. There were a small number of answers in Section B written in English, perhaps slightly more than in 2024; this was a pity as often the English answers which could not be credited showed that students had understood the German that they had heard.

Questions 1 – 5

This suite of five overlap questions was very straightforward for nearly all Higher Tier students with success rates in excess of 95% for them all with the exception of Question 5. It was clear that Higher Tier students were able successfully to match what they heard with the correct option, discounting any distractors or extraneous material, and this section of the Higher Tier paper was a very gentle start.

Question 5 was still very well done, but slightly less so than the other questions in this section. The inclusion of the word *Sonne* erroneously led some students to option D ('getting sunburnt') even though the week spent in Italy was without sun and with plenty of rain, wind, and storms.

Questions 6 – 7

These overlap questions are a well-established feature of this specification, and they test both an understanding of different time frames and the ability to pick out details from listening comprehension passages. As is to be expected, they were answered more successfully by Higher Tier students than by Foundation Tier students.

In Question 6, almost 65% of students scored both marks with a large majority of the remaining students scoring one mark. Just over 5% of students failed to score here. The vocabulary was clearly accessible. Installing solar panels (at the moment) was more commonly given as an answer than using public transport (in the future); it was a little surprising that not more Higher Tier students knew the meaning of *öffentliche Verkehrsmittel*.

Question 7 had a very similar success rate with almost 65% of students getting both marks; over 25% scored one mark and therefore about 10% failed to score here. *Autoabgase* was less well known than *Wasserverschmutzung*, with some students understanding the *Auto-* part of the first key item of vocabulary but not the *-abgase* and giving answers such as 'there are too

many cars;’ these guesses were not credited. A few students transposed their answers, regrettably, suggesting a less secure understanding of tense formation. In the new specification (8662), students who succeed will have a secure grasp of tense formation, and teachers are therefore advised to continue to ensure that their students can recognise and produce the past, present and future tenses successfully.

Question 8

This selection style question was a lower-demand item at Higher Tier. It was very successful with about 80% gaining all three marks and over 15% gaining two marks. Very few students scored one or zero marks on this question. There was no obvious pattern to the wrong answers that students chose. This question performed more strongly than the equivalent question in 2024, suggesting that students have practised the skill of listening for gist, selecting the right answers and rejecting those answers which are wrong.

Question 9

This was a higher-demand question on the topic of food, but students responded well to it. There was a good response to Question 9.1 with just under 70% of students gaining the mark here. The key word was *Werbung* and only students who referred to ‘advertising’ or ‘publicity’ were successful. There was some evidence of guesswork with answers such as ‘you can buy fast food on the internet.’ Question 9.2 was more successful with over 90% gaining a mark. The vast majority understood that healthy food is often more expensive than unhealthy food, or, vice versa, that unhealthy food is often cheaper than healthy food. The very best students were able to name the foods mentioned in the transcript; regrettably, students who mistranslated one or more of these items did not score.

Questions 10 – 12

This set of medium-demand questions was answered very well. Just under three-quarters were successful on Question 10 with *Bekannten* and *sich amüsieren* well-known. Question 11 was very well-known with nearly all students scoring the mark here: *kreative Industrie* led them to the correct answer very readily. Question 12 had a success rate of over 80% with *Ton* and *Leinwand* also well-known items of vocabulary.

Questions 13 – 16

The P / N / P+N style questions are a common feature of AQA GCSE modern languages question papers and students have plenty of experience in answering them. They will continue to figure in the new specification for first examination from 2026. Success rates were very high, suggestion that students have had plenty of practice in identifying opinions and the vocabulary that conveys them.

Question 13 was answered correctly by nearly all students. The inclusion of vocabulary such as *nie pünktlich*, *unhöflich* and *viel Müll* clearly pointed to the answer N. In Question 14, the inclusion of *jedoch* signposted a P+N answer, but this word is perhaps not as well-known as *aber*; about 70% were successful here. Question 15 was a little more successful, with more than 80% of students getting it correct; the vocabulary here (*nicht viel Arbeitslosigkeit; einfach, eine Arbeitsstelle zu finden*) was accessible to a large majority. Question 16 was answered successfully by just over three-quarters of students. The inclusion of *auf der anderen Seite* was supposed to help students to the correct answer of P+N, but perhaps this phrase is not as well-known as examiners expected.

Given that this type of question will also appear in the new specification for first examination in 2026, it is worth repeating the advice given in last year's Examiners' Report: the key to success in this type of questions is to revise carefully the opinion words given in the vocabulary lists in the specification and to listen to the whole utterance rather than just latching onto one part of it.

Question 17 – 19

This question type has appeared on most previous GCSE German Listening examinations and students were familiar with the need to complete the sentence with a phrase, ensuring that they give enough information to score the mark. Just under half of students were successful in Question 17, understanding that *später im Leben Krankheiten vermeiden* means 'avoid illnesses later in life'. Examiners were looking for a more detailed answer here, and some students wrote answers that were too vague, such as 'stay healthy' or 'not get ill,' and these were not credited. Question 18 was answered correctly by about 70% of students; they had understood *sich verletzen* and were able to translate it as 'hurt / injured themselves'. Question 19 was the most successful question in this section with over 85% scoring the mark here for understanding *spannend*, *gewinnen* and *Lieblingsmannschaft*. There were still some students who thought that *spannend* means 'relaxing,' which is *entspannend*, of course.

Question 20

Question 20 was aimed at higher-achieving students and there was a mixed response to this question. In Question 20.1, the key item of vocabulary was *Drogensüchtigen*, and this was very well-known with over 80% of students scoring here.

Question 20.2 was much more difficult with only about 20% of students being successful. The key concept here was that Philipp has a tiring job (he is a teacher) and that Malia has such a positive opinion of his voluntary work because he still has the energy to do it. Although the mark scheme was quite generous in what was acceptable, a large majority of students had trouble expressing this key concept in clear language; often, students understood words in isolation such as *Lehrer* or *Energie* and then wrote a sentence which contained 'teacher' or 'energy' but which did not answer the questions or which on occasion did not make any sense.

Question 21

This was a high-demand question aimed at the highest-achieving students. Pleasingly, it performed reasonably well, and it was clear that students have practised extracting the key information from a longer piece of German.

In Question 21.1, the positive answer was the ease of communication with people abroad. Students who were not able to give an acceptable translation of *im Ausland* did not score, and it was surprising that this phrase was not known by more students. The negative part centred around the idea of technology replacing people's jobs, or the fact that people will have to look for new jobs. There was a pleasing response to this section, although some students still wrote answers that were too vague such as 'new job.' Just over 35% of students gained both marks and about another 40% gained one mark.

Question 21.2 had a similar success rate with over 40% of students gaining both marks and about another 35% gaining one mark. 'Working from home' was the key positive idea and

clearly this post-pandemic generation are familiar with the concept. The negative part of this question had two routes to success – either understanding *Sicherheit* or *Angst, dass jemand meine Daten missbraucht*. The mark scheme allowed a range of answers relating to internet security or data theft and success rates were pleasing.

Although this question was challenging, it was gratifying to see many high-achieving students being able to extract the key information from a longer, more difficult passage of German.

Question 22

This question was of medium demand, but it proved to be less accessible than the corresponding question in 2024.

Question 22.1 had a success rate of just over 70% which given the difficult item of vocabulary *aufpassen* was commendable. Just under 35% of students got Question 22.2 correct. This was presumably because they did not understand *fehlen*, 'to be missing from school.' Option C ('failing an examination') was a popular wrong answer, probably because of the similarity in sound between *fehlen* and 'to fail'; unfortunately, that is not what it means. The vocabulary in Question 22.3 was a mixture of more straightforward items (*Englischprüfung*) and more challenging items (*durchfallen*), and just over 45% of students here were successful; option E ('pressure to get good marks') was often wrongly chosen, and those who had put option C for Question 22.2 were not perhaps prepared to go back and re-consider their answer, as this was the correct answer for Question 22.3.

Question 23

This question was aimed at higher-achieving students, and it had a mixed success rate. Question 23.1 was answered relatively well with about two-thirds of students scoring the mark here. Examiners were slightly surprised, however, that about one-third of Higher Tier students were unable to understand *jemanden, mit dem ich Zeit verbringen kann*. Common wrong answers referred to 'bringing' something or somebody.

Question 23.2 was challenging with only about 8% scoring both marks and under 25% scoring one mark. More than two-thirds of students failed to score here. The first answer was *treu*, and although a range of translations was accepted, a large majority of students did not know what it meant. The second answer here relied on students understanding a two-clause sentence which contained the verb *vergeben*, which was not well-known. There was evidence of guesswork here – students heard *etwas Dummes* and wrote that Lukas describes his friends as stupid; this was not a very plausible answer in the context of what he was saying.

Question 24

This question was aimed at high-achieving students, and it tested detailed understanding of the German heard. It performed well and it was gratifying to see over 40% of students scoring both marks and more than 30% scoring one mark. Just under 25% of students failed to score on this question.

There were three possible answers for the two marks available, but successful students gave accurate translations of the verbs that they heard as well as the nouns that they accompanied. The first possible answer was 'buy nuts', not eat them, which some students put. Those who did not know what *Nüsse* meant gave a range of Christmas-themed food, but

these were not creditworthy. The second possible answer was 'sing Christmas carols / songs', not listen to them. Many students gave this answer. The third possible answer was 'look at / see the Christmas tree'. Unsuccessful answers here referred to buying a Christmas tree or decorating one.

Question 25

The final question in Section A was another P / N / P+N question; it was very well answered and both parts had success rates of about 95%.

Question 25.1 contained key vocabulary such as *Glück haben*, *nützlich* and *in meiner Karriere benutzen* which clearly pointed students to the answer P. Question 25.2 was clearly N – *kein Talent* and *kein Vergnügen* (this word not an easy one at all) made the answer clear and the repetition of the negative *kein* was clearly helpful.

Question 26

The first question in Section B was an overlap one and it had a much higher success rate than at Foundation Tier. Both parts of the question were successfully answered by over 95% of students. In Question 26.1, students were able to work out that Emilia likes to upload her own photos to social media but is not keen on looking at her friends' photos. Question 26.2 was answered well by students who realised that *Großeltern* was the answer, despite the inclusion of *Eltern* and its position at the end of the statement; less strong students often choose the last thing that they hear.

Question 27

This was a more challenging P / N / P+N question with some difficult items of vocabulary, but it was pleasing to see that many students scored the mark here. Question 27.1 was the more successful item, even with the challenging items of vocabulary *Bedienung*, *langsam*, *nicht schmackhaft* and *Rechnung sehr hoch*. Over 85% of students correctly identified these statements as Negative. Question 27.2 was less well done with just under 55% successful. The inclusion of the word *aber* is often a pointer to P+N, which was the answer, but many students answered with N. Although they understood that the soup was too peppery (N), they misunderstood *köstlich*, thinking that it meant 'costly', another negative characteristic, when it means 'delicious', a positive attribute.

Question 28

This was another overlap question, and it was answered very successfully with both parts having a success rate of about 95%. Students were able to understand the German question and the German options as well as making the leap from phrases such as *viele Länder in der Welt sehen* to *um die Welt reisen* and *einen Job finden* to *eine Stelle finden*; a very large majority clearly had no difficulty in doing this.

Question 29

There were not many instances of students answering the final questions in Section B in English, but perhaps more than in 2024. It was a shame to see some correct answers but in the wrong language. Once again, this year there were examples of students writing 'Answer in German' on this page, presumably during the 5 minutes' reading time at the start of the paper. This is a useful reminder.

As in previous series, these questions were a test of students' understanding of what they heard and an ability to understand what the question was asking of them. The questions were written in language that was as accessible as possible, in order that students had every chance of understanding what they were being asked to do. As in previous series, students whose spelling was not exact were given credit as long as what they wrote sounded like the correct German answer. Examiners were asked to exercise a degree of leniency here in what they accepted, and the mark scheme gave full details of what was acceptable and what was not acceptable, as well as a reminder of the principle behind the marking of this type of question.

The completion of a grid with a short phrase in German was a question type that had not appeared for a few years, but students tackled this question without difficulty and there were very few blank answers. The first answer required was *Stimme seiner Lieblingssänger*. Examiners decided to accept *Lieblingssänger* by itself, as this answered the question, but not *Stimme* by itself, as this did not make sense. A range of phonetic equivalents was accepted, but 'Lieblingssinger' was not accepted, and this answer was seen far more often than the correct German word. The second mark was for *Eintrittskarten kosten viel*, or equivalent. Examiners accepted *Karten* or *Tickets*, but if students chose to write *Eintrittskarten* they had to do so in a recognisable way, unfortunately there were many examples of 'Eintrickskarten' and other mangled spellings which were not credited. Just over 15% of students got both marks here and about 35% scored one mark. About half of the students failed to score. Given that these questions are aimed at grade 8 and 9 students, this success rate is quite an achievement.

Question 30

The final question on the paper also had a mixed response. The item of vocabulary which students found challenging in Question 30.1 was *Klimaanlage*. A range of spellings of this word was accepted, but students who wrote *Klima ist kaputt* did not receive credit here; this was often seen. Just under 30% of students were able to give an answer here that was acceptable.

Question 30.2 was well answered with over three-quarters of students gaining a mark here. This was an impressive end to the examination. Most students chose to write *der Strand war sauber*, but some opted for the grammatically more challenging *ich bin (sie ist) mit meinem (ihrem) Bruder gut ausgekommen*. Unfortunately, some students mis-transcribed *ausgekommen* as *gekommen*, which meant that their answer did not make sense. Higher-achieving students are clearly being trained to transcribe accurately what they hear and these skills will be tested in the Dictation section of the new specification, for first examination in summer 2026, so teachers may wish to use some of these more challenging section B questions, and similar questions from previous series, as practice materials for higher-achieving students.

As with Question 29, there were few blank answers this year and also fewer answers that were completely irrelevant.

As in every series of this specification, there was some evidence of lower-achieving students who were not operating successfully at the highest levels writing down a series of German words which did not convey any meaning and who failed to score. It should of course be remembered that the final questions on this paper are targeted at students operating at grades 8 and 9 and they will therefore by their very nature be more challenging. That said, it

was very gratifying once again to see many students have a go at these higher-demand questions and answer them successfully.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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