



**GCSE**  
**German**

8668/LH Paper 1 Listening Higher Tier

Report on the Examination

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## General Comments

As with the Foundation Tier paper, this was the fifth time that this examination was taken by a full cohort and 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 under 35/50 (just under 70% of the total mark); this figure was an increase on the mean mark in 2023, suggesting that this exam paper was 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 targeted at the top grades where detailed listening skills were tested. Overall, the standard of responses was very pleasing and there was very little evidence indeed 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 a few more than in 2023, and students should be reminded by their teachers of the need to answer in the correct language in Section B.

### Questions 1 – 2

These overlap questions are a well-established feature of this specification now, 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, but there was some variation in success rate.

In Question 1, almost three-quarters of students scored both marks with a large majority of the remaining students scoring one mark. Fewer than 5% of students failed to score here. The vocabulary was clearly very accessible, and this question was a gentle start to this examination. Chatting with grandparents was better done than the posting of photos of Oskar's new dog; some students suggested that Oskar had just taken photos of his dog, or had looked at photos online, or had posted photos of dogs in the plural. These answers were not credited.

Question 2 was more challenging with fewer than 20% of students getting both marks, although over half of the students scored one mark. About 30% were not successful in scoring here. The idea of a boy following Isabella online whom she does not like was not seen that often; the German used here (*heute folgt mir ein Junge online, aber ich mag ihn nicht*) was clearly beyond the understanding of many students, even though taken in isolation the words used are not that difficult. There were lots of answers referring to 'young people', which is clearly a misunderstanding of *ein Junge*, and other answers suggesting that Isabella was talking to the boy when she was trying to ignore him. The problem in the future answer was better, although it was surprising that many students did not understand the word *süchtig* – this concept will be taught in terms of health problems but perhaps students did not transfer it to the idea of becoming addicted to social media.

### Questions 3 – 7

This suite of five overlap questions proved very straightforward for a large majority of Higher Tier students with success rates in excess of 90% for all of the questions, with the exception of Question 4. 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.

The only exception was Question 4, where just over 80% of students were successful. The vocabulary here (*Ausbildung, Reisebüro*) was more challenging, and some students mistakenly thought that *Reisebüro* led them to ‘going travelling then starting work’.

### Question 8

This selection style question was a lower-demand item at Higher Tier. It was very successful with about 55% gaining all three marks and over 40% gaining two marks. Very few students scored one or zero marks on this question. Some students opted for the answer that Elsa will fly to Italy, presumably mistaking *Ausflüge* for ‘flights’. It was pleasing to see that many students realised that *weil wir keinen teuren Urlaub möchten* meant that option F was wrong – the importance of teaching students to listen out for negatives such as *kein* cannot be overstated. This question performed more strongly than the equivalent question in 2023, suggesting that students have practised the skill of listening for gist, selecting the right answers and (equally importantly) rejecting those answers which are wrong.

### Question 9

This was a high-demand question on the topic of homelessness. There was a reasonable response to Question 9.1 with just under 40% of students gaining the mark here. The key word was *Miete* and only students who referred to people not being able to afford the ‘rent’ were successful. More general answers such as not being able to afford housing were not credited as this question was testing knowledge of specific vocabulary. Question 9.2 was more successful with a range of answers permitted in the mark scheme. Over 60% of students understood that family breakdown or difficulties in the family were given as a reason for homelessness. This question identified accurately those high-achieving students who were able to understand a passage of more complex German and then answer the questions set on it accurately.

### Questions 10 – 12

This set of medium-demand questions was answered very successfully with between 80% and 85% of students getting the marks for each of them. This was pleasing given some of the more challenging vocabulary contained in this suite of questions such as *einsam, Bekannte, Wettbewerb, aufregend, selbstbewusster*.

### 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. This suite of questions was much more successfully answered than in previous years, because the vocabulary contained in them was more straightforward. The only question that caused students difficulty was Question 16.

Question 13 was answered correctly by nearly all students. The inclusion of vocabulary such as *sehr intelligenten Studenten* and *den besten Lehrern* clearly pointed to the answer P. In Question 14, the inclusion of *aber* signposted a P+N answer, and the contrast between *ich habe Angst* and *genießen* reinforced this answer. Question 15 was a little less successful, but still with more than 90% of students getting it correct; the vocabulary here (*ich bin sicher, dass ich es unmöglich finden werde...*) was more challenging and therefore this rate of success is very pleasing.

Question 16 was the exception in this suite of questions with only just over half of the students scoring the mark here. The inclusion of *jedoch* was supposed to help students to the correct answer of P+N, but perhaps this word is not that well known; it was also occurred in the middle of a clause rather than standing at the beginning of it. Some of the vocabulary in this question was also challenging, such as *das macht mir viele Sorgen*, although *toll* is a straightforward word.

As stated in last year’s Examiners’ Report, the key to success in this type of questions is to revise carefully the opinion words given at the start of 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 are familiar with the need to complete the sentence with a phrase or sentence, ensuring that they give enough information to score the mark. Just over half of students were successful in Question 17, understanding that *Parkplätze* means ‘parking spaces’ or ‘places to park’. Regrettably, far too many students thought that it meant ‘parks’ (green spaces) and these answers were not creditworthy. Question 18 was answered correctly by about 45% of students. The problem here for many students was that they did not understand the key phrase *hässliche Gebäude*. The mark scheme was generous in allowing various translations of *hässlich*, but the key vocabulary had to be known for success on this question. This was even more the case with Question 19, where *günstig* was only understood by a minority of students; less than one-quarter were successful on this question. Many students were able to write that you could buy a nice house here, but only the most able were able to add ‘at a good price’ (or equivalent) and thus score the mark.

### 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 clause was *weil das Lammfleisch mir zu scharf war*. Although examiners did not insist on ‘lamb’ and were happy to accept ‘meat’ or even ‘the meal’, only about one-third of students were able to translate *scharf* as ‘spicy’, ‘hot’ or a suitable equivalent. It was clear from the large range of answers given that many students were simply guessing.

Question 20.2 proved to be more straightforward with over two-thirds of students scoring the mark here. Although the best students wrote that cherries were Sophia’s favourite fruit, the mark scheme allowed the idea that she had her favourite fruit for dessert without insisting on the mention of cherries. There were a lot of incorrect translations of *Kirschen* and, perhaps more worryingly, many students thought that *Obst* means ‘vegetables’.

### Question 21

This was a high-demand question aimed at the highest-achieving students. Pleasingly, it performed much better than the comparable question in 2023, perhaps because the topic of School is so well known by students and clearly very well taught by their teachers.

In Question 21.1, the positive answer centred on having good friends to help Clara – this was very well done. To score the mark for the negative aspect, an appropriate translation of *Notendruck* had to be supplied, and this proved more challenging for some. That said, over 40% scored both marks and about 55% more scored one mark; only about 5% of students failed to score on this part of the question.

Question 21.2 was less successful overall with around 35% of students failing to score, about 40% scoring one mark and only about a quarter scoring both marks. The greater source of difficulty was in understanding and effectively rendering into English the phrase *dass es viele Wahlfächer für das Abitur gibt* – examiners were looking for ‘optional subjects’ or ‘a choice / range of subjects’. More successfully done was the negative aspect of this answer with many students understanding that Ben was not good at history and/or that he had a terrible history teacher. Regrettably, there were some students who put the wrong subject, thus negating an otherwise correct answer.

Although this question was challenging, it was pleasing to see an increased success rate compared to 2023 and many students scoring well on a question that was targeted at students who are working at or above grade 8.

### Question 22

This question was of medium demand, and it proved to be more accessible than the corresponding question in 2023. Despite the relatively challenging vocabulary in places, students were often able to choose the correct option from the five choices given.

Question 22.1 had a success rate just short of 90% and this was an impressive performance given the challenging vocabulary that this question contained – *die Weltbevölkerung wird immer größer*. About three-quarters of students correctly understood *die Abholzung des Regenwaldes* in question 22.2 and were able to select ‘deforestation’ as the correct answer. Question 22.3 was the least successful part to this question, because *Auspuffgase* was not that well known and there is also a need to link ‘exhaust fumes’ with ‘air pollution’. Many students were probably listening for a direct translation of ‘air pollution’ in this question, but at this level it is legitimate to expect students to be able to make the connection between car exhaust fumes and air pollution. This question contained some conceptually difficult ideas and some challenging vocabulary, and examiners were therefore pleased to see an encouragingly high success rate.

### 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. This was encouraging given some of the challenging vocabulary (*mit deutschen Untertiteln, ermüdend*) and the idea that reading subtitles can be tiring.

Question 23.2 was more challenging, with fewer than 40% of students scoring both marks and just over 40% scoring one mark. Just under 20% of students failed to score here. The first answer hinged on students understanding the phrase *Filme, die mich zum Weinen bringen* and it was clear that many students did not understand the verb *weinen*, ‘to cry’. There were many valiant attempts by students suggesting that Ahmed likes films where you can drink wine, and even some ingenious ones suggesting that he likes films set in Vienna (*Wien*), but unfortunately students were only successful if they understood *weinen*, ‘to cry’. The second part was more successful with many students understanding *die Polizei*, ‘the police’, but there were many references to ‘politics’ which were not creditworthy. A few students wrote answers which were too specific, for example ‘the police are abusive / violent’ and these were also not credited. Being able to identify detail from more challenging passages is one of the key characteristics of high-performing GCSE students and it was pleasing to see a good rate of success on this question.

**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 very pleasing to see over 35% of students scoring both marks and more than 40% scoring one mark. About 20% of students failed to score on this question.

Many successful students understood the phrase *ich muss den Stress bei der Arbeit vermeiden*. However, students who simply wrote ‘avoid stress’ did not get the mark as they had not mentioned ‘at work’ – this question was aimed at testing detailed understanding. Students who wrote that Lara should stop work altogether were also not credited with a mark – this is not what she said. The second idea was more challenging with many students not understanding *Ernährung* in the phrase *muss ich eine gesunde Ernährung haben* and simply writing that she must live healthily. ‘Have a healthy lifestyle’ was seen quite a lot, and this also suggested that students were guessing at the meaning of *Ernährung* – they were not given the mark here.

**Question 25**

The final question in Section A was another P / N / P+N question; it had an interesting pattern of success. Question 25.1 was answered correctly by over 80% of students who clearly realised that the answer was P despite the inclusion of *schlecht* in the phrase *wenn ich schlechte Laune habe*; this demonstrated an impressive command of detailed listening skills. *Was mir so gefällt* is not an easy phrase but perhaps this helped to cement the answer P. Question 25.2 was less successful with just over 35% of students receiving the mark. Many students latched onto the final phrase (*dann kann ich sie nicht leiden*) and wrote N as their answer; they had not understood the previous phrase *ist oft die herrlichste Musik* or realised that *außer* indicated a change from a positive to a negative opinion, hence the correct answer P+N. Nevertheless, there was a good response rate from stronger students to this challenging question.

**Question 26**

The first question in Section B was an overlap one and it had a much higher success rate than at Foundation Tier. Question 26.1 was answered correctly by over 95% of students who were able to work out that Annika does not get on well with her uncle and to realise that the words she uses to describe her brother and father are positive ones. Question 26.2 was also much better answered at Higher Tier with more than 80% of students being able to interpret *mein Onkel nervt mich oft* as meaning that he is *nervig*.

**Question 27**

This was a slightly more challenging P / N / P+N question with some more difficult items of vocabulary but it was very pleasing to see that many students scored highly here. Question 27.2 was the more straightforward item, even with the challenging items of vocabulary *unglaublich leistungsstark* and *eindrucksvoll*. Perhaps the latter word pointed students to the correct answer P. Question 27.1 was correctly answered by about 70% of students; *mies* is probably not that well known as a negative word, but many students will have understood that the app opening slowly is a negative characteristic. Success rates for this question were pleasing for a question aimed at students operating at grades 6 and 7.

**Question 28**

This was another overlap question, and it was answered more successfully on the Higher Tier paper than on the Foundation Tier paper, particularly Question 28.2 which was no problem for a large majority (over 95%) of students. They were clearly able to hear *Zuhause für Katzen* and choose the answer *mit Tieren*, avoiding the distractor of *mit Obdachlosen*. Question 28.1, however, was more difficult, even for Higher Tier students, with just over three-quarters of them understanding that the old people's home has closed, and therefore she cannot work there anymore; it was surprising that the phrase *Menschen, die auf der Straße leben* did not point more students to the correct answer *mit Obdachlosen*.

**Question 29**

There were not many instances this year of students answering the final questions in Section B in English, but perhaps a few more than in 2023. Teachers should remind their students that they must answer this section in German. It was a pity 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 always, 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 is as simple as possible, in order that students are not prevented from accessing the questions. 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.

This question had a higher success rate than the equivalent question in 2023, suggesting the students' practice of this question type has been worthwhile. In Question 29.1, students who could successfully convey the idea of *eine starke Beziehung* were credited with a mark. There were many spellings of *Beziehung* in evidence, and examiners were given clear instructions on what to accept and what to reject. Just under half of students gained a mark here. Question 29.2 proved to be a lot more accessible than the equivalent question in 2023, probably because the idea of weddings being expensive is a common one, and the fact that the German used to express this was straightforward. Nearly 90% were successful here. There were fewer instances this year of students not attempting the question or of completely irrelevant answers.

**Question 30**

The final question on the paper was also answered well. The mark scheme was discussed in detail during the standardisation process and a range of answers for *Fremdsprachen* or *Französisch* in Question 30.1 were accepted. The mark scheme gave plenty of detail to help ensure that examiners marked with consistency and accuracy. Over three-quarters of students were successful on this question. In Question 30.2, about half of the students scored the mark. There were various ways to get there – the idea that Sara got a grade 6 in Maths, that she failed in Maths, or that her mother will be angry with her. Many students attempted to use the verb *durchfallen*, but this met with mixed success, with many students mangling it or using *fallen* or *gefallen* instead. 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 and who in these final questions wrote 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 heartening once again to see many students have a go at these higher-demand questions and answer them successfully.

## **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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