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# AS LEVEL GERMAN

Unit 1 Listening, Reading and Writing  
Report on the Examination

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## General comments

This paper proved to be slightly more challenging overall than last year's paper. However most students understood the gist of the listening and reading items, even if some struggled with the detail, and many were able to use Section B to show off their writing skills in German. Very few appeared to have run out of time. Rubric infringements were rare, with just a small number of students answering Question 1 in German instead of English. Illegibility was once again an issue with some scripts, especially in those parts of the paper where quality of language was assessed, i.e. Question 9 and Section B.

## Section A

### Question 1

This transfer of meaning task on friendship was fairly well tackled.

Question (a), many students scored at least two of the available three marks. Some struggled to convey *psychischen* in English – examiners did not accept versions that looked more like 'physical' than 'psychological'. Not all knew the verb *halten* in the sense of 'keeping'. Question (b), again many students scored at least two of the available three marks. The least familiar of the three key German words was *Geduld*. Question (c), most students scored at least two of the available four marks. However, some mistook *höheren* for *hören*, and the phrase *hält ... doppelt so lange* caused some confusion. A number of students struggled to convey *aus einem fremden Kulturkreis* in acceptable English. Most but not all showed understanding of *ein Drittel* and *die Hälfte*.

### Question 2

This non-verbal listening task on golf in Germany was on the whole well answered.

### Question 3

Many students coped well with this non-verbal listening task on music. The most accessible items proved to be parts (a) and (e) and the least accessible was part (b), perhaps because the verb *stört* was not recognised.

### Question 4

This listening task on technology required students to answer questions in German. The accuracy of their German was not assessed, but they had to convey all required information clearly; in a few instances linguistic errors impeded communication. A few students relied too much on transcribing directly from the recording and in doing so either included irrelevant information or betrayed a lack of understanding through the garbling of key words. However the majority seemed at ease with this type of task. Question (a)(i) was very well answered. Question (a)(ii) discriminated well because students had to understand the context in order to distinguish between the various people mentioned in the recording. The verb *schenkte* gave the clue. Question (b)(i) most students identified the correct section of the recording, but there was widespread confusion between *enttäuscht* and *enttäuschend*. Either word could have formed part of the correct answer, but *enttäuscht* needed to be preceded by *Er war* or similar. Question (b)(ii) was fairly well answered, but not all students recognised *Theorie* – there were quite a few versions that looked more like 'terror' – and a few had difficulty with the past participle *behandelt*. Question (c) discriminated well because students had to give explanations that could not be lifted word for word from the recording. The phrase *Daten rette* caused difficulty, with some students treating *rette* as if it were a noun and there was some confusion between *schließen* and *schießen*. Question (d) was well

answered, with many students correctly conveying the three key words *angenehm*, *manchmal* and *notwendig*. A few students referred inappropriately to the writing of prescriptions.

### Question 5

Most students coped well with this non-verbal task on smoking. Parts (a), (d) and (e) attracted the largest number of correct responses and part (b) proved to be the most difficult, perhaps because the verb *lohnt sich* was unfamiliar.

### Question 6

This matching task on advertising was, on the whole, well done. The most common error was '2' instead of '7' for item E, perhaps because the noun *Lügen* was unfamiliar.

### Question 7

This non-verbal gap fill exercise on cinema proved to be an effective discriminator, as students had to understand the gist and detail of the text in order to place the missing words correctly. The fact that all the missing words were verbs ending in *-en* meant that this was more a test of vocabulary than of grammatical understanding.

### Question 8

This task requiring students to answer comprehension questions in German produced a wide spread of responses. As in Question 4 those students who copied out chunks of the text sometimes did so in a way that showed a lack of comprehension; often the best answer consisted of just two or three words. Question (a)(i): correct answers were relatively scarce, because many students did not specify what the *das* referred to in the phrase *Das ist ... nicht mehr so ungewöhnlich*. Question (a)(ii): this item was fairly well answered, with many students showing they had understood the phrase *die Zahlen seien noch höher*. Question (b): a minority of students scored the mark here, perhaps because the past participle *geehrt* was unfamiliar. Some students referred inappropriately to the *lange Unterbrechung*. Question (c): many students scored both marks. A few referred inappropriately to *Kontakt mit den Kunden*. Question (d): this item was well answered on the whole. A few students thought that Martin was bringing his family rather than the food to the table. Question (e) discriminated well because students had to understand much of the final paragraph to identify the correct answer. Versions in the second person such as *Was machst du den ganzen Tag?* were not acceptable. Question (f): again, this tested comprehension of a lengthy section of the text and correct answers were relatively scarce. Those who correctly identified *neidisch* sometimes struggled to change *auf mich* into an appropriate phrase in the third person such as *auf ihn* or *auf Martin*.

### Question 9

As in previous series, this grammar test discriminated well at all levels, although there is some evidence to suggest that students now are better prepared than they used to be for this type of task. Students are reminded that they only score the mark if they spell their answer correctly, including the presence or absence of an Umlaut where appropriate. Poor handwriting made it impossible to award marks in a few instances. Question (a) there were many correct responses, although the wrong spelling *ließt* was not unusual. Question (b) most students gave the correct past participle of *entwickeln*. Question (c) was fairly well answered, although some students wrote the subjunctive form *hätten* instead of the simple past *hatten*. Question (d) proved to be challenging; once again it was the simple past *mussten* that fitted the context. Question (e) discriminated well. A few thought that the *-er* ending on *locker* was itself an adjectival ending and

changed the word to *lockes*. Question (f): most students gave the correct answer, perhaps following the rule that an adjective ends in *-en* when it comes after an article ending in *-en*. Question (g) discriminated well. The most common error was *klaren* instead of *klare*. Question (h) proved to be fairly challenging. The most common error was *bequemes* instead of *bequeme*. Question (i): the past participle of *zurückkommen* was by no means universally known. Versions without *-ge-* and with the ending *-t* were quite frequent. Question (j): only a minority of students gave the correct imperfect subjunctive form of *sein*. The clue lay in the verb *hätte* in the *wenn*-clause at the end of the sentence.

## Section B: Extended writing questions

The extended writing question produced, as usual, a wide range of responses. At the top end, some students wrote fluently and confidently on their chosen topic, responding thoughtfully and in a well-focused way to the question set. Only a small number of students seemed unable to get to grips with the requirements of the task. As in previous series, most students exceeded the recommended count of 200 words, but those who wrote significantly more did not necessarily score higher marks.

In awarding the Content mark examiners look for a well-balanced response to the chosen title, with opinions supported convincingly by appropriate evidence and examples. The structure should be clear enough for the reader to follow the writer's thoughts easily. The inclusion of personal experiences is fine in principle, although this can sometimes result in superficiality, e.g. when a student merely narrates a recent holiday experience. As in previous series, introductory paragraphs this year were often stronger than conclusions; the main pitfall with conclusions appears to be a tendency to introduce new points that may in some cases contradict the main body of the essay. Although examiners assess Content independently of Quality of Language, some major linguistic errors may hinder communication and in such instances the Content mark will be adversely affected.

For the three Quality of Language marks – Range of Vocabulary, Range of Structures and Accuracy – examiners are not expecting a native or near-native performance. Rather, top marks will be awarded to a student who reaches the level that can be reasonably expected one year after GCSE. The student's vocabulary should include topic-specific terms where appropriate and avoid unnecessary repetition. The syntax should be varied and include a wide range of sentence types, including subordinate clauses, infinitive clauses and conditional clauses. Different verb tenses should be used with confidence. However examiners do not have a 'tick list' of structures: instead they will credit the use of natural-sounding German which by its very nature will include variety. As for accuracy, a few mistakes are tolerated even in a response that scores top marks, but the strongest students are able to show a good understanding of the principles of German grammar, especially word order, verb endings and case endings. Among the most common errors this year were confusion between *mehrere* and *mehr*, the misuse of *überall* to mean 'overall' and *Fern* used to mean 'television'.

### Question 10

This question, which asked students to compare the merits of taking holidays at home or abroad, was a popular choice. It produced many good responses. Examiners allowed some flexibility with regard to students' interpretation of *zu Hause* and *in einem exotischen Land*; in practice most students took *zu Hause* to mean 'in their home country' and *in einem exotischen Land* to mean 'somewhere outside Europe'. Many students used two or three of the suggestions on the examination paper to frame their response; on the whole this worked well, although some appeared to have misunderstood the word *eigene* in the phrase *das eigene Land kennen lernen*. Among the interesting points mentioned by some students were: the dangers that some tourists

might encounter in exotic destinations; the environmental impact of tourism on local communities alongside the economic benefit to those communities; the variety of experiences that might be available 'at home'; and the snobbery associated with some exotic destinations. Weaker responses often included too much repetition or contradiction.

### **Question 11**

This question, which invited students to evaluate tattoos and piercings, was the least popular of the three Section B titles, but those who chose it generally did so successfully. Many responses came down heavily in support of body art, stressing its attractiveness and the way in which it expresses a person's individuality. However the drawbacks were often mentioned as well, such as the permanence of body art and the fact that some employers might react badly to it. A few students commented in general terms on our society's increasing focus on external appearance, which could be a good or bad thing according to one's personal standpoint.

### **Question 12**

This question, which asked students to assess the extent to which TV destroys family life, was a popular choice, but on the whole it was less well done than Question 10. Some students wrote a general essay on the good and bad aspects of TV in general, making insufficient reference to family life. Detailed references to the dangers of a sedentary lifestyle were usually irrelevant, as were lengthy descriptions of specific TV programmes. A number of students sensibly began their essay by explaining the changing nature of TV, with more and more TV content being watched on personal devices and with an ever greater overlap between different forms of technology. Others began by outlining the reasons why we watch TV, ranging from entertainment and relaxation to information and education. In support of the quotation in the question many students mentioned the arguments that can arise between family members over TV schedules – although this is surely less of a problem with individual devices – and the missed opportunities to spend time together doing other things such as sport and outings. Among the most common counter-arguments was that: almost any TV programme can get family members talking to each other; the watching of popular series can give families a way in to discussing sensitive topics such as sexuality; and small children can benefit from watching TV with parents or grandparents.

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

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

## **Converting Marks into UMS marks**

Convert raw marks into Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) marks by using the link below.

[UMS conversion calculator](#)