
AS

GERMAN

Paper 2 Writing
Report on the Examination

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General Comments

In the second year of the new AS specification, there was a significant drop in the number of students taking the exam. The level of difficulty of the translation into German was slightly higher than in 2017, but examiners still saw a good range of scripts from across the ability range.

Section A

Students were required to translate five sentences from English into German. Each sentence was broken into six parts, with one mark awarded for each correct element. The translation exercise proved to be a good discriminating exercise. There were a number of students who did not attempt any part of some sentences. This was regrettable, as each element is discrete and can gain credit. Therefore, students who had been encouraged to write what they could often benefited.

The theme for the translation this year was Artistic culture in the German-speaking world, with the sub-theme *Kunst und Architektur im Alltag* being the focus of the exercise. The reading passage before the sentences provided useful vocabulary, structures and verbs needed for effective completion of the exercise. Students were required to manipulate verb tenses or change cases and adjective endings. This was done with a varying degree of success.

It was not always possible to provide all alternative translations in the mark scheme. Responses were given credit, as long as the message was conveyed in accurate German. Some of the examples below help to show this point. The translation sentences required a high level of grammatical accuracy, including capitalisation, emphasising the need for clear handwriting in order to distinguish between upper and lower case.

- 1.1. *10 Jahre* was often used instead of *Jahrzehnt* and this was perfectly acceptable. *Treffung* was a common mistranslation for *Treffen*. *Von berühmten deutschen Persönlichkeiten im Architekturbereich* was awarded 2 marks because of innovative combination of two elements of the question.
- 1.2. In the first part of the sentence *Auftrag*, *Aufgabe*, *Rolle* and *Job* were all accepted but not *Beruf* as this was deemed to mean something else in this context. *Städten* was accepted for 'cities'.
- 1.3. Some better answers used *ein hässliches Stadtzentrum*, showing good knowledge of grammar in a correct response. *Nicht viele Leute* was offered by many students and was accepted as an alternative to *wenige Leute*. *Geburtsort* was not widely known at all.
- 1.4. Word order was a clear problem in this sentence, even when students correctly used the perfect tense of *verstehen*. 'Annual' caused problems, sometimes with the item of vocabulary itself, finding the correct adjective ending or the omission of the umlaut. However, thoughtful responses included *die Konferenz, die jedes Jahr stattfindet* and this, of course, was given due credit.
- 1.5. A very high number of students did not manipulate *um den richtigen Weg* to *auf dem richtigen Weg*. Structures needed to be changed. The reading passage contained some useful items of vocabulary but too many responses lifted the words here without thinking of grammar. The plural forms of *Schule* and *Fabrik* produced a very high number of

inaccuracies. The separable verb *aussehen* was widely known, but the position of the verb was not always correct.

Sections B and C

These sections offered a choice of ten literary texts and six films. Students were required to select one work, either a text or a film, and to answer one question from two alternatives.

Some students failed to indicate the number of the question they were attempting, which occasionally caused problems for examiners, who had to work out which question the student was attempting to answer before awarding a mark.

Section B attracted 25% of the cohort. Although not very high numbers, the most popular choices were *Der Besuch der alten Dame* and *Der Vorleser*.

Some texts were not chosen at all: *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*, *Zonenkinder*, *Gedichte – Buch der Lieder* and *Fundbüro*. Others attracted very few responses, and some only a single student.

75% of the cohort elected to attempt a question from Section C. All six films attracted responses, although *Goodbye Lenin* and *Das Leben der Anderen* were by far the most popular choices.

The standard in terms of AO3 and AO4 was variable. The statistics show, however, that all questions in both sections discriminated well between lower- and higher-attaining students.

There were no incomplete papers, suggesting the examination was indeed accessible to all.

Some planning of the essays was evident in several responses, but a high number were interrupted by asterisks, crossing-out or even 'see end of essay'. This rendered the answer difficult to follow at times and disrupted the fluency.

There were examples of poor handwriting, making it difficult to decipher words. It is essential that students are aware of the importance of legibility in a written paper.

While many students were well prepared and able to write with fluency and linguistic accuracy, there were responses where the poor standard of German impeded immediate comprehension of the points made. Some students knew the content of the work, but were unable to express what they wanted to say. Basic errors such as verb agreements, word order, use of personal pronouns and use of simple cases disallowed access to the higher mark bands in AO3 and often impacted on a student's AO4 mark too. Many students were unable to distinguish between *werden* and *bekommen*, *wollen* and the future tense, and *einige*, *eigene* and *einzig*.

On the other hand, there were plenty of answers with excellent use of the language. Correct use of the passive and advanced vocabulary made a very positive impression.

In terms of content, the best answers remained focused on the title of the essay and supported points made by direct reference to the work. Personal opinion and analytical skills were evident in high-scoring answers. Weaker responses tended towards the purely narrative. Although direct quotation can be very useful in support of points made, it must be accurate and this was very often not the case in many of this year's essays.

It seemed not all students kept to the question set. In spite of past papers and essays prepared in class or at home, it is vital the actual title on the paper should be addressed. Too many responses veered away and contained irrelevant information.

To end on a pleasing note, it was very satisfying that many of the responses were of a standard that could be reasonably expected from a candidate at this level, and indeed some were of a far higher standard.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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