
AS

GERMAN

Paper 3 Speaking

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

Entries for this examination were much reduced compared to last year; most visiting examiners had very few students to examine. Schools assisted the smooth running of the tests by providing invigilators, chaperones and suitable accommodation. There were no problems with students choosing the correct combination of cards from the four cards handed to them at the start of the preparation time. Most centres conducting their own tests followed the instructions regarding administrative procedures, but examiners still reported some failings. Centres are reminded to ensure the following:

- Full announcement at the start of each test following the prescribed wording in the *Instructions for the conduct of AS level examinations*, which can be found in Secure Key Materials
- CD insert or USB label showing the order of tests, the stimulus cards chosen by each student and the teacher-examiner's name
- Correct labelling of tracks showing component, centre and candidate numbers
- Recordings saved in mp3 format
- Checking of volume for both student and teacher

Most students used the 15 minutes preparation time well. Before choosing two cards, students should consider how well they understand the information on each card and how much AO4 related knowledge they have. Writing down very lengthy answers to the three printed questions does not necessarily guarantee good marks; students also need to think about elements on the card which may not be covered in the three questions but which may be addressed in the discussion.

The majority of students were able to formulate a meaningful and relevant question connected to the card content. Students are reminded that their question must have a conjugated verb and must not be a repeat of one of the printed questions or of a question asked by the examiner.

Teacher-examiner conduct

Examining technique can have a real impact on students' performance, particularly with regard to AO1, AO2 and AO4 marks. Some teachers enabled their students to achieve high marks in these Assessment Objectives through skilful and imaginative questioning. However, examiners often reported the following problems with teacher-examiner conduct:

- Failure to develop students' responses. In order to have access to high AO1 marks students must show the ability to react appropriately to unpredictable elements. Examiners should therefore follow-up and develop answers regularly in order to invite spontaneous reactions from the student. In many centres, students were allowed to deliver lengthy prepared answers without further responses from the teacher requiring the student to demonstrate independence and spontaneity. In many conversations, teacher-examiners asked standard or apparently rehearsed questions on the sub-theme leading to wholly or partly pre-learnt responses for which high AO1 marks could not be given.

- Failure to discuss the content of the stimulus card in detail. Many teachers asked the printed questions in quick succession without following up the student's responses and without exploring important elements on the card through additional questions between the printed ones; this often reduced students' chances to show good understanding of the stimulus. Students who simply gave a summary of the card content or read out verbal information on the card without any further discussion could not be awarded high AO2 marks. It is also important that teacher-examiners invite students to rectify any misinterpretation of the card content.
- Insufficient opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of German-speaking society and culture (AO4). Teachers need to be aware that AO4 marks can only be achieved through questions and answers that explicitly refer to a German-speaking country. This is made clear in the [Your questions answered](#) booklet:

Will facts given by students which are not related to a target language speaking country simply be ignored when the AO4 mark is being considered? - *That's correct; AO4 tests knowledge of the target language speaking country and so only such information can be credited.*

In the wider sub-theme discussion, many teacher-examiners spent too much time on general and personal aspects. This was particularly the case with Cards A to F, ie cards relating to German-speaking society. Given that AO4 accounts for a third of the total marks available the effect on the overall outcome for the student was often quite severe. In order to maximise chances to show AO4 knowledge it is advisable to refer to a German-speaking country even before the third printed question is asked. Many teacher-examiners introduced the last question on the card rather late and thus left little time for an appraisal of the sub-theme in a German-speaking context. For higher AO4 marks students must be given opportunities to evaluate factual knowledge, to express views and to justify arguments. In their questioning, many teachers focused too heavily on eliciting facts and too little on seeking critical and analytical responses.

- Failure to prompt the student's question in time. In very few tests the teacher forgot about the student's question altogether, but if the student's question was asked after the maximum time of 7 minutes it could not be credited, incurring a reduction of AO2 marks by one. There is no point in the teacher eliciting a question in hindsight after the end of the second discussion.

Correct timings were mostly observed. Teachers are reminded that the entire test should not exceed 14 minutes; examiners are instructed to time the test as a whole without re-setting the stop-watch and to stop marking at 14 minutes.

As in previous years, many teachers used *du* and *Sie* alternately, occasionally within one question. It is not obligatory to address students with *Sie* if they are used to *du* from the classroom. Teachers should therefore feel free to address to follow their usual practice; the questions on the cards can, and should, be adapted.

Students' performance

AO1: Fluency was generally good; only rarely was the student's pace of delivery so fast or slow that it made utterances difficult to follow. Visiting examiners were pleased with the readiness of most students to develop their answers without much prompting and to react appropriately to unexpected questions; the majority of V-students scored marks of 4 or 5. In many teacher-conducted tests, there were too few opportunities for students to show spontaneity and independence as many teachers did not follow up students' responses sufficiently and frequently allowed pre-learnt statements.

AO2: On the whole, students reacted well to the stimulus material and, when probed by the examiner, were able to comment appropriately on various elements on the cards. Not enough teacher-examiners exploited the content of the card satisfactorily, and consequently students were denied higher scores.

AO3: The standard of grammatical performances varied widely. Some students handled simple and more complex structures with confidence and a good degree of accuracy; other students showed rather fragile awareness of basic grammar and struggled to express ideas spontaneously. However, complete breakdown of communication was rare and the majority of students achieved marks in the top three bands. Pronunciation was generally good or acceptable; weaknesses with *ch*, *z* and *v* sounds were most prominent. Frequent individual mispronunciations were *Jungenlichen*, *deutschsprachig*, *Technologie*, *Arkitektur*, *Famili*, *taglich*, *Gebaude*, *Hauser*, *Börlinn* and English pronunciation of *Idee* and *Musik*.

Common grammar errors included:

- Conjugation of verbs and modal verbs
- Failure to invert subject and verb
- Word order after *und* / *aber* / *weil*: *und gibt es*, *weil es gibt*
- Past participles and auxiliary verbs eg *ich habe besuchen/ bekommt* / *ich habe gegeht*
- Use of *mehr* with comparatives
- Personal pronouns eg *er* / *ihn*
- Use of prepositions eg confusion of *zu* and *nach*; *abhängig auf dem Handy*
- Confusion of conjugations *als* and *wenn*
- Confusion of possessive pronouns *sein* and *ihr*

Common vocabulary errors included:

- *wissen* / *kennen*
- *es ist ein Schade*
- *eigen* / *einzig* / *einige*
- *interessant* / *interessiert*
- *bekommen* / *werden*
- *lassen* / *verlassen*
- *putzen* for to put
- *Idee* for *Ahnung*
- *in meiner Meinung*

AO4: Students demonstrated different degrees of knowledge and understanding of society and culture in German-speaking countries. Visiting examiners found it hard at times to elicit German-related responses when discussing Cards A to F; students were often reluctant or unable to name relevant German sources such as articles or websites in order to support facts about the family, digital technology and youth culture in Germany, Austria or Switzerland. Quoting a few statistical figures or declaring the situation in Germany to be the same as in Britain did not demonstrate genuine knowledge and understanding of the sub-theme. In contrast, students who referred to relevant German texts or websites, to their own observations during a visit to Germany or to their personal contact in a German-speaking country usually achieved better AO4 marks. Too few teacher-examiners persisted with eliciting German-specific AO4 knowledge. Instead, many all too readily discussed personal or general issues. Even able students thus often scored disappointing marks for AO4. All students who discussed cards G and H had some knowledge of traditions and festivals in German-speaking countries: *Oktoberfest*, *Karneval* and *Weihnachtsmarkt* being top of the list. Contributions about art and architecture (Cards I and J) were often limited to a few names appearing in textbooks, and examiners regularly gained the impression that few students had more than superficial knowledge and appreciation of an artist's or architect's work. Cards K and L often led to a worthwhile discussion of aspects of Berlin's cultural life, and a number of students talked about their own impressions from a visit to the German capital. However, while many students were keen to talk about historical sites in Berlin (eg *Checkpoint Charlie*, *Mauermuseum* etc) wider knowledge of art, music and theatre in Berlin was much less common. The third question on cards K and L often triggered a pre-learnt statement about *Berliner Kultur* regardless of whether it was relevant to the actual question.

Karte A: Die Familie – der Mittelpunkt des Lebens

This was understood well by most students. Some students read out each figure from the statistics, but many explained the statistical information with their own words; a few expressed surprise at the low percentage of *Freunde*. The second table could have been discussed further by many teacher-examiners, but some students gave valid reasons for the difference between men and women. The wider discussion often failed to establish clear and continuous reference to German-speaking countries, although many students mentioned the legalisation of same-sex marriages in Germany last year.

Karte B: Bumerangkinder – zurück ins Hotel Mama

This card was not done as well as the previous card on family. The pronunciation of *österreichisch* frequently caused problems and many students appeared not to have fully understood the concept of *Bumerangkinder* and *Hotel Mama*. The statistics and the reasons were often read out verbatim without adding opinions, interpretation or conclusions. For Question 2 students could often not think of any disadvantages, and the box with Brigitte's statement was generally ignored. Reference to German-speaking society was sparse in many teacher-conducted tests.

Karte C: Digitales Burn-out?

This card was handled with limited success. The figures in the table were often read out without further comment and only few students remarked on how little mobile phones were used for

making phone calls. The point and the purpose of a 'digital diet' were frequently missed by students; despite the card providing a lot of material for further discussion many teachers did not pursue this substantial element of the stimulus. Most teacher-conducted conversations on the wider sub-theme referred only loosely to the use of digital technology in German-speaking countries, but some students mentioned German websites or YouTubers that are popular among German teenagers.

Karte D: Liebe auf den ersten Klick!

This card was not a popular choice and generally not done very well. Even when students quoted the speech bubbles much more discussion of the pros and cons of dating apps could have taken place. Many students missed the fact that the second question was about apps in general and repeated answers given earlier. This question was a good opportunity to score AO4 marks by mentioning popular smart phone apps in German-speaking countries, but in teacher-conducted tests this opportunity was rarely taken. Once again, too many general and personal questions about mobile phone use were asked.

Karte E: Die Rückkehr der Vinylplatten?

This was a popular card. Not many students had taken on board that the sale of vinyl records had increased and simply mentioned the low percentage of 5% in the table. Many students expressed surprise that CDs were the most popular medium, but the fact that 54% referred not just to young Germans was often missed. Relatively few students made further comments on the opinions next to the picture which some thought were about the advantages of CDs. *Vinyl* was usually pronounced as in English and a surprising number of students did the same with *CD*. The third question was answered well by students who had listened to or read about German music and could name German groups and singers. In the further discussion, some students made good points about the use of German or English in German pop and rock music. However, many teachers devoted too much time to finding out about the students' personal preferences in music.

Karte F: Experiment Jugendfernsehen

The card produced mixed results. Most students were able to relate the main facts about the TV station although many missed the fact that it had closed. Good examiner-conduct elicited personal reactions to the listed programmes, and some students also commented on the need for advertising or the advantages of interactive television. Only patchy knowledge about German-speaking television was evident in the wider discussion; few students could name one or more popular TV programmes and teacher-conducted conversations usually concentrated on students' own viewing habits.

Karte G: Ostern in Wien

This was an accessible card and often done well. Not many students commented on the several locations and the duration of the Easter markets. The card presented a number of pronunciation hurdles: *Wien [Wein]*, *Ostereier*, English pronunciation of *Region*, *traditionell* and *Dekorationen*. Surprisingly many students had problems describing the *Kinderprogramm* in their own words;

suchen often seemed to be an unfamiliar verb. All students were able to name other festivals and traditions in German-speaking countries, predominantly *Oktoberfest*, *Karneval* and *Weihnachtsmarkt*, but also *Hexenfest* and *Silvester*. Unfortunately, many conversations about these were mainly factual and descriptive with little or no critical appraisal of the events.

Karte H: Ein wichtiger Tag für Kinder

This card contained a lot of information and able students who had absorbed it well in their preparation time showed good understanding of the subject. Many students on the other hand missed the significance of *Schultüte* and of how the first day at school is marked. The bullet points were usually read out without further explanation or interpretation and too few teacher-examiners explored these points with further questions. The second printed question was often answered well and wider sub-theme discussions followed the same paths as with Card G.

Karte I: Wohnen auf der Brücke

Few students chose this card. Students' descriptions often suggested that they had not fully understood what distinguishes the *Krämerbrücke* from other bridges. *Mittelalterlich* was hardly ever mentioned, but most students explained why the street is popular with tourists. Many students ignored *alte Architektur* in the third question and talked about *Bauhaus* or *Hundertwasser*, often with pre-learnt statements.

Karte J: Kunst für alle

This was a frequently discussed card and discriminated well between able and less able students. Some students understood the central aim of the project and were able to explain and evaluate it. Many, however, missed or did not understand the point of *ärmere / benachteiligte Kinder*. Students rarely surmised what activities might happen in the *Kunstbus* and very few mentioned the value of offering art activities during the holidays. English pronunciation of *Region* and *Projekt* was frequent and surprisingly many students could not pronounce *Ferien*. Frequently, the third question was taken as the trigger for delivering pre-learnt speeches about German-speaking artists and/or architects; the fact that the question was about the importance of art was widely ignored. Visiting examiners who probed further into this very aspect often found sparse knowledge among students about, for instance, galleries in German towns, art teaching in schools or art in public spaces.

Karte K: Tanzen in der Telefonzelle

This card was handled quite well, although few students commented on the quirky side of the subject matter. The information on the card was well understood and many students expressed opinions about the *teledisko*. Unfortunately, teacher-examiners rarely engaged students in a more detailed discussion about this unusual installation and quickly moved to the third question. Most students had some knowledge about Berlin's music scene – *Techno-Musik* was often mentioned – but in most teacher-conducted tests the discussion swiftly progressed to favourite aspects of the sub-theme such as *Museumsinsel*, *Checkpoint Charlie* and *Holocaust-Denkmal*.

Karte L: Die lange Nacht der Religionen

Many good discussions took place on the subject of this card, but unfortunately several aspects of the card content remained under-explored in most centre-conducted tests; teachers could for instance have asked about possible motives behind visiting 'foreign' places of worship, about treating sacred spaces as a tourist attraction, about possible contents of the exhibitions and talks etc. Many students did not make use of the quotes in the grey box which could have provided ample material for an in-depth answer to the second question. *Moschee*, *Kirchen* and *Religionen* posed pronunciation problems. Many teacher-led discussions of the sub-theme only fleetingly touched on the aspect of *Vielfalt* in the third question; *Döner* and *Kebab* often served as sole evidence of cultural diversity. Most sub-theme discussion focused on Berlin's historical sites and some deviated from the sub-theme into issues of integration and racism.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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