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GCSE

**GERMAN**

8668/WH Writing Higher Tier  
Report on the Examination

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8668  
November 2020

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## General Introduction to the November Series

This has been an unusual exam series in many ways. Entry patterns have been very different from those normally seen in the summer, and students had a very different experience in preparation for these exams. It is therefore more difficult to make meaningful comparisons between the range of student responses seen in this series and those seen in a normal summer series. The smaller entry also means that there is less evidence available for examiners to comment on.

In this report, senior examiners will summarise the performance of students in this series in a way that is as helpful as possible to teachers preparing future cohorts while taking into account the unusual circumstances and limited evidence available.

## Overview of Entry

The entry for this examination was predictably extremely small, representing a tiny fraction of the entry in a normal year. From the style and content of some of the work assessed, I believe the entry to have contained a disproportionate number of German native speakers. This feature, along with others, means that results will not be comparable with those of other years.

## Comments on Individual Questions

### Question 1

Option 1.2 proved more attractive than the alternative, with almost 70% of students choosing to write about home town/amenities/environment/future domicile rather than about money/shopping/future work plans. Students generally found both topics readily accessible, understood what was required of them and most dealt well with the four required bullet points. Any failure to address a bullet point was usually limited to BP2 on option 1.2, relating to recent actions to help the environment. Overall the vocabulary needed to respond was largely well within students' grasp, and any losses of clarity were due to limitations in manipulating the language effectively. Students performed slightly better on option 1.2, with over 65% of them scoring full marks for Content and even more, perhaps having missed a bullet point, scoring a top mark on Quality of Language. Overall scores on option 1.1 were not a great deal lower with 59% achieving a top mark for Content. No student scored under 5 for Content or under 3 for Quality of Language on either option.

### Question 2

The student preference here was to write about the very familiar topic of school [around 70%] rather than about aspects of life as a young person. There were some excellent answers to both optional questions, and it is encouraging to see students able to express themselves with such fluency and in such detail on topics where they feel in a sense at home with familiar language and are able to use it for real communicative purposes. It was on the topic of school pros and cons/ideal school, option 2.1, where the most assured answers were produced, with 31% reaching a top Content mark, as opposed to 25% who did so on option 2.2. This difference was reflected in the numbers attaining a mark within the top [13-15] mark band, 65% on option 2.2 and a little under 52% on the alternative question. While many responses to both options were of a very good or good standard, a number of students appeared out of their depth in producing a sufficiently detailed and clearly-expressed piece of extended writing. A handful of answers were largely

irrelevant to the task as set and a few were far too short and cursory to access good marks. In addition, issues with clarity of expression and the loss of intended messages limited the performances of some students. Though there were no Content scores below 5 on option 2.2, the percentage of students scoring in the lowest band on option 2.1 was a little over 10%, suggesting that less confident students had largely selected this familiar topic area, but had nevertheless found it difficult to access good marks. This is further suggested by the fact that marks on Range of Language were higher on option 2.2 with 65% reaching the top mark band and 35% on a full mark of 12, whereas on option 2.1, the percentages were somewhat lower, with 50% of marks between 10 and 12. The lowest mark for 2.2 was 5 [3%] but for 2.1 it was 4 [10%]. Scores for Accuracy showed similar divergence with 43% of those selecting option 2.1 and 55% of those selecting option 2.2 scoring 5/5. The lowest Accuracy score for 2.1 was 1, with around 18% scoring 1 or 2 on these criteria, whereas the lowest mark for 2.2 was 2 and only 6.9% scored 1 or 2 on this option.

### Question 3

This question produced the full range of marks across the entry, with relatively few scoring full marks on the conveying of key messages [around 20%], though 35% achieved a top mark for their application of grammatical knowledge and structure. The explanation is likely to be that some native speakers, while writing in more or less flawless German, were less careful than non-native German speakers about translating the messages precisely as stated and tended on occasion to paraphrase extensively, which is not what examiners are looking for in this part of the examination. 80% of students achieved marks for the transmission of key messages of between 4 and 6, and almost the same proportion [77%] achieved the same score for accuracy and use of appropriate structures. Around 15% of students produced marks in the mid-range for each set of criteria, scoring either 3-3 or occasionally 3-2 where transmission of key messages was achieved, but perhaps only just. Only around 4% scored marks below 2 for key messages and 8% for overall accuracy.

Much of the content and vocabulary in the translation text was accessible to the majority of students though there were some who had difficulty with the comparative *älter*, some who were not familiar with *Fach*, and the correct word for *when* in the present tense was a stumbling block for some. The past tense was generally well done, a good number of students managed *freiwillig* and many were able to make a decent attempt at *Suppenküche*, all of which is most encouraging.

### Concluding Remarks

All questions on the paper proved accessible to almost all students. There were for example very few less assured students who did not achieve any marks at all on Question 3. In other questions, there were no zero scores, which is, in the circumstances, what one would expect. The optional questions provided most students with the possibility of expressing their experiences, ideas and opinions in some detail and often with a degree of success.

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

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