



AS LEVEL GERMAN

7661/3V; 7661/3T: Paper 3 Speaking
Report on the Examination

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General points and administration

The number of students entered for this examination was again fairly small. It was noted that despite the two difficult years these students had during the pandemic most students were on the whole well-prepared for the tests and seemed to have covered all of the themes and sub-themes on the specification.

With the introduction of the 'Media Submission Portal' centres did not have to send CDs or USB sticks to the examiner. Very few technical problems with the audio files were reported, but teachers who conduct tests must ensure that the student is as audible as the examiner. Some centres failed to send the accompanying paperwork to the marking examiners who were instructed only to mark tests where the paperwork had arrived. In many cases marking was unnecessarily delayed. Centres are asked to include with the attendance list a note indicating the stimulus cards discussed by each student and the name of the teacher-examiner.

Visiting examiners enjoyed face-to-face conversations with students; most students responded well to the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of topic areas and their language skills. Arrangements for holding the tests and the accommodation for the speaking tests were generally good. The required invigilators and chaperones were in place and helped to make procedures run smoothly and efficiently.

Teacher-examiner conduct

The outcome of speaking tests can be strongly influenced by the conduct of examining. Markers of teacher conducted tests voiced concerns about the standard of examining in many centres. Areas of shortcomings in teacher-conduct were:

- A general reluctance to pick up on points made by students and to ask follow-up questions which invite further explanation and require students to react spontaneously to unpredicted elements. Many teachers asked a series of unrelated questions, always accepting students' answers without further prompts or questions.
- Allowing students to deliver long monologues rather than engaging them in a real conversation. This was particularly problematic when students read out very long prepared answers to the printed questions and were not given enough opportunities to demonstrate the qualities required in AO1 i.e. responding to spoken language. Furthermore, simply reading out information on the card verbatim does not demonstrate good understanding of the material and will by itself not score AO2 marks.
- Insufficient exploration of the stimulus card content. High AO2 marks can be awarded where students show thorough insight into the stimulus material and are invited to discuss specific aspects on the card in more detail. Examiners are therefore required to intersperse the printed questions with appropriate supplementary and follow-up questions. Too many teacher-examiners asked the three given questions in succession without addressing important elements within the stimulus material further. This practice regularly denied students the chance for a high score at AO2.

- Too little focus on the German-speaking world when discussing the wider sub-theme. AO4 marks are awarded for knowledge of and insight into a German-speaking society or culture. Students need to make it clear in their responses that they have acquired this knowledge by clearly referring to Germany, Austria or Switzerland. If they are asked predominantly general or personal questions, for instance about their use of social media, their preferences in fashion or the difficulties for single parents, high AO4 marks cannot be awarded.
- Long answers to the student's own question. Delivering such extensive replies takes up time that should be available for students' contributions. It is essential that the examiner's response is as brief as possible. Very few teachers failed to elicit the student's question where this was necessary; however, questions that are asked outside the allocated time cannot be credited; where the student omits the question during the discussion of the first card this cannot be 'tagged on' at the end of the test.

Each card must be discussed for 6-7 minutes. By and large, teacher examiners adhered to this timing, but there were exceptions. Teachers are reminded that marking stops at 14 minutes of total length of the test and any contribution from the student after that point cannot be considered for assessment. If the time devoted to the card is cut short students may be denied full completion of the task. The timing device should be started when the examiner asks the first question, not when the student gives a reply.

Teachers are once more reminded that it is advisable to use the same form of address throughout the test and not to alternate between *du* and *Sie*. The questions on the stimulus cards can and should be adapted to the *du*-form if this is the usual form of address between teacher and students.

Students' performance

AO1: The majority of students spoke with good fluency and usually gave appropriate responses to unpredicted questions. In many teacher-conducted tests students could have scored more highly if the teacher had provided more opportunities for showing spontaneity and independence by following up on prepared or pre-learnt statements.

AO2: Students showed on the whole good understanding of the stimulus material and many obtained marks in the higher bands. As mentioned above, markers of teacher-conducted tests often reported insufficient exploitation of the card content by the teacher-examiner through the lack of appropriate supplementary and follow-up questions. Thus, students were often denied the opportunity to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the stimulus which limited their AO2 score.

AO3: Due to the disruption of classroom teaching during the pandemic many students must have had fewer opportunities than in 'normal' years for intensive practice of grammar. It was therefore pleasing to see that most students were able to communicate clearly and that grammatical errors rarely rendered replies incomprehensible. The majority of AO3 marks ranged from 5 to 10. Complex structures with *weil*, *dass* und *wenn* were often attempted, but syntax errors in main and subordinate clauses were widespread. Handling of verb conjugation was often insecure and many

students had problems with forming correct past tenses. Wrong past participles as well as using *hat/haben* and *es gibt* instead of *hatte(n)* and *es gab* were common. It was felt that the general standard of pronunciation had suffered slightly due to lack of practice, but nevertheless a complete breakdown of communication because of pronunciation errors was rare. Perennial weaknesses with *v*, *z* and *ch* sounds were evident.

Common grammar errors included:

- *kann/können* (*die Kinder kann...*)
- *will/wollen* (*man wollen...*)
- Infinitive in modal verb phrases (*ich möchte besucht*)
- Word order after *und/aber/oder* (*und gibt es, aber es nicht gut ist*)
- Subject/verb inversion (*dann sie bekommen...*)
- Possessive pronouns (*sein/ihr*)
- Prepositions (*auf dem Computer, zu Deutschland, drei Jahre vor*).

Common vocabulary errors:

- *wissen / kennen*
- *verbringen / ausgeben / spenden*
- *schauen / zeigen*
- *bekommen / werden*
- *jemand / jeder*
- *interessant / interessiert*
- *in meiner Meinung*
- *ich stimme mit es* (for *ich stimme zu*)
- *Jungenliche* for *Jugendliche*
- *...ist richtig* (for *...hat Recht*)
- *es ist Spaß* (for *es macht Spaß*).

AO4: Marking examiners reported that there were fewer very good performances in this area of assessment than in the past. Knowledge of German-speaking society and culture was often quite superficial. Quoting some statistics about internet use or listing some tourist attractions in Berlin will not lead to high AO4 scores. In order to demonstrate thorough understanding of aspects relating to the sub-theme and to gain access to higher AO4 bands students must be able to discuss learnt facts further by backing them up with relevant examples, by expressing and justifying views and by drawing conclusions. Too many teacher-examiners failed to develop the exchange in this way and focused too heavily on eliciting factual knowledge.

In many discussions of 'Aspects of German-speaking society' (Cards A to F), clear reference to a German-speaking country was lacking. Successful students used evidence from a German article, quoted a pen friend or relative in Germany or reported personal observations from school-exchanges and thus managed to maintain the required connection to a target language country. In too many teacher-conducted tests, students were allowed to talk about the sub-theme only in

general and personal terms. In preparation for the exam, stimulus cards from past years could provide useful material for wider discussions of sub-themes in the context of German-speaking society/culture.

Discussion of stimulus cards

In their preparation time, students are advised not only to look at the three printed questions and then prepare their written answers. If they study the material and develop a few thoughts on specific elements they will be better equipped to react to unexpected supplementary questions. Many students prepared a very lengthy answer to the first question on the card which covered all or most of the information presented, regardless whether this information was targeted in the question. Students need to be aware that the first stimulus question is not as a rule on the line of *Was erfährt man hier über...?* Very long initial answers that try to incorporate the entire content of the card and that are only partly relevant reduce the time available for further discussion of the stimulus material. Visiting examiners will often interrupt such lengthy answers with a suitable question but in teacher-conducted tests such good practice was rarely followed. Many students read out bullet points on the card verbatim, sometimes simply introducing them with *es gibt...* High AO2 marks for this approach are unlikely to be awarded. Successful students used their own sentences to convey the information, often added some comment or opinion and thereby showed understanding of the material.

All cards were accessible and presented few problems with vocabulary. Because of the small cohort of AS students in most centres the first few combinations of cards at the top of the allocation grid were used most frequently.

Most students asked a relevant question connected to the stimulus material. *Was denken Sie....?* was by far the most common type of question. Only few students' questions did not fully communicate or were a repeat of either a printed question or one asked by the examiner. In such cases a deduction of one mark for AO2 had to be made.

Karte A: Leih-Großeltern

Many students who chose this card did not grasp the fact that *Leih-Großeltern* were not the real grandparents but senior citizens who helped with childcare. Some students talked lucidly about the advantages for *Leih-Großeltern* through being in contact with children, the feeling of being needed and avoiding loneliness. The aspect of receiving no or little pay for their work was not often taken up. The wider discussion needed to focus on developments regarding the different types of family, marriage, partnership etc in the German-speaking world. Quite a few students talked about the legality of same-sex marriage in German-speaking countries; only very few reported personal experiences of family life during an exchange visit. In too many teacher-conducted tests, however, the discussion revolved around general aspects without consistent reference to a German-speaking society.

Karte B: Gleichgeschlechtliche Beziehungen

Any card with statistical information tempts students to read every number out without summarising their actual meaning in the context of the subject matter. Many students had problems with the

large numbers here while others described successfully in their own words the differences between same-sex and heterosexual marriages. Pronunciation of *gleichgeschlechtliche Beziehungen* and *traditionell* often caused problems. Speculating about reasons for the different divorce rates was a fruitful talking point, but was taken up in too few teacher-conducted tests. The factors for a successful relationship as found in the grey boxes were not often discussed either, but a few students assessed their importance. The verb *gekämpft* did not seem widely known, but some students commented on the quotation underneath the photograph. The wider discussion usually resembled that of Card A.

Karte C: Soziale Medien in Deutschland

A good deal of statistical information was on this card and some students were able to explain it well in their own words without quoting every number. English pronunciation of *Kommunikation* was quite frequent. More discussions could have taken place about the two statements on the card. This sub-theme was close to students' lives and most of them had a lot to say about the advantages and disadvantages of social media. Detailed knowledge about the subject in a German-speaking context was much less evident; only few students could for instance talk about the use of digital technology in German schools or measures to combat cyber-bullying. Many teacher-examiners simply asked about the student's personal use of social media, the internet etc.

Karte D: Deutschland – Land der Gamer

Many students initially read out everything written on this card without using their own language or developing the information. A number of students expressed surprise about the average age of users of video games but too little use was made of the captions underneath the photos which invited further exploration of the subject. Question 2 resulted in many good contributions about the benefits and dangers of video games. As to the wider discussion of the sub-theme, the same problems as with Card C were reported.

Karte E: Wertheim Village – Designermarken zu Sonderpreisen

This was a frequently used card and produced varying performances. In many teacher-conducted exchanges, minimal exploration of the information provided took place. The controversial element of the designer outlet (*Schwindel?*) was not often discussed and other pertinent aspects such as the advantages of free parking, the bus connection or the play facilities were not exploited. The third question on the card and the subsequent discussion of the sub-theme often resulted in exchanges about personal attitudes towards fashion or general aspects regarding young people with little or no reference to a German-speaking country. Some students however could talk about AO4 related matters e.g. the fact that no uniform is worn in German schools or the growing popularity of *Öko-Mode* among young people in Germany, Austria or Switzerland.

Karte F: ‚Austro-Pop‘: Popmusik aus Österreich

This card was not a frequent choice. It tempted students to read out the bullet-pointed information, but only rarely was a discussion held about the special characteristics of the band *Wanda*, i.e. the melancholic content of their songs and the fact that the group uses Viennese dialect. Their turning away from drugs and alcohol misuse was also hardly ever taken up. In the wider discussion of the

sub-theme, a few students talked about popular music choices among young people in German-speaking countries or popular festivals and a few students commented on the dominance of English over German within the popular music scene in German-speaking countries. However, all too often teacher-examiners discussed personal music choices with their students.

Karte G: Ein alter Brauch zum Sommerbeginn

Understanding the content of this card was made easier through the photographs with their captions so that the card was generally well-handled. Many students could have scored more highly on AO1 and AO2 if their teacher had explored aspects of the *Sonnwendfeier* in more detail. Some students commented on the benefit for the region through welcoming visitors from far and wide but the special atmosphere created through the lights on the river, the torches and the *Sonnwendfeuer* was mentioned by very few. The discussion of the wider subtheme invariably featured *Weihnachten*, *Karneval* and *Oktoberfest*. Some superficial knowledge was evident, for instance reducing Christmas traditions in Germany merely to Christmas markets. For high AO4 marks students need to show more than factual knowledge; they need to demonstrate deeper understanding through developing points and expressing views and conclusions. Unfortunately, in many teacher-conducted tests such opportunities were not provided enough.

Karte H: Der ‚Cannstatter Wasen‘

This card was generally handled well. Students could usually describe the significance of this annual festivity and the fun to be had in the beer tents and on the fairground. Reference to the traditional costumes in the procession was however rare. Most students mentioned the benefit the festival brings to the town of Stuttgart in terms of the large number of visitors and additional jobs. Fewer students explained of their own accord the less positive sides, i.e. the large energy consumption and the amount of rubbish created, and had to be helped by the examiner. *Belastung* in the quotation was generally an unfamiliar word although it was not crucial for understanding the drawbacks of such big festivals. In response to Question 2, very few students thought that traditional festivals should no longer be celebrated. The discussion of the general sub-theme usually featured the same areas as with card G.

Karte I: Wandkunst in Mannheim

This card was very rarely chosen but done well by the students who opted for it. Livening up ‘grey walls’ with colourful pictures was considered by all a worthwhile project although the fact that this is particularly relevant in poorer districts was not mentioned. As one examiner observed, the sub-theme of *Kunst und Architektur* may not be the most popular at AS but for students who are enthusiastic about art a card like this can provide good opportunities for real engagement and expression of opinions. In the wider discussion art movements like *Der Blaue Reiter* or *Die Brücke* were regularly the subject of conversation.

Karte J: Urbanes Wohnen im 21. Jahrhundert

This card was discussed in very few tests. The vocabulary on the card did not present any hurdles. Aspects to be explored were the advantages of smart home technology in modern buildings or the importance of living near shops, restaurants and public transport.

Karte K: Internationales Frühstück

This was the most frequently discussed card because it appeared in three card combinations at the top of the allocation grid. It presented no problems for students' understanding of the content but it tempted many to read out word by word all the breakfast choices in the various cafés. This usually took considerable time and presented several pronunciation problems (*Quark, vegetarisch*). A few students recognised the connection between these examples of international cuisines and the respective districts of Berlin and commented on the different ethnic communities in the city. Question 2 usually elicited valuable ideas about the multi-cultural nature of Berlin and without exception students found this an enriching quality. The wider discussion showed quite varied knowledge of the sub-theme. A high number of students mentioned only historical or political sights such as *Checkpoint Charlie, Reichstag, Eastside Gallery* and *'die Mauer'*. Some mentioned the *Museumsinsel* but could not name specific museums or galleries. In many discussions, higher AO4 marks could have been achieved if students had been able or been invited to talk about some tourist destinations in more depth, to give reasons for their popularity and to express own views.

Karte L: Musik der Straße

This was a fairly popular card which was handled with varied success. The card illustrated well the widespread problem mentioned earlier i.e. students not paying attention as to what aspect of the stimulus was targeted in the first question. On this card Question 1 was only directed at the information in the first bullet pointed list but not at the second list explaining the rules for street musicians. This information needed to be elicited through additional questions. A number of students seemed to have limited understanding of the *Regeln* which were often read out verbatim and regularly not explored further by teacher-examiners. Many students thought that *Tagesgebühr* was what listeners paid the musicians and few opinions were expressed about the official ban on taking money. *Toleranter Umgang* and what this means for street musicians in Berlin was generally not a well-understood concept. In well-conducted tests questions about the reasons for the rules elicited valid spontaneous responses. Answers to Question 3 differed widely; only a small number of students had detailed knowledge about places and institutions in the capital where music of different kind is performed. Discussions on the wider sub-theme were similar to Card K.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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