



A-LEVEL GERMAN

7662/2

Report on the Examination

7662

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General Comments

It was pleasing to see that there were answers in varying numbers on all sixteen texts and films.

Very few students did not complete two answers and it could, therefore, be claimed that the paper was accessible to all. In fact, many students wrote at great length. The distribution of marks shows that the paper discriminated well between lower and higher attaining students and there were some outstanding responses across the range of questions.

There were two sections to the paper. Section A consisted of ten prescribed literary texts and Section B of six films. Students were asked to choose one question from each section or two from Section A. There were no instances of rubric infringement, although some students did not complete the box where they are required to enter the number of the question being answered. This caused occasional difficulty as examiners did not recognise which of the two questions was being answered until they were well into marking the essay.

A number of essays were escalated to senior examiners because the handwriting was too difficult to read. Fortunately, all such cases were resolved and schools and colleges should be assured that handwriting is not taken into consideration when awarding marks. Only AO3 (quality of language) and AO4 (quality of content) are assessed.

AO3

As in previous years, there was variation in standards in both Assessment Objectives. Some essays at the lower end of AO3 revealed poor knowledge of basic grammar and even of simple vocabulary for which it was difficult to award marks above the lower bands. It was not uncommon to see incorrect verb forms even in the present tense: *er sprechen* or *Alex und seine Mutter lacht viel*, as well as inaccurate use of cases: *er trifft mit das Polizist*, and wrong use of possessive adjectives, especially *sein / ihr*. On the other hand, many students were able to write in highly accurate German, displaying excellent knowledge of vocabulary and structures: *In dem von Becker gedrehten Film ist die Beziehung äußerst wichtig; er hätte sein Schicksal vermeiden können*.

As in the past, students are still misusing or confusing common words and phrases and not distinguishing where an umlaut can change the meaning: *wurde, würde; schon, schön; Tod, tot; töten, sterben; streng, stark; probieren, versuchen; bekommen, werden; auf dem Klavier, auf dem Fernsehen*. In their conclusions to essays, a very high number of students thought that *überall denke ich* meant 'generally' or 'over all'. Similarly, some words were 'invented': *seine Treffung mit Dreyman*. There were many examples of anglicised German: *Land wo sie kommt aus; er ist sprechend mit dem Bürgermeister; Sophie fragt was für*.

AO4

Some introductions were not relevant. Questions do not require students to explain the author's or director's background, nor to inform us when and where the work was produced or which awards have been granted. The most effective first paragraphs outline the main points to be made or how

the title will be addressed. Examiners noted this year that very few responses tried to reproduce pre-learned essays and this is a step to be welcomed. Concise answers displaying knowledge, critical awareness and personal opinions can easily access the higher mark bands.

Too many conclusions were merely a repetition of points already made in the main body of the answer and no marks can be given for points already credited. Conclusions that are brief are usually more effective than half a page of repeated points.

Overall, examiners were impressed by the depth of knowledge of texts or films that was evident in many answers, even if, at times, students found it difficult to express themselves. They are advised to keep to German they know to be correct; they do not need to get into problems by attempting to be too adventurous in their use of language. Many students like to support their work with quotations, which can be a strong device, but they must be sure that they quote accurately. Inexact quotations do not serve their purpose.

The most impressive answers did not rely on narratives at the expense of evaluation and analysis. They contained many valid and concise points, focusing on the requirements of the question and supported by detailed references to the work to justify points. Personal reaction and opinions enhanced analysis; there is scope for students to answer questions as they deem fit, as long as their views are well supported. For example, in Question 3.1 some students argued very successfully that Dürrenmatt did indeed intend to address serious issues and not merely entertain his audience. Any response that is justified and supported is given the credit it deserves.

Section A

The section attracted responses on all texts, but very few on the works of Heine and Lenz. The majority of answers centred on the works of Dürrenmatt and Schlink, which elicited some outstanding essays in terms of AO3 and AO4. As far as *Der Besuch der alten Dame* was concerned, Question 3.2 was the most popular choice, where the best efforts combined fluent and grammatically correct German with a deep understanding of the work. Students understood that the playwright aimed his arrows at the corrupting influence of money, the disintegration of moral standards and the shallowness of relationships when money is involved. Other criticisms were made of the role played by religion and the dishonourable behaviour of high-ranking officials.

Very high numbers elected to answer Question 10 about *Der Vorleser*. Examiners were impressed by essays on both options. In Question 10.1 students showed a mature awareness of the social and cultural background to the story as well as the influence of past events on the present. Students discussed the themes of guilt for past actions both on a personal level for Hanna and Michael and on the generational level, leading to criticism of parents and older people during the war. The incident with the Mercedes driver was mentioned as being very important for Michael, causing him to consider actions of the past.

Question 10.2 engaged students to the point where many scored in the highest bands. Hanna was the object of sympathy, pity and severe criticism from students, but whichever view was taken full credit was given for well supported answers. The various opinions of the portrait of Hanna were

often fascinating to read and examiners were convinced by the students' detailed knowledge of the work. Many students reacted sensitively, put forward their own reasons for Hanna's inconsistent behaviour towards Michael and sought to explain her decision to take her own life.

Section B

All films attracted answers and it was very encouraging to note that many students were well acquainted with the content. *Goodbye Lenin!* and *Das Leben der Anderen* were again the most popular choices. Both questions on these two works attracted a very high volume of responses. In Question 11.1 both positive and negative aspects of life in the DDR were identified by students, many of whom considered both sides carefully before deciding whether there was a positive or negative slant. Others concluded that both sides were equally represented and it was up to individuals to make a judgement. Students pointed out that citizens complained about the lack of basic freedoms and the brutal reaction of the police to protests as well as the lack of choice in shops. However, the fact that the state looked after its citizens and that nobody was unemployed was also explained. Students argued that people felt secure, that in the end they became the innocent victims of circumstances and missed the old way of life.

In Question 11.2 the most thorough answers recognised the importance of the loving relationship between Alex and Christiane since it was the catalyst for a series of important scenes in the film. However, other relationships, such as that between Ariane and Rainer, were equally important for different reasons. Some students acknowledged the importance of Alex and Christiane but concentrated on themes that led to successful outcomes in well-argued essays.

Examiners commented on the excellence of many answers to both questions on *Das Leben der Anderen*, an extremely popular choice this year. Responses revealed extensive knowledge of the events of the film and the deeper meaning behind them. Essays were consistently detailed and supported by close and accurate reference to the film, including appropriate quotations. In Question 12.1 students associated significant events with Dreyman's key decisions. Examples included Hempf's smear campaign, Christa-Maria's affair with Hempf, Jerska's suicide and Wiesler's role in saving Dreyman from a potentially disastrous situation. In Question 12.2 the issue of *Sauberkeit* was thoroughly discussed. This question was particularly well done by the vast majority of respondents, who produced clear and insightful work. They identified different aspects of the theme – political, personal and moral cleanliness – through characters and events. The term *sauber* referred to those loyal to the system, the bugging of people's homes, the reasons for Wiesler's transformation and the need to wash away any feelings of guilt. Naturally, the term *schmutzig* appeared often in essays as a contrast, citing Hempf as one who could not possibly claim to be clean.

As mentioned earlier, there were many excellent essays on both the books and the films; if students can take on board the points made above about AO3 performance we can look forward to many more essays scoring high marks.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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