
GCSE GERMAN

8668/LH: Listening Higher
Report on the Examination

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General Comments

As with the Foundation tier paper, this was the third time that this GCSE examination has been taken by a full cohort of students and it was very good to be able to see the progress made by learners despite the challenges of the pandemic years. The Higher tier paper differentiated well between students of varying abilities. The mean mark on the paper was just under 30/50 (around 60% of the total mark); as with the Foundation tier, this was a decrease (albeit a smaller one) on the performance seen in 2019, the last time when a large number of students took a comparable exam. It is clear that this examination was more challenging in places than in 2019, but as with the Foundation tier, the loss of teaching and learning time because of the pandemic was also in part responsible for this decrease in performance.

As in previous series, the most able students responded well to all questions, including those in Section B where written answers in German were required. These questions proved more challenging for less able students who also struggled with some questions in Section A where detailed listening skills were tested. Overall, the standard of responses was pleasing and there was little evidence of a large number of questions being left blank or students being entered incorrectly for the Higher tier examination. There were more answers in Section B written in English (and thus unable to score) this year; perhaps this is a reflection of students not having had as much chance in class to practise answering questions in German because of the constraints placed on teaching by the pandemic.

Questions 1 – 2

These overlap questions were answered more successfully by Higher tier students than by Foundation tier students. Nearly three-quarters of students scored both marks for Question 1 because they were able to answer in sufficient detail, for example mentioning that he was planning to go on holiday but not fly there, and nearly 95% of them got at least one mark. Some students did not give full details and thus their answers were not creditworthy, but they were in the minority. There were a small number of responses in German, for which no credit could be given, but it was pleasing to see that most students had been prepared very well to answer this type of question which tests both their understanding of vocabulary and their ability to differentiate between time frames.

Question 2 was answered well by many Higher tier students, although the mistakes made at Foundation tier appeared at Higher tier as well, in particular in the second part of the question where some students did not realise that the answer involved talking about or discussing alternative energies, not using them. Nearly half of the students scored both marks on this question with again about 95% scoring at least one mark, usually for the first part of the question.

Questions 3 – 7

These overlap questions were straightforward for a large majority of Higher tier students who were able successfully to match what they heard with the correct option most of the time, discounting any distractors or extraneous material. Success rates varied between more than 90% for Question 4 and just under 80% for Question 7.

Question 8

This selection style question was a lower-demand item at Higher Tier. It was surprising that only about 30% of students scored three marks, therefore; the most popular mark (over 55%) was two

marks, but cumulatively over 85% of students scored at least two marks. Options C and D were the most popular, probably because the language used here was straightforward – *bei gutem und schlechtem Wetter* and *vor zwei Jahren*.

Questions 9 – 10

These were high-demand questions on a more difficult topic in the specification, charitable work. There was a relatively modest response to Question 9 with only about 30% of students gaining the mark. The key to success here was realising that the speaker wanted to help people experiencing poverty or in need, not simply those needing help. *Bedürftige* is a challenging item of vocabulary, although there were other ways to reach the correct answer, such as understanding *Seite an Seite mit denen stehen, die nichts haben*. Some students' answers were too vague while others were clearly guessing, mentioning homeless people or refugees, neither of whom had anything to do with the answer. This question certainly identified accurately those high-achieving students who were able to understand a more complex passage in German and then answer the question on it succinctly.

Question 10 had a higher success rate (almost 60%) with many students able to identify that he organised charitable concerts or concerts to raise money for charity or for the Red Cross. A range of acceptable answers were identified, but any response that did not mention charity or collecting / raising money or the Red Cross was not accepted. There was some evidence of very short answers (e.g. 'concerts') which did not convey enough information to gain the mark. Students should be reminded to answer verbal comprehension questions in as detailed a way as possible to avoid the possibility of excess brevity robbing them of a mark.

Questions 11

Question 11 was a more successful question on the whole. Question 11.1 was answered successfully by nearly 80% of students who were able to understand *kulturelles Erlebnis genießen*. Question 11.2 was more challenging with just over 55% of students getting it correct; *Zeitschriften* was a strong distractor here. Those students who understood *Sorgen des Alltags vergessen* (over 90% of all students) answered Question 11.3 correctly.

Questions 12 – 15

The P / N / P+N style questions are a common feature on AQA GCSE MFL question papers and students have clearly been well trained by their teachers in how to answer them. There was a high degree of success here.

Question 12 was answered successfully by over 90% of students with the key words or phrases *Sinn für Humor*, *sympathisch* and *kauft mir Geschenke* being well understood. Question 13 did not contain the obvious clues to a P+N answer such as *aber*, *jedoch* or *auf der anderen Seite*, but *schade* was clearly understood by many students as the pivot on which the speaker moved from a positive to a negative statement; about 85% of them got it right.

Question 14 was another successful item (nearly 85% of students got this correct), despite the more challenging vocabulary here such as *Selbstlosigkeit* and *ehrenamtlich*. Question 15 was the most straightforward with vocabulary such as *nervt mich* and *er stiehlt mir meine Sachen* leading over 95% of the students to the correct answer.

Question 16 – 18

Students are familiar with this question type and understand the need to complete the sentence with a phrase or sentence whilst ensuring that they give enough information to score the mark. Question 16 was not well done on the whole, with only about one-third of students scoring the mark, largely because many students did not understand the importance of the word *nur*, misinterpreting it as *nicht*. There were lots of answers referring to the speaker not working in the morning or not having to work in the morning, which were of course incorrect. Only answers which made it clear that his employer allowed him to work only in the morning gained the credit. It is important for students to make sure that they know key high-frequency words such as *nur* as they can be essential in their arriving at the correct answer.

Question 17 was more successfully answered (nearly three-quarters got it right) with many students understanding the word *spannend* and realising that her old job was more exciting or her new job was boring. Unfortunately, some students thought that *spannend* meant 'relaxing' and they failed to score. Question 18 met with mixed success (just under 40% got it correct), often because answers were not precise enough, failing to mention that his factory was closing next month. There were some answers with the wrong time given ('next week'), some answers that said that he was already out of work, and some answers that referred to 'Monday'; all of these were incorrect. There were occasional answers that referred to 'fabric', a clear misunderstanding of the word *Fabrik*.

Question 19

This was a high-demand question which was only answered correctly by the most able students. It required a detailed understanding of what was said and an ability to give enough detail in the answer to be creditworthy. Fewer than 15% of students answered Question 19.1 correctly, with *Geschäft* (either meaning, 'business' or 'shop', was acceptable), *kostenlos* and *Werbung* needing to be understood for a successful answer. Question 19.2 was also very challenging, with about 10% of students getting the answer correct. Although many students did understand *alle fünf Minuten* and *Bildschirm*, they were unable to write a sufficiently precise answer or did not realise that she was complaining about social media making her look at a screen a lot (or every five minutes). These high-demand questions differentiate between strong and very strong students and it is likely that only those students operating at grades 8 and 9 will answer these questions correctly.

Question 20

This was another high-demand question which proved challenging for many students. The first part of Question 20.1 hinged on students' understanding of the phrase *sehen, wie wir in Deutschland leben* and many students wrote about tourists seeing Germany rather than tourists seeing how Germans live or what life in Germany was like. The second part was slightly more accessible with the key word *Stau* being better known. Any answer that implied that tourist coaches cause traffic jams or delays in town was accepted. About 35% of students scored at least one mark, but only about 10% scored both marks here.

Question 20.2 also required a clear understanding of a demanding passage and an ability to write a precise answer. The first part centred on the idea that tourism brings entertainment opportunities; the German used here (*Unterhaltungsmöglichkeiten*) and the challenging phrase '*ohne Touristen hätten wir keine Nachtclubs und keine Restaurants*' was only accessible to the most able students. There were many references to nightclubs and restaurants but not all of them

made sense or were correct. The second part proved to be more accessible, with some students able to identify that jobs in tourism are often badly paid or seasonal. However, many students wrote that tourists take jobs from the locals, which was clearly an incorrect idea. As with Question 19, this item was designed to identify the most able students and it fulfilled that task well; over 40% got at least one mark but fewer than 20% got both marks.

Questions 21 – 23

These questions were on the whole more accessible as, despite some relatively challenging vocabulary, students were often able to choose the correct option from the five choices given. In Question 21, which was answered correctly by about 60% of students, *Wolkenkratzer* and *Grünanlage* were challenging items of vocabulary, but *bauen* gave students a clear pointer to the right answer. In Question 22, many students chose the distractor in option C and failed to realise that it was the aggressive cyclists who were the problem; only about one-third of students came to the correct answer. *Fahrkartenpreise* and *günstig* were pointers to the correct answer in Question 23, and *Innenstadt* did not distract too many students towards a wrong answer. Over 60% of students got this question right.

Question 24

This question was another question with a mixed success rate. Just over half of the students got Question 24.1 correct either by understanding *Probleme beim Atmen* or by understanding *Lungen* later on in the passage and working back from that. Question 24.2 was answered correctly by about 30% of students – those who understood that *Bewegung* means exercise, being active, doing more sport etc. There were lots of incorrect answers here to smoking. Question 24.3 was answered correctly by about 40% who got the mark by mentioning both a walk/hike and every week/once a week. Students who only wrote one element of the answer were not successful; the inclusion of the word ‘exactly’ (emboldened) in the question is a reminder to students to ensure that their answer is sufficiently detailed.

Question 25

This question also tested detailed understanding of the material heard, as indicated by ‘exactly’ (in bold) in both parts of the question. There are several ways to render *in der Nacht vom fünften zum sechsten Dezember* and examiners took care to ensure that all valid answers were credited. There were a disappointingly large number of students who were unable to understand these numbers, however, and examiners saw a lot of ‘from the 15th to the 16th’ or ‘from the 25th to 26th’, neither of which gained the mark. Just under 40% were successful here. Question 25.2 was answered correctly only by a little more than 10% of students. Correct answers had to mention ‘shoes’ and the ‘front door/outside the house’ to be creditworthy, and this proved too much for many.

Question 26

The final question in Section A was another P/N/P+N question and it was answered with a relatively high degree of success. Question 26.1 was answered correctly by almost 65% of students who understood *schmackhaft* and *zu scharf*; *jedoch* was a strong pointer to the correct answer of P+N. Question 26.2 contained some more difficult vocabulary (*sich beschweren* and the testing phrase *alle sein*), but it was pleasing to see that nearly 85% of students got the mark here; perhaps the cold garlic bread was the factor that clinched it for them.

Question 27

The first question in Section B was an overlap one and it had a much higher success rate than at Foundation tier with nearly 90% of students getting Question 27.1 correct but only just over 60% getting Question 27.2 correct. Students clearly still had some difficulty in getting from *medizinische Hilfe* to the correct answer (*Arzt*) in Question 27.2.

Question 28

This was a more challenging P/N/P+N question with some difficult items of vocabulary and strong distractors. That said, over 80% of students got Question 28.1 correct, successfully dismissing *prima* as a distractor and choosing *schlecht* instead. Students who understood *das kommt darauf an* and *während* were led successfully to P+N in Question 28.2, but this was more challenging, with about 55% of students getting this question correct.

Question 29

This was an overlap question and it was answered more successfully on the Higher tier paper than on the Foundation tier paper. About three-quarters of students got Question 29.1 correct and a similar number were successful on Question 29.2.

Question 30

As in previous series, some students answered the final questions in Section B in English, when they specifically require a written answer in German. This was a shame as it was clear that they had understood what had been said. There were slightly more answers in the wrong language this year than in previous series. It was also clear that some students have been well trained by their teachers, as it was not uncommon to see 'Answer in German' written on this page, presumably during the 5 minutes' reading time at the start of the paper. This reminder often paid off for these students.

These final questions were a test of students' understanding of what they heard and an ability to understand what the question was asking of them. The questions were written in language that is as simple as possible, in order that students are not prevented from accessing them. As in previous series, students whose spelling was not exact were given credit as long as what they wrote sounded like the correct German answer. Examiners were asked to exercise a degree of leniency here in what they accepted, and the mark scheme gave full details of what was acceptable and what was not acceptable, as well as a reminder of the principle behind the marking of this type of question.

In Question 30.1, students who managed to write *besser*, *Arbeit* and *finden* were successful. These words are not difficult for Higher tier students and there was a relatively high success rate, with almost 60% of students scoring a mark. Question 30.2 was more challenging with *theoretisch* proving too difficult for many students, although some excellent attempts were seen. To compensate for the difficulty of this word, an alternative answer was possible, *Gehalt* (or *Geld*) *verdienen*. There were a number of successful attempts at this phrase, although too often *Gehalt* was mangled and answers such as *Halt* or *Verhalt* were seen. This item was reasonably challenging with just under 30% of students gaining a mark.

Question 31

The final question on the paper was quite challenging with just under 30% of students gaining a mark in Question 31.1. The mark scheme was discussed in detail during the standardisation process and a range of answers were accepted. Spellings of *traditionell* with an -a- sound at the end were rejected, however, as this would not sound like the correct German word. *schon* was also rejected as this is a different word to *schön*. Question 31.2 was answered successfully by about one-third of students. Those who wrote *Menschen* and *trennen* were successful, as examiners did not insist on the reflexive *sich trennen*. Some students misheard *Menschen* and wrote *Mädchen*, unfortunately, and there were some references to divorce which were not credited. Again, there was an alternative answer, but some students had difficulty in writing the word *Ehe*, and this option was less often successful.

As in previous series, there was evidence of some students who were not operating successfully at the highest levels who in these final questions wrote down a series of German words which unfortunately did not convey any meaning, and there were instances of blank answers here. It should be remembered that these items are targeted at the highest achieving Higher tier students and they will therefore by their very nature be more challenging. That said, it was very pleasing to see many students have a go at these higher-demand questions and answer them successfully.

There are many positives to be drawn from the student performances seen this year; they and their teachers have obviously worked extremely hard to compensate for the disruptions of the past two years and they should all be congratulated for their efforts and achievements.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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