
AS LEVEL GERMAN

7661/3T/3V Teacher conducted / Visiting examiner speaking test
Report on the Examination

7661/3T/3V
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General points and administration

The numbers of students entered for this examination was again fairly small. Most students were well prepared for the tests and responded well to the opportunity to demonstrate their language skills and their knowledge of the themes they had studied.

Few technical problems with uploading audio files and documentation from centres onto the media platform were reported. Teachers who conduct tests must ensure that students are as audible as the examiner; in a few recordings the student seemed to be much further away from the microphone than the teacher-examiner. Quietly spoken students were occasionally hard to follow.

Visiting examiners again enjoyed face to face conversations with students. Arrangements at centres and accommodation for the speaking tests were generally good. The required invigilators and chaperones were in place and helped to make procedures run smoothly.

Teacher-examiner conduct

The conduct of the exam often has an influence on students' performances and the outcome of tests. There were many very well conducted tests where teachers provided maximum opportunities for students to complete the tasks to the best of their ability and score good marks in all categories. As in previous years, there were also a number of shortcomings in teacher-conduct which often had a detrimental effect on marks. They included:

- A reluctance to develop points made by students and not asking follow-up questions that could invite explanation, justification and opinions and require students to react spontaneously to unpredicted elements (AO1). Some teachers again asked a series of unrelated questions and accepted students' answers without developing points with further questions or prompts.
- Allowing students to deliver lengthy speeches rather than engaging them in a conversation. Students who read out long prepared answers to the printed questions had diminished opportunities to demonstrate the qualities required in AO1 ie responding to spoken language.
- Too many closed or leading questions. Some teachers repeatedly introduced their questions with *Denken Sie / denkst du, dass...* or asked suggestive 'double' questions with *oder*. Not only do such questions take up valuable time that should be available for students' answers, they invariably provide vocabulary and tempt students to repeat large chunks of the question in their answer.
- Insufficient exploration of the stimulus card content. High AO2 marks are awarded where students show thorough understanding of the stimulus material by discussing specific aspects on the card in more detail. Simply reading out information on the card does not demonstrate good understanding of the material and does not provide access to high AO2 marks. Examiners are required to intersperse the printed questions with a few appropriate supplementary and follow-up questions; just asking one additional question – as happened in many card discussions – is not sufficient. Some teacher-examiners still asked the three questions on the card in succession and accepted the student's responses without

developing them and exploring key elements in the stimulus material any further. Unfortunately, a considerable number of AO2 marks were lost through unsatisfactory conduct.

- Too little connection to the German-speaking world during the discussion of the wider sub-theme. Students need to demonstrate that they have acquired AO4 knowledge by explicitly and repeatedly referring to Germany, Austria or Switzerland; this can happen through relevant examples, quoting evidence or reporting personal observations. In many discussions, the teacher-examiner asked questions of a predominantly general or personal nature, thus denying access to higher AO4 marks. This was again most evident with Cards A-F, where some teachers and students find it more difficult to establish and maintain the connection to the German-speaking world.
- Too much emphasis on facts in the wider discussion. Examiners must probe into factual AO4 knowledge with questions that enable students to evaluate facts, draw conclusions and justify views (see mark scheme AO4). Too many teacher-examiners failed to engage students in a more detailed discussion.
- Long answers to the student's own question that took away precious time from the student. 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. In a few cases, the students were prompted for their question outside the maximum allocated time and could not be credited.

Most teacher-examiners adhered to the prescribed timings of 6-7 minutes for each card and a maximum time of 14 minutes for the test. There were a few over-long tests where students' contributions after 14 minutes could not be considered for assessment. Likewise, stimulus discussions under the minimum time may deny students the opportunity to complete the task fully and deprive them of marks in a number of Assessment Objectives.

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 preferred form of address between teacher and student.

Students' performance

AO1: Students generally spoke with good fluency and gave appropriate responses to unpredicted questions. In many teacher-conducted tests, AO1 scores could have been higher if more opportunities for spontaneity and independence had been provided through unpredicted follow up questions.

AO2: Good or reasonable understanding of the stimulus material seemed evident in many tests, but often there was no or insufficient exploitation of the card content by teacher-examiners. Students were not invited to discuss elements on the card in greater detail or were only asked the three printed questions before the wider sub-theme discussion. Consequently, many students were denied AO2 marks in the higher bands. Marking examiners commented that the students' own questions were generally well formed and relevant; few students repeated a teacher's question or lifted a question from the card.

AO3: Most students' linguistic knowledge enabled them to communicate clearly, but there was a wide range of grammatical proficiency and knowledge of vocabulary. As in previous years, the majority of AO3 marks were between 5 and 10. Wrong word order in main and subordinate clauses was widespread, whereas modal verb structures were often successfully handled. Many students attempted structures with *weil*, *dass* and *wenn* as well as infinitive clauses. Wrong verb conjugation was widespread and handling of past tenses often insecure. The standard of pronunciation also varied considerably. A good number of students had excellent pronunciation as well as natural intonation. Faulty pronunciation rarely led to breakdown in communication. Wrong *ch* sounds were frequently heard in words like *Architektur* or *Technologie*. Other mispronunciations included *Studie* (as *Studi*) and cognates such as *digital*, *Tradition*, *Depression*, *Prozession*.

Common grammar errors included:

- *kann/können* (*die Kinder kann..*)
- *will/wollen* (*man wollen...*)
- Word order after *und* / *aber* / *oder* (*und gibt es, aber es nicht gut ist*)
- Position of *auch* (*wir auch lernen*)
- Subject/verb inversion (*dann sie bekommen...*)
- Possessive pronouns (*sein* / *ihr*)
- Prepositions (*auf dem Computer, zu Deutschland, seit* / *vor* confusion)
- Dates without the ordinal number (*dreizehn bis vierzehn August*)

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*
- *kontakten*

AO4: Knowledge of German-speaking society and culture was often quite superficial. Quoting some statistics about internet use in Germany or listing some tourist attractions in Berlin did not lead to high AO4 scores. To demonstrate thorough understanding of aspects of the sub-theme and to gain access to higher AO4 marks students must back up facts with relevant evidence; they should express views and draw conclusions. It was pleasing to notice that some students had obviously used previous stimulus cards for practice and were able to quote from these. As mentioned above, many teacher-examiners did not develop the wider discussion sufficiently beyond eliciting factual knowledge.

Teachers and students again sometimes found Cards A-F more difficult in terms of establishing and maintaining a clear and consistent link to a German-speaking society. Students who referred to a German article, a pen friend or relative in Germany, or offered personal observations from a school-exchange, had better chances to achieve higher AO4 marks. Students who were asked personal and/or general questions scored marks in the lower bands. As mentioned earlier, information contained in past stimulus cards could often be helpful in conveying relevant AO4 knowledge of sub-themes that have a less exclusive connection to the German-speaking world.

Discussion of stimulus cards

All cards were accessible and few vocabulary items seemed to pose difficulties. As in previous years, many students prepared a lengthy answer to the first question on the card. This usually covered all or most of the information presented, regardless of whether it was targeted in the question. Students need to be aware that the first stimulus question is not always *Was erfährt man hier über...?* but is often directed at a specific aspect in the stimulus. Very long initial answers with limited relevance reduce the time available for detailed exploration and discussion. Visiting examiners usually interrupted such lengthy answers with a suitable question, but too few teachers adopted this practice. Information presented in bullet points or quotations were often read out verbatim with very little or no attempt to paraphrase. Unless students were invited to discuss these items through further questions, high AO1 and AO2 marks could not be awarded. On the other hand, there were also students who conveyed the aspects of the stimulus in their own words and added some interpretation, comments and opinions, thereby showing thorough understanding.

Card A: Wir wollen heiraten!

The card was well understood by students. Some read out statistics without interpreting them and many teachers did not ask any further questions about the average age for getting married or the difference between men and women; students who were asked such questions often gave valid responses. Following the second question, too few teacher-examiners discussed the quotations and the student's reaction any further. The last question produced rather limited knowledge about the German-speaking world beyond the fact that in all three countries same-sex marriage is now legal. Cards from previous years could have supplied valuable information about issues concerning families in German-speaking countries.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: whether having the same surname is really important; why a big romantic wedding is important for many; what a 'genuine family' means.

Card B: Neue Formen des Zusammenlebens

The card was generally handled well, although not all students seemed to fully understand the caption under the pictures. Many read out the advantages in full without teachers asking more questions that could have enabled students to show full understanding of the content. The second printed question proved difficult to answer for some. In response to the third question many students talked about different *Familienformen* but did not explain how the concept of *Familie* has

changed over the years. Too often the further discussion was about personal or general matters rather than related to a German-speaking country.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: why and for whom loneliness exists; what kind of support is possible; why these alternative forms of *Wohngemeinschaften* are more prevalent in cities.

Card C: Medienerziehung für Kinder und Jugendliche

Due to the prescribed sequencing this card was not discussed often. The fact that it dealt with teaching about the safe use of digital media was generally not fully understood; students tended to talk about young people using apps and games and did not offer a relevant answer to the second question about the efficacy of the programme. The third question and subsequent discussion of the sub-theme usually rendered little German-related information beyond a few facts about the use of WhatsApp or Facebook among German teenagers. Teachers often failed to seek more German related information, eg about mobile phones in German schools or campaigns against cyber mobbing in Germany.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: the meaning of *Präventionsarbeit* and why it is important; what kind of *Netzregeln*; why parents and teachers need *digitale Bildung*.

Card D: Handysucht unter deutschen Jugendlichen

This was a frequently chosen card and generally well understood. Some students talked about digital media in general rather than mobile phones and many read out the statistical information without interpreting it or expressing opinions. Teachers often failed to exploit the main cues on the cards such as depression, health costs or missed days at school. All students had something to say about advantages in answer to the second question. With questions of this kind it would be useful to try and gain some AO4 marks by offering examples from a German-speaking country. As with card C, many discussions about the wider sub-theme failed to establish and maintain a clear connection to the German-speaking world thus leading to generally low AO4 marks.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: why there are costs for the health system; reasons for depression; meaning of *digitaler Stress*.

Card E: Ende des ‚Reality-Wahns‘?

This card was rarely discussed. The students who chose it often got bogged down by reading out statistics without further comment and then were not asked more questions about the figures. The opinions in the speech bubbles were often ignored although they could have been the basis for some valid points to be made about these kinds of programmes. Generally, there was sparse knowledge about TV habits and preferences in TL countries and wider discussions usually revolved around general and personal matters.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: why teenagers tend to favour these shows; what kind of illusions participants have; opinion about constant adverts.

Card F: Die Rückkehr der Punkbewegung

This card was only discussed a few times. The idea of *Rückkehr* was often not understood and students usually read out the sentence under the title without clearly understanding it. The list of *Merkmale* was hardly ever explored satisfactorily by teacher-examiners. Students sometimes commented on the price for the festival and usually had an opinion about visiting it. Knowledge about music and fashion in Germany was varied. A few students talked about popular German groups, fashion labels etc. but all too often teachers asked about the student's preferences in music or fashion.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: reasons for punks liking tattoos, piercings, etc; why they use aggressive texts; possible reaction by many people to the punks' appearance.

Card G: Traditionelle Schweizer Kultur

Being at the top of the prescribed sequence of cards made this one of the most frequently discussed ones. Most students handled it well but there was also a lot of reading out of the captions and bullet points; many teachers did not probe more deeply into important elements on the card to test their students' understanding. *Gottesdienst* was hardly ever mentioned; *Teilnehmer* was sometimes interpreted as visitors while *Alphorn* was often pronounced as *Alfor*n. The range of festivals and traditions mentioned by students was, as in previous years, largely restricted to *Oktoberfest*, *Karneval* and *Weihnachten*. For many students, Christmas in the German-speaking world is solely about *Weihnachtsmärkte*; other elements of the festival featured rarely. Cards from previous years could provide some wider knowledge of the wide range of festival and traditions in German-speaking countries. In many teacher-conducted tests, students were not asked to add analysis and evaluation to their factual description of festivals.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: why traditional costumes are important for Switzerland; whether *Jodel-Chor*, *Volkstanz* and *Alphorn* music are outdated; whether the festival should have a religious element.

Card H: Eine alte Tradition in Bayern

The card was a fairly popular choice and handled with mixed success. As with other cards, the information was often read out word by word and frequently introduced with *es gibt / es ist...* Many students failed to point out the significance of the horses and very few referred to *Leonhardi-Ritt* being rooted in the farming community. This and the mayor's statement about the importance of a Christian custom in today's world were rarely pursued by teachers so that AO2 marks were often quite low. The third question asked about other traditions and customs, yet too many students ignored *Traditionen und Bräuche* and immediately talked about festivals such as *Weihnachten* or *Oktoberfest*. A few students knew about traditions around *Maifeiertag*, *Walpurgisnacht* or *Vatertag*. As with card G, students' contributions to the wider discussion often remained descriptive rather than analytical and evaluative.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: why horses are of importance in this tradition; opinion about the wearing of *Tracht*; possible reason why the tradition is held in November rather than in spring or summer.

Card I: Kunst als Blick in die Welt

This card produced performances of different quality and depth. Some students, with the help of the examiner, addressed the most salient points about this unusual artist and expressed considerate views about her. Others did not mention her unusual way of painting with her hands or her extensive travels to create some of her paintings. The additional information about her versatile activities as an artist was often read out but then not discussed further. Many teacher-examiners could have explored some of these aspects to a much greater extent. Most students could name at least one artist from the German-speaking world and some demonstrated quite impressive knowledge of the sub-theme. However, teachers did generally not do enough to find out from students why an artist was significant or which aspects of their works appealed to them.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: opinion of the pictures and their titles; whether she really needed to travel the world to create her panoramic views; whether watching her at work in her studio would be attractive to people.

Card J: Ein Haus für Menschen und Bäume

Being high up in the allocation sequence made this a frequently discussed card. Some students had either learnt about this building in the classroom or had even seen it in Vienna, which enabled them to make well founded contributions and express views. Other students resorted to reading out most of the bullet points without further comment. *Gerade Linien* and *unebener Fußboden* were often not understood. The card contained numerous elements that could be discussed and exploited, but many teachers accepted students' answers without further probing.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: why the house can only be viewed from outside; how it feels to walk on uneven floors; why trees were planted on the roof.

Card K: Schiffstour ‚Historische Stadtrundfahrt‘

Students who chose this card often did not explain clearly that this tour was on the river and whether, in answer to question 2, this fact may tempt them to take part in it or not. The sights in the box and the special tours on offer were often read out without teachers probing deeper. Equally, the length and price of the tour were not explored in many conversations. Many students had quite extensive knowledge of popular sights in Berlin, but needed to be invited by examiners to add evaluations and opinions through further questioning.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: whether the tour is too long or too expensive; what the advantages/disadvantages are to view sights from the river; the reason for multilingual audio guides.

Card L: Die außergewöhnlichen Museen Berlins

This card was handled with varying success. Many students did not point out that these museums were *außergewöhnlich*; the star in the centre was hardly ever referred to. The captions were often read out without further comments and were often not picked up by teacher-examiners for further discussion. Most students favoured the *Computerspielemuseum* or *Plattenbaumuseum* and could sometimes give a good reason. The third question often triggered well-prepared contributions about Berlin which were often not about *kulturelle Angebote* but mentioned only some famous buildings. Since the question asked about *alle Besucher*, students could have been encouraged to consider activities for different age groups. As with card K, good knowledge about the sub-theme was evident but many discussions lacked in depth.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: what kind of people these unusual museums would attract; what kind of *Kunstschätze* Berlin's museums contain; what the atmosphere in *Berliner-Unterwelten* might be.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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