
A-LEVEL GERMAN

7662/3 Speaking
Report on the Examination

7662/3
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General

Most students were well prepared for the tests and responded well to the opportunity to demonstrate their language skills and to talk about the themes they had studied as well as their research project.

Few technical problems with uploading audio files and documentation from centres onto the media platform were reported. Teachers who conduct tests must ensure that the student is 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 very hard to follow.

Some centres failed to upload the necessary documentation, including the Candidate Record Form. When this had to be chased up by AQA it caused undue delay for examiners.

Visiting examiners again enjoyed face to face conversations with students. Arrangements at centres and accommodation for the speaking tests were generally good.

Teacher-examiner conduct

Conduct of examining 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 perform to the best of their ability and score good marks in both parts of the test. As in previous years, there were a number of shortcomings in teacher-conduct which often had a detrimental effect on marks. They included:

- A reluctance to pick up on points made by students and to ask appropriate follow-up questions. Some teachers asked unrelated questions, sometimes from a prepared list and accepted students' answers without further prompts or follow-up questions. Such practice was especially unhelpful during the IRP discussion. In both parts of the examination, it is essential to provide students with the opportunity to engage in a real conversation, to respond to unpredicted questions, to explain and evaluate points, to justify views and to draw conclusions.
- Allowing students to deliver long monologues. This was particularly problematic when students read out long answers to the printed questions on the stimulus card and were thus given limited opportunities to demonstrate the qualities required in AO1 ie responding to spoken language and to unpredicted questions.
- Insufficient exploration of key elements on the stimulus card. High AO2 marks can be awarded where students show thorough insight into 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 quick succession and accepted the student's responses without developing them and asking probing questions. Unfortunately, a considerable number of AO2 marks were lost through unsatisfactory examining conduct.
- Too little focus on the German-speaking world in the wider discussion of sub-themes. This was again a more frequent problem with cards relating to 'Aspects of German-speaking society' (ie cards A, B, C) but also occurred within the other three themes. Students need to show AO4 knowledge and understanding by clearly and repeatedly referring in their

responses to Germany, Austria or Switzerland; giving relevant examples, quoting evidence or reporting personal observations will help to demonstrate good understanding of the sub-theme. Teachers regularly did not maintain this German-specific connection in their questioning and asked too many general or personal questions for which high AO4 marks could not be awarded. Stimulus cards from past years can provide useful material for the wider discussions of sub-themes in the context of a German-speaking society and culture.

- 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.
- Question types. Generally, too many closed or leading questions were used. Some teachers repeatedly introduced their questions with *Denken Sie / denkst du, dass...* or asked suggestive 'double' questions with *oder*. The latter take up valuable time that should be available for students' answers. They also provide vocabulary and tempt students to repeat part of the question in their answer. Teachers need to strive at all times to keep their own participation to a minimum. Questions like *Was können Sie mir über erzählen/sagen?* which were frequently asked during the IRP discussion, should also be avoided since these invariably lead to long (prepared) monologues.
- Long answers to the student's own questions that took away precious time from the student. It is essential that the examiner's responses are as brief as possible. Very few teachers failed to elicit the student's questions where this was necessary. In a few cases, the students were prompted for their questions outside the maximum allocated time and these could not be credited.

Most teacher-examiners adhered to the prescribed timings. There were a few tests that lasted more than 20 minutes. Examiners time the test as a whole when marking and students' contributions after 18 minutes cannot be considered for assessment.

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: The majority of students spoke with good fluency and usually gave appropriate responses to unpredicted questions. Relatively few students scored AO1 marks below 3. Occasionally, fluency suffered where students strove for high accuracy and took too long to complete their answers. In many teacher-conducted tests students could have scored more highly in both parts of the examination if the teacher-examiner had provided more opportunities for spontaneity and independence by asking additional questions that invited spontaneous development of points.

AO2: Most students demonstrated good or satisfactory understanding of the stimulus material and many students obtained marks in the higher bands. However, too often there was insufficient exploitation of the card content when teachers asked no or too few appropriate supplementary and follow-up questions about key elements of the stimulus material. Many students were thus denied opportunities to show a deeper understanding of the stimulus, which limited their AO2 score. Students' own questions were generally well formed and relevant; few students repeated a teacher's question or lifted a question from the card.

AO3: The majority of students had sufficient knowledge of grammar and vocabulary to communicate their ideas without ambiguity. AO3 marks below 5 were relatively rare and examiners

reported on some impressive performances where students used a variety of structures and ambitious vocabulary as well as appropriate idioms with confidence and a high degree of accuracy. Sub-ordinate clauses with *dass*, *weil* and *wenn*, relative clauses and infinitive structures were often handled successfully and examiners observed frequent use of the passive voice. On the other hand, some students struggled with accurate word order even in simple sentences. Weaknesses with verb conjugation and perfect tenses were also evident.

The standard of pronunciation was generally good with some excellent performances. Weaknesses with the production of German *ch*, *z* and *v* sounds occurred as well as missing out *Umlaute*. As in previous years, some students mispronounced names and abbreviations contained in their IRP project eg *DDR*, *RB Leipzig*, *Michael*, *Bayern*, *AfD*.

Common grammar errors included:

- modal verb forms (*Die Leute kann*)
- wrong use of *konnte* / *könnte*
- preposition 'ago' (*drei Jahre vor/drei Jahre früher*)
- wrong use of *wenn* / *als*
- word order after *und* / *aber* / *auch* (*aber denke ich, es auch hilft*)
- *es gibt* instead of *es gab*
- missing adjective endings
- possessive pronoun *sein* / *ihr*
- *sein* / *sind* confusions (*das wird nicht gut..... sind*)

Common vocabulary errors included:

- *kennen* / *wissen*
- *schauen* / *zeigen*
- *Charaktere* instead of *Figuren* / *Personen* (when talking about films/books)
- use of *nur* as an adjective: *die nur Partei*
- *jeder* / *jemand*
- *Interesse* / *interessant* / *interessiert*
- *im Ost* / *im West*
- *einzig* / *einige* / *eigene*
- *spenden* / *verbringen* / *ausgeben*
- *töten* / *sterben*
- *erlauben* for *dürfen*
- *überall* used for 'overall'
- *also* for *auch*
- *Punkt* instead of *Komma* in numbers (*5 Punkt 5 Prozent*)
- *ich stimme mit das* for *ich stimme (dem) zu*

Common pronunciation errors:

- German closed *e* (*schwär*, *mähr*)
- Short vowel in *Maßnahme*, *Fußball*
- *dreißig* as *dreitsig*
- *digital* / *Generation* with soft *g*

Discussion of stimulus cards

All cards were accessible and posed few problems in terms of vocabulary. In a few centres the prescribed sequence of cards was not observed even though there was no overlap with the student's IRP topic. Very few teachers deviated from the wording of the printed questions or omitted one of them.

As in previous years, many students produced a very lengthy answer to the first question on the card, covering all or most of the information regardless of whether or not it was actually targeted in the first question. Students need to be aware that the first question on the card is often not *Was erfährt man hier über...?* but instead directed at a particular aspect or element in the stimulus content. A very long but not fully relevant initial answer reduces the time available for further exploration of the stimulus material. Visiting examiners often interrupt such lengthy answers with a suitable question, but in teacher-conducted tests such good practice was rarely adopted. Many students read out lists of bullet points on the card verbatim, sometimes simply introducing them with *es gibt...* Unless some of these elements were picked up and discussed further by the teacher-examiner higher AO2 marks could not be awarded. On the other hand, there were students who conveyed the content of the stimulus skilfully in their own words, added some interpretation, comments and opinions and thereby showed thorough understanding.

Card A: *Familienfreundlichkeit in der Arbeitswelt*

Due to the prescribed sequencing, this card was not often discussed. Although most students are aware of the issue of combining family with work many did not pick up on the fact that this card focused on supporting employers. Consequently, the first question was often not answered very well whereas students offered good points in answer to the second. In the wider discussion, *Regenbogen-* and *Patchworkfamilien* or *Homo-Ehe* were usually discussed, but the necessary reference to a German-speaking country was often not maintained.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: what 'family friendly policies' in companies mean; why employees are more motivated; reasons for easier recruitment of employees.

Card B: *Oma als YouTuberin*

Being high up in the sequence grid, this was one of the most popular cards. Students are generally keen to talk about digital matters but many did not focus sufficiently on the fact that Greta was *ungewöhnlich* as a 71 year old youtuber. The bullet points were often read out; few students explained what kind of *Tipps für ein glückliches Leben* Greta may give, commented on the title *Zu jung fürs Alter* or on the fact that Greta had had no previous knowledge of online technology. *Jugendwahn* in the second speech bubble was generally not well understood. Responses to the second question often referred to YouTube videos in general rather than for the older generation. The third question often produced general answers about the use of digital media rather than specific examples from TL countries. Examiners often felt that, apart from a few statistics, students had rather limited AO4 knowledge of this sub-theme. When students did give relevant examples from a German-speaking country, teachers often did not develop these points and allowed the wider discussion to drift into matters that could not attract AO4 marks, eg at what age children should get a mobile phone.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: what makes Greta S. so unusual; what kind of tips for a happy life the videos may show; what the reasons for her success may be.

Card C: ‚Zürich Street Parade‘

The card was discussed by only few students. Once again, the information was often quoted verbatim without being discussed further by teacher-examiners. Some discussions about *Müll* took place but other problems like drugs or the need for police presence were rarely mentioned. In the wider discussion, a good number of students knew about popular German-speaking musicians, but they could often have been invited to expand on this factual knowledge with evaluation and opinions.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: why so much *Müll* is produced; the reason for strong controls by the police; why it may be fun to dance on a ‚Love-Mobile‘.

Card D: *Das ‚Ahländer Blütenfest‘*

This was one of the most frequently discussed cards and produced some good contributions. Not many students understood the special nature of this festival as celebrating the flowering of the fruit trees that are so important for the region. *Obstanbau* was universally ignored and only few teacher-examiners draw the student’s attention to it. Many students read out the bullet points in both grey boxes and could often have been asked more questions about these by teachers. Some students pointed out the importance of regional produce being on offer at the event but *Blütenkönigin* and *Blütenkorso* were rarely discussed. Surprisingly, many students did not seem to know *Umzug* despite it having appeared on numerous cards in the past years. *Feuerwerk* was invariably used in the wrong plural form *Feuerwerke*. Answers to the second question often contained good reasoning about the value of such smaller festivals for communities and the need for upholding traditions. Many students knew about festivals in German-speaking countries beyond *Weihnachten*, *Karneval* and *Oktoberfest*. Sometimes knowledge about festivals or traditions was quite superficial, eg Christmas being defined solely by *Weihnachtsmärkte*. However, some students knew about the political nature of *Karneval* or the history of *Oktoberfest*. Unfortunately, in many wider discussions, students were allowed to give narrative descriptions without being asked to add evaluation and own views.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: why fruit trees are important for the region; the meaning of *Kulinarisches*; the reason for the festival being held in May.

Card E: *Stadt der Kontraste*

The card was discussed by a few students. In response to the first question, the aspect of *Kontraste*, ie Graz combining both old and modern architecture, was often not clearly pointed out; instead students tended to list the different buildings without further comment. Equally, the two contrasting opinions underneath the pictures were often not discussed in detail. Still, some students expressed considerate views on certain types of architecture, both old and new. *Hundertwasserhaus* and *Reichstag* were cited most frequently in answer to the third question, few other famous buildings in the German-speaking countries seemed to be known. As with other cards, few teacher-examiners tried to raise the wider discussion above descriptions and facts, thereby denying students the highest AO4 marks.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: the reason for Graz being called city of contrasts; what is special about the *Mur-Insel*; personal opinion about the modern buildings in the pictures.

Card F: *Ort des kulturellen Austausches*

Quite a few students discussed this card, with mixed success. The international aspect of the *HKW* (often wrongly pronounced as *Ha Ke We*) as enabling cultural exchange was often either ignored or not well explained. The content of the boxes was often read out without interpretation or comment and teachers on the whole did not enter into a more detailed discussion of the card content. The fact that this is a unique institution in Europe or its idyllic location featured rarely in discussions. The most able students produced full and valid answers to the second question. Knowledge about other cultural offers in Berlin was varied. Some students talked well about *Museumsinsel* and its galleries and museums. Many ignored the word *kulturell* and produced prepared and not entirely relevant material about the Berlin Wall, *Reichstag*, *Checkpoint Charlie* or the multi-cultural population in the capital.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: why cooperation in culture and science is important/valuable; whether Berlin is a good location for such a forum; what type of people would visit the *HKW*.

Card G: *Ausländische Studierende – ein Gewinn für Deutschland*

Due to the sequencing, not many students chose this card. Seeing *Studie*, *Studierende* and *Studium* in the introductory sentence sometimes caused confusion. Able students handled the stimulus well but many failed to understand the idea that foreign students effectively pay back the cost to Germany once they had worked in the country after completing their studies. Teacher-examiners could have tried harder to draw out this point by focusing on the statistical information presented. *Fachkräfte der Zukunft* or the positive statement by the minister which demonstrated the benefits from foreign students were also ignored too often. Question 2 was generally answered well, whereas for the third question many students did not address the importance of the subject of immigration in German-speaking countries and talked instead about the 2015 refugee crisis, even *Gastarbeiter* or racism and integration. There was little mention of current issues surrounding immigration, such as housing, education or financial pressures on communities.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: how the state/the economy profits financially from foreign students; what type of future *Fachkräfte* these students may be; why an exchange of knowledge and ideas is important.

Card H: *Wie gelingt Integratio in der Schule?*

Since this card only appeared in 12th position in the allocation sequence it was hardly ever discussed. It provided a wealth of information on the subject matter and a small number of students understood and exploited it well. The distinction between *separate* and *reguläre Klassen* was not always recognised and neither was the reason for avoiding children with the same mother tongue in one group. Students contributed well to the wider discussion about integration but could often have provided more concrete evidence rather than talking in general terms about the need for integration and its problems. Cards from previous years could have provided useful material.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: the reason for avoiding putting children with the same mother tongue in one group; what the benefits of joint activities are; why separating pupils could lead to conflicts.

Card I: *Rassismus im Fußball*

This was a popular card about which all students who chose it had something to say. Some students made relevant comments on some of the points, expressing opinions and evaluation. Many read the bullet points out verbatim followed by the two quotations. It was not always clear whether *Neonazi-Parolen*, *Hitlergruß* and, in particular, *Übeltäter* were fully understood. Too few teachers entered into detailed discussions about important points, be it video surveillance, banning offenders from matches or anti-discrimination measures. The third question and subsequent wider discussion frequently led to students talking about the *AfD* or racist attacks of the (sometimes quite distant) past like Solingen. Knowledge of other far right groups and activities was limited although the more recent racist attack in Hanau was mentioned by a few students.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: the aim of video surveillance; what the *Antidiskrimierungsmaßnahmen* could consist of; whether clubs should also receive some kind of penalties.

Card J: *Rekord-Zustimmung für die EU*

This was by far the most frequently chosen card and generally dealt with well. The majority of students had acquired good knowledge about the sub-theme and seemed to enjoy talking about it. Many translated the numbers of the study into percentages. The items in the speech bubbles were often explained in the students' own words and also commented on, but many students simply read them out in full without interjections from the teacher and further exploitation. Most students considered *Menschenrechte* and *Klimawandel* to be the most important issues; surprisingly few had much to say about *ungehindertes Reisen* and *Roaming-Gebühren* as being of benefit for ordinary citizens. Wider discussions about the sub-theme sometimes deviated into general pros and cons of the EU without focussing on Germany.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: why solidarity between member states is important; the benefits of promoting scientific projects in the EU; what the *Motto* means.

Card K: *„Wir wollen mitreden!“*

The card was not often discussed. Most students who chose it talked about young people's involvement in climate demonstrations; far fewer expanded on being a member of a youth parliament or the rise in the number of young voters. Most teacher-examiners failed to discuss the quotation. The second question was usually answered in a rather generalised way without students offering precise arguments or examples. The most frequent aspect featuring in the wider discussion was the lowering of the voting age to 16; very occasionally students knew about politics being widely taught in German schools or about democratic practices through school parliaments, but examiners felt that on the whole AO4 knowledge about this sub-theme was limited or superficial.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: what issues may be discussed in a *Jugendparlament*; the reasons for higher voter participation; how politicians could support political engagement among young people.

Card L: *Das Ende des ‚Soli‘*

This card was chosen frequently and produced mixed results. A few students did not seem to understand what the *Solidaritätszuschlag* was and the reason why it was introduced. Despite having studied the sub-theme, the term *Aufbau Ost* was often not explained well and a number of students did not fully grasp the point that, since 2021, only high earners have had to pay the *Soli-Steuer*, *gering* and *Betrag* seemed to be unfamiliar vocabulary to some students. With a relatively complex subject matter like this teachers needed to guide students through the most pertinent points by asking suitable questions; unfortunately, far too few teacher-examiners did so. The two contrasting opinions which provided good starting points for further discussion were too often not used for further discussion. On the other hand, there were some students who demonstrated good insight and background knowledge and spoke lucidly about aspects of the stimulus. In answer to the third question, a number of students talked about the fall of the wall and events leading up to it rather than the aftermath and challenges of reunification.

Suitable supplementary questions about the card included: the meaning of *Aufbau Ost*; why the two opinions are so different; whether it is fair that some people still pay the *Soli*.

Individual Research Project

Once again, a wide variety of IRP topics had been researched by students and, besides the recurring popular subject areas, some unusual titles were offered. It was pleasing to notice that the majority of students were genuinely interested in the topic they had chosen and, on the whole, demonstrated in-depth knowledge. A well formulated title can be of help to ensure critical and analytical research. Fewer vague or very broad titles appeared this year (eg The German car industry, Bayern Munich, Tourism in Austria) but it is worth reminding students to consider carefully what the scope of a topic should be and to aim for a title that, if possible, indicates the main focus of the research. The various guidance materials published by AQA and contacting an IRP adviser can be helpful in this respect.

Fewer German titles than in previous years appeared on Candidate Record Forms and examiners encountered few entirely inappropriate titles. Most CRFs contained sub-headings outlining the scope of the student's research. In a few cases students only entered additional source material, often in the form of lengthy websites which are usually of little or no help to the examiner. Some CRFs in students' handwriting were again almost illegible.

Frequently chosen topic areas included:

- German football / the *Bundesliga*.
- immigration / refugee crisis of 2015.
- Angela Merkel.
- rise of populism / far right groups in Germany / the AfD.
- German reunification and its aftermaths / continuing East-West divide.
- the NS period / Second World War.
- the German car industry.
- Formula 1.

Unusual topics included:

- *Bouldern* in Germany
- Struwwelpeter
- Mannheimer *Planken*
- the Dachshund as a German symbol
- alcoholism in the GDR
- Hegel and his influence on Marx.

Topics that were at risk of not providing sufficient AO4 related content included titles dealing with sustainable fashion, vegetarianism / veganism, Fridays for Future movement, green technology, animal testing.

Presentation

The majority of presentations were well-timed; few went beyond two minutes, whereas a number of talks were up to half a minute short. Some students recited their presentation at high speed which often resulted in reduced comprehensibility. Many presentations were well structured, were relevant to the topic title and set out the main findings with some brief evaluations, explanations or comments.

Factors that contributed to a low score for the presentation were:

- presenting a detailed background (eg biography, history) to the subject before addressing the remit in the title.
- limited relevance to the title.
- the student talking at length about what they intend to talk about.
- giving detailed reasons why the topic was chosen.
- listing source materials.
- staying well under the time of two minutes.

Discussion

As in previous years, the majority of students demonstrated reasonable, good or sometimes excellent knowledge about their topic. Many students also had clear insight and critical understanding which they demonstrated in evaluating facts, in offering personal views and in supporting conclusions through valid evidence and examples.

Many teacher-examiners helped their students gain high AO1 and AO4 marks through good conduct. This meant that they followed up responses and provided opportunities for development, analysis and evaluation through probing questions. Regular, unpredicted follow-up questions enabled students to show independence and spontaneity. Some teacher-examiners adhered slavishly to the list of sub-headings, often using a list of prepared questions. Since students must not know what questions they will be asked by their teacher such practice is strongly discouraged. Teachers are reminded that it is not necessary to cover every sub-heading on the CRF and that it is essential to introduce unpredictable elements.

Good conduct in the IRP discussion was established through:

- going beyond factual information; regularly asking for evaluation, views and analysis.
- following up on the student's answers.
- keeping the discussion relevant to the topic title.
- avoiding general invitations like *Was können Sie mir über erzählen?*
- preparing appropriate 'starter questions' for sub-headings to avoid awkward pauses while searching for the next question.
- asking brief and clear questions.

The majority of students are to be congratulated on the hard work they put into their studies of the language and on their eagerness for communicating in German in both teacher-conducted tests and in conversations with visiting examiners.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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