



GCSE

GERMAN

8668/LH Paper 1 Listening Higher Tier
Report on the Examination

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General Comments

Changes were made to the 2023 papers to reflect the removal of the regulatory requirement to test vocabulary outside of the published vocabulary list.

As with the Foundation tier paper, this was the fourth time that this examination was taken by a full cohort and examiners were pleased to see the progress that had been made by many GCSE German students. The Higher tier paper differentiated well between lower-attaining and higher-attaining students. The mean mark on the paper was just over 30/50 (around 61% of the total mark) and this figure was very similar to the mean mark in 2022, suggesting that this exam paper was broadly comparable in demand to the previous year's exam. As in previous series, the most able students responded well to all questions, including those in Section B where some written answers in German were required. These questions proved to be more challenging for lower-attaining students who also struggled with some of the questions in Section A targeted at the top grades where detailed listening skills were tested. Overall, the standard of responses was pleasing and there was very little evidence of questions being left blank or of students being entered wrongly for the Higher tier examination. There were fewer answers in Section B written in English this year, suggesting that teachers had had the opportunity to practise this style of question more with their students.

Questions 1 – 2

These overlap questions are a well-established feature of this specification now, and they test both an understanding of different time frames and the ability to pick out details from listening comprehension passages. They were answered more successfully by Higher tier students than by Foundation Tier students, as is to be expected, but overall success rates were lower than for the corresponding question in previous years. In Question 1, just over 20% of students scored both marks and a further 40% scored one mark, leaving a sizeable minority who failed to score. The key to success in this type of question is a detailed knowledge of the vocabulary listed in the specification along with items commonly taught at Key Stage 3. The first mark centred on an appropriate translation of *Deutschheft* and it was disappointing to see that many Higher tier students could not render this word into acceptable English. There was evidence of guesswork at times, and vague answers such as 'German work' were not accepted. The German school grading system tested in the second part of the question was not as well-known as hoped for, despite it being listed in the specification, although some students did realise that Maximilian was going to do badly in his English test.

Question 2 was much more successful with very pleasing levels of correct answers, showing that students were able both to differentiate between time frames and give a sufficiently detailed answer to score. Over 55% scored both marks and a further 40% scored one mark. *Kunstgalerie* was widely known and most students who scored only one mark did so here. The second mark was for the exchange trip to the partner school in England; although this vocabulary was more challenging for some students, there were still many correct answers.

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. With one exception, each question had a success rate in excess of 90%. The exception was question 6 where just over 80% were successful. This mirrored the dip in the success rate seen on the Foundation tier. The word *Freunde* was heard in the passage and two options contained the English translation 'friends'. The concept of not having their

posts read by as many people was a more challenging one and this, coupled with the strong distractor in the option F, led more students to choose the wrong answer than for the other questions in this section.

Question 8

This selection style question was a lower-demand item at Higher tier. It was very successful with over 40% gaining all three marks and over 45% gaining two marks. Very few students indeed scored zero on this question. Some students opted for the answer that Petra studies now at the university, missing the key word *früher* and the perfect tense, and that was the most popular wrong answer. This question performed more successfully than the equivalent question in 2022, suggesting that students have practised the skill of listening for gist, selecting the right answers and (equally importantly) rejecting those answers which are wrong.

Question 9

This was a high-demand question on the topic of marriage. There was a relatively modest response to Question 9.1 with just under 30% of students gaining the mark here. The key word was *Unterstützung* and it was clear that many students did not know what this word meant. There were many answers containing 'understanding' which were not credited. Examiners allowed a range of answers that meant the same as 'support' such as 'help', 'assistance', 'you can rely on a partner' but this question clearly challenged many students. Question 9.2 had a very similar success rate, although conceptually it was more difficult. Although many students understood *ein Blatt Papier*, it was relatively rare to see students give the correct answer that a piece of paper is not needed for a strong relationship. Again, a range of equivalent answers was accepted, and there was an alternative answer about unmarried couples also caring for each other, but this was seen less often. This question identified accurately those high-achieving students who were able to understand a passage of more complex German and then answer the questions set on it succinctly.

Questions 10 – 12

This set of medium-demand questions was answered very successfully with over 85% of students getting the marks for each of them, and in the case of question 11 over 90% being successful. Students are clearly au fait with the vocabulary needed to talk about environmental issues and despite the existence of some distractors, for example public transport in option E and clothes in option B, a large majority of students successfully avoided these possibilities and chose the correct option.

Questions 13 – 16

The P / N / P+N style questions are a common feature of AQA GCSE modern languages question papers and students now have plenty of experience in answering them. This suite of questions was less successfully answered than in previous years, however, perhaps because of the more challenging nature of some of the vocabulary.

Question 13 was answered correctly by almost 50% of students. The key phrase here was '*es ist zu spät, die Situation zu verbessern*'; many students heard the last word and thought that this was a positive opinion, when the opposite was the case. It is clearly important that students listen to the whole utterance before making their decision. Question 14 had a success rate slightly in excess of 45%. The topics discussed here were discrimination and racism – words that clearly have negative connotations. However, the context of the utterance was that many young people today will not tolerate such ideas and that this is excellent, hence the answer P. The challenging nature of this

idea, and the more difficult vocabulary item *ausgezeichnet*, led many students to give the wrong answer N here.

Question 15 was answered correctly by about half of the students. Again, the idea was conceptually challenging – charities helping lots of needy people but their top managers receiving very high salaries – and the vocabulary contained in the utterance was not always straightforward; students who realised that *hervorragend* was a positive word but that *ich bin dagegen* expressed a negative idea were able to reach the correct answer P+N. Question 16 was the most successful question in this section, with a success rate just short of 85%. The idea of being treated like a child in terms of the food selection in the canteen was clearly much better understood than previous questions and many students realised that this was a negative idea.

The key to success in this type of questions is to revise carefully the opinion words given at the start of the vocabulary lists in the specification and to listen to the whole utterance rather than just latching onto one part of it.

Question 17 – 19

This question type has appeared on previous GCSE German Listening examinations and students are familiar with the need to complete the sentence with a phrase or sentence, ensuring that they give enough information to score the mark. Just under 40% were successful in question 17; those students who understood that *sicher* means ‘safe’ were usually able to score, although alternative renderings were also accepted. Very occasionally, students gave answers that were too specific, for example ‘flying is safer than travelling by car’, which were not accepted – it is important that students do not invent additional material for their answers. Question 18 was answered successfully by just over half the students who took this exam. Most of them answered by stating that they get travel sick on planes, but some preferred to refer to the impolite airline employees. There was quite a lot of evidence of students not knowing *unhöflich* with wrong translations such as ‘unhelpful’ or ‘unhopeful’ being rejected. Answers had to make it clear that they were referring to people who work at airports or for airlines, rather than the too general ‘people on planes’. There was some evidence of contamination of answers here, with students writing a correct answer and also an incorrect answer, for example that flying makes her feel ill and that people on planes are unhelpful; a correct answer presented with an incorrect answer will not gain a mark. Question 19 was the most successful question in this section with a little under 60% of students gaining the mark. There were several routes to the answer, but the most common was to say that his country has everything needed for a holiday. References to ‘my town’ or the over-general ‘place where I live’ were not accepted and students who mistranslated *schöne Berge* or *interessante Geschichte* were also not rewarded.

Question 20

It was pleasing to see a good response rate to this question that was aimed at higher-achieving students. In Question 20.1, the key vocabulary was *ein neues Fach* and this was understood well with over 65% of students scoring the mark here. This item was perhaps more straightforward than anticipated, although sometimes students wrote an incorrect subject to translate *Wirtschaftslehre*, thus contaminating their answer. Question 20.2 was more challenging, but still correctly answered by just under 45% of students. The key vocabulary was *eine Wohnung mieten* and many students understood this, although there were a good number of answers that referred to ‘houses’ rather than ‘flats’ or that relied on a generic ‘place to live’; these answers were not credited. Some students thought that she would be able to buy a flat, or that she could rent out a flat, and again these were not successful. This question was more successful than the comparable question in 2022.

Question 21

This was a high-demand question aimed at the highest-achieving students. Unsurprisingly, it proved challenging for many students, although the overall success rate this year was greater than for the corresponding question in 2022, perhaps because the vocabulary was slightly easier or because the ideas surrounding the celebration of Christmas are well known. In Question 21.1, the positive answer required students to understand the word *Verwandte* and many of them didn't know it. Only the most highly attaining students were able to write 'relatives' or 'family' and many students resorted to the general word 'people'. The negative idea of having to share one's bedroom with other family members was better known. Just over 10% of students gained both marks here, but more than 55% of them gained one mark, mostly on the negative part of this question.

Question 21.2 was less successful overall with over 40% of students failing to score, although a little under 30% of students scored both marks and a similar number again scored one mark. The negative idea of not knowing what presents to buy was not that well understood with plenty of guesswork in evidence here – not having enough money to buy presents, not liking the presents received, or the simple word 'presents' in isolation. *Keine Ahnung haben* is a challenging phrase and only higher-achieving students understood it. The positive aspect was better done with a good number of students realising that he didn't have to go to work or could enjoy time at home relaxing. Some students still think that *sich entspannen* refers to excitement, rather than relaxation, and these answers could not be credited.

Although this question was challenging, it was pleasing to see well over half of all students scoring at least one mark on a question that was targeted at students who are working at the top grades.

Question 22

This question was of medium demand and it proved to be more accessible than the corresponding question in 2022. Despite the relatively challenging vocabulary in places, students were often able to choose the correct option from the five choices given. In Question 22.1, there was a clear distractor (*Heim für Obdachlose*) but most students ignored that and went for the correct answer, realising that Eva thought it was important to build affordable places to live; *billigere Sozialwohnungen bauen* is challenging vocabulary and therefore this was an impressive performance. In Question 22.2, items of vocabulary such as *Mindestlohn*, *nicht ausreichend* and *höher werden* are also difficult, but almost 70% of students chose the correct option, which again was pleasing. Question 22.3 was the most accessible with *Drei-Tage-Woche* a reasonably straightforward item of vocabulary. Over 80% of students were successful here. This question contained some conceptually difficult ideas and some challenging vocabulary and examiners were therefore pleased to see an encouragingly high success rate.

Question 23

This question was also aimed at higher-achieving students and it had something of a mixed success rate with the main problem being that many students did not give enough detail in their answers for them to be creditworthy. Being able to identify detail from more challenging passages is one of the key characteristics of high-performing GCSE students. In Question 23.1, students had to understand that Sophia's parents were not letting her go away on holiday with her (boy)friend and that this is why she was angry. Many students thought that her parents wouldn't allow her to go out with her (boy)friend and there were also references to her friends (in the plural) which were

not accepted. Only the strongest students understood the full implications of what they heard. In Question 23.2, about one-third of students managed to get one mark or more, most often the idea that she should go away with her (boy)friend and a larger group of friends. Two marks was less common because of the word *zuverlässig*, a challenging item of vocabulary, even though a range of translations was accepted.

Question 24

This question was aimed at the most accomplished students and it tested detailed understanding of the German heard. Only the most highly achieving students scored both marks here, just over 20% of the total candidature. Almost 30% scored one mark, and thus almost half of all students scored at least one mark out of two – this was a pleasing performance on a challenging item. There was no real pattern discernible in terms of which item was more straightforward as both answers contained some challenging vocabulary and grammatical structures. The idea that the music the orchestra played was new to her was seen perhaps slightly less often than the idea that the concert hall was beautifully decorated or looked beautiful; vocabulary such as *das Allerbeste* and *schmücken* and the use of the pluperfect tense certainly made this a high-demand item. Some students unfortunately wrote answers that were too vague or too general to score, such as the concert (as opposed to the concert hall) was beautiful and there was evidence too from lower-attaining students of guesswork. That notwithstanding, it was good that many stronger students coped well with the more challenging vocabulary in this question.

Question 25

The final question in Section A was another P / N / P+N question and it was answered with a very high degree of success. Question 25.1 was answered correctly by those students who understood *furchtbar* and *mies* – almost 90% of students gave the correct answer here. Question 25.2 was very successfully answered, perhaps because of the relatively straightforward nature of the vocabulary – *nicht so schlimm*, *zufrieden*, *schwach*. The inclusion of *obwohl* was also a pointer to the answer P+N and over 95% of students were successful.

Question 26

The first question in Section B was an overlap one and it had a much higher success rate than at Foundation tier. Question 26.1 was answered correctly by nearly 90% of students who were able to work out that *Spinat*, *Blumenkohl* and *Zwiebeln* are examples of *Gemüse*. In Question 26.2, however, there was still some difficulty in moving from *Käse* and *Joghurt* to the correct answer (*Milchprodukte*); the distractors *Bonbons* and *Pralinen* were clearly too tempting for many students and this question had a success rate of less than 60%.

Question 27

This was a slightly more challenging P / N / P+N question with some more difficult items of vocabulary but it was very pleasing to see that many students got Question 27.2 correct, perhaps because *froh* is well-known and the idea of finishing work early on Fridays is a positive one in anybody's book; over 80% were successful here. Question 27.1 was more challenging because of the idea that what David was promised in the interview turned out not to be true. '*Ich bin wirklich sauer*' is also a challenging phrase. That said, about two-thirds of students were successful here, and this is pleasing for a question aimed at students operating at the middle grades for this tier.

Question 28

This was another overlap question and it was answered more successfully on the Higher tier paper than on the Foundation tier paper, particularly question 28.1 which was no problem for a large majority (about 90%) of students. They were clearly able to hear *Pferde* and *Reiten* and choose the answer which contained the two words together, *Pferdereiten*. Question 28.2, however, proved to be much more difficult, even for Higher tier students, with just under half of them understanding that '*ich habe keine Zeit mehr, ins Hallenbad zu gehen*' means that swimming is the sport he doesn't do any more. *Hallenbad* was perhaps not as well-known as examiners would hope and students also had to cope with a negative question, identifying the sport he no longer does.

Question 29

There were far fewer instances this year of students answering the final questions in Section B in English, which was very encouraging and suggests that students have practised this type of question with their teachers. It was also 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 is a useful reminder.

As always, these 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 the questions. 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.

This question had a higher success rate than the equivalent question in 2022, suggesting the students' practice of this question type has been worthwhile. In question 29.1, students who could successfully convey the idea of Finn falling asleep in lessons were credited with a mark, as were those who said that the teacher was angry, and the vocabulary used was not particularly challenging for Higher tier students; over two-thirds were successful. Question 29.2 was also more accessible than the equivalent question in 2022, probably because *ein netter Mensch* (or just the word *nett*) is well within the range of most Higher tier students. Students did have to make it clear who was nice, however, in order to answer the question logically. Just under 60% were successful here. There were fewer instances this year of students not attempting the question or of completely irrelevant answers.

Question 30

The final question on the paper was also reasonably well answered. The mark scheme was discussed in detail during the standardisation process and a range of phonetically equivalent answers to *Seifenoper* in Question 30.1 were accepted. Spellings of the word with a Z- at the beginning were not accepted, however. The mark scheme gave plenty of detail to help ensure that examiners marked with consistency and accuracy and if they were in doubt they were told to sound out the word. In Question 30.2, although the key word was *unrealistisch*, students had to write more than the word by itself to gain credit – they had to make it clear that Alexander felt that soap operas are unrealistic in order to answer the question logically. This proved challenging for some students, and the word was often seen in isolation. Again, a range of spellings was accepted, as the mark scheme made clear, and there was an alternative answer, although this was more difficult

German (*das wirkliche Leben sehen*) and this was seen only relatively rarely. As with question 29, there were fewer blank answers this year and also fewer answers that were completely irrelevant.

As in previous series, there was some evidence of lower-achieving students who were not operating successfully at the highest levels and who in these final questions wrote down a series of German words which unfortunately did not convey any meaning. It should be remembered that the final questions on this paper are targeted at students operating at grades 8 and 9 and they will therefore by their very nature be more challenging. That said, it was very gratifying once again to see many students have a go at these higher-demand questions and answer them successfully.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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