
GCSE GERMAN

8668/WF Paper 4 Writing Foundation Tier
Report on the Examination

8668/WF
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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.

The vast majority of students who sat this paper were entered at the correct level and the paper was clearly accessible to almost all, with most students able to make some attempt at all questions. Where students did not understand an element of the question, some had been well trained to gain some credit by writing a simple '*ich finde ... gut*' response, which often worked in terms of covering the bullet point. Handwriting was occasionally an issue, often because it was so small that it was impossible to read. Whilst examiners will try their best to read what the student has written, credit cannot be given where a word is not clear.

The mean mark on the paper was just over 28/50 (just under 56% of the total mark).

Question 1

This question requires students to write four sentences about a photograph, in this case of three young people in a shopping centre and was easily accessible to most students. Answers centred largely on the people in the photograph, and many students scored full marks by describing the people in simple but perfectly acceptable language. *Es gibt einen Mann / eine Frau / drei Freunde / drei Leute* all scored 2 marks, and examiners accepted various attempts at plural forms and a variety of spellings apart from the English 'man'. Examiners were as generous as they could be with other misspellings, although some students reverted to English when they could not remember the German word. '*Ein Bag*' was seen repeatedly, and students are advised against trying to write something they do not know and to keep their answers simple.

Whilst the vast majority of students did attempt to write about what was in the picture, references to the weather could not be credited as this was an indoor setting, nor could any answer referring to things clearly not visible, however those students who wrote *es ist in Deutschland* or *es ist in der Schweiz* (or indeed any other country) did receive credit.

Once again, disappointingly, sentences starting with *gibt es* were regularly seen and some students would have doubled their marks had they not started every sentence with that. The perennial problems of *der ist* and the present continuous were also an issue, although notably fewer than in previous years. Some students gave one-word answers where a minimum of two are required to score at least one point, and an attempt at a verb is needed for 2 marks.

Approximately 58% of students scored full marks on this question.

Question 2

Most students were able to make a reasonable attempt at this question and many produced responses well over 40 words, however *die Geschäfte* was often not understood and students either omitted this bullet point entirely or gained some credit by simply writing *die Geschäfte ist gut* or by mentioning *ein Supermarkt* or *Einkaufszentrum* when describing their town. '*Attraktionen*' also caused problems, but this bullet point was often covered anyway by a detailed description of their town. Some students used *ins Kino* incorrectly to mean a cinema when listing what their town has to offer. Students were often inspired to write in some detail about favourite restaurants and

foods, but would be well advised to keep to the 40 words recommended as longer answers tended inevitably to lead to a lack of clarity and more errors.

In general, there were some interesting accounts with supporting opinions and it was clear that students could relate to the bullet points and for the most part were keen to give personal views about where they lived.

A few students misunderstood the scene-setting rubric and failed to score by referring to *deinen deutschen Freund* throughout.

Disappointingly, only 32% achieved the top mark band for covering all bullet points on Content, scoring either 9 or 10 marks, and around 44% did so for Quality of Language. However, it was pleasing to see that fewer than 3% of students managed only a minimal response to the bullet points.

Question 3

Most students were able to make a confident start on the translations and despite a variety of spellings of *Mathe* many scored well on the first sentence. As always, *Freund / Freundin* caused problems with many students incorrectly using the plural form *Freunde*. Examiners accepted a variety of offerings for 'mobile phone' and this was often well done. The higher demand 'too many cars' proved problematic with students often omitting 'too', although *in der Stadt* was often well known. At both Foundation and Higher tier, however, students should be advised to look carefully to see whether the definite or indefinite article is required, as some answers could not be credited due to the use of the wrong article. Surprisingly, few students knew *Fleisch* although *nicht sehr oft* was well known and credited regardless of word order. Most students recognised the need for a past tense in the last sentence and any attempt at this was credited although surprisingly 'to a football match' caused more difficulty than anticipated with a widespread failure to attempt any kind of preposition. *Letztes* was mostly credited but often badly misspelt.

Students need to be aware that the incorrect person of a verb is an error and that different persons of the verb will be tested on this question.

Just under 40% of students scored 3 or above for Key Messages and around 31% for Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures. The most frequently achieved mark on both sets of criteria was 2, suggesting that the translation continues to be a task that students find challenging.

Question 4.1

The overlap questions proved accessible to most with option 4.1 'Family and Friends' proving the more popular (56%).

A significant number of students at this tier did not understand *auskommst*, and so, disappointingly, very few were able to use it correctly. Those who misunderstood it tended to write about going out with family, where the family came from or how their family got on with their friends.

Understanding of *wichtig*, however, caused fewer problems and many students wrote enthusiastically about what their friends mean to them. However, some failed to say why their

friends were important, which was required, while *Hilfen* was commonly seen as a misspelling of *helfen*.

Most students seem to have been well trained to expect both a past and future tense on this question and were able to make at least some attempt at forming both tenses although, as always, some answers were written entirely in the present tense. '*In letzter Zeit*' was not understood by all and some students wrote about summer holidays the previous year which could not be credited, although those who used what they had clearly learnt about holidays but prefaced it with *Letztes Wochenende* or similar had access to the full range of marks. Where problems with tenses did occur, these tended to be missing auxiliaries with the perfect tense and with the future; *mochte* or *wurde* were commonly seen as was *möchte* with a past participle. These could not be accepted; however a pure future tense was not required this year and many students found other ways of expressing future plans.

Performance on this question was disappointing, with only just over 5% of students attaining top band marks for Content and 11% achieving top band marks for Quality of Language

Question 4.2

Although this option was less popular (44%), it proved to be the more successful choice. Students were clearly well rehearsed in writing about school subjects and had a lot to say about their own personal experiences. Many wrote at length about a number of subjects, although providing some reference was made to their favourite or best subject this was not in itself a problem. Students are advised, however, to restrict their answers to the information requested as over-lengthy answers frequently lead to more errors. Surprisingly, perhaps, some students failed to recognise *Fach* and wrote about things other than school subjects.

Surprisingly, *Prüfungen* was often not known by students at this level, with this bullet either omitted completely or answered using pure guesswork, which was rarely successful.

Many students were, however, able to make some comment about their last year at school, although for both this and the future plans there were some overly ambitious answers which were, unfortunately, rarely successful. Many students started their answer with *Meine Pläne für nächstes Jahr ist...*, which led to some clumsy constructions, and a small number misunderstood *Pläne* and wrote about travelling somewhere by plane, which was clearly not relevant.

On the overlap questions, students are best advised to restrict their answers to 90 words as requested, and not to attempt to write about things outside their capabilities in German. Where messages break down, either by use of English or simply German that fails to communicate, marks for Content are unlikely to exceed 4/10 and for marks in the top two bands a minimum of 2 opinions are required. For Quality of Language, references to all three time frames are required for marks in the top band and there must be some attempts to use complex structures.

This question produced the highest percentage of students attaining top band marks for Content with 14% achieving it, and 21% achieving marks in the top band for Quality of Language.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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