



GCE A LEVEL EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**A LEVEL
GERMAN**

SUMMER 2023

Introduction

Our Principal examiners' reports offer valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. They are written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and detail how candidates have performed.

This report offers an overall summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It goes on to look in detail at each question/section of each component, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.ⁱ

The information found in this report can provide invaluable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	Eduqas offers an extensive annual programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.eduqas.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 6 months after the examination.	www.wjecservices.co.uk or on the Eduqas subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For unitised specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and unit level. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the overall subject, rather than for each component that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results and Grade Boundaries (eduqas.co.uk)

Exam Results Analysis	WJEC Eduqas provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	www.wjecservices.co.uk
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	www.wjecservices.co.uk or on the Eduqas subject page.
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Subject Officer's Executive Summary

Overall, candidates were well prepared for all three components this year and it was evident that candidates are beginning to feel more confident with assessments following the disruption since 2020.

A common theme across the four skills was weaknesses in vocabulary at times which led to ambiguity in candidate responses. This was particularly evident in the assessment of productive skills with the speaking assessment, the translation element of Component 2 and in the extended writing pieces for Component 3.

There was also evidence in the receptive listening and reading skills of candidates missing the meaning in the German and opting for common-sense responses. Candidates should be reminded to ensure they check their responses against the content of the extracts to check they are actually answering the question in the paper.

Areas for improvement	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
Comprehension exercises – ensure the responses match the German. Vocabulary resilience to ensure the work is unambiguous, relevant and clear.	Past Papers Mark Schemes OER (Online Exam Review) CPD material Exam Walkthroughs	Previous responses from candidates/mark scheme.

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COMPONENT 1: SPEAKING

Overview of the Component

- Component 1 assesses the oral ability of candidates. AO1 tests the ability to interact, understand speech and respond. AO2 tests the ability to respond to written text for the independent research project and also on the prompt card. AO3 assesses the accuracy of language, pronunciation and intonation and also linguistic range and variety. AO4 tests the knowledge and insight into aspects of German culture and the ability to evaluate and support viewpoints.
- Once again, there was a very interesting range of topics covered in the Independent Research Project (IRP). The IRP is a feature that makes the modern language A level sit very well with any combination of other A levels. Themes researched reflect candidates' other interests, eg the health system in Germany; trends in psychology; sport; music; science; maths; history; politics; law. The independent nature of this study task is excellent preparation for university and most candidates rise very well to the challenge.
- The standard of German was generally high and candidates were in the main clearly very well prepared, particularly for the stimulus card. A high level of quality German teaching is evident in candidates' ability to talk convincingly, particularly about the stimulus card. On the whole, nerves played less of a role than last year; candidates seemed to be better used to exam situations after the hiatus of 2020 and 2021.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- A particularly popular choice of IRP topic this year was sport, particularly football. German fairy tales also cropped up a few times, with candidates able to express interesting, insightful views about their relevance today, such as *Schneewittchen* warning today's internet user not to be too trustful of strangers. A good IRP presentation lays out the research findings, making it obvious from what is said that a wide variety of research has been undertaken. The best presentations have involved not just reading internet sites but also watching documentaries, interviews or film. Some candidates had got so interested in their research they had even bought a book on the subject. It is important to choose a topic that is rooted in German culture. *Schindler's List* is a very good film but as a Hollywood film made by Steven Spielberg, cannot be considered to be a German source. It could provide interesting support material, but it is not appropriate to base the whole IRP topic on that particular film. The IRP pro forma needs to cite approximately five sources in **German**.
- The best IRP presentations avoid narration and express insight and analysis of their topic. There is a big difference between citing facts and figures about motor sport, and expressing considered views as to **why** motor sport is popular or unpopular in German-speaking countries. It is also important to choose a topic that demonstrates independent research.

- Overlapping on a theme from the syllabus is certainly possible, but it is important that a particular angle is chosen. For example, an IRP generally about the fall of the Berlin Wall suggests knowledge based on classwork rather than independent research.
- Once again, the stimulus card led to some high-quality discussions, in some cases at an impressively sophisticated level. It is important that candidates spend some of their five-minute preparation time considering two relevant and interesting questions they could ask. The quality of these questions is considered when marking AO1.
- Candidates make an informed choice of the card, in that they are shown a choice of two. The immigration and traditions topics appeared more popular than discussing the events of 1989 and their impact on modern Germany. To gain AO4 marks, candidates need to remember to root their answers from the perspective of German-speaking countries. For example, there was a slight temptation in responding to the card about peer pressure to talk about life as a UK teenager, which is **not** relevant to the mark scheme.

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COMPONENT 2: LISTENING, READING AND TRANSLATION

Overview of the Component

Stimulus material was in German, based on the two themes at A level about social issues and trends and political, intellectual and artistic culture. Section A consists of listening comprehension questions including multiple choice, gap-fill answers, summary/assimilation style questions and comprehension questions in German. Section B consists of reading comprehension questions based on texts provided in a supplementary reading folder which includes true/false statements, multiple choice, gap-fill answers, summary/assimilation style questions and comprehension questions and answers in German.

Both sections assess AO1 and AO2 and could achieve 60 marks. Section C: Translation testing AO2 and AO3 skills: Two unseen passages: one from English into German and one from German into English, each divided into 20 sections with a maximum achievement mark of 40. 100 marks maximum in total.

This component caused no major problems for the majority of candidates. In section A and B, candidates achieved very high marks, whereas the translations seemed to be more difficult, especially the translation into German where grammar and vocabulary were the main challenge.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1** The multiple-choice listening task was usually completed successfully. Sentence 1 was often connected with the ending j: '*mit kleinen Lichtern*', which makes complete sense grammatically, but was not the main point in the transcript.
- Q.2** Most candidates achieved high marks here. If '*Hubschrauber*' or '*Drohnen*' was spelled incorrectly the marks were given. Some candidates did not give all three examples of where the drones could be helpful. They copied full sentences of what they heard.
- Q.3** Multiple choice was nearly always correct.
- Q.4** Was not always successful: some candidates did not hear that Lars Braun was the owner of the shop (1); they were not clear about the reasons for people to wear nice clothes (6) and we accepted different variations here. Question 8 about '*Kaufgewohnheiten*' also left the candidates guessing which ones apply. We accepted various options here. The candidates must make sure that they give 2 answers if 2 examples and 2 marks are possible.
- Q.5** Provided no problems but the word needed to be spelled correctly. Occasionally candidates left out '*im*' before '*Alltag*'.
- Q.6** The reading passage about '*Rikschas*' provided no difficulties.

- Q.7** Most candidates achieved high marks in the reading passage of the novel. If the candidate placed the correct cross in the box but did give a wrong correction of the sentence, the mark was not awarded. The candidates should not copy the sentences from the text.
- Q.8** Difficulties in this question were more common: In Q5 some candidates gave too many options for the examiner to pick the correct ones. The reason for the help received from the couple was not always clear.
- Q.9** The range of marks achieved in this section was very wide. Some candidates had a very good grasp of the translation, others had difficulties mainly identifying: 2: problem districts; 7 completely normal; 11: fellow human beings meet them the same way- we accepted many variations here; 13: a tour guide is organising- needed to be in singular and present tense; 14: some candidates used the town name in German 'Köln'; vocabulary such as 'Vorurteile' and 'Bewusstsein' (15,16) were not known by some; 18: among others was often omitted or referenced to tourists; 19: a number of candidates translated cigar into cigarette which was an avoidable mistake.
- Q.10** As in Q9 there were wide differences in achievements. Candidates needed to pay particular attention to cases such as the Dative and Genitive, tenses -past and passive and two relative pronouns and question words. The main difficulties in this section were: 1: 'seiner Geburt' the dative was not identified; 2: 'wird gespielt' no passive; in 4 and 5 we accepted various tenses in the past; 9: 'lädt ein' is a split verb; 11: the adjectival endings were not always correct and the vocabulary 'Komponist' not known; in 12 and 13 the main vocabulary 'Stockwerke, Dauerausstellung' were not known; in 16,17,18 we accepted variations in the tenses, but did not accept 'wenn' or 'als' for 'wann' and 'wo' for 'wer'. 20: 'Leidenschaft' was a difficult word to know and we accepted variations.

In summary, the candidates did very well in section A and B. Section C, the translation into English requires stricter proofreading by the candidate, checking that all words are translated and an ear of what sounds right in English. Translating into German needs practice in the vocabulary of art and culture and grammar, particularly question words, relative sentences and tenses and need to be emphasized in teaching.

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COMPONENT 3: CRITICAL AND ANALYTICAL RESPONSE IN WRITING

Overview of the Component

Component 3 assesses candidates' abilities to analyse and respond in writing to a literary text in German and/or a film as outlined in the specification. In the exam they need to write two 300-word essays, at least one of which must be on a written text, and the second one can be on either another literary text or a film. For each work there are two possible questions, and candidates need to select one of these for each of the works they covered in class. As in previous years all centres chose to teach a written work and a film.

The essays are marked according to two attainment objectives:

- A03** Candidates need to manipulate language accurately, using a wide range of lexis, grammatical structures and idiom, doing so in an appropriate style. A neat summary of this is: grammar, lexis and style.
- A04** Candidates need to show knowledge and understanding and respond critically and analytically to a literary work or film. This means making points with reference to the work studied in line with the question selected, supporting the points by using evidence and forming all of this into a discussion/argument.

Overall, candidates performed well this year and wrote some very interesting essays in response to the set questions. It was clear that teachers had prepared candidates well for what can often be a challenging component. Many had some interesting, thought-provoking and insightful things to say on the works which showed they had gone beyond the narrative level and were able to discuss the issues the particular works threw up.

Teachers might find the following points useful in preparing candidates for next year's Component 3 section of the exam:

Linguistic observations

On a very basic grammatical level, many candidates lost marks due to consistent misplacement of verbs especially but not only in subordinate clauses (e.g. in clauses commencing with "weil") n.b. Band 2 AO3 descriptor.

In many essays it was at times difficult to follow what was being written due to punctuation errors e.g. capital letters being missed out or used where not appropriate (as in "Sie" for she). Examiners want to credit candidates and it might be easy for them to miss creditworthy language due to lack of standard punctuation. There are clear punctuation rules in German.

General observations

The above points relate more to AO3. Regarding the other attainment objective, a few points could be helpful:

Many essays started with a lengthy generic introduction (perhaps up to 50 words) giving background information about the work. I would limit the introduction to 30 words which relate directly to the question. This focusses the essay and keeps its contents relevant from the word go. The closing paragraph should also be brief.

Candidates often deviated from the set question. In order to gain a high mark for AO4, the essay must be relevant. While planning the essay before actually writing it, candidates should constantly be asking themselves if they are answering the question set in the question paper. An example is question 3a, which clearly focusses on Claire and the extent to which she could be seen as a victim. Information on other people being victims would be a relevant footnote but should not be the main focus of the essay. This highlights a problem of drift, i.e. starting off on task but then moving off into irrelevance. As suggested above, careful planning can avoid this problem.

Length of essays was at times an issue. Although the 300 word “limit” is only a guide, as the essays are designed with this number of words in mind, it is better to stick to this. In the vast majority of cases essays which exceeded this number probably gained a lower mark than they would have had the word limit been adhered to.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1 Franz Kafka *Die Verwandlung*

Kafka's short work was studied by quite a few centres. Most of the essays were written in response to question 1a, which was about the main character's transformation and what it symbolised. Many candidates wrote well about why they thought Gregor was actually going through a nervous breakdown and discussed what had led up to it (e.g. excessive workload and difficult family relationships).

Q.2 Karin König *Ich fühl mich so fifty-fifty*

Fewer centres studied this book this year than in previous series. Most candidates chose to do the second question on the structure of the book and their opinions of its effect. Some interesting remarks were made about the fact that elements like the letters enabled different viewpoints to be represented on the events which the book depicts, and why the author chose to present her story in this way.

Q.3 Friedrich Dürrenmatt *Der Besuch der alten Dame*

Dürrenmatt's play was again studied by many centres this year. Candidates wrote in more or less equal measure on both questions, although the first option was slightly more popular. Many candidates successfully argued that Claire continued to be a victim as an adult due to the traumatic nature of the events that had led up to her leaving Gullen as a teenager. Many essays also added as a footnote that there were other examples of victimhood in the town.

Q.4 No areas to highlight.

Q.5 No areas to highlight.

Q.6 Bernhard Schlink *Der Vorleser*

As in previous years, Schlink's novel remains a popular text to study. The vast majority of essays written were on whether the reader could have sympathy for Hanna (q. 4a). There were some lively discussions about whether one could or could not do so, and these were finished off with the candidate's conclusion. Often these conclusions were not clear cut.

Q.7 Wolfgang Becker *Good Bye, Lenin!*

This was by far the most popular film and work this year, with a roughly equal number of essays on each option. Slightly more essays were written on 7b which was to do with the image presented of a new Berlin after the fall of the wall. Candidates had a lot to say on what had changed and were able to evaluate the significance of these changes, and place the changes in the cultural and political context.

Q.8 Dennis Gansel *Die Welle*

Compared with previous years, fewer centres chose to study this film. Candidates mainly chose to do the essay on the significance of the water polo game. Higher marks were scored when candidates were able to discuss what happened in the scene itself and make connections with and draw comparisons with previous scenes where the team was training in the swimming pool (especially with the scene towards the start of the film).

Q.9 No areas to highlight.

Q.10 Florian Henckel von Donnersmark *Das Leben der Anderen*

Of the two essays on offer most candidates went for option b), which was about lies/deception and truth. Many candidates identified correctly how these were important ideas in this film, especially within the cultural and political context in which the film was set. Some of the best essays were able to argue that the truth tended to come out in the end in this film.

Q.11 No areas to highlight.

Q.12 No areas to highlight.

Supporting you

Useful contacts and links

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ⁱ Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.