



GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GERMAN
GCSE**

SUMMER 2019

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Annual Statistical Report

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

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GERMAN

GCSE

Summer 2019

COMPONENT 1

General Comments

This is the second year of the reformed GCSE and the candidates had to demonstrate the new skills in which they were assessed. There has been an improvement in the performance of the candidates. They were better prepared for the speaking exam, knowing what to expect and how to perform. Most coped well with the Role Play, the discussion of the Photo Card and the Conversations. However, there were still a number of common mistakes with regard to the conduct of the exam.

A fair number of centres did not adhere to the recommended timings of the individual tasks. The timings for each task as indicated in the table below are approximate; however, teachers must adhere to the overall timings of 7-9 minutes (foundation tier) and 10-12 minutes (higher tier). **Any speaking evidence that exceeds these timings will not be marked.**

Comments on individual questions/sections

Role Play

Foundation Tier

Generally the Role Plays were performed well, giving even candidates at the lower end of the spectrum the opportunity to gain a few points when giving just single word answers. This year, it was evident that the centres had practised role plays, because the candidates were able to conduct the role plays better.

There is still a problem with some question words, especially *Wie?*

Having to give an opinion is still a challenge for some candidates.

Another new skill was to have to ask a question. There was often a pregnant pause and a fair number of candidates had to be prompted to ask the question in the role play.

- **RP 2** When asked *Magst du Sport im Fernsehen* candidates often only responded to *Magst du Sport?*
- **RP 3** The word *Geburtstagsgeschenk* was rarely known
- **RP 5** The word *Unterkunft* was virtually never known
- **RP 6** Candidates were rarely able to answer the question *Welche umweltfreundlichen Produkte kaufst du?*

Higher Tier

As with the Foundation Tier the candidates generally coped well with the role plays. There were some candidates who wanted to part with a lot more information than was needed for the individual questions, which shows that they did not really know about the format of a role play.

Answers in the Role Play have to be perfect to score 3 marks. Candidates who said far too much in the role plays often lost marks, whereas if they had stopped promptly they would have scored a full 3 marks each time.

Most mistakes were made when a specific tense was required.

Register infringement also happened, however the more able candidates managed very well.

- **RP 4** *besichtigt* was often not understood
- **RP 5** *Nachteil* was often missed, and candidates spoke positively about holiday in Austria;
 - candidates often misunderstood *Wie findest du Tourismus?* and spoke about how nice it is being a tourist
 - candidates rarely understood *Wie bist du letztes Jahr in Urlaub gefahren?* and answered *wohin* instead
 - candidates rarely understood the word *Unterkunft*
- **RP 6** generally very well dealt with, although candidates often classed *Umweltprobleme* as *Sozialprobleme*; candidates rarely offered a correct answer to *Wie wirst du nächste Woche Geld sammeln?* and answered with who they are going to donate to instead or how they were going to earn some money.
- **RP 7** Candidates often missed the *nach* in *Was hast du gestern nach der Schule gemacht?* and answered what they did in school yesterday instead.
- **RP9** Candidates rarely asked the question with *Sie*, so were unable to access the full range of marks for this section.

Photo Card

Foundation Tier and Higher Tier

Most candidates were able to say a couple of sentences to describe the picture. The more able ones did rather well with the picture itself. Some had been taught phrases like *Ich sehe, im Vordergrund/Hintergrund gibt es* which helped. However, sometimes candidates added non relevant material like what the people on the photo may have had for breakfast or what their hobbies were.

The questions were not always answered well but most candidates gave it a good try. At times teachers tried to simplify the questions to help their students, which is permitted as long as the meaning of the question is not altered.

There were quite a few recordings where the teachers unnecessarily added questions to the prescribed questions, sometimes not even connected to the subtheme of the card. The advised timing for the Photo Card is 2 minutes at Foundation level and 3 minutes at Higher Level. Teachers should aim to adhere to these timings.

Foundation Tier

- **PC 1:** few knew the word *Flughafen*

candidates rarely understood *wie (wie fährst du gern and wie bist du letztes Wochenende in die Stadt gefahren?)*

- **PC 2:** most candidates thought the man was a family member
- **PC 6:** few understood the statement *Freunde haben die gleichen Hobbys*
- **PC 9:** it was rare to hear anyone able to mention *Schnee, or es schneit*

Higher Tier

- **PC 1** it was extremely rare that anyone knew the word *Flughafen*

the description of the photo was generally quite poor

not many knew what *Angst haben* means

candidates frequently misunderstood *Wie wirst du nächstes Wochenende in die Stadt fahren?* and answered with what they are going to do and not how they are going to get there.

- **PC 4** *Wen möchtest du live sehen?* was rarely understood and had to be re-phrased
- **PC 6** candidates could rarely answer the question *Was hast du gemacht, um deinen Freunden zu helfen?*

Conversations

Foundation and Higher Tier

Candidates were generally well prepared for their chosen theme. Unfortunately, some were over rehearsed, which resulted in a very distinctive lack of spontaneity/ natural conversation.

This part of the exam is a conversation and not a presentation followed by a discussion. It is not a requirement for the candidate to say which theme they have chosen or to give a short presentation. The teacher should just announce the theme of the first part of the conversation followed by the first question.

The idea of a conversation is that the candidate responds to a question and that the next question is linked to the candidate's response. Otherwise it becomes a question and answer session of unrelated items. This has an effect on the interaction, which is an element that is being assessed. Unfortunately, there are still centres where all candidates get the same unrelated questions.

It would be more beneficial for the candidate if questions were linked together, which would enable them to express thoughts and views better, as well as been given the opportunity to narrate an event, however briefly.

There was often a discrepancy in the performance between the chosen and prescribed themes, with the latter being not as well executed. There were also occasions where the centres chose the wrong second theme, or where both parts were not given equal timing. This had an effect on the marks awarded for the conversation.

Summary of key points

On the whole, the candidates were better prepared this year and performed well. Most exams were well conducted.

In future series, candidates should:

- Make sure that they learn the German question words: Wer? Wie? Was? Wo? Wohin? Was für? Wann? Welche?
- Make sure that they understand how to ask a question. Wie findest du...?/ Hast du...?/
- Make sure that they give an opinion: *Ich finde...gut/schlecht. Ich mag... . Ich mag... nicht.* Or the use of **gern** : *ich esse gern.../ ich trinke gern.../ ich sehe gern...*
- Practise giving short descriptions of pictures concentrating on: **where** was this photo taken: *das Foto zeigt../ im Foto sehe ich...ein Klassenzimmer/ ein Café/ einen Supermarkt;* **who** you can see: *ich sehe zwei Mädchen/ eine Familie/ drei Jungen;* **what** they are doing: *sie essen/ sie fahren Rad/ sie reden/ sie machen Sport/ sie spielen Tennis;*

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COMPONENT 2

General Comments

- Attendance registers should be completed and enclosed with the scripts.
- Script envelopes should be completed and the number of scripts contained in each envelope must be indicated.
- Scripts should always be packed in examination number order.
- Scripts should be completed in black ink or ball point pen not pencil. This is stated on the front of the candidate's answer paper.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1** Mostly well done. Some candidates failed to tick two boxes for b and c. Some candidates misunderstood the reference to *zwölf Euro* as a reference to opening hours.
- Q.2** The majority of candidates answered correctly.
- Q.3** Some candidates wrote a description of the photos in the box instead of the letter. Some candidates failed to recognise the difference between positive and negative opinions.
- Q.4** Mostly well done although *Wagen* was often not recognised as a synonym for *Auto*.
- Q.5** A number of candidates answered that the festival took place last week. Austria was often given as the correct answer to **(b)**, unfortunately a number of candidates misunderstood *dabei* in the recording to be Dubai. A number of candidates were not able to identify two details for **(d)**, *Frühstück* was most commonly recognised, *Anreise* and *Unterkunft* less so.
- Q.6** This was challenging for a number of candidates. *die gleichen Interessssen* often lead to candidates answering that 'he is interesting'.
- Q.7** Most candidates answered that the report was about school uniform, although some were not specific enough and only gave school as an answer. Some candidates then gave generic arguments for and against school uniform to which there was no reference in the text.
- Q.8** (b) and (c) were generally well answered. For (a) a number of candidates misheard *Tisch* and gave answers about eating fish. A number of candidates were not specific enough in their answer to (d).
- Q.9** Generally well answered. There was often some confusion about the negative statement in (a) with a number of candidates answering that they both studied together. The most challenging question was (e) where a number of candidates answered that her sister lived in Australia or Iceland or failed to recognise the tense.

Higher Tier

Questions 1, 2 and 3 as per the Foundation paper.

- Q.4** Both sections were generally well answered although some candidates were not specific enough with their answers and a number of candidates did not recognise *Freiwilligenarbeit* or *behindert*.
- Q.5** This was generally well answered, although the distractors of other family members caused some problems. Other candidates were unable to identify the difference between positive and negative opinions.
- Q.6** Generally well answered although *kein Interesse* was often not understood and *Wintersport* and *Wassersport* were commonly confused.
- Q.7** Some candidates answered 'his family would miss him' for **(d)** which was the wrong way round and some were not specific enough in their answer to **(a)**.
- Q.8** Generally well answered, although some candidates lost marks by not being specific enough in their answer or by giving contradictory information.
- Q.9** A number of candidates were confused by the distractors or by not reading the question carefully. *Kunden* was misheard to mean dogs by a number of candidates. The distractors in Section 3 caused problems for a number of candidates who gave answers relating to the opinion of his parents.

Summary of key points

- Extended answers often lead to negating the correct answer and losing the mark.
- Candidates who write in German where an English answer is required fail to gain marks and vice versa.
- Candidates should make clear which answer is intended for marking. Redraw the box if there is ambiguity. The use of arrows often causes confusion.

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COMPONENT 3

General Comments

- Attendance registers should be completed and enclosed with the scripts.
- Script envelopes should be completed and the number of scripts contained in each envelope must be indicated.
- Scripts should always be packed in examination number order.
- Scripts should be completed in black ink or ball point pen not pencil. This is stated on the front of the candidate's answer paper.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Foundation Tier

- Q.1** Mostly well done. A number of candidates wrote 3 answers to (bii) which lost them marks.
- Q.2** Mostly well done.
- Q.3** Mostly well answered. Recognising the link between *Bruder* and *Geschwister* was the main challenge.
- Q.4** Generally well answered although a number of candidates failed to recognise the negative statements.
- Q.5** A number of candidates were not specific enough in their answers and often struggled to identify the time phrase needed to answer (b).
- Q.6** Generally well answered. A number of candidates were unable to identify the answer to (d) and gave answers relating to tearing up tickets, being angry or going to bed.
- Q.7** This was challenging for a number of candidates. Candidates were often not specific enough in their answers. *Anzug* was not generally recognised with many candidates giving answers about swimming costumes or trains.
- Q.8** This was challenging for a number of candidates, especially (b) where many candidates understood *8 Stunden auf den Beinen* to be related to start or finish times. Many students struggled to identify two details for (c), often making educated guesses linked to the word *Produkte*.
- Q.9** As you would expect this was far more challenging for Foundation candidates than Higher ones. At Foundation candidates were often able to pick out keywords but not answer specifically enough to gain marks. At both tiers candidates often lost marks as they gave too much detail for (e) which did not appear in the text e.g. her father is an alcoholic/her father won't let her/she has to look after her father.

Q.10 Translation. A surprising number of candidates were unable to translate *Geschichte*, often translating it as Geography. Some candidates didn't translate the past tense correctly and therefore lost marks. A number of candidates didn't recognise *aber* and often translated it incorrectly.

Higher Tier

Questions 1 and 2 as per Foundation Tier Questions 8 and 9

Q.3 Generally well answered.

Q.4 Generally well answered, with questions (e) and (f) causing the most problems.

Q.5 Mostly well answered.

Q.6 This was challenging for a number of candidates. Candidates were often not specific enough in their answers, especially for (c), (e) and (f).

Q.7 This proved more challenging than the first Literary Text on the paper. Candidates often struggled to identify two details for (a). A number of candidates understood *wieder ihr Bestes gegeben* to mean it was her best or favourite meal. Candidates were often not specific enough in their answer to (g)

Q.8 Generally well answered, although certain parts caused problems. A number of candidates struggled to identify two details to answer **(a)**.

Q.9 A number of candidates were unable to translate the past tense correctly and therefore were not able to access the full range of marks. Some candidates were unable to translate *verdienen* correctly. A surprising number of students were unable to translate *Prüfungen* correctly, with stress/jobs/pressure often being given as an incorrect translation. Others translated it correctly but failed to recognise that *es gab* is past tense. The word *Büro* created a problem for a number of candidates who translated it as bank/shop/café or mechanics.

Summary of key points

- Extended answers often lead to negating the correct answer and losing the mark.
- Candidates who write in German where an English answer is required fail to gain marks and vice versa.
- Candidates should make clear which answer is intended for marking. Redraw the box if there is ambiguity. The use of arrows often causes confusion.
- Candidates seemed well prepared for the Translation section, although careful attention should be paid to different tenses.

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COMPONENT 4

General Comments

The overwhelming majority of centres dispatched scripts directly after the examination. Packages included the attendance register, with candidates' scripts packed in register order. Thanks are due to those working in centres' Examination Offices for their efficiency.

Most candidates adhered to suggested word limits of each task and this year fewer candidates at higher level were significantly over the suggested limits. Although this in itself, is never penalised, it does however increase candidates' opportunity for errors and where this was the case, candidates were not able to access the highest marks for "Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy".

Handwriting was problematic again in some cases this year. What can not be read, can not be marked. Some candidates word processed their answers to avoid problems with illegible handwriting. This, of course, has to be arranged in advance with centres' examinations officers.

As last year, missing "Umlauts" affected communication in some cases (*mochte/ möchte; konnte/ könnte; wurde/ würde; war/wäre; and hatte/ hätte*). Likewise, many candidates did not capitalise nouns.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Foundation

Q.1 Nearly all candidates followed the instruction to write a complete sentence in response to the stimuli, which reflects good training in centres by teachers. Most candidates were able to manipulate *dein/deine* into *mein/meine* although there were still some misunderstandings of this type of stimuli. A minority of candidates made questions out of all the stimuli eg. "*Was denkst du von Schuluniform?*", and this was not penalised where the response contained no major errors. Some candidates are still writing far too much for this question. Writing a short sentence with an accurate verb will gain full marks. Candidates should therefore be discouraged from writing complex sentences for this question. Some candidates wrote a perfectly acceptable response but added extra information which was ambiguous and therefore only allowed them to achieve one of the two marks available. A minority of candidates wrote single word responses without a verb. Such responses can only be awarded a maximum of one mark, if the word is relevant. Most candidates did not recognise that the nouns *Schulfächer*, *Lehrer* and *Hausaufgaben* were plural and therefore, strictly speaking, required a plural verb if the nouns were recycled in the answers. English interference meant that sentences such as *Hausaufgaben ist . . .* were quite common. Some candidates misused *gern* as a verb leading to answers such as "*ich gern Mathe*". As verb inaccuracy is considered to be a major error.

Such responses could not be awarded two marks. “*Uhr/ Stunde*” proved to be problematic for many candidates – any length of time about the school day or homework was invariably “*X Uhre*”.

- Q.2** Most candidates (far more than last year) followed the rubric by giving both information and opinions on all three bullet points listed. In some cases, the coverage of the three bullet points was somewhat uneven – candidates wrote a lot about the weather (although frequent use of “*rainig*” affected their mark for Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy), but less about the tourist attractions, and transport systems in their area. Some candidates were unfamiliar with “*es gibt*” and used “*der ist*” instead. Where candidates omitted one or more of the bullet points, full marks for Communication and Content could not be awarded. At this level it was unusual to see attempts at subordinate word order and simple main clause sentences prevailed. Perfection is not a pre-requisite to gain full marks on this question, as the mark scheme states that responses should be “mainly clear” and may be “occasionally ambiguous”. Those candidates who produced pertinent simple sentences with accuracy inevitably scored higher than those attempted more complex structures.
- Q.3** In contrast to last year, far fewer candidates were thrown by the use of *Sie* in the rubric of question and most covered all three bullet points in their answers, remaining focused on the task and not introducing irrelevant material. Centres seem to be preparing their candidates well in this respect. Equally, candidates were better prepared for answering in different tenses, although candidates were more successful at addressing the future tense than the past. There were better attempts at subordinate word order. Some candidates at this level were unable to use “*man*” consistently and after an initial “*man sollte X machen, um gesund zu bleiben*”, this quickly became *du* + *hit* and *miss* conjugations of the verbs *sollen/ müssen/ können*, or simply resounded in the first person. There was also a surprising confusion between *gesund* (adjective) and *Gesundheit* (noun) – e.g. “*es ist gut für mein gesund*” – given that both forms were present in the question stimulus itself.
- Q.4** Candidates appeared to be more prepared to have a go at all the sentences in this question but were often stymied by their lack of vocabulary. Commonly unknown items were: *stay, country, coast, hot, Austria* (often misread as *Australia*) and *fly*. There were some poor constructions of the perfect and future tenses in (d) and (e), with some using “*ich bin . . . gefahren*” instead of “*wir sind . . . gefahren*” in (d) and some inability to use accurate word order. Candidates coped better this year with formulating the question (What is your favourite country?) although, as already mentioned, most did not know the word for *country* often replacing it with “*Lieblingsausland*”. Messages were often grammatically incorrect and therefore only partially communicated, resulting in many marks at 1 for parts (a) to (c) and 2 at best for parts (d) and (e).

The overwhelming majority of candidates were entered correctly at this level.

Higher

- Q.1** Some of the issues of this crossover question experienced by foundation candidates, apply here too but higher level candidates appeared to cope much better with the task in terms of accuracy and breadth of vocabulary and structures. Most candidates were able to address all aspects of the task.

Q.2 The majority of candidates opted for **2.1** (*“Ferien”*) although candidates scored similar marks regardless of the option they chose.

2.1 Some candidates misread *“Ferien”* for *“Feiern”* but were able to include typical holiday activities in descriptions of various family celebrations. Some candidates did not understand that the formation *“Vor- und Nachteile”* means *“Vorteile” und “Nachteile”*. In the best scripts, candidates addressed this by writing *“X is good/positive because one can / it is ...”* as opposed to *“an advantage of X is Y”* which often led to inaccurate German. The best candidates not only covered both bullet points with relevant information and opinions, but also demonstrated their range of Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy by including past and future holidays, which is relevant to the overall task. Some candidates’ responses to the second bullet point about their ideal holiday were rather short and demonstrated limited understanding of the conditional tense. Candidates should plan for both bullet points in order to create an even balance. Candidates need practice in using the expression *“Spaß Machen”* correctly in a variety of tenses. Many translated with interference from the English: *“das war Spaß”* etc.

2.2 Those who attempted this question often showed an impressive range of vocabulary associated with the topic but were let down by their grasp of sentence structure and grammatical accuracy. This applied to both questions at this level – candidates were able to write at length in their attempts to convey *most/ almost all/ all requirements of the task* (Bands 3, 4 and 5 for Communication and Content) but their lack of grammatical accuracy meant that few candidates achieved the top band for either Communication and Content and Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy as the errors created ambiguity. Consequently many marks fell within Bands 3 and 4 for both criteria.

Q.3 Centres need to be reminded that this is a translation exercise, which requires precision, and not a paraphrasing one. Candidates who paraphrase will preclude themselves from gaining full marks. However, this strategy will allow them to partially convey the message and therefore gain one for the first three sentences and two marks for the remaining two. At Higher Tier, the translation task will be between 50-55 words. Therefore, candidates can expect the five sentences to contain complex structures.

Responses to this question covered the entire range of ability. There were very few answers at the very top of the range and most candidates fell in the middling category. Marks were lost through minor slips such as failing to read the sentences accurately in English before even starting to translate into German and omitting certain words, especially intensifiers.

Sentence 1: Very few candidates knew *“gestern Abend”* and the overwhelming majority had *“letzte Nacht”*, with variant spelling. Most used the perfect tense and were able to invert the auxiliary verb and subordinate the past participle successfully.

Sentence 2: The intensifiers *quite* and *extremely* proved challenging – especially *extremely*, which figured in last year’s translation. Some candidates did not know the German for *difficult*.

Sentence 3: Many candidates misread *so* for *very* (helpful). Some candidates had problems subordinating after “*dass*”, but (surprisingly) not after “*weil*”. The word *helpful* proved challenging for some candidates, with many incorrectly using “*höflich*”.

Sentence 4: *Languages* was not securely known. Some candidates failed to invert after *in my opinion*; and there were many paraphrases for *if you want a good job*, with “*du*” very common, and “*möchte*” for *want*.

Sentence 5: Many candidates knew *future*, but the possible permutation of prepositions for *to university* was not done well – many with just “*zu*”, and some with “*nach*” - which would change the meaning. Some did know how to use the “*um . . . zu*” construction for *to study French*, but spellings of both *French* and *study* were less secure.

The vast majority of candidates were correctly entered at this level.

Summary of key points

- Candidates should be encouraged to write a short sentence with an accurate verb for Foundation **Question 1**.
- Candidates should be encouraged to plan their answers before committing to paper – especially Foundation **Question 3** and Higher **Question 1** and **2**.
- Candidates should organise their writing into paragraphs that clearly address the bullet points of the question.
- Candidates should be encouraged to write the word count at the end of each task.
- Candidates should clearly indicate which option they have chosen in Higher **Question 2** by writing the task number and title to avoid examiner confusion.
- Centres should train their candidates to know that Higher **Question 2** will always have 2 choices but that they must only write about **ONE** of the 2 options.



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