



GCE A LEVEL EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**A LEVEL (NEW)
GERMAN**

SUMMER 2019

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:
<https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?!=en>

Online Results Analysis

WJEC 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.

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.

Component	Page
Component 1	1
Component 2	3
Component 3	8

GERMAN
GCE A LEVEL (NEW)
Summer 2019
COMPONENT 1

General Comments

This was the second year of the new oral exam and the vast majority of candidates rose well to the challenge of the Independent Research Project (IRP). It is striking how well this format fits with candidates' other interests and it is always enjoyable and interesting discussing their IRP. The overall oral standard was high, most candidates were well prepared and centres seem to be settling in well to this new specification.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Most candidates were good at timing their IRP presentations and not exceeding the allotted time. Many understood the need to structure their 2 minute talk to make it clear a range of sources had been used. To score top marks on AO2 it is necessary to demonstrate understanding of the topic drawn from a wide variety of sources. Being too superficial or narrating facts or plots makes it harder to achieve AO2 marks. Similarly, candidates who were able to explain the significance and relevance of their topic to German-speaking countries scored more highly on AO4. Sometimes when the IRP was about a novel, film or TV show, the candidate had to work harder to put the subject in question into the context of German culture or society. To score well on AO4 candidates need to do more than explore characterisation or themes of a book or film. It is important to show how the topic enhances knowledge and understanding of different aspects of German culture or society. It is also essential that the topic has its origins in the German language; it is very evident when candidates have done their research mainly in English or even studied an English novel that happened to be translated into German.

With its emphasis on **independent** research, the IRP is an excellent introduction to a taste of later academic life, and those centres embracing and encouraging their candidates' independence approach the IRP in the spirit in which it is intended.

A good IRP title was often a question and it was clear that many candidates felt passionately about their research and could have spent much longer than the allocated time discussing it. A modern language sits well with any A level, and the IRP really gives candidates the opportunity to explore a subject linked to a German-speaking country in much greater detail than a taught aspect of the syllabus. It was evident that students were going on to study history, psychology, economics, politics and music from the variety of titles presented. Here is a flavour of the range of topics:-

- The influence of Wilhelm Wundt on modern psychology
- The Lidl success story
- Whether the German school system is fair
- Whether Sophie Scholl's legacy is still relevant today
- The effectiveness of the German health system
- Richard Wagner's influence on classical music
- The rise of the far right in Germany and Austria
- Why the German car industry is so successful

The stimulus card led to some high quality discussions and in the main candidates were better prepared this year to ask questions as per the requirement of the mark scheme. It is important that candidates spend some of the 5 minute preparation time considering two relevant and interesting questions they could ask.

Being able to make an informed, rather than blind choice of card benefitted most, although some who chose the Martin Luther card were not as well prepared to tackle it as well as the other topics. Immigration issues and current politics were well handled; knowledge of the German education system and musical heritage in the German-speaking world in some cases less reliable.

Although not allowed to discuss the IRP, those centres with a foreign language assistant definitely gave their candidates the benefit of regular oral scheduling as they were particularly well prepared for the card task.

Centres offering the opportunity to visit German-speaking countries enable candidates to draw on their own experience of a German museum, art gallery or city which is of enormous benefit if discussing a card about German society. This after all covers 50% of the A level themes, and even more if candidates have been able to explore Berlin.

Summary of key points

- Judging from most candidates' level of preparation, the overall state of German teaching appears to be as excellent as ever.
- In order to improve their performance candidates could try to immerse themselves as much as possible in a German context by watching German films, listening to news items or following German social media. It would also be helpful if they took every opportunity to speak German in the classroom.

GERMAN
GCE A LEVEL (NEW)
Summer 2019
COMPONENT 2

General Comments

Component 2 assesses candidates' reading and listening comprehension skills using a variety of authentic resources. Candidates are also required to demonstrate their translation skills, both into English and into German, in Section C of this component.

Comments on individual questions/sections

SECTION A – LISTENING

Q.1-4 are marked according to AO1 where candidates are required to understand and to respond in writing to spoken language drawn from a variety of sources. There are 30 marks available for this section.

- Q.1** Question 1 required candidates to identify which 7 statements from a possible 14 were true. There were 7 marks available. The majority of candidates clearly understood the first listening text well and this task was completed to a high standard. Indeed, the mean score for this question was 6.3.
- Q.2** This task required candidates to complete a summary of listening text 2. There were 8 gaps to be filled in the text and candidates had a choice of 3 possible answers for each gap. There were 8 marks available. Question 2 proved to be challenging for a high percentage of candidates. Indeed, many candidates incorrectly chose *die neuen Medien* to complete the sentence rather than the correct *die Welt*. Many candidates found Question 8 difficult too. Indeed, *Einblick* was a popular choice rather than the correct *Handbuch*. Candidates should be reminded that they are expected to write the correct word in the gap provided and not simply circle their choice of word or, as some candidates did, fill the gap with the letter (a), (b) or (c). The rubric clearly states *Ergänze dann die folgende Zusammenfassung mit dem richtigen Wort*.
- Q.3** Question 3 required candidates to complete the sentence by choosing one of three possible endings. There were 5 marks available. Most candidates performed well in this question. The mean score was 4.7.
- Q.4** This task required candidates to answer the questions set in German. There were 10 marks available. Full sentences were not required. Indeed, sometimes a short phrase or even just one word was all that was required for the candidate to achieve the mark. Candidates who copied exact sentences from the spoken text were not awarded the mark. The rubric clearly states *“Du darfst Wörter vom Hörtext benutzen. Du darfst aber ganze Sätze nicht kopieren”*.

Candidates should be reminded that if a candidate uses an English word in their response, then no mark will be awarded. For this reason, those candidates, who simply wrote Syria as a response for Question 1, were not awarded the mark for that question. In Question 3 many candidates were unable to achieve the 2 marks available because, although they answered the first part of the question *Wie haben sich die Gäste gefühlt.....?*, they did not then answer the second part of the question *Woher wissen wir das?* It is apparent that there are some candidates who continue to struggle with the meaning of some question words, and in particular, *Wie....?* and *Woher ...?* These candidates, of course, have no chance at all of responding appropriately to the question set. It is vital that all candidates know the meaning of all question words.

SECTION B – READING

Q.5 – 8 are marked according to AO2 where candidates are required to understand and to respond in writing to written language drawn from a variety of sources. There are 30 marks available.

- Q.5** This task required candidates to complete the sentences in List A by selecting the correct ending for each sentence from List B. There were 8 marks available. This exercise posed no major problems and the majority of candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of this literary text and were able, therefore, to match the two sentence halves. Questions 1 and 5 proved to be the most challenging. For Question 1 *An diesem Tag is Hans* many candidates chose the incorrect (k) *sehr traurig* as their answer. For Question 5 *Der Vater will seinem Sohn* many chose the incorrect (f) *fleißiger gearbeitet haben* to complete the sentence.
- Q.6** This task required candidates to summarise a short passage of written German. Bullet points were given to assist candidates in this task. There were 7 marks available. This exercise was completed well and most candidates were able to demonstrate that they had understood the text well. The most common error in this exercise was the response for bullet point 2 where many candidates did not make the important point that this was the place where the Berlin Wall had separated West and East Germany. Many candidates also found the last question difficult and were not able to express the fact that Angela Merkel had gone to Mainz this year because that was where the official celebration was taking place.
- Q.7** This task required candidates to find the synonyms for the words given in the written text. There were 5 marks available. Although many candidates performed well in this exercise, too many candidates lost marks because they didn't give the exact synonym. In question (a), for example, the article is not required. Indeed, *der Stadion* does not feature in the text. In Question (e) *finanzieren* is similarly incorrect as *finanziert* is the required synonym in this case. Candidate must give the exact synonym to achieve the mark.
- Q.8** This task required candidates to answer the questions set in German. There were 10 marks available. Full sentences were not required. Indeed, sometimes a short phrase or even just one word was all that was required for the candidate to achieve the mark. Candidates who copied exact sentences from the spoken text were not awarded the mark. The rubric clearly states *“Du darfst Wörter vom Text benutzen. Du darfst aber ganze Sätze nicht kopieren”*. For Question (a) many candidates wrote *Frauen Fahrradfahren beizubringen*. This was not an acceptable answer as candidates needed to make clear that the aim of the project was *Musliminnen (or Migrantinnen) Fahrradfahren beizubringen*.

Many candidates failed to understand that Aysel Kilic had been a translator before she had become a trainer herself and, as a result, they answered this question with the incorrect *Kursleiterin*.

In Question (e) Radfahren zu lernen was not accepted as a valid answer. Candidates had to make the point that Musliminnen (or Mädchen/Frauen) lernen, radzufahren. In Question 8 some candidates responded to the question *Welche Vorteile kann das Radfahren den Migrantinnen bringen?* with *Sport treiben ist gesund*. Whilst this may indeed be a fact, there is no mention of this in the text and the response is, therefore, not considered a valid answer.

SECTION C – TRANSLATION

- Q.9** The translation into English is marked according to AO2 where candidates are required to understand and respond in writing to written language drawn from a variety of sources. The translation into English is divided into 20 sections with one mark allocated per section.

It was pleasing to note how many candidates this year were able to produce very good translations, which not only revealed a good knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, but also displayed an ability to write in fluent, accurate English. Credit was always given to translations, which conveyed the meaning of the German in acceptable English. Those candidates who did struggle with this translation task simply lacked knowledge of even the most basic vocabulary. Words such as *friedlich* and *ausgelassen* proved to be problematic for the majority of candidates. *Die Veranstaltung*, *ernst* and *ihre Zurückhaltung* were generally not known. A particularly common error was for candidates to translate *und auf die Frage nach....* as *and to the question after....*. This is something we would never say in English and, for that reason, such a response was not considered an acceptable translation. Some students failed to translate all the words in the text and, as a result, lost marks. Adverbs, in particular, continue to be regularly ignored. As an example, the word *auch* in the phrase *dass auch fleißige ernste Deutsche* was not translated by some candidates. Similarly, some candidates ignored the *Mit ihnen* in the phrase *mit ihnen die Deutschen*. Teachers should also continue to stress to candidates the need to be accurate when translating from German into English, which means taking note of all tenses, pronouns and other important aspects of language. In this particular translation many candidates lost marks because they translated the tense of the verb inaccurately. As an example, some candidates missed the pluperfect tense in *an diesem erstaunlichen Imagewechsel hatte die Fußball-Weltmeisterschaft 2006*. The passive in the opening sentence *Mehr als 26.000 Menschen aus zweiundzwanzig Nationen wurden befragt,* and also in the final sentence *wird nicht länger die NS-Zeit genannt* were not accurately translated by a high number of candidates. The mean score for Question 9 was 12.4.

- Q.10** The translation into German is marked according to AO3 where candidates are required to manipulate the language accurately in written form, using a range of lexis and structure. The translation into German is divided into 20 sections with one mark allocated per section.

Although there were some very high achieving candidates, who performed extremely well in the translation into German task, a high percentage of candidates performed badly in this task due to not only a lack of vocabulary but also poor basic grammatical knowledge. This task, as usual, differentiated between candidates at this level. The mean score for Question 10 was 10/20. A surprising number of candidates were unable to translate *became* in the first sentence. In this sentence the possessive adjective *their* also proved challenging for some candidates.

Even if they were able to select the correct *ihrer*, many were unable to use the correct ending of the possessive adjective.

Surprisingly some candidates were unable to use the imperfect *sie wollten* and simply wrote the incorrect *wollen* in the sentence *They no longer wanted....* . This error was often repeated in the phrase *which they wanted to visit*. Similarly, too many candidates were unable to use the modal verb *können* in the past tense and so were unable to access the mark for *and they could not do that* . Although examiners ignore minor slips in gender and minor spelling errors, provided there is no ambiguity, mistakes with common verbs and tenses are not considered minor errors and marks are never awarded when these errors occur. It was, however, pleasing to note how many students were able to use relative clauses accurately. Infinitive clauses proved difficult too for many candidates and so clauses such as *to cross the border illegally* and *to demonstrate against their government* were not translated accurately by many candidates. There was also some vocabulary which was generally not known. Candidates should be reminded that if they offer a translation, which conveys the intended meaning and the German is accurate, then they will be awarded a mark. This is far more preferable than leaving a gap. Words which caused particular difficulty this year were those such as *more and more*, *dissatisfied*, *imprisoned*, *a special permit*, *government* and *for such a long time*. *To cross* was also a challenge for some candidates with some believing the required verb to be *kreuzen*. As in the translation into English some candidates fail to translate every word. As examples many candidates did not translate the word *already* in *For that reason some had already* or the word *finally* in the sentence *and finally on the 9th November....* .

Despite the fact that there are many candidates who struggle with the translation into German, it has to be said that there are also many candidates who have performed extremely well in this translation in exercise and it has been a pleasure for examiners to mark such high standards of German at this level.

Summary of key points

Candidates who sit Component 2 of AS German examination in future are offered the following advice

- Candidates should read all questions in the reading and listening comprehension sections carefully, paying particular attention to the question words.
- When responding to questions in the reading and listening sections of the paper candidates should ensure that the personal pronoun and the verb form used in the response are in line with the question.
- Candidates should check how many marks are available for each question and ensure that they give enough detail in their response to be able to access the total number of marks available for that question.
- Candidates should ensure that they do not lift whole sentences from either the reading or listening texts. Material from the texts used in a candidate's response will always need to be manipulated. No marks are awarded for responses which have been completely transcribed from a text, be it listening or reading.

- When translating from German into English candidates should remember that it is often not possible to translate word for word from the original German text. It is essential that once they have completed their translation candidates re-read what they have written to ensure that it reads naturally in English. When proofreading their translation candidates should also ensure that all words from the original text have been translated.
- When translating from English into German candidates should remember that they should check their verbs and word order carefully. If the candidate mis-spells a word, provided there is no ambiguity, the mark will be awarded. A minor slip in gender is also acceptable. Mistakes with verbs, however, are not acceptable and the mark for that section will always be lost.

GERMAN
GCE A LEVEL (NEW)
Summer 2019
COMPONENT 3

General Comments

I would like to start off on a positive note and say well done to all teachers and candidates for all of their hard work in a challenging component. My impression was that students were generally well prepared over the pre-exam period and they were consequently in a strong position to do their best on exam day. Many essays were completed to a high standard and it was obvious that students had had time to study the chosen works carefully, form opinions and then learn how to express them in German.

Comments on individual questions/sections

As last year, candidates tackled a wide range of questions on the prescribed texts. They often had very interesting, insightful things to say which showed a keen appreciation of the films or books studied. Many essays also showed that candidates had made links between what they had learned in the film and literature section of A level and other themes and sub-themes.

The most studied texts, as shown by response rate in the Component 3 exam were *Good Bye, Lenin!*, *Der Vorleser* and *Der Besuch der alten Dame*. Of these, the most popular question was 7b), on the role of Denis Domaschke. High scoring essays dealt with amongst other aspects, Denis' representative function as a West German collaborating and becoming good friends with an East German, Alex Kerner. Their relationship could thus be seen as a microcosm of reunification. Many insightful candidates also commented well on the contrasts between the Denis-Alex vis à vis the Denis-Rainer relationship. Lower scoring essays (on the AO4 side) went no further than a description of Denis and of his practical role in the production of faked *Aktuelle Kamera* episodes.

On the literary side, 6a was also a popular question, dealing with the use of first person narrative in *Der Vorleser*. High scoring essays discussed the implications of Schlink's deliberate choice of using this literary approach e.g. by arguing that through it we got to know Michael's innermost thoughts and feelings, and about how these changed as he grew and matured. Discriminating candidates also argued quite well that we as readers at times needed to maintain a critical distance and not automatically assume him to be always reliable/objective as a narrator, and that due to the use of this perspective we only saw other characters through his eyes. On the other hand, lower scoring essays attempted to retell the story of *Der Vorleser* and ended up being quite descriptive and even irrelevant to the set question.

Many essays, usually the highest scoring ones showed signs of good planning. The 16 page answer booklet has plenty of space and the time allowance includes ample time for initial planning (and post essay checking). Students preparing for this exam would be well advised to see planning and checking as integral parts of the Component 3 process and to practise and develop these as skill areas. An essay is a means of communication and complex ideas need to be well thought out if they are to be well communicated. Some essays also had a lot of sections scored out and a sometimes quite complicated system of footnotes. This was sometimes hard to follow and gave an impression of lack of planning.

Another point to watch out for is that candidates need to write in full sentences. For example there were times when candidates wrote a subordinate clause instead of a full sentence, and that can and did cause confusion. This was especially the case with “sentences” starting with “Obwohl” (which I think candidates were using to translate “However”). When writing an A level exam essay, a formal style is necessary.

An allied point is the use of capital letters. More and more their use may be optional in certain contexts in English, but in written German there are rules which need to be followed for the sake of clarity. For example a capital letter in German may change the part of speech from a verb/possessive adjective to a noun (“sein” and “Sein”). Candidates were of course not penalised for inaccurate use *per se* but if their misuse led to confusion then they might lose out.

Some candidates wrote essays which were excessively long. Generally this is a bad approach as such essays often drift into irrelevance. The suggested length of 300 words is of course a guide, but the questions are designed with this guide in mind, so candidates should aim to write around 300 words. There were essays up to three times the suggested length. In such cases my impression was that candidates could have used their time more productively and would have ended up with a higher score (e.g. if they had spent more time planning what they wanted to write and how they were going to write it rather than doing so much writing). My impression furthermore was that candidates in such cases were trying to say as much as possible about the film/book, no matter how relevant what they were writing was to the question.

- Q.1 (b)** The highest scoring essays dealt in depth especially with the female members of Gregor’s family. Some also dealt with his relationships with other women (e.g. the one in the framed picture).
- Q.2 (a)** Many candidates used this question as a starting point to survey society in East Germany. This was often not only irrelevant (n.b. the question is about the educational system) but also students did so with little reference to the book.
- (b)** The points raised immediately above apply here too. On the positive side many candidates were able to discuss in depth the implications for the Dehnert family and the wider implications of living in such a restrictive society.
- Q.3 (a)** A key word in the question was “alles”. Higher scoring candidates spotted this and used it to discuss the relationship in a wider context and how important other aspects were as well.
- Q.6 (b)** There were some fascinating essays analysing Hannah’s words and their significance. Many candidates made good connections between “Jungchen” being uttered here at the end of the novel and also when she first addressed Michael in this way at the beginning. This led them to discuss the extent to which her view of him had changed (especially in the light of her other words in this brief quote). Less successful essays focussed on Michael, discussing how he had grown up. This failed to take into account the fact that Hannah was saying the words in the quotation.
- Q.7 (a)** Unsuccessful essays surveyed/listed the historical events which had taken place. This suggested candidates had not read the question carefully enough (nor understood fully what an A level essay should look like). Others suggested that it was good to learn about East German history.

Again this did not answer the question, which is about the technique of presenting history on a personal level and more importantly on the personal level of an albeit fictional East German family. There is of course scope for candidates to interpret the essay in different ways as mentioned above (so for example one interpreted “einer ostdeutschen Familie” as “one” (= numerically speaking) as opposed to “an East German family), but the first two cannot be interpreted as answering the set question.

- Q.10 (a)** Many high scoring essays identified how important this event was for Dreyman and for Wiesler. Some candidates also discussed the relevance of suicide and suicide rates in East Germany and what that might mean for a country as a footnote.

Attainment Objectives

This section of the exam is marked against two sets of attainment objectives. It is strongly recommended that teachers (if they don't do this already) make students very aware of what these are as they are the standards by which essays are measured.

AO3 - For the first attainment objective candidates needed to demonstrate that they can “manipulate the language accurately, in written forms, using a range of lexis and structure”. It has three strands relating to grammatical accuracy, range of lexis and structures and then overall style and register. Below are some comments on the first two of these:

Strand one distinguishes especially between “errors” and “basic errors”. The main focus here was the verb, as the most important element in any sentence. Verbs needed to be formed and positioned well in order for the candidate to score a high mark. Some candidates not only did this well but in addition showed the ability to use compound verb constructions accurately (e.g. “would have done”). As the essays involve the candidate's judgement there is plenty of scope for the use of conditional constructions (e.g. Wenn ich Michael wäre, würde/hätte ich.....)

As regards strand 2, many candidates were also able to show that they had a good vocabulary and could use this effectively to express themselves at times with some nuance. Good use of synonyms not only added interest but also demonstrated range of lexis. Furthermore many candidates often used specialist vocabulary that they had learned while studying specific works.

On the other hand there were some often recurring problems with certain words, which are briefly mentioned below:

“*both*” – very often candidates did not distinguish between adjectival use e.g. “*beide Charaktere*” and adverbial use e.g. in the construction “*sowohl.....als auch*”. (n.b. also pronominal use of “*beide*”.)

“*when*” – very often candidates did not distinguish correctly between “*wenn*” and “*als*”.

“*obwohl*” – this contrastive conjunction was often misused.

“*überall*” – this was often misused as a way of summing up to translate the English “over all”

AO4 – For this attainment objective candidates are required to “show knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically and analytically to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken”. A simplified view of the mark scheme could be that higher marks were awarded for showing a “critical analytical appreciation” of the book/play or film, and lower marks awarded for showing “knowledge” of the work. The highest marks were awarded if this critique was done in detail with a lot of relevant supporting evidence.

Showing a relevant critical and analytical appreciation is moving beyond the plot of the film/book/play and discussing the significance of events or aspects contained within it. Being able to comment on the plot of course implies a certain amount of retelling the story, but the balance has to be on giving some kind of critique of the plot in order to attain higher marks.

Summary of key points

- During teaching time, teachers should make sure candidates are fully familiar with the marking criteria as set out in the mark scheme;
- Essay writing needs to be worked at during teaching and learning time. The role of quality teacher feedback in helping candidates develop their technique cannot be overstated;
- During the exam candidates should ensure they read questions carefully and check as they go along that they are answering the question chosen;
- On exam day before starting to write the essays candidates should make time for planning;
- After completing the essay candidates should spend time checking their work carefully.



WJEC
245 Western Avenue
Cardiff CF5 2YX
Tel No 029 2026 5000
Fax 029 2057 5994
E-mail: exams@wjec.co.uk
website: www.wjec.co.uk