



GCE AS EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GERMAN
AS**

SUMMER 2019

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Annual Statistical Report

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COMPONENT 1

General Comments

As a general comment, it is striking to note the progress that candidates clearly make in their AS year. The impressive strength of German teaching is very apparent, not least when we remind ourselves that these candidates were only one year ago at GCSE level.

Communication with centres was efficient as always, despite the challenge presented by a particularly late Easter holiday. It is much appreciated that most centres are very organised, for example by providing a well thought out schedule and practical conveniences such as refreshments and a reserved parking space where necessary. Invigilation provided was excellent and the accommodation was nearly always appropriate, away from noise as much as possible and preparation areas close by. It is helpful when centres produce a schedule that includes a short briefing with all candidates at the beginning of the session to enable the examiner to introduce him/herself. This enables examiners to try and dispel any nerves as much as possible by explaining the exam procedure and showing they really are on the side of the candidate, wanting them to say as much as possible.

Comments on individual questions/sections

The aims of the oral exam are for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of German speaking countries, their ability to understand and respond to a piece of text, and their fluency and spontaneity in expressing views and opinions on selected areas of the specification. Centres prepared candidates well and it is striking that many were able to discuss in more detail cultural aspects of German-speaking countries. Most centres have adapted well to the requirements of the new specification – particularly demonstrating knowledge and analysis of AO4. Overall candidates gained more marks for AO4 than previously. The number of topics to be covered is demanding and those candidates who were able to talk at more than a superficial level achieved a higher score for AO4. It was noticeable that some candidates did not know much about Frankfurt however, thanks to good teaching, they were able to talk about other cities instead. It is worth remembering that AO4 accounts for a third of the marks available and is of equal importance to language accuracy, lexis and idiom.

Most candidates were well prepared with idiomatic phrases which helped them to gain AO3 as well as AO2 marks. “Laut dem Text” and “wir lesen im Text, dass...” were well used. Performance in both A and B cards was very similar, although particularly well handled was ‘Oktoberfest’, for which many candidates demonstrated a genuine enthusiasm and respect for German traditions.

Teachers drawing on their own cultural experiences of German-speaking countries are enabling candidates to use this awareness as a springboard for further discussion. Candidates responded well to the idea that the cards are ‘prompt’ cards, aimed at stimulating wider conversation.

The emphasis is on interaction and transfer of knowledge rather than detailed awareness of every single German/Austrian/Swiss festival or piece of architecture.

Although it is important to demonstrate linguistic understanding for AO2, the best candidates were not fazed if unfamiliar with a particular festival ('Martinstag') or music group ('Woods of Birnam') and were able to discuss other traditions or German music. The best prepared candidates who had the card about the use of computers in schools scored well by showing good insight into the German education system and were able to express insightful opinions backed up with evidence.

It was clear that most candidates had been taught to ask at least one question per card, as per the mark scheme, and some good thought-provoking questions were asked.

Summary of key points

- Discussing German films seemed more challenging than possibly intended; some candidates referred to the film they were studying for Component 3 but did not necessarily have the vocabulary to link it to a general discussion about the German film industry. The use of German in lessons when discussing films is much more helpful than using English. Obviously classroom time is precious so perhaps it would be helpful to recommend candidates watch – and analyse - a range of German films in their own time.
- As in previous years, students who had had the opportunity of visiting Germany benefitted from referring to their own experience of the country, for example German, Austrian or Swiss museums or art exhibitions they had visited, specialities they had tried or festivities they had experienced.

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COMPONENT 2 – LISTENING, READING AND TRANSLATION

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.

For those students who had chosen to study AS German, the questions in Component 2 proved to be very accessible and all questions were attempted by all candidates. This component produced a range of attainment, but there were some notably impressive performances by some candidates, who demonstrated how well they can use the German language at this level.

Comments on individual questions/sections

SECTION A - LISTENING

- Q.1** Question 1 required candidates to identify which statements were true and which false. If the statement was false, candidates were required to correct the statement to achieve the mark. There were 8 marks available. Most marks were lost in this task because candidates simply did not correct the false statements correctly. If a candidate identified the false statement, but did not correct it appropriately, then no mark was awarded. This task proved to be particularly accessible with candidates gaining on average 6 out of the 8 marks available. The most problematic question was (e) as some candidates appeared to struggle with the numbers 5000 and 15,000.
- Q.2 (a)** Question 2 (A) required candidates to answer the questions set in German. There were 5 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 transcribed exact sentences from the spoken text, were not awarded the mark. Candidates found questions (b) and (d) to be the most challenging. In Question (d) some candidates answered the first part of the question *Was hat Christoph an der Uni nicht dabei gehabt?* but failed to then answer the second part of the question *und welches Problem hat das für ihn verursacht?* Candidates must take care to answer both parts of the question if they are to gain the two marks available for such questions. This was a common error.
- (b)** Question 2 (B) required candidates to complete the sentence by choosing one of three possible endings. There were 5 marks available. The majority of candidates performed extremely well in this question and the average mark achieved was 4 out of a possible 5 marks. Indeed, this question proved to be the most accessible question of the whole paper.

- Q.3 (a)** Question 3 (A) required candidates to summarise a short passage of spoken German. Bullet points were given to assist candidates in this task. There were 6 marks available. Most marks were lost in this question because candidates again failed to give enough details in their response, despite the fact that in this question it clearly stated in all bullet points *Gib zwei Details*.
- (b)** Question 3 (B) required candidates to answer the questions set in German. There were 6 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 transcribed exact sentences from the spoken text were again not awarded the mark. Only a few candidates were able to answer question (c) *Woher stammt das Passwort „qwertz“? Tastatur* was known by only a small number of candidates.

SECTION B – READING

- Q.4 (a)** Question 4 (A) required candidates to find the synonyms for the words given in the written text. There were 4 marks available. Although many candidates performed well in this exercise, some candidates were unable to find the synonyms for *“üblichen”* and *“sorgt”*. Candidates need to take care that they give the exact synonym in their response. Some candidates wrote phrases when these were simply not required and thereby lost the mark. The synonym must be exact to gain the mark.
- (b)** Question 4 (B) required candidates to summarise a short passage of written German. Bullet points were given to assist candidates in this task. There were 6 marks available. Some candidates continue to find some question words such as *Wer?* and *Wie.....?* difficult.
- Q.5** Question 5 required candidates to complete the sentences in List A by selecting the correct ending for each sentence from list B. There were 10 marks available. Candidates performed well in his exercise. The average mark for this question was 7 marks out of a possible 10. The most difficult question for candidates in this Question was (3).
- Q.6 (a)** Question 6 (A) required candidates to select the correct word from the list given to complete each sentence appropriately. There were 5 marks available. However, despite the fact that the rubric clearly states that the candidate should *ergänze den folgenden Teil des Texts mit dem richtigen Wort* some candidates still used letters to fill the gap or simply circled (a), (b) or (c) on the list of words given. Candidates must follow the rubric and write the word in the blank given. The most common error in this task was Question 3 where candidates chose the incorrect *wohnte* to complete the sentence.
- (b)** Question 6 (B) required candidates to answer the questions set in German. There were 5 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. This question was generally answered well by the candidates. In Question (b) many candidates missed the fact that Heidi’s hobby was reading, probably because they failed to recognise the past tense of *lesen*.

As a result, many suggested that Heidi's hobby was teaching her younger siblings. In Question (c) most candidates answered the question set by saying that in 1884 Johanna Spyri's son had died or her husband had died. Only a very small number of the more able candidates were able to make the point that she had lost both her son and her husband in 1884.

SECTION C – TRANSLATION

Q.7 Question 7 required candidates to translate a passage from German into English. There were 20 marks available. It was pleasing to note how many candidates 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. In this translation words such as “*fremde*”, “*ungewöhnliche*” and “*bereits*” were problematic for some candidates. “*Anstieg*”, “*erforschen*”, “*bewundern*” “*einladen*” and “*berichten*” were generally not known by many of the candidates. Candidates should be reminded to pay particular attention when translating verbs to ensure that they use the correct tense in English.

Q.8 Question 8 required candidates to translate four sentences from English into German. Each sentence had five elements, each worth one mark and there were, therefore, 20 marks available. The main topic area for the translation this year was Education and Employment Opportunities, in particular work and travel opportunities. The case system, word order, tenses and adjectival endings were some of the aspects of grammar tested in Question 8 this year. As in previous years many candidates found Question 8 very challenging. Too many candidates performed badly in this task due to a lack of basic grammatical knowledge. Indeed, it is disappointing to see how many candidates still cannot use, for example, possessive adjectives.

- (a) The most common errors in the first translation included wrong word order in both the main and the subordinate clause. Some candidates were unable to translate the common verb to spend. In many cases to spend became *spenden*.
- (b) It was particularly surprising to see how few candidates were able to translate “would prefer”. Disappointing too was the number of candidates who believed that to look for is *suchen für*. Only the better candidates were able to use the Accusative Case in this sentence.
- (c) Many candidates found this sentence difficult as they were unable to use a subordinate clause accurately. Some candidates were unaware of the difference between *kennen* und *wissen*.
- (d) Many candidates struggled with vocabulary such as *dangers* and *addiction*.

It continues to be disappointing to see how many AS Level candidates still fail to use capital letters for all nouns when writing in German.

Summary of key points

Candidates who will sit Component 2 of the Eduqas 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.
- 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.
- Candidates should ensure that they have translated every word in both the translation into English and the translation into German. Attention should also be paid to the tenses of all verbs.
- Having completed the translation into English, candidates should always re-read their translation to ensure that it reads naturally in English.

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COMPONENT 3

General Comments

This report starts off with initial general remarks about the essays which candidates wrote this year, and will try where possible to put this into “historical” perspective (bearing in mind how candidates fared in previous years). It will then move to the more specific, by looking at the essays through the lens of the mark scheme and how it was applied. Throughout there are suggestions (implicit and explicit) for teachers which it is hoped will in turn help future candidates.

This is the third year that exams have been set and sat in AS German using the current specification. The marks awarded show a year on year improvement. It may well be that centres are getting better at teaching film and literature. As last year, teachers are clearly focussing their efforts on film (n.b. there was only one essay submitted on a work of literature).

Many essays showed signs of good planning. Such planning serves to focus the written work and keep it relevant to the question. It is therefore recommended that teachers continue to reinforce this in their lessons while preparing students for the exam so that they do not just “jump straight in” after opening the exam paper. There is plenty of time within the seventy-five minutes allowed for candidates to think about what they are going to write and how they are going to write it. A well-planned essay has an obvious shape and “direction of travel”, and if done well this attracts better marks. The converse is also true.

Allied to the above is the length of the essay. Some essays gave the impression that the candidate wanted to say as much as possible (relevant or not) about the chosen film or book. Although candidates are not penalised for exceeding the word limit of 250 words (which is of course only a guide), there is a danger that such essays may drift into irrelevance. Questions are designed to produce a 250-word answer, so candidates should bear this in mind when planning their answer. Another point that should be added is that candidates should also allow time to check their work thoroughly after they have “finished” writing. The longer they spend writing, the less time they have left to check the quality of what they have written. Overlong essays often give the impression of not being carefully checked over.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Of the films studied, Good Bye, Lenin! was the one which had most essays written on it. The overwhelming majority of these candidates opted for question 4a, where they had to assess the suitability of the film’s title. Many students wrote interesting, insightful essays in response, especially about the “goodbyes” in the film (e.g. to the end of a way of life in the East and to the death of Christiane), the use of English in the film’s title and the significance of Lenin (both as a representative of communism and in the context of the cinematographically striking scene where his statue was whisked away by helicopter towards the end of the film).

The second most popular question was 6a, where candidates had to comment on the extent to which they could sympathise with Hardenberg in the film Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei.

This question was initially formulated due to the ambiguities inherent in Hardenberg as a person. There were some reflective essays which dealt with the degree to which Hardenberg was a victim of the amateur tactics employed by the Edukators, and on the other hand the extent to which he deserved his fate. Some of the most interesting essays considered Hardenberg's manipulative side as well and whether anything he said could be believed. Was he really a 68er?

The least popular film was Die Welle. This is a fine film and very age-appropriate to AS students. In my teaching experience I have found that students respond very favourably to it. I would therefore urge teachers who do not know this film to watch it and also to consult the teaching resources which are available on the EDUQAS website. There are also many more teaching resources available online.

Mark scheme A03

For this Assessment Objective, candidates needed to demonstrate that they can “manipulate the language accurately, in “written forms, using a range of lexis and structure”. The three strands within each band relate to grammatical accuracy, range of lexis and structures and then overall style and register. These strands need to be worked on over the year(s) of study, but it is worth highlighting a few relevant points. Familiarity with these is essential if the candidate is to have a good chance of scoring the maximum 20 marks for the band.

The mark scheme distinguishes between significant and minor errors. As the verb is the most important element in any sentence then it has to be properly formed each time. Failure to do so constitutes therefore a significant error. This is especially true for common verbs (e.g. sein, haben, gehen), so teaching should especially be directed at these verbs. As in previous years there were errors in conjugation of present tense forms as well as errors in past tenses (i.e. perfect or imperfect verb forms of some common verbs). Worthy of separate mention are verbs such as “konnte” for “könnte”, and “wurde” for “würde”. Omission of vowel modification makes a big difference to the meaning communicated.

Another point regarding verbs is their positioning. At AS level candidates should know about inversions in main clauses and verb position in subordinate clauses. Clearly teachers will also have gone to great lengths teaching their students about subordinating and coordinating conjunctions. It seems that despite this some candidates (even some high scoring ones) got them mixed up. For example, some candidates with otherwise almost error-free grammar did not send the verb to the end of a clause starting with “weil”. Allowing for checking time (as mentioned above) once the essay has been written on the day of the exam would hopefully minimise the risk of these kinds of errors.

On the positive side, examples of accurate language which scored well for A03 included those using complex structures such as sentences with subordinate and relative clauses; conditional clauses; infinitive clauses with “zu”; idiomatic structures (sich interessieren für). At AS level this may sound like a tough call, but students can be helped in class to learn and use a few relevant stock phrases which can be used and reused in this kind of essay (e.g. Wenn ich an Hardenbergs Stelle wäre, würde ich.....).

Mark scheme A04

The other attainment objective, which also carried twenty marks, was AO4. Marks were awarded according to the candidate's ability to “show knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically to” a German language book or film. A simplified view of the mark scheme could be that higher marks were awarded for showing a “critical appreciation”, and lower marks awarded for showing “knowledge” of the work.

Showing a critical 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 implies a certain amount of retelling the story, but the balance has to be on giving some kind of critique of the plot.

The highest scoring essays answered the question as set in the question paper (not the one the candidate would prefer to answer) with a good standard of language i.e. relevance and accuracy.

To summarise, the highest marks awarded for A04 were for essays where candidates made relevant points about the film and backed these points up with what the mark scheme identifies as “evidence” (i.e. details from the film or book). These backed up points were then developed and connected together to form a clear argument. Obviously not everyone can gain the top mark, but bearing the above points in mind should help all candidates.

Summary of key points

- On the whole there were some interesting essays which made for enjoyable reading. Candidates had often spent time pondering the deeper significance of aspects in the works studied and were often able to articulate this quite well. This is an achievement for candidates one year after GCSE.



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