



GCE A Level Examiners' Report

German
A Level
Summer 2024

Introduction

Our Principal examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each component.

This report opens with a 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 then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.¹

The information found in this report provides valuable 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 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 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the 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 and PRS (eduqas.co.uk)

¹ 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.

Exam Results Analysis	Eduqas provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
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.edugas.co.uk/
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Executive Summary

This year, candidates have demonstrated that they are familiar with the format of all three Components. The vast majority of candidates attempted all questions on all Components and good attempts were made at all question types.

Principal Examiners were pleased with candidate performance in both the productive and receptive skills, in particular when writing essays for Component 3 and in effectively discussing their individual areas of interest for their IRP.

The Principal Examiner for Component 1 notes that the topics chosen for the Independent Research Project were varied and interesting, with clear evidence of engagement in the research candidates have carried out. Equally, the quality of responses for Component 3 was high, with good insights and interesting points of view effectively given.

It should be noted that candidates seemed to struggle more with the translation into English than that into German this year, largely attributed to difficulties with the grammar. Candidates performance in the translation into German was much improved on last year and the Principal Examiner for Component 2 was pleased with the standard of comprehension responses, especially for Listening questions.

Areas for improvement	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
Translation into English	Practice translation skills	Past papers Grammar list in specification
Word count on Component 3	Practice introductions and conclusions, as well as condensing ideas into the 300 word guide	OER available on the subject sites

GERMAN

GCE A level

Summer 2024

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 assesses candidates' ability to respond to written text for the independent research project and also on the stimulus card. AO3 assesses the accuracy of language, pronunciation and intonation and also linguistic range, idiom 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, for example history; politics; business; medicine; science; environmental studies; literature and film. Sport, particularly football, again seemed to be an especially popular research topic this year. The independent nature of this study task is excellent preparation for university and most candidates rise very well to the challenge.
- Overall the standard of German this year was especially high. Candidates had clearly been very well prepared for the stimulus card. A high level of quality German teaching is evident in candidates' ability to talk convincingly particularly about the stimulus card.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Candidates seemed to embrace the Independent Research Project in the spirit in which it is intended. There was genuine passion, interest and enthusiasm evident in many of the oral exams. There were many interesting explorations of German history, and the best candidates linked their research to modern German-speaking culture, offering an evaluation and explanation of the relevance of their historical insight.
- Candidates were good at keeping to the two-minute time limit. The best did not fall too far short of the two minutes. A lot less than two minutes suggests more could be said and is probably lacking insight. Many candidates scored very well on this task as they gave a clearly structured, interesting, well evidenced presentation. 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. However, some candidates were not able to follow up their presentation findings so convincingly in the discussion, which is worth 50% of the whole speaking exam. Part of the candidates' preparation for the oral exam should be considering questions on their chosen topic. 10 AO4 marks are available for being able to express insight – not just narrate - into an aspect of German-speaking culture. For example, German festivals is a fairly popular choice of topic. There is a big difference from being able to explain the historical origins and regional varieties of Christmas markets, to simply saying you can buy *Glühwein* at a market. Communicating how and why such festivals are popular, and how they fit in with living in German-speaking culture gain more AO4 points.

- Once again, the stimulus card led to some high-quality discussions, in several cases at an impressively sophisticated level. The best candidates are able to engage back and forth and produce natural interaction, reacting to the examiner's response and developing the conversation further.
Importantly, most candidates had spent 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 given the opportunity to have a look at a choice of two. Some candidates found it difficult to choose, and given the high quality this year, suggests they were well prepared in the variety of topics on the syllabus! To gain AO4 marks, candidates need to remember to root their answers from the perspective of German-speaking countries rather than the UK, for example how German-speaking teenagers would find life without social media, rather than the candidates themselves in the UK.
- In terms of AO3 points – linguistic accuracy and range – the top candidates were able to express themselves convincingly using a variety of structures and complex language. Avoiding anglicised sentence structure and idiom is key to the top grades. Achieving a modern languages A Level means candidates can manipulate language competently at a mature, abstract level.

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COMPONENT 2 LISTENING, READING AND TRANSLATION

Overview of the Component

- Stimulus material is in German, based on the two themes at A level: social issues and trends and political, intellectual and artistic culture. Section A: Listening Questions include multiple choice, gap-fill answers, summary/assimilation style questions and comprehension questions in German. Section B: Reading 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 skills in AO1 and AO2 with a maximum 60 marks. Section C: Translation assesses AO2 and AO3 skills. Two unseen passages: one from English into German and one from German into English are both divided into 20 sections with a maximum mark of 40. 100 marks maximum in total.
- This component caused no major problems for the majority of candidates. In sections A and B, candidates achieved very high marks, whereas the translations seemed to be more difficult, especially the translation into English where grammar and vocabulary were the main challenge. This was a shift from last year's exam where the translation into German posed more difficulties. This year there were some very sophisticated translations into German.
- Most candidates had been very well prepared and have shown particularly good listening skills.

Comments on individual questions/sections

- Q.1** The multiple-choice listening task was mostly completed successfully. Candidates should be reminded to write the letters clearly into the boxes provided to avoid ambiguity.
- Q.2** Most candidates achieved high marks here. If there were slight spelling mistakes (*Feiermeiler*) the marks were awarded. However, if it changed the meaning, the mark was not given. In the case of two details needed in one question, nearly all candidates gave them correctly. The candidates were able to rephrase and interpret some of the answers.
- Q.3** Multiple choice was nearly always correct. On rare occasions c) and e) had some different answers.
- Q.4** Was mainly successful. The answers for '*Was hat die Probleme verursacht?*' were quite narrow. '*es gibt nicht genug Personal*' or '*Personalprobleme*'. Many other reasons were given by the candidates (i.e. *Sicherheitsprobleme*) but they were not accepted.
The answers in Q5 were sometimes straight lifted from the text: '*in andere Jobs getrieben*'. Candidates should be reminded not to only copy directly from the text. In Q6 and Q7 various answers were accepted for 2 details each as long as they were linked to the overall expected answers.

- Q.5** The reading extract '*mein Leben zwischen Moschee und Minirock*' provided no problems and the majority of responses were correct.
- Q.6** Finding synonym words in the text was in most cases successful. For (e) we accepted another word: '*feststellen*' and (f) could say: '*kleiner Ausflug*' or just '*Ausflug*'. On some occasions the candidates did not get the synonyms for (g) and (h).
- Q.7** Most candidates achieved high marks in the reading passage about the '*Glienicker Brücke*'. If the candidate placed the correct cross in the box but did give a correction of the sentence with inaccurate German, but the meaning was understood, the mark was still awarded. The candidates should not copy the sentences from the text.
- Q.8** The responses to reading text 3 were largely successful. Q3: there were some variations to the boss' response: '*böse*', could also be '*wütend, schockiert, sauer*'. Section 6 which asked about the situation on the job market for women, accepted 2 details. Some candidates named the same situation in different words. Although it was a double question: '*woher wissen wir das*', not everybody expanded on it. Section 7 asked for one detail about life changes for a young mother, and most candidates gave 2 details. Only one mark awarded. Section 9 expected '*einen Teilzeitjob in einem Büro*'. However, the text also mentioned that she would like to continue working in the '*Logistikbranche*' and this answer was accepted.
- Q.9** The range of marks achieved in this section was wide. Some candidates had a very good grasp of the translation, others had difficulties mainly in recognising the key vocabulary linked to the theme of Reunification: 6: '*gemeinsame Währung*', 8: '*Währungsunion*', 11: '*Enttäuschung*', 12 '*Lebensmittelpreise*', 16 '*Westwaren*', 18 '*Marktwirtschaft*', 19 '*globaler Wettbewerb*'. The terms '*Ostprodukte*' and '*Westwaren*' clearly refer to the East and West German products and not all candidates named them as the goods referring to Germany and not perhaps other countries. Marks were still awarded when the link to west/east Germany was not given but just translated as East/ West products. Section 9: '*Schockerlebnis*' had many variations in the translation, and we accepted most (shocking experience, event, shock of life). Equally, the word for '*Euphorie*' in section 10, clearly would mean euphoria, but also happiness and excitement. Some of the verbs were harder for some to translate such as 2: '*erwarten*', which means wait for or expect; 5: '*drängen*' for which we accepted many variations such as gathered, swarmed, assembled, crowded; 6 '*ausgeben*': to distribute or issued. Here the tense posed a difficulty. '*Sollte ausgegeben werden*' (6): should be given out, was supposed to be given out, but not was expected / meant to be given out. Another challenging verb was in section 18: '*bewähren*'= to prove themselves. Some alternative verbs were accepted. Some time indicators, such as 4: '*vor*' - before the 1. July were missed or 7: '*pünktlich um Mitternacht*.' The conjunctions '*denn*' in section 10 and '*da*' in section 19 both mean because or as. Section 13: '*zum Teil*' was sometimes omitted or falsely translated. We accepted 'in some cases, in parts and in part'.
- Q.10** The translation into German appeared to be a bit easier for some candidates and few excelled with flawless translations into German with an authentic tone. There were a number of 17-20 marks.

In section 1 the verb 'to get married' produced some variations in translation: '*verheiraten sich*' and similarly in section 5: 'marriage' could be *Ehe, Hochzeit* with prepositions '*denken an*' and '*über*'. The sections 6,7,8 referred to the verb 'planen' which takes 'zu' & infinitive '*zu studieren, zu finden, zu ziehen*'. If a candidate missed all ,zus only one mark was subtracted. The adjective 'excited' in section 9 had different variations: '*begeistert, gespannt, aufgeregt, sind gespannt*'. The verb ,decide in section 12 was challenging for some. The section 13' world trip' had many variations accepted. Noticeable was that the last section 20 : 'to avoid having to get divorced later' posed some difficulty for some. Expected was: '*um eine Scheidung später zu vermeiden*' or '*um zu vermeiden, später geschieden zu werden.*'

In summary, the candidates did very well in section A and B. In section C, it appeared that the translation into English (Q9) was slightly harder than translation into German (Q10). In general, the marks achieved in both questions were on a similar par. For example, if a candidate achieved 12 marks for Q9, they also gained around 12 for Q 10. Rarely was there a big difference: i.e. Q9: 4 marks, Q10: 15 marks. The translations into English (9) contained some unusual words (*sich bewähren, sich drängen*) and candidates needed to be careful to pay attention to 'small' conjunctions such '*doch, leider, denn, da, kaum*'. The vocabulary around German unification should have been familiar to A-level candidates, but some failed to recognise key words such as '*Währungsunion, Marktwirtschaft, globaler Wettbewerb*'

Some translations into German were outstanding and demonstrated a very strong command of German lexis and grammar, especially in the last sentence of the translation. Candidates need to be reminded of the use of 'zu+ infinitive' in consecutive sentences and some of adjectival endings in the Dative.

The practice of proof reading and avoiding anglicised phrases needs to be emphasised.

A very pleasing result overall for most students and some centres stood out with marks of 92-99/ out of 100.

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COMPONENT 3 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 the course of their study. As in previous years centres generally chose to teach a written work and a film. The most popular combination numerically speaking this year was Schlink's novel *Der Vorleser* and Becker's film *Good Bye, Lenin!*

The essays are marked according to two assessment 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. A neat summary of this is : ideas.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Overall, candidates performed very well this year and wrote some fascinating essays. Clearly 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. An example of this is in question 6a, where a number of interesting essays went beyond discussing the more obvious shame of Hanna regarding her illiteracy.

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

Linguistic observations

- Very often the difference between a Band 3 and Band 4 mark is to do with verbs, especially forming/conjugating, and positioning the verb. Teachers would be well advised to make this a particular focus in preparing their students for this paper, especially with the more common verbs. An example of good exam practice might be a particular candidate who underlined every verb in their essay. This might have helped them get them right (it certainly seemed to), by providing a focus when doing the post-essay check.
- A clever, economical approach adopted by many candidates was repeating language across the two essays. Essays are marked individually for each AO, so using the same or similar phrases e.g. "*Erstens muss erwähnt werden, dass...*" in essay 1 and essay 2 is a perfectly good idea if used correctly.

- The idea of “feeling” was especially important in question 6a, as it dealt with the role played by shame in Schlink’s novel. Candidates often mixed up the reflexive and transitive uses of the verb, e.g [sic] “*Ich fühle mich Scham.*”
- In a similar vein, “to lie” and “to lie to”, were also key ideas in question 7. Candidates were not always able to express the idea of lying to someone accurately. Teachers would be advised to focus on the correct transitive use of the verbs “(jemanden) *belügen*” and “(jemanden) *anlügen*” and the intransitive “*lügen*”. This is a bit tricky, but when used in a context (e.g. a phrase or sentence), students would find it easier to remember.
- Candidates should use information in the questions consistently in their essay, e.g. genders. In the wording of question 7a, “*Raketen-Leitmotiv*” is clearly identified as neuter. This should be replicated in the essay.
- Another example although not so clear is “*Generation*”. In the wording of the question this is dealt with in the plural (“*reagieren*” of course has the plural flection) but in their essays candidates dealt with each generation separately. This needs to be reflected in the verb formation.
- Students should also be reminded how to express the idea of “through/throughout” (e.g. through/out the book). “*Durch*” can’t be used. “*Im Lauf des Buchs/Films*” or “*im ganzen Film*” would get the idea across.

General observations

The points made above relate more to AO3. What follows is more relevant to the other objective, AO4.

- The highest scoring essays generally tended to be well structured and directly focussed on the set question. This of course comes down to good planning before starting to write, and good checking after finishing.
- What didn’t work so well is essays with rehearsed recyclable introductions. These were often too long and not focussed on the question.
- For an essay of 300 words only a short introduction is necessary. Teachers should advise their students to write around 25 words. This introduction should be pithy if possible and allude briefly to what follows.
- The conclusion should also be short and not just a restatement of what comes before. As what has been written should of course be alluded to, candidates are advised to use synonyms to avoid repetition. A useful word limit for a conclusion is also around 25 words.
- Another feature of high scoring essays this year was succinctness. Although 300 words is “only” the guide, normally candidates would be advised to stick to this. Longer essays often became repetitive and/or irrelevant. More concision would also allow time for the all-important planning and review (for which I would allow 15 minutes per essay).
- Quotations – a good essay doesn’t have to have a quotation. On the other hand, a well-chosen, relevant quotation can be effective and provide support to points made by candidates. On the whole this was not very successful, so my advice to teachers would be to ask their candidates to use indirect quotations (as these show good knowledge of the work) and only use direct ones sparingly.
- Although many candidates could do so well, I often felt that many did not write in full sentences. This may well reflect current language and everyday communication styles. However, in an exam situation like this, what is written must make sense and communicate information in line with the set question. Clarity is everything.
- The same could be said for punctuation. Capitalisation is an important feature of German writing conventions. A third person plural pronoun should not be written with a capital “s” as it may be ambiguous. All nouns must of course be capitalised.

Comments on individual questions

Q.1 Franz Kafka *Die Verwandlung*

A number of centres studied Kafka's work. Most candidates went for option b), which dealt with Gregor's humanity, in comparison with the other characters. Many candidates were able to make good points about how Gregor had retained his humanity whereas others, especially family members, had not. Candidates had obviously taken time to consider aspects and implications contained in this short work and were able to communicate them well.

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

All candidates studying this work opted for the first option, dealing with why figures in König's book chose to stay in East Germany, despite the disadvantages. Some clear analytical skills were in evidence in the essays and candidates showed some very interesting insights.

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

Although this work dates back to the middle of last century it is still studied by many at A level. Candidates did essays on both questions, although option a) was the more popular. It dealt with Dürrenmatt's description of his work as a tragicomedy. Higher scoring essays went beyond identifying and evaluating tragic and comic elements and focussed on the effects of the combination of these two elements. Some candidates even finished off with stating how they would categorise the play and gave reasons for this categorisation.

Q.4 - no areas to highlight.

Q.5 - no areas to highlight.

Q.6 Bernhard Schlink *Der Vorleser*

The overwhelming number of essays written dealt with option a). This was about "Scham". Successful essays commented on Hanna's shame, and how it developed in the course of Schlink's work. They also discussed and evaluated Michael's shame, and the significance of shame in German post-war society. All of this meant some fascinating reading.

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

Becker's film remains a very popular work for A level German students. Candidates wrote thoughtful essays on both questions. However, most essays were generated by option b), which deals with the effect of the *Wende* on different generations. The best essays often started off with analyses of each generation, as depicted in the film, and then focussed on Alex. High scoring essays considered his ambivalent response to the changes.

Q.8 - no areas to highlight.

Q.9 - Hans Weingarten: *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei*

Roughly half of the candidates studying this film chose each option. The first option was about the period in the film spent in the Alps. Some interesting points were made about why this was so important in the film. The other option was about the motivation of the main characters. The highest scoring essays dealt with how the chosen character's motivation changed and why.

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

Although some candidates chose the first option, most opted for option b), which dealt with the atmosphere in the film.

Candidates were asked to provide reasons for why they did or did not agree with the statement in the question. The highest scoring essays were able to identify and discuss not only the atmosphere of fear and mistrust caused by the Stasi in E.German society, but also the atmosphere of fear and mistrust within the Stasi itself.

Q.11 - no areas to highlight.

Q.12 - no areas to highlight

Supporting you

Useful contacts and links

Our friendly subject team is on hand to support you between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: 02922404297

Email: languages@wjec.co.uk

Qualification webpage: [AS/A Level German](#)

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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