



AS

German

7661/3 Speaking

Report on the Examination

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General points and administration

The number of entries for this examination was fairly small. Most students were again well prepared for the tests and were highly motivated to talk about the themes they had studied. Examiners thought that, overall, the standard had slightly improved from last year.

Uploading audio files and documentation from centres onto the media platforms generally worked well and the quality of recordings was good. Some centres uploaded their tests rather late which sometimes caused delays for the marking process. Most teacher-examiners observed the instructions for announcing individual students and clearly stated which stimulus cards each student had chosen.

Visiting examiners reported that students reacted well to conversing with a person unknown to them and seemed to enjoy the experience of demonstrating their knowledge and language skills. Arrangements at centres and accommodation for the speaking tests were suitable and the required invigilators and chaperones were provided.

Teacher-examiner conduct

Once again, students' performances and the resulting marks were influenced by teacher-examiners' conduct. Many teachers conducted the tests very well; they provided good opportunities for students to complete the tasks and achieve good scores in all Assessment Objectives. As in previous years, there were, however, widely observed shortcomings in teacher-conduct which often had a negative impact on marks, especially for AO2 and AO4.

- Many teachers were still too reluctant to follow-up and develop students' responses; instead, they accepted points made without inviting further explanation, clarification or views. Following-up on students' replies with unpredicted questions or prompts requires students to show their ability to react spontaneously and opens access higher AO1marks.
- Students were often allowed by their teacher-examiners to deliver monologues about the card material and were not sufficiently engaged in a conversation about the stimulus card. Reading out long prepared statements in answer to the printed questions often limited marks for AO1 and AO2.
- Teachers often asked many closed questions. Too many *Denkst du, dass...* or lengthy *oder* questions not only use up valuable time but are also likely to suggest ideas to students and present vocabulary to them.
- Insufficient exploitation of the stimulus card was still evident in many tests. Students are best served to achieve good AO2 marks if they are invited to discuss various aspects of the card content in greater detail and thereby show full understanding of the stimulus material. This cannot be achieved if students are allowed to simply read out information on the card without further probing by the teacher. The printed questions must, therefore, be interspersed and supplemented with more than one additional question and students responses should be followed up appropriately. As in previous years, some teacher-examiners asked the three questions on the card in succession and accepted the student's responses without further exploration and development.

- Many teacher-examiners failed to steer the wider discussion sufficiently onto matters relating clearly to the German-speaking world and thus did not ensure access to high AO4 marks. Students should be invited to support factual information with examples and evidence from a German-speaking country; this needs to happen especially with sub-themes on Cards A-F with their more universal content. Personal or general questions such as “Do you want to get married?”, “How many hours do you spend online?” or ‘How important is teaching music at school?’ cannot attract AO4 marks.
- In the wider discussion teachers often restricted themselves to questions about facts about a German-speaking society or culture without providing chances for the student to evaluate and comment on facts and draw conclusions all of which is part of the AO4 criteria. Questions about reasons, importance, impact or consequences are useful for fulfilling these criteria.

The timings for the test were mostly observed i.e. between 6 and 7 minutes for each card and a total time of 14 minutes. Centres are reminded that anything produced by students beyond these times cannot be considered for assessment and that students’ questions after 7 and 14 minutes respectively cannot be credited.

As in previous years, a number of teachers consistently alternated between the *du* and *Sie* address during the test. This is not good practice. Using *du* throughout the test is perfectly acceptable; the questions on the stimulus cards can and should be adapted if the informal address is used.

Students’ performance

AO1: The majority of students spoke with good or acceptable fluency. Marks in the lowest bands were quite rare. Many students demonstrated independence by extending their responses of their own accord. Teacher-examiners could often have provided better opportunities for spontaneous answers through additional follow-up questions.

AO2: Overall, students showed good understanding of the stimulus materials and many were able to explain information on the cards in their own words. Highest marks were achieved where students gave additional explanations, evaluations or views on individual aspects. In centre-conducted tests, many students were, however, prevented from being awarded high AO2 marks because teachers did not exploit and discuss the cards in detail. Just one additional question between the printed ones, as heard in many card discussions, was hardly sufficient for exploiting the stimulus content satisfactorily. Students usually asked valid questions of their own but centres are reminded that questions must contain a conjugated verb and that repeats from either a printed question or an earlier question from the teacher cannot be credited and a deduction of one AO2 mark is implemented.

AO3: As in previous years, students’ grammatical proficiency varied widely, but examiners felt that the overall standard had improved slightly from last year. Marks below 5 were again rare and a good number of students achieved full AO3 marks. Main areas of difficulty were word order in subordinate clauses, verb conjugation and perfect tense structures. Despite these, most students succeeded in communicating

their ideas successfully. Pronunciation was generally of a good standard and there were some impressive performances where students spoke with a near authentic German accent. Problems persisted with *ck* sounds instead of *ch* in *Architektur* or *Technologie*; examiners observed *Umlaut* confusion with *fördern/fordern* or *Mode* as *Möde* and *Kultur* pronounced as *Kulchur*.

Common grammar errors included:

- *kann/können* (*die Kinder kann..*)
- *will/wollen* (*man wollen...*)
- Word order after *und / aber / oder* (*und gibt es, aber es nicht gut ist*)
- Position of *auch* (*wir auch lernen*)
- Subject/verb inversion (*dann sie bekommen...*)
- *ich habe besuchen*
- *...um.....zu teilnehmen*
- Possessive pronouns (*sein / ihr*)
- Prepositions (*auf dem Handy, seit / vor* confusion)

Common vocabulary errors:

- *wissen / kennen*
- *winnen for gewinnen*
- *verbringen / ausgeben / spenden*
- *schauen / zeigen*
- *jemand / jeder*
- *interessant / interessiert*
- *in meiner Meinung*
- *ich stimme mit es* (for *ich stimme zu*)
- *Jungenliche for Jugendliche*

AO4: The mark range awarded for AO4 was again broad and reflected the varied standard of students' knowledge of and insight into German-speaking society/culture. The sub-themes on Cards A to F proved again to be problematic for adhering clearly to aspects rooted in the German-speaking world and for being eligible for AO4 marks. Too few students backed up general points with examples from a German-speaking country; more use could have been made of the information from previous years' stimulus cards when talking about family, digital matters or youth culture. The subthemes contained in Cards G to L usually resulted in higher AO4 marks although real evaluation of facts and relevant evidence, both of which are important for higher mark bands, were often insufficient.

Discussion of stimulus cards

All cards proved to be accessible both in terms of content and vocabulary. Students in centre-conducted tests were often allowed to deliver monologues about the material and many students covered the entire content of the card in their opening response, regardless of whether it was wholly relevant to the first question. The best performances happened when students used their own words when conveying the card content and added some comments, views or interpretation. Examiners marking centre-conducted tests heard many students who read out verbatim each element on the card (sometimes just introduced with *es gibt*) with little attempt to paraphrase bulleted information in whole sentences. If teacher-examiners did not pick up on points made by the student, the card content was not explored in depth and higher AO2 marks could not be awarded. In some teacher-conducted tests where no or hardly any discussion on the card itself took place, the wider discussion on the sub-theme lasted for a large part of the allocated time and frequently the teacher-examiner ran out of meaningful AO4 related questions.

Card A: Eine Familie für jedes Kind

The card produced mixed performances. Some students understood the concept of *SOS-Kinderdörfer* and described their value for disadvantaged children. Many students however had not fully grasped the purpose behind them; some thought that the reason for children not living with their parents was due to parents having too little time, too much work, etc. Many students had an opinion about the number of children in one *Kinderdorf-Familie*, but too few teachers discussed the role of *Kinderdorf-Mutter/Vater*. In the wider discussion, most students mentioned the different types of families in modern society but could often not include a clear connection to German-speaking countries. The legalisation of *Homo-Ehe* in Germany was often mentioned; very few students talked about important aspects of family policies such as *Elterngeld*, *Elternzeit*, childcare provision.

Suitable points for discussion of the stimulus card included: how *Kinderdörfer* can improve the life chances of disadvantaged children; how a safe and loving home for children can be achieved; the required qualities of a *Kinderdorf-Mutter/Vater*.

Card B: Bikulturelle Partnerschaft

This card was not often chosen but was generally understood well. Some students described the benefits of meeting and understanding different cultures as well as potential difficulties regarding religion and values. Other students read out the bullet points without demonstrating real understanding of the material. In teacher-conducted tests a lot of the potential discussion points remained unexploited. When answering the third question, many students talked about different types of families but had little to say about important current issues concerning families in the German-speaking world.

Suitable points for discussion of the stimulus card included: reasons behind the increasing number of bi-cultural relationships; how ideas of *Kindernerziehung* can differ; the importance of learning each other's language; what *funktionierende Kommunikation* looks like.

Card C: Die digitalen Engel

Students usually had a lot to say about this card, but many thought it was more about being safe online rather than about young people supporting the older generation. Grandparents having contact with their grandchildren was also mentioned frequently. Answers to the second question often did not include the benefits of the scheme for the young volunteers but most students expressed valid ideas about the role of the internet, mobile phone use, etc for the older generation. In the wider discussion, many students quoted statistics of digital media use in German-speaking countries, but this was often not followed up by teacher-examiners with a more detailed discussion about current issues surrounding *Digitalisierung*. Use of computers in German schools, *Cybermobbing* or *Handysucht* were mentioned by some students, but could often have been supported by more AO4 related evidence. Stimulus cards from previous years could provide some useful and relevant examples for these issues.

Suitable points for discussion of the stimulus card included: which apps might be helpful; the advantages of the scheme being free of charge; possible motives for young people volunteering; why protection from hackers is important.

Card D: Das Smartphone – im täglichen Leben immer dabei

Due to the prescribed sequence this summer, this card was rarely used but well understood by those students who chose it. Most expressed agreement or surprise about the table listing the usage of apps in different age groups and many gave a personal reaction to Philip's statement. The other two speech bubbles were rarely explored by teachers. Wider discussions took the same or a similar route as those for Card C but did often not focus sufficiently on AO4 related points.

Suitable points for discussion of the stimulus card included: potential risks of using the smart phone for banking and shopping; why the smart phone may be so important for Katharina; reaction to Margot's worries and what she could do.

Card E: Wer wird die beste Schülerband?

Prior to the exam it was noticed that on the fourth bullet point an 'n' was missing for 'Auftritte' (should have been 'Auftritten'). To remove any possibility of confusion for students, we highlighted this error to visiting examiners and asked them correct it manually during the visiting examinations. The materials were also amended and re-uploaded to Centre Services, with communications being sent to all centres. These comms included a survey for centres to confirm they were aware of the error and any action required. We apologise for this error, and based on our investigations and the evidence of students' responses, we feel satisfied that this grammatical error didn't affect the learner's ability to generate a meaningful response to the questions. This was one of the most frequently discussed cards and generally well handled. Not all students seemed to understand though that *SchoolJam* was a competition and did not comment on the nature of the main prize. The importance of entering the competition free of charge was mentioned by most students, but explaining the aims of *SchoolJam* as presented on the card was often very limited. Many students simply read out the bullet points (*Freude* was sometimes interpreted as

Freunde) and many teachers did not pursue these further; instead, many asked about music lessons at the student's own school or whether the student played an instrument. The quantity of AO4 related information in the wider discussion varied widely: some students knew a lot about current music trends and popular groups or singers among young people in German-speaking countries; the role of the German language in popular music was also discussed regularly with students showing good insight. On the other hand, many teacher-examiners asked personal questions about the student's own music preferences or listening habits which did not lead to high AO4 marks.

Suitable points for discussion of the stimulus card included: the importance of allowing a wider range of music styles in the competition; whether and why live performances are a good prize; why music should be promoted at schools; how making music can benefit positive social behaviour.

Card F: Dating Shows: Flirten, streiten, sich verlieben

The card was not often chosen. Examiners remarked that most students read out all the material in the two boxes without evaluating them and many teachers did not attempt a more detailed discussion. Some students commented on the *Liebe oder Geld* bubble, but otherwise the differing opinions on the card were largely ignored. AO2 marks were generally rather low with this card. Since watching traditional television is in decline among young people many students struggled to say much that related to a German-speaking country in answer to the third question. A few talked about television viewing while they were staying with a German family and knew about some popular German reality shows.

Suitable points for discussion of the stimulus card included: potential reasons for the use of English titles for these shows; why a dating show could be fun and exciting; the meaning of *fern von der Lebensrealität*; why these shows are mostly shown on commercial TV.

Card G: Das „Sechseläuten“ – ein Schweizer Volksfest

A fairly popular card and generally well done by students. Many read out all the information in the box as well as the captions under the photographs without any evaluation. Very few expressed surprise about the military element of the festival, but some pointed out its inclusive nature by referring to the different national costumes in the *Kinderumzug*. The symbolic purpose of burning the snowman was recognised by very few students and many teachers did not initiate a discussion about the quotation on the card. Many students had valid arguments for the continuation of such old festivals, usually mentioning the benefits of bringing communities together. In the wider discussion, all students had knowledge about festivals in German-speaking countries. Marking examiners commented on the narrow range of festivals students named; previous stimulus cards could provide a good number of *Feste* beyond *Oktoberfest* and *Karneval*. Students' knowledge often was descriptive rather than analytical and teacher-examiners were often happy to accept such descriptions without probing a bit deeper into origins and evolution, the role in the 21st century, possible controversies etc. of festivals in German-speaking countries. As in previous years, *Weihnachten* was often named among *Volksfeste*.

Suitable points for discussion of the stimulus card included: reasons for celebrating a spring festival; views on the quotation by Ulrike S.; what is behind the tradition of burning the image of a snowman; the role of *Trachten*.

Card H: Wachauer Volksfest

Being at the top of the prescribed sequence, this card was frequently discussed and, on the whole, well handled. The modern food choices alongside the traditional Austrian cuisine were often referred to and commented on but many students were puzzled by the presence of the Austrian army. This aspect was ignored by many teacher-examiners as was the benefit of bus connections from the entire region. As with Card G, students usually had good knowledge about festivals but tended to give descriptions rather than evaluations and conclusions. *Oktoberfest* and *Karneval* were again mentioned by most students, knowledge about other regional festivals was rather limited. A few students named *Hexenfest* / *Walpurgisnacht* whereas others thought that *Weihnachtsmärkte* can be counted among festivals. Cards from previous years could provide wider knowledge of the rich variety of festivals in German-speaking countries.

Suitable points for discussion of the stimulus card included: possible reason to have a bi-annual rather than annual festival; opinion on the duration; why bringing people to Krems by bus is beneficial; possible reasons for including football matches and an army display.

Card I: Ein neuer Stadtteil in Hamburg

This card produced widely differing performances. Many students read out all bullet points and it was often not clear whether they had clearly understood that an entire new district was being constructed. Successful students interpreted the information on the card, commented on the mixture of flats, offices and shops, the value of parks and sports facilities for quality of life or the importance of sustainable construction methods. Teacher-examiners were often reluctant to pursue these aspects and students were often asked immediately about their opinion on modern buildings but with little or no specific reference to the different views presented on the card. Some students demonstrated quite impressive knowledge of architecture in German-speaking countries, but very often A04 knowledge was limited to listing individual buildings without students being able, or being asked by teacher-examiners, to put them into the context of their time or to evaluate styles of architecture. By far the most frequently named building was *Brandenburger Tor*; previous stimulus cards could provide a wider range of examples for students to use.

Suitable points for discussion of the stimulus card included: the length of time for constructing the *Hafencity*; possible meaning of *banale und kalte Architektur*; why it is described as a *buntes Stadtviertel*; the reason for *ökologische Bauweise*.

Card J: Kunst-Workshops für alle

The card was chosen by relatively few students and was handled with varying success. Many understood the idea behind the workshops being not just an art class but also a social event in a relaxed atmosphere. They saw the advantages of it being held in the evening and the provision of online courses. It was felt that the ample information on the card could have been explored by many teacher-examiners to much greater extent to support receiving better AO2 marks. The wider discussion about German-speaking artists was variable, the best producing good knowledge as well as evaluation and personal views. Indeed, some students seemed genuinely enthusiastic about certain artists or works of art. Most frequently mentioned artists were *Franz Marc*, *Käthe Kollwitz* and *Wassily Kandinsky*. Some teachers deviated very soon into asking about architecture.

Suitable points for discussion of the stimulus card included: the range of abilities represented in the workshops; the value of professional artists being present; benefits of creating your own work of art; for whom online courses might be useful.

Card K: Geschichte im Bunker

A rarely chosen card and quite well done by those tackling it. Not all students seemed to appreciate the unusual location of this museum and how fitting it was for a historical museum in the capital. Some read out the bulleted information without comment or evaluation. Few teachers explored the *Foto-Installation* or the *Berliner Themen* and Manuel's statement was hardly ever discussed. Knowledge about other attractions in Berlin was generally good with a wide range of places being mentioned such as *Museumsinsel*, *Jüdisches Museum*, *Checkpoint Charlie* or *Fernsehturm*. Marks for AO4 could often have been higher if students had not just delivered facts and descriptions but added interpretation and personal evaluation of individual sights.

Suitable points for discussion of the stimulus card included: the benefit of audio guides in many languages; what atmosphere could be experienced by the unusual location; some discussion about the stages of history as shown in the photos; why *Freiheit*, *Energie* and *Chancen für alle* are significant themes for the city.

Card L: Das Zentrum der Berliner Klubszene

This was a fairly popular card and accessible to all students. Some students read the information in the box out word for word and teachers often did not pursue any of the items further. The location in a former GDR factory was not appreciated by many students and reference to drugs and the strict admission controls was also frequently omitted. The fact that world music was now played besides techno at *Berghain* elicited positive comments about inclusion and cultural diversity. As with the previous card, students generally had good knowledge of what Berlin has to offer but they often made no reference to 'all age groups' in the third printed question. As above, evaluation and own views were frequently lacking in the wider discussion.

Suitable points for discussion of the stimulus card included: possible reasons for a ban on taking photographs and videos; opinion on the size of the club and the large numbers of people; what the admission controls want to achieve; comment on the unusual opening times and on the admission fee.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.