



GCSE
German

8668/WH Paper 4 Writing Higher Tier

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

As expected, the quality of answers for Higher tier students was considerably better than for Foundation tier, suggesting that students were, for the most part, entered for the appropriate level.

Most students were able to cope well with the overlap questions, often scoring full marks, and were also able to make a reasonable attempt at the translation, but many found it difficult to cope with the increased demands of question 2, which became a real discriminator. On this question in particular handwriting was at times a major issue, either because the writing was too small or because it was so carelessly written. Whilst examiners will try their absolute best to read what the student has written, credit cannot be given for work that is unintelligible. Students should be reminded that it is in their own interests to ensure that examiners are able to read their work clearly.

The mean mark on the paper was just over 38/60 (just under 65% of the total mark) which is very similar to last year's mark.

Question 1

General comments

The overlap questions proved accessible to most with 1.1 (Transport) proving, surprisingly, the more popular choice at Higher tier (almost 75%). Whilst formation of the past and future tenses was at times a problem on both questions, many students were able to demonstrate confident use of all three tenses, with the best students able to bring the future or past into their responses to the first two bullet points. Performance on the overlap questions represented a considerable improvement on the equivalent questions in 2023.

On question 1, students are best advised to restrict their answers to 90 words as requested, and not to attempt to write about things outside their capabilities in German. Where messages break down, either by use of English or simply German that fails to communicate, marks for Content are unlikely to exceed 4/10 and for marks in the top two bands a minimum of 2 opinions are required. For Quality of language, references to all three time frames are required for marks in the top band and there must be some attempts to use complex structures.

Question 1.1

Performance on question 1.1 was pleasing, with just over 60% of students attaining top band marks for Content and almost 70% for Quality of language

Most students who chose this option were able to respond to all four bullet points, often bringing environmental issues into their analysis of the best form of transport. There was no requirement this year for a trip to be recent in response to *wohin du in letzter Zeit gefahren bist*, and most students were able to describe a past trip as well as future plans in detail, often drawing on well-rehearsed language on the topic of holidays.

Most students seem to have been well trained to expect both a past and future tense on this question and many were able to use tenses effectively. Where problems with tenses did occur, these tended to be missing auxiliaries with the perfect tense and with the future; *mochte* or *wurde* were commonly seen as

was *möchte* with a past participle. These could not be accepted; however, a pure future tense was not required, and many students found other ways of expressing future plans.

Question 1.2

This option proved somewhat disappointing with only just over 40% of students attaining top band marks for Content, and just under 50% achieving top band marks for Quality of language.

Students were clearly well practised in writing about their school and about subjects they like learning, and often did so with enthusiasm, expressing in great detail their feelings about school and the subjects they learn. As at Foundation tier, however, *die beste Stunde* caused difficulty for some, as did *was du in der Zukunft lernen möchtest*. Some clearly very able students often wrote detailed accounts of their future career intentions but did not mention **what** they wanted to learn and therefore failed to cover the bullet point. Students are advised to ensure they read the question carefully to ascertain exactly what is required.

Question 2

General remarks

Question 2.2 (Health) proved the most popular option, with almost 60% of students choosing it, whereas option 2.1 (Films) was chosen by 40% of students. Both questions produced some passionate responses and students often had a lot to say, although attempts to express complicated ideas often led to a lack of clarity and errors, and students must remember the importance of developing their answers as well as giving and justifying opinions for access to the top mark bands.

Relevance was also once again an issue, and on both questions reference to other family members or friends was not considered fully relevant. Students are advised to read the bullet points carefully and ensure their answers remain pertinent at all times.

Whilst most students are quite adept at using the more common subordinating conjunctions, word order was rarely correct, and at this level for the higher bands, examiners are looking for a variety of complex structures, used confidently and correctly. The best students were able to use a range of conjunctions such as *da*, *denn*, *obwohl*, *dass* and *wenn* as well as infinitive and adverbial phrases to demonstrate variety of structure and to add fluency to their writing.

Question 2.1

Some students were able to write enthusiastically about advantages and/or disadvantages of the cinema or watching films at home and about the best film they had seen. Whilst a past tense response about a best film was expected, appropriate responses in the present tense were accepted on this question. The range of adjectives used to describe films tended to be limited to *spannend*, *gut* and *interessant*, often used repeatedly, and few students seemed able to describe the plot of a film or the features which made it outstanding, instead tending to ramble about a range of films and what they and other family members or friends thought about them, which was less relevant. There were, however, a few outstanding responses describing films in impressive detail and some students were even able to write about German films they had seen.

Just under 30% scored a mark in the top band for Content, and just under 45% for Range of language, with just over 60% scoring 4 or 5 for Accuracy. There were fewer limited responses, with around 15% scoring between 1 and 6 on Content and fewer than 10% achieving only 2 for Accuracy.

Question 2.2

Rather predictably, responses to *wie man gesund leben kann* tended to focus on diet and sport and only the best students developed their answers to explain the benefits of a healthy lifestyle or to think of other factors important to health. A minority did, however, consider the importance of mental health as well as the risks posed by drugs, alcohol and too much time spent online.

The second bullet point was generally well handled, but some students failed to recognise that the question required reference to efforts to be fit and healthy and therefore responses about an unhealthy lifestyle could not be credited. Many students tended also to focus on future plans which was not fully relevant. Present tense responses were also unacceptable.

This option was the more popular and it also produced the best scores, with 45% achieving between 13 and 15 marks for Content. Range of language scores were also considerably higher than in option 1, with 55% scoring between 10 and 12. The scores for Accuracy were similarly pleasing, with just under 75% scoring 4 or 5 out of 5. Although there were some limited responses, fewer than 5% scored between 1 and 6 on Content and below 2 for Accuracy.

Question 3

In general, performances on the translation question showed a considerable improvement on 2023. This year approaching 20% of students achieved full marks for Conveying key messages with just almost 65% of students achieving 5 or 6 marks. For Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures, the percentage was also impressive at just under 50%.

Whilst students may often have gained marks for Conveying key messages, word order errors and incorrect verbs meant that a lower mark was at times awarded for Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures.

The passage is made up of elements of language which present different levels of challenge. Many students made a confident start and 'I do not often watch television' and 'because there is...', were generally well known, however the higher demand combination of 'prefer', 'programmes online' and 'a better choice' in the second sentence caused difficulty and were often not attempted, although a surprising number of students were able to offer an acceptable translation of 'choice'. *Lieber* was often offered as a verb and the plural of *Programm* was rarely known.

‘But first I must do my homework,’ scored well and was clearly a very familiar phrase, although surprisingly *musse* was seen quite often. At this level also a correct infinitive is required with a modal verb. ‘It is very important to me,’ caused few problems. Those who recognised the need to use *zu* in ‘to get good marks in the exams’ often failed to place this correctly with the infinitive at the end of the sentence.

Translations of ‘I also like to be active’ were more successful, but many students were challenged by ‘so’, often incorrectly using the German *so*, although ‘sport with friends’ was almost universally known, and it is pleasing to see that at this level students are able to form the plural of *Freund* (although the feminine singular *Freundin* was still seen).

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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