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GCSE

**GERMAN**

8668/LF: Listening Foundation  
Report on the Examination

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## General comments

This was the second year of this GCSE specification and the Listening examination differentiated well between students. It was again pleasing to see that many of them understood a lot of what they heard and were able to respond successfully to the questions that were set on the spoken material. This year, in Foundation tier, students' responses to the questions in German in section B were all non-verbal. This made the question paper more accessible to students and explains why the mean mark on the paper was just over 27 (around 68%), an increase on the performance seen in 2018. Handwriting was generally legible, although it could be very small and difficult to read at times. There was little evidence of students leaving questions unanswered but some students' English spelling was poor, although fortunately in most cases, this did not affect comprehension of their answers.

### Questions 1 – 2

These questions were designed to be an accessible introduction to the exam, but they proved to be more challenging than was expected with about a quarter of students not gaining the mark in Question 1 and over a third not doing so in Question 2. Students should be trained to listen carefully for negatives (*nicht, kein*), as these often flag up a distractor.

### Questions 3 – 5

Question 3 was fairly well answered with many students understanding *letzte Woche*. There were, however, quite a large number of references to the key distractor (two years) with some students writing 'two years ago', 'when she was two' or 'two weeks ago'. Again, students should be reminded that distractors are used throughout the Listening exam, even at the lowest grades, and that they must listen carefully for the correct information. Although most students understood the idea of relieving stress in Question 4, a large number did not make it clear that this was at/from school. Any clear answer that indicated that music reduced Verena's school stress was accepted, but 'it releases stress' was considered ambiguous and rejected. 'It's easy' was sometimes seen alongside 'it relieves stress'; this is a good example of a wrong answer spoiling a correct one and no mark could be awarded for this. Question 5 was very well answered with a large number of students understanding that there were too many people at concerts for her.

### Question 6

Question 6.1 was well answered with most students understanding that you should not eat too much cake or too many biscuits. Although 'sugary foods' was accepted, 'sweets' was not, as this was too specific an answer. Question 6.2 was met with mixed success with '600 gram(me)s' not as commonly seen as examiners would have liked. Some students referred to the number of times per week one should eat meat, some mentioned calories and there were even some improbable answers suggesting that 600 kilograms of meat per week should be the maximum amount. It was disappointing to see that some students did not understand the number *sechshundert*. There were many correct answers to Question 6.3, although students who just wrote 'vitamins' were not credited as their answer was not clear enough. There were many incorrect spellings of the word 'vitamins', but as long as the meaning was clear, they were accepted. Wrong answers included references to protein or energy and building up one's muscles. A few answers here were illegible and/or incoherent.

### Questions 7 – 9

These questions were well answered with most students scoring marks in Questions 7 and 9. Question 8 was a little more challenging, perhaps because a small amount of inference was needed to get to the correct answer, but over 70% got this correct.

### Questions 10 – 14

There was a mixed response to these questions which were aimed at the higher grades on the Foundation tier paper. Questions 11, 12 and 13 were well answered with over three-quarters of the students getting them correct. Question 10 was more challenging, with about half of students getting the answer correct, perhaps because three of the options referred to costs and *Hochzeit* was not that well understood. Question 14 was the most demanding in this section, probably because the idea of old-age poverty and the vocabulary used in the question were more abstract.

### Question 15

Question 15.1 was intended to be straightforward, but only about half of the students answered correctly with 'France'; there were some who spoiled a correct answer by writing 'France and Spain' and many students did not understand *Frankreich*, which was surprising. Many students answered Question 15.2 correctly, although there were some incorrect references to moving house, buying a house, saving up for a house. There was also a small number of examples where students had given an answer that was too specific, eg 'the flight (or the hotel) was too expensive'.

### Questions 16 – 18

Question 16 was very straightforward with many students getting the correct answer. Question 17 proved more challenging, as students had to listen out for subjects and ordinal numbers, with the numbers perhaps not as well known as they should be. Question 18 tested very accessible vocabulary and was well answered.

### Question 19

Part 1 of this question was quite challenging, and it was clear that many students did not understand the meaning of *Schauspieler*, and went instead for one of the more familiar distractors. Part 2 was much better answered, however, probably because the vocabulary was more straightforward and the answer was the last phrase heard by students.

### Question 20

There were a reasonable number of correct responses to Question 20.1, which was testing students' ability to listen for detail. Incorrect answers were given if students did not refer to the person or people with whom they were sharing photos or staying in contact. Some students gave 'take photos' as the answer, which was not accepted, as the question was targeting knowledge of the verb *teilen*. 'Speaking to friends' was also seen quite a lot, either in isolation or as contamination of an otherwise correct answer.

A significant number of students did not answer Question 20.2 correctly, presumably because they did not understand the first part of the word *Schlafprobleme*. There was a good deal of guesswork here, with answers such as 'cyberbullying', 'stranger danger', 'it knocks your confidence' suggesting many students were transferring what they had learned in PHSE lessons to this exam. There were also some very general answers, such as 'it causes problems' and a few erroneous

references to data leaks. It was disappointing to see that the *Schlaf* element of the key word was not better understood by students.

### Questions 21 – 22

Question 21 was generally well answered with most students getting ‘mother’s birthday’ correct. Occasionally, ‘birthday’ was given by itself and ‘Mother’s Day’ was also seen a few times. There were many variants of ‘Valentine’s Day’ with some imprecise spellings in places, but as long as the answer was clear, it was accepted. Unfortunately, a small number were so obscure that no credit could be given, and there were a few examples of ‘Easter’, ‘Thanksgiving’, ‘New Year’, suggesting that these students were guessing the answer.

Question 22 was more challenging and it was quite rare to see answers that were worthy of both marks. The birthday activity next year was more successfully completed than the birthday activity last year. The main problem with next year was students not giving enough detail in their answer – they needed both ‘weekend’ and ‘hotel’ to get the mark, and many missed out the ‘weekend’ element (or wrote ‘a week’ or some other incorrect period of time). For ‘last week’, reference was needed to a trip (excursion, day out...) at the beach or seaside. The word *Ausflug* was clearly not well understood, as there were lots of references to a flight to the beach, a holiday on the beach, going abroad to the beach. It was disappointing that many students did not understand *Strand*, with one student thinking it was a place name. Occasionally ‘a party’ was seen, in either part of the question, again suggesting that guesswork was taking place.

### Question 23

Question 23.1 was very well answered, but Question 23.2 was more challenging, with students needing to listen to more challenging language and then decide what opinion the speaker held. Just over half the students got this correct, probably because the language used for the opinions here was not so accessible and a certain amount of inference was needed. Question 23.3 was answered correctly by about three-quarters of the students which was very pleasing – again, they had to listen carefully to reject two of the options.

### Question 24

This was the first question in Section B. As indicated above, this year all Foundation tier questions in Section B were non-verbal response style questions. The first question in this section was very straightforward and over 90% of students got this correct.

### Question 25

This was another straightforward item with most students choosing the right answer and rejecting the distractors.

### Question 26

This was a more challenging item and, not surprisingly, it was rare to see students getting both marks here. The majority scored one mark, but there was no clear pattern as to whether they understood A or D more easily. The vocabulary here was quite challenging and *Straße* was used as a distractor in one of the options. This question differentiated well between students.

### **Question 27**

Over half the students scored both marks here and most of the rest scored one mark. Very few students did not score anything on this question and this was most encouraging. *Schwimmen* was more widely understood than *rudern*.

### **Question 28**

Part 1 was answered correctly by about two-thirds of the students and part 2 by a little under half of them. These questions were targeted at the higher grades available at Foundation tier and it was pleasing to see that many students were able to listen to a relatively lengthy passage of German, containing some challenging vocabulary, read the four options and then choose the correct answer.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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