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# GCSE

# GERMAN

8668/LH: Listening Higher  
Report on the Examination

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8668  
June 2019

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Version: 1.0

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## General comments

The Higher tier paper in the second series of this new GCSE specification differentiated well between students of varying abilities. The mean mark on the paper was just under 34/50 (68%). As last year, the most able students responded well to all questions, including those requiring written answers in German in Section B. Certain students struggled with these questions in Section B, and also with some questions in Section A where detailed listening skills were being tested. Overall, however, the standard of responses was pleasingly high and there was little evidence of a large number of questions being left blank or students being entered incorrectly for the Higher tier examination.

### Questions 1 – 2

These questions were answered more successfully by Higher tier students than by Foundation tier students and a large majority scored both marks for Question 1, although there were some inaccurate spellings of 'Valentine's Day'. 'Mother's Day' appeared a few times for the celebration last month and, on occasion, 'Halloween' was inexplicably given for the celebration next month. There were also a small number of responses in German, for which no credit could be given.

Question 2 was answered well by many students, although the mistakes made at Foundation tier appeared at Higher tier as well, with *Ausflug* not as well known as it should be at this level; there were also a good number of incorrect answers that referred to flying, or travelling abroad, or both. The birthday activity for next year was understood by many students; those who did not give enough detail by missing out either the fact that the activity was a weekend, or that it involved staying in a hotel, were not credited with the mark.

### Questions 3 – 7

These questions were straightforward questions for Higher tier students and were all very well answered with the exception of Question 7, where over one-quarter of students chose a wrong answer, perhaps because both the concept of poverty in older life and the vocabulary used in the question were more abstract.

### Question 8

This question was also a lower demand question and it was correctly answered by a large majority of students. Part 2 was slightly less successfully answered than Part 1; students need to be trained to listen carefully to reject the distractors in this type of question.

### Questions 9 – 10

There was a mixed response to this question. Some students latched on to the distractor and incorrectly gave an answer referring to jobs or the economy, but many realised that this was not the required response. Some students found it challenging to render *die Chance, neue Leute und neue Kulturen kennenzulernen* into acceptable English, although a range of answers referring to meeting new people, getting to know new people or experiencing new cultures was accepted. Examiners also accepted answers that referred to the chance to get to know the country or town.

Some students did not expand their answer and simply put 'new people' which did not convey enough information to be creditworthy; some understood *lernen* but not *kennen lernen* and tried to

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give an answer about learning new things. This question targeted detailed understanding of a passage of German and it successfully differentiated between students.

Question 10 was answered more successfully with a large majority of students being able to say that tourism or tourists do not have any respect for nature or the environment. There were some incorrect responses which suggested that tourists had no respect for the locals and again there was some evidence of very short answers ('no respect') which did not convey enough information to gain the mark. Students should be trained to answer these written comprehension questions in as detailed a way as possible to avoid the possibility of not giving enough information to score the mark.

### Questions 11 – 13

Question 11 differentiated well between students with just over half of them getting it correct; *Werkstatt* was clearly not that well known. Question 12 was answered correctly by about two-thirds of students, although many latched onto the word *Chef* and then picked the wrong answer. Question 13 was straightforward and met with a high level of success.

### Question 14

Question 14 was a low demand question but the passage was quite lengthy and it was pleasing to see a very high success rate for this question.

### Questions 15 – 18

Students have clearly been well trained in how to answer these P / N / P+N questions by their teachers and Questions 15 and 16 were very well done indeed, perhaps because the vocabulary used in the text was straightforward. Question 17 was well done, although not quite as well done as Questions 15 and 16; the inclusion of the word *obwohl* led many students to the answer P+N, although students should be reminded that they need to listen to and understand the whole text before choosing their answer – it is not necessarily the case that every time they hear *obwohl* the answer will be P+N. Question 18 was more challenging, with about one-third of students choosing the wrong answer; the use of the word *keinen* in the phrase *keinen Zweifel* was probably the reason why many chose to write N instead of the answer P.

### Questions 19 – 21

On the whole, Question 19 was well answered with many students referring to the excessive length of the film or the difficulty of following the story or plot. Some students merely wrote that the film was long or misunderstood *Geschichte* in this sense and referred to history in their answers; these answers were not creditworthy. A few students seemed not to understand the German that they had heard and perhaps drew instead on personal experience of a cinema visit, with answers such as 'too many adverts' or 'people texting on their phones' not being creditworthy.

Question 20 was also well done with many students understanding that the ending was exciting (or thrilling or intense) although *spannend* was not always understood and there was clearly some guessing of the meaning of this word, with answers such as 'the ending was good / interesting / fun' being seen. Some students mixed up *spannend* and *entspannend* and referred to a relaxing ending. If students did not refer to the ending in their answer, they were unable to score. Many students had trouble with the English spelling of 'exciting' and it was not uncommon to read "the ending was exiting"; this spelling was tolerated, however, and credit was given.

Question 21 was considerably more demanding than Questions 19 and 20 for the simple reason that many students did not understand what *Unterhaltung* meant. Answers that did not refer to the best entertainment or the most entertaining way to spend time, did not score. There were some answers that were too general ('the best hobby', 'the best experience', 'the best atmosphere') and these were not credited. Examiners even saw 'the cinema has the best snacks', which is quite a long way from what *Unterhaltung* means, and there were one or two references to 'the best conversations'. A small number of the most able students were able to understand *mir ist es egal, ob der Film gut oder schlecht ist* and referred correctly to his indifference to the quality of the film.

### Question 22

Question 22.1 was a challenging question with only the most able students answering with the required level of detail ('absent from school for 6 days in the last 4 weeks') to score the mark. Common errors were to give only half of the answer, to give the wrong numbers, to refer to Julius being late or being given a detention or to refer to poor grades. A couple of answers proved so difficult to read that it was impossible to tell if students had written 'four' or 'few'. It is disappointing to note that not all Higher tier students are secure in their understanding of simple German numbers, with some writing 5 or 7 instead of 4 or 6.

Question 22.2 was also often answered incorrectly and had a lower success rate than Question 22.1. Students had to get across the idea that Frau Bauer had been ill and that Julius had been looking after her; many students thought that Julius had been ill or did not give both parts of the answer. A few students suggested that they had both been ill or that she had been in hospital. Some students misunderstood *sorgen* in this context and said that Julius had been worried about her; again, this was not creditworthy.

### Question 23

Question 23.1 was a challenging question for all students with only the most able scoring two marks. The disadvantage was more successfully identified than the advantage, with 'it's addictive' often seen. Examiners accepted the alternative word 'addicting' for *süchtig*. A reference to spending an excessive amount of time on social media was also acceptable. Again, there was some evidence of guesswork, with 'cyberbullying' and 'not knowing who you are talking to' seen quite often. The first part of Question 23.1 was not answered well with relatively few students understanding *was bei meinen Freunden los ist* and referring to what her friends are up to. Some students misunderstood *los* in this context and referred to what was wrong with her friends, while others gave a general answer about talking to her friends or keeping in touch with them. Other incorrect answers included 'making new friends' and 'connecting with her friends'. A good number of students failed to score either mark on this challenging question.

Question 23.2 also got a mixed response and proved challenging for some students. Many were able to identify that one could learn a new language via a smartphone app, but there were lots of incorrect references to 'French', presumably because of the sound at the start of the word *Fremdsprachen*. Some students referred to translating a foreign language rather than learning it.

With regard to the disadvantage in Question 23.2, many answers were too vague ('it's dangerous', 'it's risky') or too short ('virus') to be creditworthy; again, a detailed answer is required at this level. Some students thought that Alexander might send a virus rather than receive one and some students spoiled an otherwise correct answer by adding extraneous material such as 'you might get a virus and it's bad for your mental health'.

**Questions 24 – 26**

Question 24 was answered correctly by about half of students; the vocabulary (*hält sein Wort / zuverlässig*) in this question was challenging. Question 25 was answered correctly by over three-quarters of students and it was pleasing to see them understanding *eingebildet*, although the second phrase gave them another way to the correct answer. Question 26 was the most successful in this section, with about 80% understanding that the sister is quiet and discounting the fact that the speaker is talkative. A correct answer here demonstrated very good close listening skills.

**Question 27**

This was a longer text for students to listen to and about one-third of students got all three answers correct; about 80% got two or three marks on this question, which was a pleasing performance for a relatively challenging piece of German.

**Question 28**

There was some complex vocabulary used in this question and so it was encouraging to see over half the students getting both marks available for this question. The vast majority of the rest got one mark, with A being a more common choice than B.

**Question 29**

This question was slightly more challenging than Question 28, with more demanding vocabulary being tested, but approximately 40% of students scored both marks, which was a pleasing score. Many of the rest scored one mark, but a number of students failed to score on this question, perhaps because they picked up isolated items of vocabulary that they had understood, but failed to understand the context in which they were set.

**Question 30**

The first question in Section B was a straightforward one aimed at the lower grades and it had a very high success rate with the simple vocabulary being understood by a large majority of students.

**Question 31**

The first part of this question was slightly more successful than the second part of the question, but both parts were well answered, given the relatively complex nature of the vocabulary contained within the listening material and the written options.

**Question 32**

Part 1 of this question was answered correctly by more than three-quarters of the students; the inclusion of the word *optimistisch* was perhaps the biggest clue to the correct answer. Part 2 was more challenging, again because of more demanding items of vocabulary.

**Question 33**

As last year, a few students answered the final questions in Section B, which require a written answer in German, in English. This was a shame as it was obvious that they had understood what

had been said. It was also clear that some students have been well trained by their teachers, however, as it was not uncommon to see “Answer in German” written on this page, presumably during the 5 minutes’ reading time at the start of the paper. This reminder often paid off for these students.

Question 33.1 was well answered. Examiners allowed several spellings of *Obdachlosenheim*, applying the principle (as last year) of sounding out a spelling error to see if it was very similar. Examiners accepted “Obdachlosheim” and variations on that, but rejected spellings with –ck– in the middle as well as “Hiem” and variations with umlauts on either ‘o’. A few students misunderstood and wrote down ‘old people’s home’ or ‘home for drug addicts’ in German, and some clearly did not understand the word at all and wrote down a string of indecipherable letters, but it was pleasing to see so many correct transcriptions of *Obdachlosenheim*.

Question 33.2 was aimed at the most able students and it proved to be an excellent differentiator between very good and outstanding students. Only outstanding students were able to get across the idea that drug addicts could begin a new life and express this in acceptable German. There were a few blank responses here and some written in English; the wrong person of the verb (*sie kann* not *sie können*) unfortunately made some answers ambiguous and there were some incorrect references to *Liebe* or *Lebe(r)*. Some students who were not operating at the highest GCSE level wrote down a series of German words which unfortunately did not convey any meaning.

#### **Question 34**

Question 34.1 was a challenging question for many students who did not understand *erkältet* or who could not spell it correctly (examiners also accepted *erkeltet* as well as variants with –ll– in the middle of the word). Some students referred incorrectly to Samuel smoking, which was the distractor and again there were some blank responses and some responses in English. A few students’ answers were too vague (*Samuel ist krank*) or written in incorrect German (*Samuel ist kalt*). Only very able students managed to score on this question.

Question 34.2 differentiated between very able and outstanding students very well. Few students managed to identify that he should go to the doctor if he wasn’t feeling better and to express this in understandable German. Again, there were some blank responses and some (correct) responses in English. Quite a number of students got the first part correct (some misspellings of *Arzt* were tolerated), but it was the second part of the answer which proved troublesome. Only the most able students were able to express the idea of *wenn er sich nicht besser fühlt* in correct German.

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

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