

# Examiners' Report January 2008

GCE

GCE German (8230/9230)

Edexcel is one of the leading examining and awarding bodies in the UK and throughout the world. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers.

Through a network of UK and overseas offices, Edexcel's centres receive the support they need to help them deliver their education and training programmes to learners.

For further information, please call our GCE line on 0844 576 0025, our GCSE team on 0844 576 0027, or visit our website at [www.edexcel.org.uk](http://www.edexcel.org.uk).

January 2008

Publications Code UA019842

All the material in this publication is copyright  
© Edexcel Ltd 2008

## Contents

|    |                            |    |
|----|----------------------------|----|
| 1. | Unit 1 Examiners' Report   | 5  |
| 2. | Unit 2 Examiners' Report   | 9  |
| 3. | Unit 3 Examiners' Report   | 15 |
| 4. | Unit 4.1 Examiners' Report | 21 |
| 5. | Statistics                 | 25 |



## AS Unit 1 (6481) - Listening and Writing

### Assessment Principles

This paper carries 50 marks. 26 marks are given for responding to a variety of German question-types; 14 for discrete items; 12 for answers in German. 8 marks are given to each of two personal responses in the target language. The final section, a guided summary in English, carries 8 marks.

Up to 26 marks are awarded positively for correct information successfully retrieved and conveyed in response to the German question-types on passages 1 - 5. The quality of German in the answers is only an assessment factor in so far as it impedes communication. Up to 16 marks are awarded for two personal responses based on the same text used for the German question and answer section: 8 each for Content and Quality of German, using the grids published in the Specification. Up to 8 marks are awarded positively, according to the mark scheme, for the guided English summary.

### Candidates' Responses

Examiners felt that this paper was accessible and differentiated candidate performance. On the whole, candidate performance was good, with many candidates able to cope well with the demands of the paper. A good number displayed good passive understanding of the language. There was some variety in the standard of written German: a few candidates managed to communicate enough to score some points, and a pleasing number of candidates were able to score very well in Question 5. This may be due to a number of candidates re-sitting the paper in Year 13 with an additional term of German behind them. There was evidence that many candidates had benefited from training with past papers and understood well the exact requirements of the tasks. Candidates who failed to develop fully such skills performed less well.

Q1 - 3 were in general well done. A number of weaker candidates often choose items to fill the gaps in Q2 with words which were a grammatical impossibility. Teachers are advised to train candidates in analysing the language used in these question types so that such mistakes can be avoided.

Q4 was felt to differentiate well, with responses varying from candidates who were able to answer fully all components to others who were only able to cope with the most basic replies.

Q4(a): This was an accessible first question, but a few (otherwise strong candidates) did not read the question carefully and wrote 'ein halbes Jahr' not realising the need to understand the length of time and answer the question as it is set.

Q4(b): This was done well by many candidates, with a few able to offer excellent answers such as 'Wehrdienst'. A very small number answered incorrectly by using the wrong tense, for example 'er hat Militärdienst zu machen'.

Q4(c): This was answered incorrectly by well over half and some otherwise very strong candidates did not gain this mark, offering the profession rather than a possible work place. This is another example of not reading the question carefully enough. While answering incorrectly anyway, more than a few offered 'Kölner' rather than 'Kellner', which was an interesting proposition!

Q4(d): This was answered very well by many though some offered the English spelling which could not be credited.

Q4(e): A few misunderstood the question and possibly the listening text and thought that Christoph did not like Bratwurst. Many answered correctly and there were some very succinct answers.

Q4(f): The majority tackled this well, though a few lost the mark by giving the English spelling of qualifications. The version 'Qualifikationen' was credited, however, as the plural ending helped to make it seem like a German response.

Q4(g): This question caused some candidates problems. Not everyone knew the word 'Mitarbeiter' and offered phrases like 'fünf mit arbeiter' which could not gain a mark. Quite a number did not know the word 'leer' or could not spell it, offering 'lehr' instead. Many did gain credit for expressing the idea of 'keine Arbeitsuchende' but a good number tried to transcribe this incorrectly: 'keine arbeit zu kunde', 'keine arbeitsuchhunde'. At least one offered 'keine Arbeitsüchtige'.

Q4(h): This differentiated well. Good candidates gained the mark, but a good number did not realise from the question wording 'gerade die Deutschen' that it was necessary to mention the unemployed people in Germany, rather than say there were lots of jobs in Spain (which was given in another question anyway).

Q4(i): Almost all candidates answered this correctly, though there were varying levels of grammatical accuracy.

Q4(j): This was also answered well even by candidates who had struggled with a lot of Q4. The vast majority gained both marks as there were 3 possible correct answers to give. Quite a lot of candidates misheard 'gut gelaunt' as 'gut gelernt'.

Q5(a): This was well answered on the whole with almost all understanding the question and giving enough content for at least 3 marks. There was a lot of very pleasing German, not just from native speakers. Most candidates were able to write well on the availability of jobs for unemployed Germans, there being no need for qualifications, the good weather and the people around being in a good mood. Very few gave a detailed personal response to this part of the question, but it was felt the question itself did not allow the candidates much scope to do this, so this was treated leniently.

Q5(b): This part of the question produced some very interesting - and very varied! - personal responses. Many candidates were able to give detailed personal responses backed by evidence from the text. Some candidates admired Christoph's courage in leaving Germany, his determination in finding a job, his positive attitude and so on. Others (mostly native speakers) could not stand his self-congratulation at finding a job in Spain, found that he really must be pretty stupid if he could find no work in Germany, and even vilified him for having done military service. Both approaches gained marks - the idea is to justify your personal response by reference to the text. The quality of German was on the whole encouragingly good. A few people either ran out of time, or did not understand the question, as a number of this section were left blank.

Q6 was well done on the whole. It was good to see very few answers which were too long, although one or two candidates failed to achieve the final mark by just going over the 60 word limit. It was also very encouraging to see only one answer in German!

Q6(a): Most gained at least one of the two marks by offering 'like a sauna' /it was over 30 degrees. The air conditioning caused some candidates problems, especially native speakers. Climate control was accepted as this has become an English term for a form of air conditioning in cars, but answers such as 'the office was not climated' could not be credited.

Q6(b): Almost all candidates scored on this question.

Q6(c): Many candidates offered the answer for Q6(d) which could not be credited here as the question specifically asks about the men in Q6(b). A good number still managed to convey the idea that they wanted to be taken seriously.

Q6(d): Many wrote far more than was necessary but most gained two marks. A few said they should wear shorts and sandals, the very opposite of the text. Others gave 'an open shirt' which was incorrect, but many correctly offered 'a long-sleeved shirt'. Some candidates offered a great deal of examples of acceptable clothing but did not mention the reason why to gain a second mark. A few native speakers gave answers such as 'it goes around money' which means little to an English speaker with no knowledge of German, and so could not be credited.

Q6(e): This was the most problematic answer. A handful of candidates worded it beautifully, but many either did not understand the text or failed to express their answer correctly. There were a few misunderstandings of 'locker' giving rise to answers suggesting that certain clothes be kept in a locker.

### Advice and Guidance

- Many candidates had clearly been well prepared to cope with the requirements of the paper. Teachers have clearly taken advice from previous examiners' reports and have trained candidates well. Practice with past papers is very helpful in enabling candidates to understand the rubrics and the demands of the paper. Candidates without the benefit of such training frequently suffer in that they do not follow word limits or have a good understanding of examiners' expectations.
- Candidates need to follow the rubrics and take notice of word limits given. In question 5a and 5b, they must not use more than 40 words, and 60 words is strictly enforced as the limit for the guided summary in question 6.
- Candidates who attempt simply to transcribe language (which they may not have fully understood) run the risk of failing to communicate enough to score. It is often better to attempt to give the response in the candidate's own German. This at least should convey the point the candidate is trying to make.
- Time management is essential to complete the paper. This session, there have been more incomplete papers than previously. It has been suggested this may be due to candidates running out of time. Candidates are advised to organise themselves to leave sufficient time to tackle questions 5 and 6 which carry almost 50% of the marks available in the whole paper.



## AS Unit 2 (6482) - Reading and Writing

In this paper candidates are required to demonstrate their comprehension of four passages of German by means of a variety of exercises, one of which requires German questions to be answered in the target language, and one of which consists of questions in English to be answered in English. The final task is a directed writing exercise in which the candidates respond in German to a German stimulus with guidelines in German. Candidates may be assured that 'grammatical manipulation' test-types are not used in this unit.

### Advice and Guidance

Superfluous information, information not contained in the printed target-language material, and self-contradictory combinations of correct and incorrect information earn no credit. Similarly, non-synonymous alternatives can be given no credit. Candidates are encouraged to cross through any alternative answer rather than leaving Examiners with a choice. Candidates should note that if two marks are available for a question, they should give two discrete points in their answer. Candidates should remember that in the final question the examination prescribes between 140 and 160 words in German. They must note that shorter answers cannot be rewarded in the same way as an answer of the required length, and they should likewise bear in mind that the Examiners will not mark more than 160 words. This means that the task should be completed within the prescribed word limit, otherwise full credit cannot be given.

### Assessment Principles

A maximum of 40 marks is awarded positively for correct information successfully retrieved and conveyed in response to those target-language and English questions not requiring answers in continuous prose: the quality of the language is only an assessment factor insofar as it impedes communication. Full credit is given for answers in clear, unambiguous German or, where appropriate, English, provided they contain relevant material.

For the continuous target-language writing at the end of this module, content and quality of language are equally important. Up to 40 marks are awarded positively using the grid in the syllabus. Knowledge and skills to be rewarded include the ability to communicate clearly and intelligibly; to write accurately and in the appropriate register; to produce a range of lexis and structures; and to respond relevantly and effectively to the terms of the question.

### Mark Schemes

Where appropriate, at the Standardisation Meeting a few days after the examination the Examiners discuss a number of possible versions and variants which have emerged from their considering a large number of scripts prior to the meeting. A definitive mark scheme is agreed and signed at the end of the meeting by the Principal Examiner.

All tasks are marked positively, with varying marks available for each question according to the information required in the answer or the difficulty of the question. The number of marks available for each sub-section is clearly stated within the paper.

## Candidates' Responses

The Examiners were agreed that the paper as a whole represented a good test, that it was user-friendly and fair to all candidates, that the texts were interesting, that the questions were well thought out and that the paper as a whole differentiated well between the weaker candidates and the very able ones.

The vast majority of candidates obtained full marks on the exercise based on the first text. Clearly the task was a welcome and up-to-date introduction to the examination. Although the rubric requested candidates to give a letter as their answer, the Examiners also permitted the unambiguous use of names and initials.

On the first task set under the second text, the majority of candidates performed very well. Although the rubric requested candidates to give a letter as their answer, the Examiners also permitted the use of the words in the grid.

In Q3 the Examiners were concerned that very few candidates scored more than one or two marks. A minority knew that *besorgt* could be rendered by *ängstlich*, while the majority could pick out *Kriminelle* for *Verbrecher*.

It was clear to the Examiners that candidates found Q4 to be a demanding task and a good differentiator between the able candidates and the weaker ones. The best candidates answered well by using their own words, as requested in the rubric, and the Examiners were pleased to note that there was less lifting of whole phrases than has sometimes been the case. Some candidates could not be fully rewarded, however, as they lifted their answers from the text without any manipulation, despite being requested in the rubric to answer in their own words. Candidates cannot be rewarded for lifting, or indeed for merely changing a possessive adjective or the tense or mood of a verb.

Candidates should be aware that if just one mark is on offer, as throughout this question, they should be giving only one item of information in the answer. A few candidates failed to write an answer to any of the questions in this exercise. Moreover, the Examiners were concerned that some candidates elected to give their answers in English, and thus could not be rewarded at all. On the whole, however, the Examiners noted that the questions in this task were of differing levels of difficulty, thus enabling even weaker candidates to obtain some credit.

The attention of candidates and teachers is drawn throughout to the published detailed mark schemes agreed by the Examiners. Question specific points are as follows:

Q4(a) - the Examiners were unable to reward answers which suggested that children only speak German with their family.

Q4(b) - the vast majority of answers were incorrect, with some lifting of *Unterkunft* and with many candidates assuming that the parents had lived in England for twenty years or twenty years earlier.

Q4(c) - the majority obtained the mark here, though a number could not be rewarded for assuming that the question was *warum* rather than *was*. Candidates could not be rewarded for *sie sollte ihr Englisch verbessern*. This is an example of where poor grammar results in unrewardable ambiguity.

Q4(d) - Most candidates answered this correctly, though a number merely lifted *begeistert*.

Q4(e) - This question presented some problems to those candidates who merely used *Tisch* in their answers without any explanation. Candidates were expected to suggest that the students had to speak English at meal-times or while eating. Quite a few, mainly native speakers, misread the question as *warum* rather than *wann*.

Q4(f) - Answers were mainly correct, though a number suggested nine o'clock or even five o'clock, suggesting a misunderstanding of the text.

Q4(g) - this was often wrong, as many candidates assumed that it was sufficient to suggest that Susan was the owner of the farm. The question referred specifically to her role in the language tours and thus the answer was that she was the English teacher.

Q4(h) - this was mainly well done, though there was some lifting. The Examiners were flexible in the answers which they accepted to this inference question. A few candidates assumed that the cooking was done by David and by Susan's husband, failing to realise that they are in fact the same person.

Q4(i) - this question was not well done, with many candidates lifting without any explanation or appropriate verb.

Q4(j) - many candidates were rewarded for their answers to this question.

Candidates clearly appreciated the accessibility of Q5 and they produced a number of good answers. Indeed, many candidates obtained at least ten marks for this task. Nevertheless, candidates could not be rewarded for answers which were lacking in focus and detail. Only those candidates who paid careful attention to the text were able to obtain high marks in this task. Candidates should bear in mind that the Examiners are unable to reward answers which show an inaccurate and incomprehensible use of English. The Examiners were concerned that some candidates chose to give their answers in German, and thus could not be rewarded at all. Although this kind of exercise is not one of translation, it is important for points to be rendered in English which truly reflects the meaning of the text.

Question specific points are as follows:

Q5(a) - almost all candidates gained the mark on offer here, although some failed to give a superlative adjective in their answer.

Q5(b) - this question was well done.

Q5(c) - this question was not answered, with the majority of candidates giving wrong or imprecise information.

Q5(d) - the majority of candidates were rewarded here, though some confused 27 months and three and a half years.

Q5(e) - most responses were correct, though some candidates assumed wrongly that Nicole had been released just for Christmas.

Q5(f) - this answer was mainly correct.

Q5(g) - the majority of candidates could not be rewarded here as they were either too imprecise ('last year', 'last Christmas') or rendered *am Heiligen Abend* incorrectly (eg 'on the holy evening').

Q5(h) - while this question was generally understood, quite a few candidates gave a negative emotion such as 'sadness' rather than targeting 'boredom'.

Q5(i) - this was generally answered well.

Q5(j) - this was generally answered well.

Q5(k) - a number of answers did not mention the time element, so could not be rewarded. Some mentioned (wrongly) that it took Nicole two weeks to find a job or that she only found a job after searching for over two weeks.

Q5(l) - A number of candidates mentioned that Nicole was hoping to buy a house, which could not be rewarded.

Q6 proved to be a straightforward test of the candidates' writing skills. There were some excellent responses in which candidates showed genuine interest, imagination and accuracy. Nevertheless, though most candidates attempted to include all of the content required, they often dealt with some points in one short sentence.

The Examiners were surprised at the number of candidates who failed to refer to all the points which were required. If candidates wish to earn high marks for this question, it is vital that they address each point of the stimulus with the utmost care. Some candidates wrote an imbalanced answer, writing at great length about themselves and about their hobbies, to the detriment of other points. Another noticeable feature this year was the number of scripts where candidates listed in their plans all the grammatical structures which they had been told to include. Whereas good candidates were able to do this without too much distortion, weaker candidates thus included sentences in their email which were totally irrelevant to the task, thus affecting the content mark, or they proved unable to handle complex structures and lost marks on the language component.

In the first stimulus point the Examiners were ideally looking for the candidates to state who they were and what they had photographed. Too many failed to take their photo in their own town or country (taking, for example, a photo of one of their pets), and some candidates took a variety of different photos.

In point two, candidates were asked to specify why they thought their photo should win. This was often covered very briefly indeed, though the best candidates went into detail about picture composition, the quality of the light, and the didactic nature of the photo.

Points three and four were generally well done; with candidates making full use of the opportunity afforded them to be creative. However, a number of answers did not go much beyond the requirements of GCSE and a number overlooked the *und warum* at the end of the stimulus for each of these two points.

It should be remembered that this sort of exercise may require a certain amount of imagination, and those candidates whose answers were bland did not perform as well as those who produced something rather more scintillating, whether factual or not. The ability to be creative is part of the task. Candidates are not assessed for absolute truth in this question.

A very few candidates wrote totally irrelevant essays which bore no relationship to the rubric at all and which therefore could not be rewarded in terms of content and thus in terms of language either.

A very few candidates wrote their answers in English, and thus could not be rewarded.

Some answers were too long (up to 700 words in length), which meant that the points were not covered within the prescribed word limit and candidates could therefore not be rewarded fully for their efforts. Likewise, a number of responses were too short, and thus could not convey all the points expected in the answer. In such cases the mark for language is reduced on a pro rata basis. Nevertheless, the Examiners were pleased to note that in this examination series the majority of candidates wrote within the prescribed word limit.

A fair number of candidates had obviously prepared a response in advance and endeavoured to reproduce their email within the confines of the demands of the question. This did not always prove to be an easy or worthwhile task. Similarly some candidates padded out their answers with pre-learnt phrases which were not always apposite to the task at hand.

The Examiners were pleased with those candidates who paid careful attention to case, adjectival endings, word order and spelling, though they were disappointed by the failure of many candidates to use the correct register or to use inappropriate forms of address in their email. Too often candidates failed to use the correct form of the verb. The level of language was often weak and candidates too often made very basic errors. A tendency towards Anglicisms prevented quite a number of candidates from achieving marks in a higher band. There were many examples of candidates using an English word if stuck, and there were instances of carelessness. Too few candidates deployed a wide range of structures and lexis appropriate to the task. Good candidates were careful to use correct register and expression. Those candidates who performed best ensured that each aspect of the task was addressed appropriately and relevantly.



## AS Unit 3 (6483/15) - Prepared Oral Topic

### Assessment Principles

The prepared oral topic carries 60 marks, 20 for each of the following categories, Quality of Language (10 for Accuracy, 10 for Range of Lexis), Response, and Knowledge and Understanding. The test is assessed positively. All marking is carried out by Edexcel markers.

### Candidates' Responses

There was a wide variety of subjects, ranging from towns, regions, festivals, famous people, to the more unusual such as die Stasis and die Königin Sissi. There seemed to be a particular interest in films this session, with reference to "*Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei*", "*Der Untergang*" and "*Sophie Scholl*". Most candidates chose carefully in accordance with the specifications, which state that the topic must deal with an aspect of culture and/or society of the target language country. Sports personalities with only a tenuous connection to Germany by virtue of having played there at some point in their career are not a valid choice.

Many candidates had undertaken admirable research from a variety of sources and were able to engage in an animated discussion. It is both informative and pleasurable to listen to many of the conversations. However, native speakers, especially those from international centres, should bear in mind that it is not enough simply to give an account of their home town or region, without any evidence of research. It is perhaps worth ensuring that the candidates have a copy of the mark grid, so that they appreciate that a third of the marks are allocated for knowledge and understanding. Teacher-examiners can also structure the conversation by asking more probing questions, rather than encouraging personal anecdotes.

The problem of excessive amounts of pre-learned material remains, despite being referred to in every Principal Examiner's report. Monotonous recitation where it is patently obvious that the candidate does not even understand what s/he is saying reveals nothing about their ability to speak German and does not fulfil the criteria laid down in the specification, which stress spontaneous discourse. It is also contrary to the essential spirit of the oral examination, which is to test the candidate's ability to communicate in German as naturally as possible.

The quality of presentations was variable. The maximum time is 2 minutes but it need be only one minute. It should not be significantly less than this. It is inevitably well-prepared and should enable the candidate to get started, the rationale being that it is a confidence booster. In some cases, candidates made all their points in the presentation and then had very little to add. The best strategy is to summarise the main points, using the bullet points on the oral topic form as a guideline, giving a framework to the ensuing conversation, which must last for another 8-10 minutes. The total time must under no circumstances exceed 12 minutes.

## Quality of Language

The 20 marks are allocated for accuracy and range of lexis. In the January modules, there is a considerable number of native or near-native speakers who are presumably taking the oral unit early so that they have less to do in the summer. A certain proportion seems to be re-take candidates, or candidates who are doing it as a practice run. The spread of marks is therefore considerable, with not many marks in the middle range.

Overseas candidates with a strong accent should perhaps be encouraged to speak more slowly and clearly. Communication is impeded by poor pronunciation and intonation, which is not only confined to anglicised pronunciation.

Weaker candidates tended to have the following difficulties: disagreement in number between subject and verb, gender errors, incorrect adjectival endings, and word order being the most common examples. Some candidates are still not able to distinguish accurately between the tenses. Range of lexis was variable, depending on how much research the candidate had done. Candidates are expected to have learned the vocabulary and expressions relevant to the chosen topic, but should be able to employ these **spontaneously**. The range of structures is also sometimes very limited, with *weil* and *dass* still being the only subordinating conjunctions. Some candidates are still not confident with relative clauses, or modal verbs.

There are two difficulties here; firstly, if the candidate chooses a very narrow topic, there will not be a sufficient range of lexis to lift it above GCSE level. Secondly, if the topic is too ambitious, care should be taken that the relevant abstract and analytical vocabulary is known, which may be beyond most candidates' ability at this stage. For example, a weak candidate may be ill-advised to analyse a book or film, where a considerable amount of specialised vocabulary relating to the technicalities is required. The danger then is that the teacher-examiner supplies the missing vocabulary or long and unproductive pauses develop, while the candidate struggles to find the appropriate expression.

Pronunciation and intonation were noticeably affected if the candidate was permitted to regurgitate large amounts of pre-learned material. This should not occur, as it is invariably detrimental to the overall performance and final mark. Candidates who had recently visited a German-speaking country were usually able to capitalise on this experience, although they need to be careful that it is not merely personal reminiscence.

Candidates who were able to move away from the target language headings on the oral topic form and sustain a conversation in less predictable areas of their chosen topic, also scored more marks here.

## Response

Candidates' responses varied considerably and depended to a certain extent on the way in which the examination was conducted. Teacher-examiners must remember that they are facilitators, and should not say too much themselves.

At times, the moving away from the bullet points was carried too far, leading the candidate on to unfamiliar ground and causing confusion, or resorting to irrelevant personal anecdotes. The entire conversation must relate to the chosen topic.

Large quantities of pre-learned material should **not** be permitted: teacher-examiners should adroitly interrupt “the flow” and candidates should be told to expect this. Questioning should above all facilitate independent discourse; open-ended questions or an invitation to provide further explanation often elicited the best response. Some candidates are very nervous and sometimes a sympathetic “Ja und?” is enough to encourage them to continue. They should not be permitted to respond to a pre-arranged series of prompts. A degree of spontaneity is integral to the examining process. A rehearsed recited performance cannot gain high marks. “Erzählen Sie weiter” is not to be recommended. Candidates attained higher marks where they were able to develop their answers, and were not content with a single sentence utterance. Teacher-examiners must avoid asking personal questions which are not normally very productive and turn the test into idle chit chat.

The “unpredictable” question should still relate to the chosen topic but be away from the bullet points: it is not appropriate for the candidate to be questioned about something totally unrelated.

### **Knowledge and Understanding**

The choice of topic is crucial. Centres must adhere to the specifications and candidates should choose a topic from the General Topic Area as outlined in the specifications. Very generalised topics such as “Essen und Trinken” or “Tischtennis” with “in Deutschland” as an after-thought, are not suitable, unless they are linked to particular research undertaken in the target language country.

Candidates who scored highly were those who could show evidence of detailed research in books, magazines, on the internet, or from visits to the target language country. It is advisable to start doing the research well in advance of the oral test. They must then be able to organise their material and present it logically and relevantly. Some candidates had an impressive amount of information and had clearly learned a lot in the process of acquiring it. Teachers and language assistants undoubtedly offered a lot of support and advice here.

On occasion, candidates were overloaded with information, which they then struggled to organise and present. A huge topic such as “Der deutsche Film” is not to be recommended. It is usually more successful to be more focussed, so for example, to choose one German film director, or one German film star. It is quite legitimate for candidates to re-cycle knowledge acquired in another A Level subject: however, it should be narrowed to something which is suitable for a short presentation and discussion. They should bear in mind that the total oral is only 10-12 minutes long. Centres should note that comparisons with England or any other country are not an acceptable element of this unit, nor should teacher-examiners invite comparison.

The most popular topics were:

Die Berliner Mauer

Die Weisse Rose

Mozart

Beethoven

A range of sports personalities

A variety of recent German films

Candidates whose research was limited lost marks here; there was also a danger that they became repetitive. It should also be borne in mind that understanding as well as knowledge should be demonstrated. It is all very well to have a wealth of factual information but the candidates must also be able to comment and analyse. They should also be able to show that it is significant to the culture/society of the target-language country.

### Advice and Guidance

1. **Topic:** Candidates should choose a topic which has the potential for evaluation. Entirely descriptive or narrative topics will not enable the candidate to access the higher mark range. Examples of appropriate topics can be found in the Oral Training Guide but these should by no means be regarded as prescriptive. If in doubt, centres should contact the assessment leader at Edexcel.
2. **Conduct:** Teacher-examiners' interventions should be minimal and productive. The candidates must be given ample opportunity to display their knowledge; however, regurgitated material must be interrupted. It is clearly totally unacceptable for the entire oral to be a dramatic performance, with the teacher-examiner providing "cues" for the next part of the recitation. Candidates should be encouraged to take the lead in the conversation. Teacher-examiners should resist the temptation to correct, or to supply missing vocabulary. It is **very** important to keep to the correct timing: a presentation which exceeds 2 minutes must be interrupted. The overall timing is **10-12 minutes** and must not over-run. Conversation after 12.5 minutes will not be assessed. Nor should it be less than 10 minutes. Timing for written papers is always rigorously observed. The same **MUST** apply for oral exams. Unfortunately despite comments every session to this effect, there are some centres who still do not adhere to this and it disadvantages the candidates. An additional problem this year was late entries. Centres **MUST** be aware of the final date in the examining period and conduct the orals in time. Otherwise it poses tremendous difficulties for the marking regime. Late entries for written papers would never be accepted.
3. **Oral Topic Form:** Concise bullet points are best. About 5-8 main points are probably enough. Points should be brief and lend themselves to expansion, discussion, opinion and evaluation. Half sentences, which are clearly prompts to pre-learned paragraphs, are a give-away and not acceptable. Despite clear instructions on the form, the title is often not stated, and sometimes the bullet points are in English. Oral Topic Forms should be filled in neatly and legibly, in accurate German. Nothing other than the Oral Topic form can be taken into the examination. Centres should check that the most recently published Oral Topic form is used. Oral topic forms and cassettes are returned to centres, and in addition, in certain cases, letters outlining particular difficulties, e.g. quality of recording, or timing. Centres are advised to take note of any comments made on the Oral Topic Form: often this is the only feedback.

4. **Recording:** Good sound quality is essential. Please use new cassettes. It does the candidates no service to be recorded over last year's orals or music practice tapes. It is also important to have the right balance between the candidates' and teacher-examiners' voices. Neck microphones are ideal, but free-standing microphones should be angled towards the candidate, whose voice is normally quieter than the teacher-examiner's. All mobile phones must be switched off (not just on silent, as there is otherwise electronic interference) and there should be no background noise. Centres should check that every candidate has actually been recorded, that it is audible and at the correct speed. Unit 3 and Unit 4.1 tests must be recorded on separate cassettes, even if there is only one candidate. Please check the length of the cassette, whether it is C60 or C90 so that the tape does not run out in the middle of the test. It is helpful to label the cassette as well as the box. Please ensure that the cassette is rewound to the beginning before posting it off. Markers can lose an enormous amount of valuable time if they have to rewind many cassettes.
  
5. **Handbook of Instructions to Centres:** Teacher-examiners should be thoroughly acquainted with this publication, as observing correct procedures is vital. It is recommended that teacher-examiners attend training sessions at Edexcel if at all possible. An Oral Training Guide with accompanying cassettes is also published by Edexcel, to help teachers to prepare for this examination. It is unfortunate that candidates are sometimes deprived of marks because the test has been incorrectly conducted. Teacher-examiners have the responsibility to prepare adequately, in order to bring out the best from their candidates. Any administration problems: please contact Edexcel.



## A2 Unit 4 (6484/16) - Oral Discussion of Issues

### Assessment Principles

The Oral discussion of issues carries 60 marks, 20 for each of the following categories: Quality of Language, Response, and Justification and Debate. The test is assessed positively. All marking is carried out by Edexcel markers.

### Candidates' Responses

Candidates are reminded that they must take a stance to the chosen issue, and this must be clearly stated on the declaration of issue form. It is therefore advisable to choose a provocative issue, to which a stance **can** be taken. Timing is also crucial. It is difficult for candidates to access the highest marks if the correct timing is not adhered to.

Candidates have up to 1 minute to outline the issue, adopting a definite stance. They then have to defend and justify their opinions for 4 minutes. The teacher-examiner should present the opposing view and a debate should ensue. Subsequently the conversation will move on to at least two unpredictable areas, probably more. This part of the discussion should last for 10 minutes, making a total of 15 minutes.

Many candidates were well prepared and had clearly researched their chosen issue. Those who had given thought to the stance were able to debate and justify in detail, with some extremely interesting discussions developing. It is possible for candidates to gain high marks in the first part of the test, because they are on familiar ground. The unpredictable areas were more problematical. 10 minutes proved to be a long time for some candidates and a large number of topics can be covered in that time. Centres are reminded that these should be genuinely unforeseen topics; rehearsed and regurgitated quantities of material cannot gain high marks. This should be a spontaneous discussion, not merely a question and answer session, covering a wide variety of subjects. These do not have to be related to the target-language country, nor to the initial issue, but they can be if so desired. Additional topics **MUST** be covered, and the topics should be ones which lend themselves to debate and discussion, not the "Was haben Sie in den Sommerferien gemacht?" type. In some cases the conversation was too anecdotal: there was no opportunity offered to justify and debate something controversial. Conversely, not too many topics should be covered in 10 minutes, as the candidate will not then have the opportunity to get to grips with anything. 10 topics in as many minutes does not make for much in-depth analysis.

### Quality of Language

The 20 marks are awarded for accuracy and range of lexis (10 + 10). In the January entry there are a considerable number of native or near-native speakers, so in general the quality of language was high.

Overseas candidates with a strong accent should perhaps be encouraged to speak more slowly and clearly, and to give consideration to pronunciation and intonation.

Candidates should be able to demonstrate that they have moved on from AS level and are more confident with advanced grammatical structures such as the conditional and the subjunctive. They should know a wider range of subordinating conjunctions and be able to use the passive and reflexive verbs. They should have accurate possessives and adjectival agreements. Similarly, they should be able to demonstrate a wider range of lexis. If they had done adequate research for the chosen issue, the range of lexis was broad and relevant. Some had also prepared the language of argument and debate, and were confident in using it to give and to elicit opinions.

The more testing element was the unpredictable areas, where some candidates revealed a lack of lexis, and hesitancy with certain grammatical constructions such as the conditional, or indirect speech. Centres should refer to the grammar list at the end of the Specifications for Modern Foreign Languages.

### Response

Candidates' response was variable, depending to a certain extent on the way in which the discussion was conducted. Some teacher-examiners failed to engage their students in a debate and so they were unable to demonstrate their potential to argue and justify. Although it is quite legitimate to lead from the chosen issue to a similar topic, it is advisable to cover a range of subject areas. This should enable candidates to show that they are able to discuss a wide range of issues, and they are then not in danger of repeating similar lexis and concepts. The best candidates spoke spontaneously, with minimal prompting from the teacher-examiner. They were able to develop ideas without hesitation, and it was apparent that they had been well prepared in advance and were able to take the initiative. However, candidates must not be permitted to recite large amounts of pre-learnt material. It should essentially be a spontaneous discussion on issues of general interest. This is not the forum for personal anecdote, future plans etc. Particularly with native speakers it is tempting for the discussion to fall into chit-chat. Teacher-examiners must take care to choose stimulating and provocative topic areas and are advised to be well-prepared for the test. In some cases it would seem that the test is conducted not by a teacher, but by a native speaker who has received little or no guidance. Centres must take responsibility for ensuring that whoever conducts the tests is totally familiar with the specification as regards the conduct and timing.

### Justification and Debate

Successful topics to which a stance could be taken, included:

Wehrdienst  
Kernenergie

A rather more provocative one this session was "*Prostitution-meiner Meinung nach akzeptabel.*"

Candidates are expected to show a thorough and detailed knowledge of the chosen issue, and some certainly revealed a considerable amount of in-depth research, either from books, magazines or of course, from German websites. Candidates must state on the declaration of issue form whether they are **for** or **against** the issue. 5 marks are awarded for the grasp of the issue: 15 marks are awarded for the ability to justify and debate, applicable to both the issue and the unpredictable areas.

Weaker candidates found 10 minutes' discussion on unpredictable areas difficult to sustain. There was a tendency to jump from topic to topic in the hopes of finding a stimulating subject. Please note that the unpredictable areas do not need to relate to the target language country: they are topics of general interest and factual knowledge is not being tested. At this level, students should be able to give evidence of insight and independent judgment. They should be able to express opinions and justify them. Some need to acquire the relevant lexis: meiner Meinung/Ansicht nach, die Vor/Nachteile, einerseits, andererseits.

### Advice and Guidance

1. **Issue:** Candidates should choose an issue which has the potential for debate. A stance must be stated and maintained.
2. **Conduct:** When discussing the chosen issue, teacher-examiners must take the opposing viewpoint, to enable candidates to reveal their ability to justify and debate. The presentation must take **no longer than 1 minute**, and must be interrupted if it shows signs of continuing. The subsequent discussion should last **no longer than 4 minutes**. Under no circumstances can the whole discussion relate to the chosen issue, as this reveals nothing about the candidate's ability to discuss unpredictable areas. This part of the oral should last **10 minutes**. The whole oral should last for **15 minutes**. **Keeping to these times is of the utmost importance**. Centres are meticulous about the timing of written papers: the same rigour must apply to oral tests.
3. **Declaration of Issue Forms;** Centres should ensure that they are using the most recent version of the form. They should also ensure that every candidate has signed the declaration. Candidates must take care to write legibly and in accurate German. Declaration of issue forms and cassettes will be returned to centres, and in addition, in certain cases, a letter outlining any particular difficulties e.g. timing, or quality of recording.
4. **Recording:** Good sound quality is essential. The microphone generally should be nearer to the candidate than the teacher-examiner. All mobile phones must be switched off (not just on silent, as there is otherwise electronic interference) and there should be no background noise or interruptions. Unit 3 and Unit 4.1 candidates must be recorded on separate cassettes. Please check that the tape is long enough: one candidate on each side of a C60, two on a C90. Please also check that every candidate has been recorded, that it is audible and at the correct speed. It is helpful to label the cassette as well as the box. Please ensure that every cassette is rewound to the beginning before posting them off. Markers can lose valuable time if they have to rewind a large number of cassettes.
5. **Handbook of Instructions to Centres:** Teacher-examiners are referred to this publication as observing correct procedures is vital. It is recommended that teacher-examiners should attend training sessions at Edexcel if at all possible. An updated Oral Training Guide with accompanying cassettes is also available from Edexcel Publications. Candidates are at a disadvantage and in danger of not being able to access the highest marks if the teacher-examiner is inadequately prepared and/or is not familiar with the specification



# Statistics

## Unit 1 Listening and Writing

| Grade                 | Max. Mark | A  | B  | C  | D  | E  |
|-----------------------|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Raw boundary mark     | 50        | 41 | 36 | 32 | 28 | 24 |
| Uniform boundary mark | 90        | 72 | 63 | 54 | 45 | 36 |

## Unit 2 Reading and Writing

| Grade                 | Max. Mark | A  | B  | C  | D  | E  |
|-----------------------|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Raw boundary mark     | 80        | 62 | 55 | 49 | 43 | 37 |
| Uniform boundary mark | 120       | 96 | 84 | 72 | 60 | 48 |

## Unit 3 Prepared Oral Topic

| Grade                 | Max. Mark | A  | B  | C  | D  | E  |
|-----------------------|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Raw boundary mark     | 60        | 46 | 40 | 34 | 29 | 24 |
| Uniform boundary mark | 90        | 72 | 63 | 54 | 45 | 36 |

## Unit 4.1 Oral Discussion of Issues

| Grade                 | Max. Mark | A  | B  | C  | D  | E  |
|-----------------------|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Raw boundary mark     | 60        | 47 | 41 | 36 | 31 | 26 |
| Uniform boundary mark | 90        | 72 | 63 | 54 | 45 | 36 |

## Notes

**Maximum Mark (Raw):** the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the mark scheme.

**Boundary mark:** the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

Further copies of this publication are available from  
Edexcel Publications, Adamsway, Mansfield, Notts, NG18 4FN

Telephone 01623 467467  
Fax 01623 450481

Email [publications@linneydirect.com](mailto:publications@linneydirect.com)

Order Code UA019842 January 2008

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit [www.edexcel.org.uk/qualifications](http://www.edexcel.org.uk/qualifications)  
Alternatively, you can contact Customer Services at [www.edexcel.org.uk/ask](http://www.edexcel.org.uk/ask) or on 0870 240 9800

Edexcel Limited. Registered in England and Wales no.4496750  
Registered Office: One90 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7BH