

GCE



**Chief Examiner's and  
Principal Moderator's Report  
German**

Summer Series 2018





## Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of CCEA's General Certificate of Education (GCE) in German for this series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's microsite on our website at [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk).



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## GCE GERMAN

### Chief Examiner's Report

#### Introduction

The Revised Specification seems to have been fully embraced by all candidates and centres. The 'Use of Language' element, which had been much dreaded by students and teachers, is proving to be a good test of language and a good discriminator of performance as well. Examiners are convinced that the renewed emphasis on grammar also encourages greater awareness of language and attention to detail. However, there is also evidence that some candidates find this part of the examination very challenging, especially since we are still dealing with a year group who passed their GCSE examinations with 60% controlled assessment.

Furthermore, the Extended Writing/Literature paper also encourages more sophisticated reflection of the themes and topics than the discursive writing element of the Legacy specification.

Numbers at this level are still holding up well as some centres have large groups of students who are highly motivated and extremely well prepared.

#### Assessment Unit AS 1 Speaking

With the new specification in its second year, teachers and candidates seemed to have adjusted very well to the new format. This is reflected in the high standard of the speaking test.

As in previous years, teachers and school staff were very welcoming, enthusiastic and helpful everywhere, and arrangements for accommodation were very good with glass panels in the doors/walls and appropriate furniture, creating a professional atmosphere in the rooms and meeting the requirements of child protection. Some schools arranged their timetables in such a way as to avoid external noise from bells or breaktime/lunchtime noise and thus avoiding disruption for the candidates.

Centres provided visiting examiners with the necessary paperwork including the proforma with candidates' 60 words. Where this was not the case, candidates had chosen not to use the proforma at all.

#### Presentation

The new specification requires candidates to give a presentation based on an AS level theme related to an aspect of a German-speaking country or community. For the majority of candidates, this change did not present a problem.

Most candidates were well prepared and, as in previous years, the presentation seemed to give them a sense of security.

It is worth reminding candidates that presentations should last approximately 3 minutes and that excessive brevity (around 2 minutes) will be taken into account in the marking.

Candidates had chosen to give presentations on a wide range of topics focusing on individuals, German cities and regions, tourism, sport, music, art, German films, food or festivals.

The following topics were particularly interesting.

- Die Sorben
- Kreuzberg
- Göttingen
- Die Geographie von Deutschland
- Warum Deutschland ein ideales Reiseziel ist
- Mein Austausch mit Lippstadt
- Meine Erfahrung in Österreich
- Triberg im Schwarzwald
- Deutsches Gebäck
- Berliner Philharmoniker
- Deutsche Musik
- Ludwig van Beethoven
- Deutsche Märchen
- Rotkäppchen
- Caspar David Friedrich
- Gustav Klimt
- Axel Hütte und Candida Höfer
- BMW Motorräder
- Audi
- Pina Bausch
- Puma
- Marc-André ter Stegen
- Schwimmen in Deutschland
- Tony Martin und Radfahren in Deutschland
- Weihnachten
- Martin Luther
- GSG 9

Candidates should steer away from general topics such as ‘Jugend in Deutschland’, ‘Rauchen’, ‘Alkoholkonsum von Jugendlichen’ and ‘Homosexualität’ as these topics do not address the AO4 Performance Descriptor required for this new speaking examination. However, most candidates delivered a presentation that was well researched, interesting, well-structured and well put together, and with a degree of originality and personal engagement.

It is important that presentations demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the chosen topic. The best presentations were those that reflected the candidate’s personal interest. Candidates should also make sure that their presentation has a clear conclusion rather than petering out or ending abruptly.

Teachers or assistants should check their candidates' presentations for mistakes. It is also advisable to invest time and effort in pronunciation, intonation and, especially, the delivery of the presentation. Some candidates speak too fast which makes it difficult for the examiner to understand what is said.

## Conversation

As in the legacy specification, the general conversation in this revised specification still focuses on whether candidates respond readily and fluently, how well they develop their answers and how grammatically correct they respond in German.

The standard of the general conversation was very high: most candidates are well able to talk about themselves, their family and friends, hobbies, lifestyle, modern technologies and holidays.

It is still worth pointing out that the topics of school, university and part time jobs have now moved to A2, and will no longer be a focus of the AS conversation unless a candidate wishes to discuss these matters as part of the general conversation.

It is pleasing that so many candidates were able to engage in a genuinely interesting exchange and these were the candidates who achieved the highest marks. A few candidates put in an outstanding performance and made very, very few mistakes. To underpin the natural flow of conversation, candidates should be encouraged to learn a few idiomatic phrases, such as "das kann man so nicht sagen" or "es kommt darauf an".

As expected, linguistic accuracy was less convincing in this part of the examination. Whilst some candidates were able to impress with correct conditional and subjunctive forms as well as sophisticated idiomatic phrases, others showed weaknesses in basic grammar and vocabulary. Mistakes occurred in the use of the perfect tense, modal verbs, word order, gender, or in the incorrect use of vocabulary: e.g. "Zeit passieren" or "Geld spenden" are incorrect uses for "Zeit **verbringen**" or "Geld **ausgeben**"; "nächstes Jahr möchte ich **auf** die Uni gehen".

## Assessment Unit AS 2      Listening, Reading and Use of Language

### Section A – Listening

Despite the fact that candidates are required to respond in the target language in the first of the two questions they performed very well in this paper and generally seemed to find the topics 'elderly people and housing in Berlin' and 'reading to children' very accessible. Even though spelling and syntax were not always correct, candidates showed the necessary understanding and were able to identify the relevant information.

Candidates occasionally misunderstood Question 1 (g) "Was hält Frau Bolte von ..." but many scored full marks in Question 1 as a whole.

Individual lexical items presented problems for some candidates in Question 2. These were "Gerechtigkeitsgefühl" (b), "Zeitschriften" (d) and "Vorurteile" (h). This was disappointing as "Gerechtigkeit" had occurred in this question in last year's listening test. Candidates also found Question 1 (d) very challenging and often guessed the answer (tablets are expensive and addictive) rather than being able to figure out "wie vielseitig und sinnvoll die Nutzung dieser Geräte sein kann". Question 2 has to be answered in English, and it is important that candidates are precise. Unfortunately, one candidate answered the second question in German and did not get any marks.

## Section B – Reading

The text for reading comprehension about young people’s use of mobile phones was an accessible topic, however, some candidates found the questions in German difficult. However, most were able to identify the information required and score good marks. Even in Questions (f) and (j) where longer answers were required, most candidates coped well.

As there are no longer marks available for quality of language when answering in German, candidates should be discouraged from rewording the original text as this can lead to lack of clarity and, consequently, loss of marks.

### Translation

The majority of candidates understood the passage for translation about unpacking after the holidays well. However, many lost marks due to carelessness when failing to translate words such as “wieder”, “immer noch”, “nur” and “auch”. Some candidates experienced difficulties with the words/phrases “einschalten”, “Badehose”, “Geldschein”, “klebt”, “Glücksgefühle” and “verschwinden”. Therefore, these words became the discriminator between successful and less accomplished performances.

## Section C – Use of Language

This is the section that teachers and candidates must have practised heavily during their lower sixth year and for many the work paid off. It was helpful that the five questions followed a similar format to the questions in the SAMS and in last year’s paper. However, there is no guarantee that this will continue to be the format followed in future examination papers.

Performance in the first two questions on adjective endings and on pronouns was very mixed. Many candidates performed well in question three which required candidates to change the tenses and find the correct verb form. The least successful of the tense adaptation was Question 3 (d) which required the imperfect tense of ‘hat’.

As last year, the fourth question on word order was generally very well completed but, again, the conjunction ‘denn’ was less reliably identified as the non-subordinating one.

Finally, most candidates were able to pick up some points in the last question where they had to translate full sentences. Each sentence was worth 3 marks and minor mistakes were allowed. Surprisingly, ‘I got’ in Question (b) caused problems for some and so did “not as ... as “.

Candidates are reminded that handwriting is important! Students should avoid giving alternative answers in brackets as it must be clear which information is to be considered as the answer.

## Assessment Unit AS 3      Extended Writing

Overall, this paper was well received and the questions generally gave candidates the opportunity to write at length about the film/text that they had studied. As this is a separate examination now it seems that candidates study the topics in much greater depth than they had prepared for the extended writing task in the past and, as a result, many responses were very long. It should be emphasized at this stage that, while candidates should be encouraged to show evidence of knowing the film/text well, overly long essays can become unfocused and repetitive. It is important to show a clear understanding of the question and to select points which are pertinent to the argument. Pre-prepared paragraphs which address the topic in a general way will not gain high marks.

By far the most popular option in this paper is the film 'Good Bye Lenin'.

Approximately two thirds of centres chose to teach the film which deals with the topic of German reunification in an informative as well as entertaining way. It is pleasing to see that teachers and students clearly find the content interesting and enjoyable and are able to give excellent analysis of the film and show personal engagement. Of the two questions Option (a) about Alex creating the illusion of the GDR was twice as popular as Option (b) about GDR citizens coping with the changes after the fall of the wall. Responses on this film tended to be particularly long and often pre-learnt.

Dealing with the same period but a different aspect of reunification is the text 'Ich fühl mich so fifty-fifty' which was studied by approximately 20% of candidates. The popularity of both options for this text was more balanced. Approximately the same number of candidates chose Question (a) as those who chose Question (b).

Very few centres studied the films 'Almanya' and 'Die letzten Tage'. Understandably, the latter deals with a very heavy and depressing topic; however, one might think that History students might be particularly interested in German resistance against the Hitler regime. On the other hand, Almanya offers a very light-hearted view of the history of Turkish immigrants in Germany and can form a good basis for the topic at A2 level.

## Principal Examiner's Report

### Introduction

The Revised Specification went into its second year this year and the bigger cohort of last year's AS candidates sat the new format of the A-level examination for the first time.

Apart from slight changes in the speaking test the new examination required candidates to summarize a passage in German into English and, above all, the marks allocated to the different assessment objectives brought a greater emphasis to the prose translation. The Literature question offered two completely new texts for study but also brought back two classics which had been A-level texts in the past.

Overall, centres and candidates met the challenges of the new specification with the usual diligence and enthusiasm and the grades awarded seem to reflect the high calibre of A-level students in Northern Ireland.

### Assessment Unit A2 1 Speaking

It is worth reminding centres that the examination period for the Speaking tests has moved further forward to the last week in April. It is therefore understandable that examiners might ask candidates to consider being tested as much as two weeks before getting off on study leave. This will have even greater implications for schools when the Easter holiday is late – as it will be next year.

Having to coordinate examinations in two or three centres in one day requires careful organisation and examiners wish to thank teachers for responding promptly to e-mails and phone calls to arrange suitable dates. Thank you also for teas/coffees and snacks, it is much appreciated.

Facilitation for the Speaking Test was very good in all centres. The rooms were quiet and away from main thoroughfares but had windows in order to meet regulations for child protection. Centres may be reminded that telephones should be switched off during the examination in order to avoid interruption during the examination.

## Discussion

There is a slight change in balance in the A2 Speaking test for the Revised Specification as the Discussion is now worth 40 marks while the General Conversation is worth 35 marks. This is not reflected in the time allocated for each component, though, as the Discussion is given 6 minutes and the Conversation should last approximately 9 minutes. It is therefore very important that candidates are extremely well prepared and that they can speak fluently and at length about their chosen topic.

Generally speaking discussion topics were thoroughly researched and the information was effectively presented, providing interesting insights into the topic.

As 'Das Wunder von Bern' is no longer an option for this component, some centres had difficulty suggesting suitable topics to their students. It is important to remember the following points when making choices:

- Candidates must not use any aspect of their AS study as their research topic for the discussion. For example, candidates who studied 'Good Bye Lenin' or 'Ich fühl mich so fifty-fifty' must not choose aspects of East and West Germany or German re-unification as their research topic unless it is very clearly distinct from what they have studied in the context of AS. In order to avoid any ambiguity, we suggest that candidates should focus on a completely different topic. Centres should be reminded that candidates must authenticate on their summary sheet that they have not chosen *"a topic for their introduction [and discussion] that relates to the AS 1 topic [or the set works studied for AS 3 and A2 3]"*. *Specification, Section 3.4.*
- The topic must focus on either 'a cultural aspect of a German-speaking country or community', 'a historical period from the twentieth century of a German-speaking country or community' or 'a region of a German-speaking country or community'. The topic should not be drawn from the A2 Contexts for Learning – unless it fits clearly into one of the above categories.
- It may well be possible to discuss the German education system if it is dealt with from a historical perspective or discussed as a cultural topic. However, simply describing the German school system is not an appropriate topic.
- The topic should be neither too broad ('Bayern') nor too narrow ('Krampusnacht in Klagenfurt') and, as far as possible, capture the interest of the student rather than reflect teacher notes.
- Bullet points need to be well planned and, ideally, give a sense of progression through the topic rather than be randomly copied from the internet. While in the majority of cases candidates were able to depart from their prepared script and respond competently to the examiner's questions, some candidates gave the impression of not understanding any background or context of their chosen topic.

It should be noted that while most native speakers provided a high level of detail relating to the discussion topic, some adopted a more 'anecdotal' approach. While the level of language demonstrated by these candidates is very high, the same level of in-depth research is expected from them as from non-native speakers.

The topics on a region included 'München', 'Niedersachsen', 'Der Bodensee', 'Thüringen' and others, and the most interesting and often the most successful research themes provided a specific focus on the topic such as the economy, famous personalities, tourism, religion and many more.

The topics on a historical aspect included 'Sachsenhausen', 'Einwanderung in Deutschland', 'Die Russlanddeutschen', 'Deutschland nach der Wahl 2017', 'Die Swing-Jugend und die Edelweißpiraten', 'Die Stasi', 'Das Wirtschaftswunder', 'Die Geschichte der Grünen' as well as various aspects of Berlin, German division and re-unification.

Those who opted for a cultural aspect discussed 'Das Bauhaus', 'Die Gebrüder Grimm', 'Kinder-und Jugendliteratur in Deutschland', 'Sport und Gesellschaft in Deutschland', 'Das multikulturelle Berlin', 'Popmusik in Deutschland', 'Die deutsche Filmindustrie' and many more interesting topics.

While topics such as 'Die Pharmaindustrie in Deutschland' or 'Die deutsche Landwirtschaft' do not seem to fit the template at first sight, topics such as these can be developed to make insightful comments about German History, Culture and Region in a very sophisticated way.

The conversation phase of the test was – perhaps inevitably – less well-prepared than the discussion element. Schools may be reminded of the importance of the Speaking Test which constitutes 30% of the A-level examination overall (75 marks out of 250).

The very best candidates proved to be adept, well-informed, fluent and more than capable of talking at length on any issue mentioned. Teachers and candidates are again reminded that candidates need to have thought about all of the topics at both AS and A2 and be in a position to air the major issues emerging from each one. Part of the interest and challenge of the specification is for candidates to become more aware of, more informed about, and more able to address the central questions of our times – including immigration, conflict, the internet, Brexit, poverty and micro-plastics to mention but a few. Differentiation of performance was best achieved through discussion of these more challenging topics.

It was particularly pleasing to witness the considerable enthusiasm for Germany and the German language demonstrated during this examination, particularly amongst those who have already been afforded the opportunity to spend some time in the country.

In a small number of cases failure to develop answers had a detrimental impact. Candidates should strive to take an active role in the conversation in order to best maintain control of it and to guide it to areas with which they feel most comfortable.

In a very small number of cases the formal 'Sie' address confused candidates. Being familiar with the formal address and the appropriate response to 'Wie geht's?' should form part of every student's preparation for the Speaking Test.

While there were no specific common pronunciation mistakes overall, in some cases examiners commented on a predominance of the Northern Irish accent which sometimes had a negative impact on intonation. Candidates should be aware that poor pronunciation will affect their marks.

## Assessment Unit A2 2      Listening and Reading

### Section A – Listening

The format of the Listening section changed slightly on allowing candidates 5 more minutes and reducing the marks awarded from 30 to 25.

This section was very accessible and most candidates performed very well. The vast majority achieved at least 20 out of 25 or better with only very few candidates scoring less than 12 out of 25. It seems that both listening tasks were equally accessible.

In Question 1 candidates had to answer German questions in German. Overall, the quality of answers was very good.

Some candidates were unable to distinguish between "Schule" and "Schüler" which was required for some of the questions. Some candidates could not spell "abwechslungsreich" in Part (b). Some candidates repeated what was in Part (g) instead of "wenn sich Schüler im Unterricht schlecht benehmen" or did not focus on "Klassenfahrten" in Part (h) with the correct answer "man lernt die Schüler noch mal ganz anders kennen".

In Question 2 candidates had to answer questions in English and this task was also very well completed.

In Part (a) many candidates were awarded the mark for the word “Bratwurst” instead of “sausages”. A number of candidates came up with “Christmas meaning “ or Christmas mood” instead of the required “they want to experience the special Christmas atmosphere” in Part (b). Some candidates did not give the correct answer of “magazine for the *homeless*” in Part (d). Part (g) required candidates to write “helping others makes you *happy*” instead of “glad”.

## Section B – Reading

The gap fill exercise in Question 1 proved very challenging for candidates this year. Almost a third of candidates achieved 5 marks out of 10 or less. Indeed, one candidate ended up with zero for this section. The vast majority of candidates did not get “Zusammenhänge” and many put “eine” instead of “keine” in Part (h).

In the Reading Comprehension of Question 2, candidates had to answer questions in German. This was completed very successfully, with about 40% of candidates achieving full marks. Candidates found this text very accessible and copied the correct phrases or sentences. There is no need to rephrase but candidates may have to manipulate language for the correct answer! Some candidates mixed up the answers for Parts (d) and (e). A few candidates did not give the full response of “Urlaub am *Gardasee*” in Part (f) or did not copy/spell “Rentner” correctly in Part (g).

The summary is new in this Revised A2 examination and is marked out of 15. Candidates read a German text of approximately 300 words in length and reduce it to a summary in English of 100 words (with a tolerance of 90 to 110 words). The AO2 Performance Descriptor requires candidates to display a level of understanding of the stimulus and the task, and to select and convey the key points within the tolerance of the word limit. The response also needs to be consistent and balanced.

This section of the examination was very successful: Nearly all candidates wrote summaries that displayed a very high level of understanding within the word limit tolerance. About half of all candidates achieved 12 out of 15 or higher which is excellent considering that candidates had no past papers to practise this part of the examination.

Some candidates did not understand the word “Jahrhundertgeschichte” or the phrase “zwei Dutzend Syrer”. A number of candidates did not convey the concept of “klettert ... aus dem Boot, sie ziehen es, schieben es, stundenlang”. Or “sie schaffen es ... bis an den Strand und alle sind gerettet”. Some candidates did not understand “Die Schwestern wurden in Berlin mit Deutschlands wichtigstem Medienpreis, dem Bambi, ausgezeichnet”.

The Prose Translation is marked differently in the Revised A2 examination: the text is slightly longer and is divided into 7 sections. Each section is marked out of 5 which adds up to a final score of 35 overall. These marks are not scaled or factorised and therefore, the prose translation gains a much greater emphasis in the overall marking of this paper.

As expected, there was a wider distribution of marks for this part of the examination with a few excellent or even outstanding translations (10% scoring 30 marks or more). Nobody achieved full marks, but 40% of candidates did well or very well achieving between 23 and 29 marks.

Prose Translation is a very demanding task that requires candidates to demonstrate grammatical and lexical accuracy.

In the first section, some candidates did not know the lexical items “Kommunikationstechnologie” or “von zu Hause (aus) zu arbeiten”. In the second section, only one or two candidates knew the words “Anfahrtszeiten”, “Arbeitszeiten” or the phrase

“mit Kinderbetreuung koodinieren”. In the third section, candidates surprisingly did not seem to know the words “beliebt” or “regelmäßig” or “zwölf Prozent der Angestellten”. Many candidates did not recognise the dative case in “in anderen europäischen Ländern” in Section 4. Candidates had difficulty with the word “Arbeitsbedingungen” or the comparative “sie sind auch produktiver” in Section 5. Section 6 was particularly challenging as most candidates could not come up with “Arbeitgeber *erwarten*, dass ihre Angestellten selbst spät *am Abend* und am Wochenende E-Mails lesen. The final Section 7 was also challenging with “dass der *persönliche* Kontakt ... verloren *geht* und sie *sich* isoliert und *einsam* fühlen *könnten*”.

As examiners regularly point out, many candidates have a very relaxed attitude to capital letters, punctuation and especially umlaut, which can alter the meaning of a word or change the tense, and may result in a deduction of marks!

Teachers need to emphasise to their students the importance of learning basic vocabulary!

## Assessment Unit A2 3 Extended Writing

In the Revised examination, candidates sit this part of the examination on a different day from the A2 2 examination. As a result, a lot of candidates write very long essays (in excess of 6 pages; some writing 8-10 pages or more). Although the time allocation for this examination is still one hour, candidates may be less tired or simply feel obliged to produce more in one hour.

In general, the standard of writing was very good. Many candidates wrote very good essays and some candidates produced excellent responses indeed. But there were also essays that did not address the question or demonstrated a lesser command of German.

There are four new literature texts in this section.

62% of candidates opted for *Besuch der alten Dame*. Every single candidate out of these chose Question 1 (a) “Inwiefern geht es in diesem Stück um die Macht des Geldes?” which was a very accessible essay title that enabled candidates to write good essays. A lot of candidates wrote very long essays, some of a very high standard. Nobody opted for Option (b).

Examiners were surprised to see that *Tschick* was the second most popular text as this is a very recent book with fewer resources compared with the more traditional Dürrenmatt or Frisch. Approximately 20% of candidates chose Question 3 (a) “Wie werden die Erwachsenen in diesem Roman dargestellt?” and only a few answered Question (b) “Inwiefern kann man diesen Roman als eine lustige Geschichte bezeichnen?”

The third most popular text was *Andorra* with about 8% of candidates. About half answered Question (a) “Wie beurteilen Sie die Person des Paters und sein Verhalten in diesem Stück?” and the other half going for “Untersuchen Sie das Thema Gewalt in diesem Stück?”.

The final literature text was *Russendisko* which was chosen by about 8% of candidates as well. This must have been quite a challenge for the teachers choosing this book, as, to date, there are few resources for this text and the book contains a great number of short stories. Almost all candidates answered Question 4 (a) “Wie stellt Kaminer das Leben und die Probleme in der Großstadt dar?” and only one candidate opted for 4 (b) “Inwiefern ist *Russendisko* Gesellschaftskritik oder einfach eine Sammlung humorvoller Geschichten?”

The mark scheme for this component has changed. Overall, there are 75 marks awarded to the essay. There are 35 marks awarded for the Performance Descriptor AO2 Understanding: Candidates need to demonstrate their understanding of the requirements of the question. They need to address the question appropriately and coherently with minimum repetition and show evidence of analysis.

A lot of candidates showed very good understanding and good evidence of analysis. However, quite a few candidates were not specific enough in their answers and gave a response of a general nature.

There are 20 marks awarded for the Performance Descriptor AO4 Knowledge. Candidates are expected to demonstrate knowledge of the text and to focus on key aspects of the question. Very able candidates gave a response with detailed knowledge, views, arguments and insights and this was presented with clarity.

Some candidates made incorrect references to the text, gave incorrect quotations or named the short stories in *Russendisko* incorrectly. Some candidates only focused on certain aspects.

There are 20 marks awarded for the Performance Descriptor AO3 Target Language. This assesses a candidate's command of language, grammatical accuracy, use of idiomatic language or complex structures appropriate to this level. As in previous years, candidates had problems with word order, verb agreement, adjectival endings, modal verbs to name but a few. Furthermore, the correct use of capital and lower case letters matters in German, as does the use of umlaut and punctuation. Some candidates need to be reminded that, when linking sentences and subordinate clauses, a comma is put before not after the subordinating conjunction (... , dass...).

However, some candidates have an excellent command of German and manage to write very long essays at a very high level and with very few mistakes. Well done!

It was noticeable that some centres seem to have sample essays or sample introductions that candidates learn off by heart, which they then reproduce with varying success. This is particularly the case for candidates who had prepared for *Der Besuch der alten Dame* and to some extent *Andorra* as these two books featured on the German specification in the past and teachers have kept their notes and past papers. This practice only works well, if candidates can use these sample essays wisely and apply or adapt them to the questions appropriately.

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