

# GCSE Examiners' Report

German  
GCSE  
Summer 2025

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## Introduction

Our Principal examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each unit.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.<sup>1</sup>

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

## Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	WJEC offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	<a href="https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/">https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/</a>
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	<a href="#">Portal by WJEC</a> or on the WJEC subject page
Grade boundary information	<p>Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade.</p> <p>For unitted specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and unit level.</p> <p>For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each unit that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.</p>	For unitted specifications click here: <a href="#">Results, Grade Boundaries and PRS (wjec.co.uk)</a>

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

Exam Results Analysis	WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	<a href="#">Portal by WJEC</a>
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	<a href="https://resources.wjec.co.uk/">https://resources.wjec.co.uk/</a>
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	<a href="#">Portal by WJEC</a> or on the WJEC subject page.
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## **Executive Summary**

Candidates should be commended for their performance this year, and centres for preparing candidates well for all four assessments. Principal Examiners have remarked on a noticeable improvement in fluency in German and an overall preparedness across the cohort this year. Unit 3, in particular showed a marked improvement on performance compared to previous series and it was clear in the productive skills that candidates had been advised to answer the questions and not to over-produce and introduce errors.

While this was a clear strength this year, there were still instances where candidates were extending their work beyond the expected level for the assessments, which opened up opportunities to introduce errors. This is particularly evident with stronger candidates. Centres should advise candidates to be concise and prioritise what is relevant to the questions asked.

As in previous years, there are continued issues with basic vocabulary, such as numbers, connectives and adverbs which can change the meaning of a sentence. Candidates should be reminded to look out for these and ensure they check they have read every word in the question before responding.

# GERMAN

## GCSE

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### UNIT 1 SPEAKING

#### Overview of the Unit

The speaking exam consists of three parts: the role play, the photo card and the conversation. The candidates are prescribed a set from 1-6 which includes the role play, the photocard and a choice of conversation topics. Across the three tasks, all three themes are addressed. For the role play, candidates should try to attempt a “complete response”, although marks are still available for varying degrees of ambiguity and inaccuracy. The photo card is marked according to communication and interaction and linguistic knowledge and accuracy. Similarly, the conversation takes a holistic view of the communication and interaction and linguistic knowledge and accuracy from the two parts of the conversation but also assesses each candidate’s pronunciation and intonation.

Most centres had made an accurate assessment of each candidate’s ability and entered them for the correct tier. However, we still saw a small number of centres being too ambitious in their judgement, meaning that some candidates struggled to score many marks at higher, whereas they would have been closer to / or indeed comfortably within the top band on foundation.

Overall candidates performed well, and performance was similar to that of previous years. There were, however, areas which all centres are asked to consider for future examination series:

**Appropriate venue:** Most centres conducted the tests in areas which were clearly well away from the usual hustle and bustle of a school day. There were still times, however, when noise from passing students made it difficult to hear what was being said. Teacher-examiners should also ask if it is possible to suspend the use of the school bell for the duration of the assessments as this too can cause it difficult to hear responses. More schools now seem to employ a tannoy system and there was even an incident of music being played during an exam. This must be avoided at all costs.

**Administration:** The Unit 1 speaking assessments were virtually all completed and uploaded onto the system within the required time frame. The uploading of the administrative documents required was excellent, although it should be reiterated that centres are required to upload the set allocation form, as without this, examiners are unable to mark the submissions.

**Uploading of files:** Again, this was done very well. Whilst difficult to check that an examination has recorded successfully to the end it is recommended that centres check for any suspiciously small sound files which could indicate a recording that has been cut short.

**Timings:** Timing of exams is improving year on year. Role play and photo card discussions were particularly pleasing. The two parts of the conversation were also generally well balanced and very few candidates went over the overall 9-minute (Foundation) and 12-minute (higher) limit.

## Comments on individual questions/sections

### The Role Play

The majority of candidates were able to fulfil the requirements of the role play activity at Foundation and Higher Tier. This year, it was pleasing to hear so many candidates able to both ask a question and answer the unseen question. There were fewer incidences of candidates self-penalising by extending their response unnecessarily, although there were still instances of this, particularly at higher tier.

### The Photo Card

The photo card brought out some extremely interesting and natural German which was very nice to hear. There was much more relevant and detailed information expressed in comparison to previous years, which enabled a good number of candidates to attain the higher band. Whilst candidates were again able to provide answers to unseen questions on this part of the exam, it should be stressed that for the best marks, candidates need to provide justification to their opinions and should always endeavour to explain their ideas. Candidates who can provide two sides to an argument tend to score very well on this part of the exam.

### The Conversation

The majority of candidates provided pleasantly natural responses to the conversation. Clearly, candidates are being well prepared for the examination but not simply learning long chunks of language which causes candidates to lose marks for interaction and spontaneity. Candidates usually initiated part one of the conversation and teachers asked questions relevant to the sub-sub-theme, allowing for a natural and coherent flow to the conversation.

Pronunciation and intonation were generally good across all centres.

Most candidates were able to develop their answers to questions and the candidates who performed best were those who could express and justify opinions and views, using complex structures. Those candidates who performed confidently when using time references were able to access more marks than those who struggled when referring to past or future events.

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**UNIT 2 LISTENING**

**Overview of the Unit**

Unit 2 consists of a listening examination of approximately 35 minutes at Foundation Tier and 45 minutes at Higher Tier .

At both tiers there is a mixture of question types, box ticking, gap filling and responding briefly in German and English / Welsh.

Candidates completed tasks related to themes and sub-themes at both levels. There were very few questions or sections not attempted. Some candidates at both levels still appear to be anticipating words used in the boxes or pictures. This could cause difficulties. It is important to concentrate on the question, not on anticipating what words could be used in the actual recording. Numbers, in all forms, still appear to cause difficulties for many candidates. Several candidates gave too much information that wasn't required but which, unfortunately, contradicted their answer, resulting in a +1/-1 mark.

There were a number of exemplary scripts this series, particularly at Higher Tier. Teachers and candidates to be congratulated for their hard work in preparing for the examination.

The outcomes for 2025 were similar to the 2024 series.

**Comments on individual questions/sections**

**FOUNDATION TIER**

- Q.1 Generally no areas to highlight in sections a-d. *Zahnärztin* was generally not known - most candidates chose *Journalistin* as the answer.
- Q.2 Generally no areas to highlight in Sections 1 and 2, some minor confusion with part (e), *cheap being a popular choice*.
- Q.3 Generally no issues to highlight apart from *telling the time* in section (b) which caused some confusion.
- Q.4 Appears to have caused a number of difficulties for most candidates. Question words need to be reinforced.
- Q.5 Section 1, parts (a) and (b) were well attempted. There were almost no answers mentioning clothes or hairdresser. *Ausland* generally not known. *Austria* and *Australia* were popular answers here.
- Q.6 Section 1 part (b) was well attempted. A popular answer in section (f) however was *to pay in Euros*.

- Q.7 Generally no issues to highlight.
- Q.8 At both levels this appears to have produced better responses than in previous series. Section 1 appears to have caused few problems. Some candidates offered too much information, sometimes contradicting themselves, resulting in a +1 -1 mark. *Gymnasium* still often translated as something to do with sport.
- Q.9 Generally, reasonably well attempted, particularly by candidates entered for the higher tier. In section (b) *bekannt* was often translated as popular. There were very few correct answers in section (c). Dates and numbers again showing a particular weakness at both tiers. Various answers were offered in section (e). *Boathouse* amongst the most popular, along with *Caldey Island*.

#### HIGHER TIER

Questions 1-3 are common to both tiers

- Q.4 Generally no issues to highlight.
- Q.5 Generally well attempted, with section (d) producing a variety of ticks in the boxes, *Studentenwohnheim* was a popular choice.
- Q.6 Generally well attempted. Some confusion arose with section (c). Several candidates choosing *studieren* as their answer.
- Q.7 This question produced a variety of good responses. Minor confusion arose with the days the bus did not operate.
- Q.8 This question produced several good responses from candidates. Issues arose in section (a) where few candidates picked up on the *etwas Medizinisches*.
- Q.9 A number of candidates performed well. In section (a) most candidates ignored the **less than half**. *Imbiss* was generally missed. Candidates were correctly able to identify that countries wish to convert *totally* to electric cars.

Section (d) appeared to be the most challenging section. Very few candidates identified that pupils should *not check their phones*

Section (e) was successfully attempted by many candidates.

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## UNIT 3 READING

### Overview of the Unit

Candidates demonstrated their understanding of a broad range of German covering all sub-themes as outlined in the Specification.

Questions in both the Foundation and Higher Tiers were accessible to all candidates. The paper maintained the same format as in previous exams and candidates were familiar with common question types, e.g. tick boxes and identifying the main idea of a text. Candidates generally performed well in matching and multiple-choice tasks across both tiers. Most were also able to provide accurate short responses in English or Welsh when required. However, weaker candidates found inference-based questions more challenging. Although short answers in English or Welsh are encouraged, responses must be clear and unambiguous.

Higher Tier candidates generally achieved higher marks than Foundation Tier candidates on the common questions (Foundation Q8+9 / Higher Tier Q1+2).

### Comments on individual questions/sections

#### Foundation Tier Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5 (non-verbal responses)

Basic vocabulary was identified well, and simple language structures were understood by most candidates. Opinions were also generally well identified in Q2. Statements on technology in Q3 were more challenging for some candidates but generally answered well. In Q4 (factual text), the majority of candidates found vocabulary like "*Miete*" challenging. Question 5 was generally well handled, with most candidates successfully identifying different tenses.

#### Foundation Tier Q6

This year candidates performed well on the first literary task. The majority of candidates were able to identify key vocabulary required to answer the questions successfully. Q6(d) and (f) proved slightly more challenging.

#### Foundation Tier Q7

Basic numbers were often challenging in Q7 (and later in Q9). Weaker candidates often wrote "19, 9", a random number or "90" for the number of Germans using BBQs, not adding "%". In (c) the vast majority identified basic food items such as bread and (pasta) salad.

#### Foundation Tier Q8/Higher Tier Q1

In this literary text, a good recall of a mix of vocabulary was noticeable e.g. school subjects, local area, world of work. Some weaker candidates misinterpreted "*in den Bergen*" as being a city/town called "*Bergen*". HT candidates expectedly outperformed FT candidates often due to being more precise in their English answers e.g. (e) "there can be fun situations" instead of "funny situations".

## Foundation Tier Q9/Higher Tier Q2

The majority of pupils coped well with the demand of the question and scored marks across Q8/Q2. Unfortunately, almost all candidates were not precise enough for (a) by answering “the best beach” instead of “one of the best beaches”. Very weak FT candidates struggled with the basic number “10”.

## Foundation Tier Q10 Translation

Candidates performed very well this year and showed a good recall of a range of vocabulary. Weaker candidates often overlooked detail such as “*viele Feste*” and translated it as “a festival” rather than “lots of festivals”. Most candidates were able to translate the tenses, especially the past tense, correctly but some did not distinguish between “*ich möchte*” (conditional) and “*ich will*” (future tense).

## Higher Tier Q3,4,5 (non-verbal responses)

Most candidates performed very well in the non-verbal responses this year and identified vocabulary and structures including tenses correctly. The factual text in Q4 with the question style of matching up sentence parts was challenging for some candidates.

## Higher Tier Q6

Some candidates used highlighter to identify key messages in longer texts. This technique showed that the correct part of the text was identified, but occasionally a lack of precision in the English/Welsh answers didn't allow for marks to be awarded e.g. “*eine der schönsten Städte*” was translated as “pretty” not reflecting the superlative. Candidates should read back over their answers to check that they make grammatical sense in English.

## Higher Tier Q7

This literary text about social issues was handled very well by the majority of candidates this year. They were able to identify the key words/structure required to answer the question successfully. More able candidates coped well with the challenging questions (c) and (f) whereas it appears that some less able candidates guessed answers or left these questions blank.

## Higher Tier Q8

Again, the majority of candidates performed well here and were able to show good understanding of a factual text in German. Marks could not be awarded where candidates were not precise enough e.g. (b) “people don’t listen to the radio” should have been “fewer people listen to the radio” or (e) “friends” instead of “friendships”.

## Higher Tier Q9 Translation

The translation task reflected a clear differentiation between very able candidates who identified complex structures and weaker candidates who generally coped well with the vocabulary but were unable to translate complex language such as “*gefällt mir*” or “*wäre es besser/wenn ich ... haben würde*”. Marks could only be awarded where structures and vocabulary were translated correctly.

As in previous years, many candidates lost marks due to a lack of precision in their English/Welsh responses. Adverbs and “small words” i.e. “*so/viel/zu*” continue to be frequently overlooked or omitted. It was encouraging to see that many candidates demonstrated a good understanding of a broad range of vocabulary and grammatical structures. Notably, both Foundation and Higher Tier candidates showed further improved recognition of different tenses this year.

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#### UNIT 4 WRITING

##### Overview of the Unit

The format of the Foundation and Higher Tier exams remained consistent with previous years. Most candidates completed all questions within the allotted time and generally adhered to the recommended word counts. Only the weaker candidates struggled to write enough to reach the top mark band.

Candidates were typically well prepared and responded appropriately to the tasks. For Question 1 on the Foundation Tier, responses were short and precise. Question 2 was answered with simple, clear sentences, while Questions 3 on the Foundation Tier and Questions 1 and 2 on the Higher Tier required more extended language, including complex structures, justifications and a range of tenses. The translation tasks provided stronger candidates with an opportunity to demonstrate their solid grasp of vocabulary and more advanced grammatical structures, but for weaker candidates this proved to be challenging.

##### Comments on individual questions/sections

###### Question 1 Foundation Tier

Candidates were asked to provide simple information related to the theme of *Healthy Lifestyle*.

Most were able to write short, clear sentences using a basic structure of noun, verb, and object. Full marks were awarded when responses conveyed the intended meaning clearly and demonstrated a good level of accuracy. Responses that only partially conveyed the meaning or contained serious errors were awarded one mark.

Minor errors—such as incorrect gender, agreement, or spelling mistakes that did not obscure the meaning—were disregarded. However, more serious errors, including incorrect verb endings or incorrect word order after conjunctions or inversion, resulted in the loss of one mark.

Weaker candidates were often able to convey some meaning, but their responses frequently included serious errors. Some candidates still write too much which carries the risk of making mistakes which will result in a loss of marks.

## Question 2 Foundation Tier

In Question 2, candidates were expected to provide basic information related to the theme of *environment*. Some responses lacked sufficient detail or clarity, preventing them from being placed in the top band for Communication and Content. Weaker candidates often struggled with even basic vocabulary related to the topic e.g. *Ich recycle Glas*. Few candidates were unable to communicate only very little meaning.

Responses clearly below 50 words lacked the necessary range and complexity of structures, resulting in lower marks for Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy.

## Question 3 Foundation Tier / 1 Higher Tier

In this question, candidates were asked to write about school subjects, past homework and what they would like to study in the future. Although the instructions clearly required candidates to address all three bullet points, some failed to do so. As a result, marks were lost for both Communication and Content, and Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy, due to a limited range of language—for example, a lack of varied tenses.

Foundation Tier candidates frequently struggled to express their ideas and opinions clearly, particularly for the second and third bullet points. Their responses tended to use basic vocabulary and grammar, and many were unable to form the past tense accurately. Higher Tier candidates generally performed better, offering more detailed responses with a wider range of opinions. However, many still encountered difficulties with verb use, particularly in terms of tense, endings, and word order.

## Question 4 Foundation Tier - Translation

Most candidates translated part (a) correctly and the singular or plural form of *Ferien / Urlaub* was accepted to correspond with the verb.

As in previous years, forming questions proved difficult for many. A significant number of candidates were unable to use inversion correctly and some struggled to translate the verb *skiing*.

In part (c), weaker candidates often failed to recall core nouns like *mountains* and *hotel*. For the past tense sentence in part (d), most candidates were able to gain some marks, but issues with word order, correct auxiliary verb selection, and general vocabulary were common.

A similar pattern was seen in part (e), where some meaning was conveyed in the future tense, but grammatical structures and vocabulary were frequently inaccurate.

## Question 2 Higher Tier

It was encouraging to see that most candidates wrote the expected length of approximately 150 words and included factual information, developed ideas, opinions and justifications. In general, communication was clear; however, among weaker candidates, meaning occasionally broke down due to over-complicated sentence structures that led to ambiguity.

The strongest candidates produced well-structured and detailed responses, going beyond simple fact listing by including ideas, opinions, and justifications. For Option (a), candidates were expected to explain (dis-)advantages of healthy food, while Option (b) required suggestions for positive and negative aspects of friends/family. In many cases, these explanations were underdeveloped or omitted e.g. *Gesundes Essen ist gut, weil es gesund ist.*

Linguistic knowledge and accuracy were generally good. While weaker candidates attempted a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures, their responses often contained frequent errors, particularly with verbs, tenses, and word order. It was positive to see that many candidates could express their ideas and viewpoints clearly, using a good variety of language. The strongest candidates showed confidence in using multiple tenses and demonstrated a wide range of vocabulary and structures, including constructions like "um...zu", comparisons, conjunctions, idiomatic and topic-specific language.

## Question 3 Higher Tier - Translation

Most candidates were able to convey meaning to some extent, using basic grammatical structures with a fair degree of accuracy. However, topic-specific vocabulary—such as terms like "favourite country", "holidays," and "swimming pool"—proved surprisingly challenging for many.

Common grammatical errors included incorrect word order after conjunctions, failure to apply the verb-second rule, *um+zu* and errors when using structures in the past and future tense. Verb endings posed difficulties, particularly for weaker candidates.

Marks were awarded where meaning was partially conveyed, despite responses frequently containing multiple grammatical errors that affected the overall accuracy.

Many candidates demonstrated the ability to convey information, ideas, and facts effectively, and overall communication in German was mostly clear. However, grammatical weaknesses were noted, particularly in the use of verb endings, tenses, and word order—especially with inversion and after conjunctions. Candidates who made an effort to use more complex structures were credited for their ambition according to the Mark Scheme, even when errors were present.

## Supporting you

### Useful contacts and links

Our friendly subject team is on hand to support you between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: 029 2240 4297

Email: [languages@wjec.co.uk](mailto:languages@wjec.co.uk)

Qualification webpage: [GCSE German](#)

See other useful contacts here: [Useful Contacts | WJEC](#)

### CPD Training / Professional Learning

Access our popular, free online CPD/PL courses to receive exam feedback and put questions to our subject team, and attend one of our face-to-face events, focused on enhancing teaching and learning, providing practical classroom ideas and developing understanding of marking and assessment.

Please find details for all our courses here: <https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/>

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