



GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GERMAN
GCSE
SUMMER 2023**

Introduction

Our Principal examiners' reports offer valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. They are written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and detail how candidates have performed.

This report offers an overall 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 goes on to look in detail at each question/section of each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.ⁱ

The information found in this report can provide invaluable 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 annual 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.	https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
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 6 months after the examination.	www.wjecservices.co.uk 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 unitised 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 overall subject, rather than for each unit that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.</p>	For unitised specifications click here: Results, Grade Boundaries and PRS (wjec.co.uk)

Exam Results Analysis	WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	www.wjecservices.co.uk
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.	https://resources.wjec.co.uk/
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.	www.wjecservices.co.uk or on the WJEC subject page.
Become an examiner with WJEC.	We are always looking to recruit new examiners or moderators. These opportunities can provide you with invaluable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	Become an Examiner WJEC

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Subject Officer's Executive Summary

Overall, candidates were well prepared for all four units this year. The vast majority were entered for the appropriate tiers/combination of tiers.

A common theme across the four skills was a weakness with common vocabulary and synonyms. Also, for the speaking and writing components, it was evident candidates were not always comfortable with conjugating verbs, both regular and irregular. In particular for Units 2 and 3, an unfamiliarity with the question words (who/what/where/when/why etc) led candidates to answer the question incorrectly.

Another common feature across the four skills was a tendency to write more than required. While not out of the scope of the assessments, this generally resulted in candidates introducing errors in work which would otherwise have been sufficient to reach the top bands in Units 1 and 4, or to satisfy the mark scheme for Units 2 and 3.

Areas for improvement	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
Candidates should be familiar with high-frequency vocabulary	Vocabulary list Knowledge Organisers	Vocabulary list in the specification Knowledge organisers to apply the vocabulary
Carefully read the rubric to only answer what's required.	Past Papers Mark Schemes OER (Online Exam Review) CPD material Exam Walkthroughs	Previous responses from candidates/mark scheme

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UNIT 1 SPEAKING

Overview of the Unit

The speaking exam comprises of three parts: the role play, the photo card and the conversation. The candidates are given a prescribed Set of tasks from 1-6.

The majority of centres showed an understanding of their candidates' abilities and consideration was made when entering candidates of the 'accessibility of assessments for learners of different abilities', thus ensuring that candidates were able to access the tasks appropriately. Very few candidates sounded "out of their depth" – although individual centres may choose to reflect on the way in which they decide upon the tier of a candidate in future series. Centres should consider the foundation and higher mark schemes carefully, noting especially the linguistic requirements to reach the top band on higher.

Even though the format of the examination was different to 2022 series, in that the photo card activity was re-introduced, conduct of the exams was very good. There was a marked improvement in the conversation in that students were almost always asked questions relating to the correct sub-themes.

Timings and administration

The speaking Unit places unique demands on centres in terms of timing and administration which merit a specific mention here:

- Most centres arranged appropriate venues for the assessments and recordings were generally clear. In some cases there was excessive noise, often the result of the school bell, which impeded both the clarity and, at times, the flow of the examination.
- 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. This really does help with the marking process, helping examiners to cross check for attendance, allocated sets and deciding which work is eligible for use in CPD.
- It is of course difficult to check that an examination has recorded successfully to the end but centres must look for any suspiciously small folders when uploading which could indicate a problem. Centres should also store original recordings securely in case the issue has come about during the uploading process.
- On the whole, the timing of exams was good this year. There were however some issues when teacher-examiners spent too long on the role play and photocard activities. Teachers should really move through these activities swiftly, without rushing the candidates, and certainly should not add extra questions. It is when these two activities take too long, that students risk going over the overall 9-minute (Foundation) and 12-minute (higher) limit and **any speaking evidence that exceeds these timings, will not be marked.**

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. Foundation Tier candidates handled the unseen questions well, as did most at Higher Tier, although the idea of preparing for the unexpected is perhaps one area that teachers and candidates of future cohorts could work on. There are still a number of candidates who introduce errors, especially on the Higher Tier roleplay, by extending their response unnecessarily, resulting in an inaccuracy in either use of vocabulary or grammatical structures. Candidate's performance was consistent with last year's cohort.

The Photo Card

Considering the photo card was absent from last year's exams, this part was done quite well and virtually all candidates were able to provide some information to both the photo and the subsequent questions. It is worth mentioning that more marks are available on the mark scheme for candidates who provide *relevant* information to the photocard. Of course, we understand that it is a difficult task for some candidates and that hair colour etc may be all that some students can talk about, but those candidates who could say what was happening and relate to the theme of the photo scored very well.

The Conversation

The majority of candidates at both Foundation and Higher Tier were able to access this part of the assessment and were well prepared for the task, enabling them to answer questions on the two themes. As already mentioned, timing of the two parts was much improved across centres and allowed students to maximise their Communication score. Candidates usually initiated part one of the conversation and teachers asked questions relevant to the assigned sub-themes.

Pronunciation and intonation was 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. That said, it was good to see that all candidates were at least given the opportunity to use different tenses thanks to well-considered questions, even if they ultimately failed to form the appropriate structures.

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UNIT 2 LISTENING

Overview of the Unit

Unit 2 is a listening comprehension assessment 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 answering briefly in German and English / Welsh.
- Candidates completed tasks related to themes and sub-themes at both levels. There were very few unattempted questions or sections to questions.
- Several candidates introduced 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 2023 were similar to previous series with improvements in candidate responses for the overlap questions and towards the end of the Higher Tier assessment.

Comments on individual questions/sections

FOUNDATION TIER

- Q.1** No areas to highlight.
- Q.2** Some minor confusion with parts (d) and (e)
- Q.3** Section 1 caused the most problems. ,*Obdachlosen*' appeared generally unfamiliar / Most candidates opting for the picture of the music concert. Section 2 was generally well answered.
- Q.4** Appears to have caused some difficulties, especially with the first line answers. Question words need to be reinforced.
- Q.5** Section 1, parts (a) and (c) were well attempted. There were almost no correct answers to part (b). Candidates failed to pick up on the fact that the festival was *taking place for the 10th time*. Section 2 produced good responses.
- Q6** Section 1 part (b) was well attempted. Section 2 produced good answers to (d). Often in part (c) the fact that there *are fewer young people than 5 years ago* was not picked up on.

- Q.7 Foundation/Q1 Higher:** Section 1 was well attempted. Section 2 appears to have caused some difficulty with the €12 answer often chosen. Prepositions appear to have caused several candidates difficulty. All 3 boxes attracted answers.
- Q.8 Foundation/Q2 Higher:** 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.
- Q.9 Foundation/Q3 Higher:** Generally well-attempted, particularly by candidates entered for the higher tier. The exception being section (d). There were very few correct answers here identifying 2012. Many answers included the number 12, e.g. 12 years ago, 12th May etc.

HIGHER TIER

- Q4.** Section 1(a) *Germany* was often offered an answer. The *TV* often ignored. Part (b) The idea of *visiting Wales in a week* was often not picked up on. Candidates offered various answers involving the mountains and getting tips for visiting Wales. Part (d) *weltberühmt* was often conveyed incorrectly. *Lots of international books* was often given an answer instead of *international visitors*.
- Q5.** Generally well-attempted, section (c) producing a variety of ticks in the boxes.
- Q6.** Generally well-attempted. Some confusion arose with section (a). A number of candidates choosing *‚hat einen Job‘* as their answer.
- Q7.** This question produced a variety of good responses. In section 1 *Abfall* was sometimes translated as apples.
- Q8.** This question produced several good responses from candidates. Issues arose in section (d). *Mobbing* sometimes not translated correctly. *‚neidisch‘* almost universally ignored, but *‚spart Geld‘* generally well understood.
- Q9.** A number of candidates performed well. Some lost marks by applying their own knowledge about environmental issues to the situation. In section (a) a number of candidates were correctly able to identify that countries wish to convert *totally* to electric cars. Section (d) appears the most challenging section. Very few candidates identified the fact that *Norway leads the way* with electric cars. Section (e) was successfully attempted by many candidates.

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UNIT 3 READING

Overview of the Unit

Despite challenges for learners and teachers over the last few years, candidates displayed their ability to understand a wide range of German in different types of contexts.

Questions in the Foundation and Higher Tiers were accessible to all candidates and covered all themes and sub-themes. The paper followed the same format as in previous years and candidates were familiar with the type of questions, e.g. tick boxes, what is the text about etc. Only Q6 FT had a new format which asked candidates to complete a sentence in English with the missing word.

Even though short answers in English/Welsh are generally encouraged, answers must not be ambiguous. One-word-answers are not always precise enough to gain the mark (please see below for examples).

Comments on individual questions/sections

Foundation Tier

- Q1.** No areas to highlight.
- Q2.** Some candidates did not make the link between “*lecker*” and “*mag das Schulessen*” but chose “*isst nicht gern*” instead.
- Q3.** Some candidates left answers blank instead of trying any box. This was noticed in all tick-box exercises.
- Q4.** For (a) many pupils overlooked the negative at the start “*nicht viel Zeit*” and only saw the fast-food items.
- Q5.** This question was challenging for many pupils, especially (b) “*bin gern im Büro*” and “*Büroarbeit mag*” and (c) “*jobben, um Erfahrungen zu sammeln*”
- Q6.** This is the first of 2 literary texts, and in the past candidates have found these challenging. Candidates performed well overall but (e) “*verbietet*” was often not understood in this context.
- Q7.** Most candidates answered all questions, but some appeared to be guessing e.g. (a) What you have to do before you arrive at the car park? > pay for the ticket – the correct answer was “to cross a bridge”. (e) is an example of where 1-word answers are not precise enough. “Eat” (Where? What?) or “tearoom” (To eat? To drink? To shop? To visit?) alone was not precise enough but “eat in a tearoom” was required to gain the mark.

- Q8. (overlap with Q1 Higher Tier):** This is the second literary text in the FT and the first in the HT paper. Many Foundation Tier candidates found this text more challenging and some basic vocabulary like “*Herbst*” or “*österreichisch*” was not understood. Higher Tier candidates were able to access the text better and extracted the correct information for each question.
Some candidates miss out on marks because they misread questions e.g. “When are Susanne and her son going on holiday? > skiing”. It is advised to read all questions before answering and to highlight question words to avoid these types of errors. More able candidates answered (f) correctly with “go to the bank”, whereas less able candidates overlooked “*am dritten Tag*” and answered with any activity, mostly “going to the museum” (*Museumsbesuche*).
- Q9. (overlap with Q2 Higher Tier):** Text 9 is a more factual text which candidates still find challenging. (a) asks for the general meaning of the text. Especially Foundation Tier candidates only focused on some aspects/paragraphs within the text e.g. holidays rather than on the entire text.
Common errors were “*Flughafen*” translated as “airplane”, “*Ausflüge besprechen und ...verkaufen*” was often simply translated as “talking to tourists”. Like Q8, (f) could not be answered in 1-word. The idea of “working in the sunshine” or “working with colleagues” had to be clearly expressed to gain the mark, not simply “sun” or “work”.
- Q10. Translation:** Some candidates translated the entire paragraph into the past tense, having little awareness of tenses and “trigger”- words such as “*Letzte Woche*”. At times, the adverb “*manchmal*” was omitted and the conjunction “*weil*” was occasionally translated as “and”. The vocabulary was overall accessible but only more able candidates distinguished between tenses and comparison vs. adjective in “*gesünder*”.
Candidates should read the paragraph carefully first and take time to ensure that all words have been translated. More able candidates crossed off words/sentence parts as they went along, as part of their proof reading.

Higher Tier

- Q3.** (e) “*Das Festival wird immer größer*” (future tense) was often mistaken for “*hat sich ... schnell vergrößert*” (past tense).
- Q4.** Candidates found this factual text about job applications generally challenging.
- Q5.** Like some candidates in the FT, boxes were occasionally left blank. Candidates found it challenging to make the connection between “*Auswahl der Kurse*” and “*Angebot an Fächern*” (b).
- Q6.** Similar to Q2, candidates often focused on only one part of the text rather than the general meaning e.g. “dentist” (only in the second part of the text). In (b) the word “*seltener*” was not taken into consideration and many candidates only focused on the “*schlechte Zähne*”. More able candidates answered (f) correctly by using inference i.e. “playful situation” or even “play dentist”.
- Q7.** This is the second literary text. More able candidates looked at each question individually trying to find the correct part of the text. Less able candidates were unable to use inference in (e) (the reason why the parents bought a mobile phone > for safety) correctly, and used the same answer for (e) and (f) i.e. “to find out where he was”. Only the best candidates distinguished between “*ein paar Meter*” and “*einen Meter*” for (g).

- Q8.** Being the last reading question in the HT paper, candidates must be very precise to gain the mark e.g. (b) How much rubbish is produced daily? > **more** than 3 million tons, not just 3 million tons. In (g) many candidates misread the question “an upcycled household item” i.e. the end product, as “an item that can be upcycled” i.e. the product that gets upcycled. A few candidates were able to answer (h) correctly, distinguishing between “*trennen*” (to separate) and “*sich trennen von*” (to part from).
- Q9. translation.** Overall, candidates performed well in this task. It was surprising to see that many misunderstood “*in der Nähe von*” as “north”. Weaker candidates did not use tenses correctly e.g. “*haben ... besucht*” was translated as present tense. Some theme-specific vocabulary appeared to be challenging e.g. “*Küste*”, “*neblig*”, or “*Straßen*”.

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UNIT 4 WRITING

Overview of the Unit

Foundation Tier: For Q1 Candidates were required to write a full sentence for a heading related to the theme of leisure and free time.

In Q2 a short text of about 50 words had to be composed relating to school life, including information and opinions about subjects, homework and the canteen.

Q3 in FT is also Q1 in HT. Here, candidates were expected to show a wider range of vocabulary and language skills relating to their region. In Q3 candidates were asked to write in the present tense as well as in at least one further tense (bullet point 2: what you **did** last weekend in your region). Modal verbs and/or the conditional were encouraged to be used in the last bullet point i.e. what tourists could do in their region.

The last part of the exam was a translation of 3 short sentences incl. question formation and 2 complex sentences in different tenses.

Higher Tier: Q1 is the same as Q3 in FT. For Q2 candidates had the choice to write 150 words about either school subjects or future plans. They were required to give information, examples, explanations and opinions in order to access the top band of the marking scheme. Bullet points to guide them were given, but candidates did not have to include these in their answers.

The format of previous years was followed, and candidates were familiar with the layout of the paper. They were able to answer all questions in the allocated time and the majority followed the word count, with some HT candidate writing far more than required. Some FT candidates found it challenging to write the required 100 words for Q3.

Candidates were well prepared (advanced information was available to narrow down possible themes) and were familiar with the requirements in order to access the top bands on the mark schemes.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q1. FT: Some candidates write too much. One simple full present tense sentence per bullet point is required, including a subject, verb and object. Accurate use of the present tense verb endings for first and third person singular was necessary to gain the mark, but some candidates chose to answer in the past tense and were awarded full marks as long as the accuracy was not compromised. Minor errors (incorrect gender, agreements) were overlooked but major errors such as verb endings resulted in a loss of marks.

Several candidates omitted the verb e.g. "*mit meiner Mutter*" and could therefore not be awarded full marks. Candidates who wrote too much were often not able to access full marks for accuracy due to major errors.

- Q2. FT:** Most candidates were able to fulfil the requirements of the task and wrote about 50 words. Some did not understand “*Schulfächer*” und described their “Schulfach” as “*zu teuer / zu klein*“. Less able candidates failed to provide enough detail to access the top band for Communication and Content (CC). Most candidates were able to show satisfactory Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy (LKA) to access the top band, as long as they attempted more complex structures e.g. using conjunctions. Few candidates only gave isolated facts or responses that lacked clarity due to a lack of linguistic skills.
- Q3. FT / Q1 HT:** Foundation candidates often found it challenging to express their ideas and opinions clearly, especially for the last 2 bullet points. They used a simple range of vocabulary and grammar, many of them unable to form the past tense correctly. Higher Tier candidates performed better generally included more opinions and detail. But even HT candidates often struggled to use verbs correctly (endings/position).
- Q4. FT Translation:** The majority of candidates was able to translate at least some meaning for each sentence, however grammatical structures were often incorrect. The most challenging was topic specific vocabulary e.g. “he earns/after/money”, question formation (simple inversion “*hast du*”), and the correct use of the past tense. The performance was better referring to the future tense for the last sentence where “*ich werde/ich will/ich möchte*” was accepted for “I want”. Word order of verbs was generally very weak, especially in more complex structures, but many candidates were able to convey the meaning at least partially.
- Q5. HT:** Most candidates chose to write about their school subjects. Only a few weaker candidates used basic German to describe subjects rather than giving explanations and opinions with justifications in greater detail. Stronger candidates were able to discuss lesson activities in the past tense and compare advantages and disadvantages of foreign languages. The best candidates gave examples and justified their views using more complex language (conjunctions). Some candidates who wrote about their future plans wanted to show a wider range of language and included the past tense by discussing previous studies. Better candidates showed a wide variety of vocabulary e.g. “*eine Ablenkung vom Stress*” whereas weaker candidates used simpler language such as “*es ist interessant*”.
- Q6. HT translation:** Most candidates were able to convey meaning partially with basic grammatical structures used correctly. Vocabulary that appeared to be challenging were “enough / vegetables / prefer / fresh / vegetarian / sandwich”. Word order was often disregarded after “*weil*”, verb 2nd idea, and when using the past tense. Verb endings were also a challenge for weaker candidates, and many were unable to use infinitive + *zu* correctly for “*wichtig, gesund zu sein*”.

Supporting you

Useful contacts and links

Our friendly subject team are on hand to support you between 8.30am and 5.30pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: 029 2240 4297

Email: languages@wjec.co.uk

Qualification webpage: <https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/german-gcse>

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

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ⁱ *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.*