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**GCSE**

**GERMAN**

8668/WF Writing Foundation tier  
Report on the Examination

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8668  
June 2018

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Version: 1.0

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## General Comments

The quality of work produced for this new examination was encouraging. The paper differentiated very well in that most students were able to score marks over a variety of questions. The vast majority had been correctly entered for this tier. The ability to use a range of tenses was demonstrated by many students and most were also able to express opinions when required to do so. Where they failed to score marks it was due to inaccuracies which caused a delay in communicating messages. The usual reasons for this were either wrong verb formation or students writing extended responses, far longer than the suggested word count, something which created greater scope for error. Another barrier to achievement was the omission or misinterpretation of the bullet points in Questions 2 and 4.

### Question 1

Teachers should remind students that they are required to write four sentences about what is **in** the photograph. Each sentence is marked separately and is worth a maximum of two marks. The best responses made repeated use of *Es gibt* or included a simple sentence about the weather. *Das Wetter ist schön* was frequently seen. Most students attempted to write full sentences but there were instances where the responses consisted of a single word. These gained no credit. Other reasons why a response could not be credited were:

- information was repeated, for example '*Es gibt zwei Kinder.*' '*Zwei Kinder sind auf dem Foto.*' The latter, although correct German, was not credited ;
- sentences such as '*Das Foto ist schwarz und weiß*' as the rubric required the students to refer to what is in the photo.

There were five main reasons why one mark was given rather than two:

- a delay in communication caused by mis-spellings or the misuse of words;
- a long sentence, one part of which was accurate but where the other part was inaccurate; the whole sentence was assessed and not just the accurate part;
- the sentence began with '*Gibt es...*' rather than '*Es gibt...*';
- the sentence began with '*Der ist...*';
- the sentence contained a continuous present. '*Sie ist essen*' and '*Sie sind trinken*' were very much in evidence.

Several examiners commented that some students did not know the difference between *trinken* and *Getränke*, with the former frequently being used instead of the latter.

### Advice to students

Keep the sentences short and simple to ensure that a clear message is being communicated.

### Question 2

Teachers are reminded that there are 10 marks for Content and 6 marks for Quality of Language. Students are required to write approximately 40 words in total about four different bullet points. All bullet points are compulsory and must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage.

## Content

The criteria for assessment address both coverage of the bullet points and clarity of communication. The most successful responses were concise, addressed all the bullet points and developed at least one of them. All four key ideas, *Haus*, *Schlafzimmer*, *Stadt* and *Wetter*, were understood by practically all students and most were able to produce a good to reasonable response. The main discriminator in the awarding of marks was the level of clarity of communication. There were, however, students who did not change ‘*dein*’ in the rubric to ‘*mein*’ in their response to one or more of the bullet points. This had the unfortunate consequence that what the student had written could not be credited. On very rare occasions this happened in the response to all four bullet points. In such cases examiners sought to credit something which might possibly have related to the student.

## Quality of language

The vast majority of students were able to score three marks and above. There were good attempts at variety – for example, different ways of expressing opinions and different persons of the verb. Students often failed to score high marks when verb formations were not accurate. That was also frequently the case when they had attempted to write much more than the 40 words. Such pieces created more scope for error and proved detrimental for the less able students.

## Advice to students

- Aim to write roughly the number of words required. As with all extended pieces of writing, the emphasis needs to be on **quality** and not **quantity**.
- Mention all the bullet points. Attempt to write something about them rather than omitting them. Students should be encouraged to tick off bullet points once they have addressed them.

## Question 3

For this question, there are 5 marks for *Conveying key messages* and 5 marks for *Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures*. Given that the level of demand of the messages was aimed at covering Grades 1 to 5, the question differentiated well with practically all students able to score some marks.

## Conveying key messages

The computer is very good.	This was very well done but the occasional student did not know the cognate ‘ <i>Computer</i> ’.
We have five lessons every day.	‘ <i>Stunden</i> ’ was frequently not known. ‘ <i>Fächer</i> ’ was not accepted.
My sister lives with a friend in Berlin.	This was generally well done but the spelling of ‘ <i>Freund(in)</i> ’ left something to be desired at times.
My parents often go to Spain on holiday.	Most students could manage ‘ <i>Meine Eltern..oft</i> ’ but there were many incorrect spellings of ‘ <i>Spanien</i> ’ and ‘ <i>im Urlaub</i> ’ was frequently not known.
I listened to rock music in the living-room.	The perfect tense ‘ <i>Ich habe..gehört</i> ’ was not always well produced and ‘ <i>habe</i> ’ was a

	common omission. ‘ <i>Wohnzimmer</i> ’ was not as widely known as it could have been, with both ‘ <i>Lebensraum</i> ’ and ‘ <i>Wohnungszimmer</i> ’ being seen on more than a few occasions.
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### Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures

Minor errors did not prevent award of marks for conveying key messages provided they were communicated. Because of this, when awarding marks for application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures, inaccurate language was considered. For example, the mis-spelling of ‘*Spainen*’, the position of ‘*oft*’ and time-manner-place in sentence 4, although frequently wrong, had no effect on communication but they were taken into consideration here.

### Advice to students

- Practise high frequency words and phrases.
- Check carefully that all aspects of the translation have been addressed accurately, particularly the little words such as ‘*mit*’.
- If you are not sure how to translate something, have a go as it may get you a mark. Leaving it blank will not.
- Check verb tenses and endings.

### Question 4

For this question, there are 10 marks for Content and 6 marks for Quality of Language. Students are required to write approximately 90 words in total about four different bullet points. All bullet points must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage. The standard of work varied considerably. Many students dealt confidently with all four bullet points and developed their responses. Others were able to do that for the first two bullet points which required only the present tense. The second bullet point in each question invited an opinion and most students were able to add a second opinion elsewhere. The main discriminators in both questions were bullet points 3 and 4. Here less deft use of language led to a lack of clarity in communication. There were some overly long responses, something which gave greater scope for errors.

### Content

The criteria for assessment focus on four elements: coverage of the bullet points, development of ideas, clarity of communication and expression of opinions. Students need to be reminded that coverage of all 4 bullet points is essential, as misinterpreting or omitting even one means that the award of a mark above 6 is impossible, given that for the award of marks in the range 7 – 10, all aspects of the task must be covered. In addition, although students had no difficulty in developing ideas and expressing opinions, there were occasions when inaccuracy led to a lack of clarity of communication (referred to as ‘lapses’) and this had an impact on the marks awarded. It should be noted that opinions which referred to something unintelligible were not credited, e.g. ‘*Gestern, in der Schule ich hat ein Mathematics leben. Es war sehr langweilig.*’

### Question 4.1

This was the more popular choice with students. It was a topic with which they are familiar but it is important that they remember this new specification requires them to use their knowledge to respond to the exact requirements of the task rather than just reproduce pre-learned language. As was to be expected, bullet points 1 and 2 were well covered, with many good responses. Bullet point 1 in particular enabled most students to develop information. As soon as they wrote *‘Mein Lieblingshobby ist...’* to introduce their response to bullet point 2, they had expressed an opinion. There was often some material common to the responses to bullet points 1 and 2 but almost invariably the students had written enough for both to be credited. In bullet point 3 the past time frame proved problematic. Bullet point 4 was reasonably well attempted by most students but *Pläne* was on occasion misinterpreted as *‘planes’*.

### Question 4.2

This again was a familiar topic to students. As was the case for question 4.1 bullet points 1 and 2 were generally well done and the responses to these showed good development. Bullet point 2 was designed to elicit an opinion and development of the response usually added a second one. The third bullet point proved most problematic with the past time frame reference. Bullet point 4 was usually quite well done but some students used this as a prompt to write about their career plans when they had finished their university course.

### Quality of language

The key features of the criteria for assessment are variety of language, attempts at complexity, time frames and accuracy.

- Variety of language – the range of vocabulary used in response to both questions was appropriate and reasonably extensive. *Gern* and *lieber* were quite often used to indicate liking or preference, but a fairly common failure was the omission of the verb.
- Attempts at complexity – there were some well worked longer sentences using a variety of connectives such as *und, aber, oder, denn* and *weil*. It was also pleasing to note the many attempts to use *‘um...zu’* or *zu* plus an infinitive. Negatives were also quite well handled but both *nein* and *klein* crept in at times when *kein* was needed.
- Time frames – most students were able to make an attempt at all three time frames and the questions were designed to encourage this.
- Accuracy – most students were able to write accurately in the present tense using the first and third person singular. They were also able to subordinate correctly after *weil* and *dass*. There were however six common errors.
  - Unnecessary inversion after *und* and *aber*. This turned an intended statement into a question.
  - The wrong auxiliary verb with an infinitive. *‘Ich habe...gegangen’* was often seen.
  - The omission of the auxiliary verb in an attempt to form the perfect tense.
  - An auxiliary verb plus an infinitive in an attempt to form the perfect tense.
  - The use of *würde* in an attempt to form the future tense. It should be noted that a future time frame and not a future tense was required. The time marker followed by the present tense to indicate the immediate future would have been acceptable.
  - The use of *‘Ich mochte’* instead of *‘Ich möchte’* in describing future plans. The missed Umlaut radically altered what the student was trying to communicate.

### Advice to students

- Aim to write roughly the suggested number of words. The emphasis needs to be on **quality** and not **quantity**.
- Mention all the bullet points. Attempt to write something about them rather than omitting them. Tick off the bullet points in the rubric once they have been addressed.
- Identify which bullet points target the different time frames and check that your verb formation is accurate.
- Make sure you include opinions as required by the task.
- In some cases, the language of the bullet points can be manipulated to help you write a successful response. For example, in Question 4.1, the first bullet point '*etwas über **deine** Schule*' could easily have been adapted to produce '***Meine** Schule ist...*' or '***Meine** Schule hat...*'
- Write clearly and legibly.

### Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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