



Pearson
Edexcel

Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2025

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level
In German (WGN03) Paper 1

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

January 2025

Publications Code WGN03_01_2501_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2025

Test Format

The assessment consists of two sections:

- **Section A:** This part begins with an optional introduction to the chosen topic, lasting up to one minute. It is followed by a debate on the selected issue, where the candidate and the interviewer take opposing positions. Candidates must demonstrate evidence of prior reading and research. This section must not exceed 5 minutes in total.
- **Section B:** This section involves a discussion on at least two additional, unpredictable topics drawn from the General Topic Areas (GTAs) outlined in the specification. The duration of this section should be between 6 and 8 minutes.

The overall test should last between 11 and 13 minutes, ensuring that **Section A concludes at exactly 5 minutes.**

Assessment Criteria

This unit evaluates **spoken communication skills, critical analysis, and listening comprehension.** The test is positively marked out of 40 by Edexcel examiners.

- **AO1 Spontaneity and Development (20 marks):** Assesses how naturally the candidate engages in conversation, their ability to maintain discourse, and how well they develop their ideas throughout both sections.
- **AO2 Reading and Research (5 marks):** Evaluates the candidate's reading and research into the topic and ability to reference at least two German texts or sources in preparation for the debate in Section A, citing them explicitly.
- **AO3 Quality of Language (10 marks):** Includes **accuracy (5 marks)** and **range of vocabulary (5 marks)**. Pronunciation, intonation and accuracy as well as the range of grammatical structures and lexis contribute to these marks.
- **AO4 Critical Analysis (5 marks):** Judges the candidate's ability to connect ideas, provide a thorough evaluation of key issues, and develop well-reasoned arguments.

Pearson Edexcel provides examiner guidance on their website, outlining expectations for spontaneity, discourse, development, and other key assessment criteria. Schools are strongly encouraged to review this document for reference.

Candidate Performance – Section A

Section A is designed as a **debate** rather than a discussion or presentation. The teacher/examiner is required to take the opposing stance to the candidate, actively challenging their arguments. This format ensures that candidates engage in **the language of debate**, as stipulated in the specification. Unlike a presentation, the goal is not for candidates to merely showcase their knowledge but to demonstrate their ability to argue and respond critically. When selecting debate topics, centres should guide candidates toward **issues with ample written German sources**.

Structure and Timing

- The candidate's initial stance should be outlined in **one or two sentences** and **must not exceed one minute**. However, it is not mandatory for candidates to take the full minute—they may begin the debate immediately.
- Strict time management is essential, as **Section A must not exceed five minutes**. Overrunning this section reduces the time available for **Section B**, potentially affecting the candidate's overall score.

Reading and Research Requirements

Candidates **must provide evidence** of reading **German texts** in preparation for the debate. To achieve higher marks for **Reading and Research**, candidates must explicitly refer to **at least two sources by name**. While audiovisual sources and statistics may be mentioned, the Reading and Research marks require reference to **written sources**. Acceptable sources include **newspaper articles, academic texts, and other written materials in German**. Candidates should name the texts they have read to demonstrate their research. Personal opinions and factual knowledge alone do not meet the highest assessment criteria.

Most candidates began with a brief presentation before moving into the debate, with only a small number failing to engage in a proper debate. Many presentations were within the one minute time limit and often provided a good introduction to the debate. Furthermore, most teachers were well prepared with arguments for their stance which helped the candidate to engage in a well-structured debate. The most commonly chosen topics included *Abtreibung*, *Sterbehilfe*, *die Legalisierung von Cannabis* and *die Abschaffung von Zoos*. These topics frequently resulted in successful debates.

Some debates were less successful because candidates relied only on their own opinions without citing any sources or factual knowledge like statistics as supporting evidence. This impacted the marks for Reading and Research negatively. Encouragingly, the majority of candidates did refer to **at least one source** enabling them to achieve **almost full marks** for Reading and Research. A minority included at least two sources and more and achieved full

marks. Some candidates lost out on marks as the source mentioned was too vague. ('Ich habe in einer Zeitschrift gelesen.')

Candidate Performance – Section B

In Section B candidates should be engaged in a discussion on **at least two unpredictable topics**. While only two topics are required, discussing several topics too superficially is not recommended. It is preferable to explore **two topics in greater depth** rather than covering multiple areas at a surface level. Centres should ensure that the unpredictable topics selected for discussion in Section B are **conceptually challenging enough for A2 level**. A2 candidates must demonstrate their ability to handle abstract concepts. If uncertain, centres should select topics from the **A2 General Topic Areas (GTAs)**:

- **Technology in the German-speaking world**
- **Society in the German-speaking world**
- **Ethics in the German-speaking world**

These will provide sufficient opportunities for candidates to demonstrate sophisticated argumentation, including the use of abstract concepts, advanced vocabulary, and complex structures. Personal questions should be avoided, as they are not conceptually challenging. If a candidate uses personal experience to illustrate a point, they should be encouraged to **generalize their response**. For example, instead of asking "*What do you personally do to help the environment?*" (which is more suited to AS or GCSE), a more appropriate question would be: "*What are the advantages and disadvantages of nuclear power for a country?*"

Additionally, discussions must focus on the **German-speaking world**. For example, if discussing an issue such as environmental policy, there should be **specific references to Germany, Austria, or Switzerland** (e.g., "In der Schweiz gibt es...").

Overall, section B provided some challenges for centres when conducting the examination. Often the **choice of topic did not allow** candidates to show their language skills and the ability to handle abstract concepts at A2 levels. Talking about school uniform or other sub topics from the GTA Youth Matters are more suitable for AS level and in these cases prevented candidates from the highest mark band.

Furthermore, some centres used **a list of questions** and this does **not** facilitate **fluent discourse**. It is important that teacher/examiner and candidate listen and reply to each other and create a discourse that allows spontaneity and development. Again, this type of examination conduct prevented some candidates from being able to access the highest mark band for AO1 (Spontaneity and Development) although it seemed that the candidates would have had the ability to do so had there been better discourse.

In a few cases, teacher/examiners **failed to introduce a second topic**, remaining on aspects of the initial issue for the entire discussion. This limits the marks available for Spontaneity and Development as well as for Critical Analysis.

However, many candidates demonstrated excellent language skills and were able to express their views on at least one suitable topic at A2 level sharing interesting and valuable insights.

Candidate Performance in Reference to Assessment Criteria

AO1 Spontaneity and Development

As outlined before, a lack of **spontaneity and fluent discourse** had a significant impact on candidate marks in some centres during this examination session.

To access a score of **11 or higher** in **Spontaneity and Development**, candidates must give **many** examples of spontaneous responses. The term "*many*" implies that spontaneity should be a defining characteristic of the assessment. Candidates who **recite pre-learned material** throughout any part of the test cannot achieve high marks. At best, they may fall within the **6–10 mark band**. Centres should discourage memorization, as it does **not** lead to high scores. It is pleasing to note that there were not many candidates this series who recited their knowledge and were in this category.

However, discourse is a key component of **Spontaneity and Development** and was a serious an issue. Examiners expect **genuine interaction** between the candidate and teacher/examiner, rather than a simple **question-answer format**. **Fluent discourse** is a requirement for the top band and some candidates' marks was thus limited to 15. Teacher/examiners should respond directly to **what the candidate says** to encourage them to move beyond prepared material. Asking questions such as "*Wieso?*", "*Wie meinen Sie das?*" or "*Können Sie ein Beispiel dafür geben?*" fosters a more natural, spontaneous discussion.

Most candidates demonstrated good **development** in this session, with evidence of thorough preparation. For strong **development**, a candidate must fully understand the question and give a detailed response, expanding on their ideas and they should present and evaluate **opposing viewpoints** with reasoning.

AO3 Quality of Language

Range of Lexis

Examiners assess the **breadth of vocabulary** used, as well as the **grammatical structures** employed and the performance in this series was very strong. Many candidates demonstrated **progression from GCSE and AS level**, using **complex sentence structures**, multiple **tenses**, and a **sophisticated lexical range** appropriate to A2 level in particular when challenging topics have been chosen as they often lead to richer vocabulary usage. For example, a debate on assisted suicide is likely to encourage **more advanced vocabulary** than a discussion on school uniforms.

Accuracy

Most candidates showed a strong performance in this assessment criterion worth **5 out of 40 marks**. It is worth noting that a **perfectly grammatical** performance is **not required** to achieve a **score of 5**. Examiners are trained to ensure non-native speakers can access full marks.

AO2 Reading and Research

5 marks are awarded for **Reading and Research**, which applies **only to Section A. As mentioned**, candidates must cite **at least two written German sources** by name to access the highest band. The majority of candidates used one source and some two or more, thus accessing thus 5 marks. There were also a number of candidates who demonstrated their Reading and Research providing information and factual knowledge from their research without citing the source.

AO4 Critical Analysis

The strongest candidates in this session consistently supported their arguments with evidence and counterarguments. Many candidates were able to explain key issues fully with some justified links and coherency. Candidates should be encouraged to **move beyond factual recall** and demonstrate the ability to discuss **beliefs, morals, and political perspectives**. They should evaluate **both sides** of an issue, provide **evidence** for their opinions, and **link ideas logically**. Again, centres can help this by selecting **abstract and challenging** topics that require deeper analysis.

Advice for Future Examination Sessions

Section A (Debate)

- The format is a debate, where the candidate and the interviewer take opposing positions on a chosen issue.
- If candidates present their topic at the beginning the presentation should take no more than 1 minute.
- Section A must not exceed 5 minutes. Overlong assessments negatively impact Section B.
- Candidates must reference **at least two German-language written sources**.
- A suitable topic for A2 level should be chosen.

Section B (Unpredictable Discussion)

- Candidates should engage in a **discourse** where both speakers engage with each other.
- Topics should be conceptually and linguistically appropriate for A2 level.
- Candidates should avoid relying on personal experience and instead provide generalized arguments and evidence.

General Conduct of the Assessment

- Candidates should **not memorize** and recite responses.
- The total exam time is 11-13 minutes. Examiners stop listening at the 13-minute mark, so there is no benefit to exceeding the limit.
- Discussions about the German-speaking world must include **direct references** to German-speaking countries and candidates should provide **examples from a German-speaking country**.

Examiner Conduct

Only one teacher/examiner should be present during the assessment. It is not acceptable for two examiners to ask questions. This creates an overwhelming experience for the candidate. The same examiner should conduct both Section A and Section B.

Thank you

Examiners express appreciation for the dedication and hard work of centres in preparing candidates for the assessment. Their efforts ensure a smooth examination process and help candidates reach their full potential.

Grade Boundaries

Pearson Edexcel continues to ensure fair and consistent marking across French, German, and Spanish speaking assessments through rigorous examiner standardization.

