



# Examiners' Report

## Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel International A Level

In German (WGN04)

Unit 4: Research, understanding and written response

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## Section A – Listening

### Question 1 (*Das Auswanderermuseum*)

Candidates listened to a short podcast in German about the Emigration Museum in Hamburg.

For most candidates, this was a positive start to the paper. At (c), *permanent wohnen* was sometimes thought to be the correct answer by those who did not recognise the significance in the passage of *eine temporäre Unterkunft*.

### Question 2 (*Schulsport in der Krise*)

Candidates listened to a short radio report in German about the problems facing school sport in German schools.

Most candidates were able to identify the correct answers. Part (c) proved to be the most challenging sentence to complete. This required careful listening to the whole section of the recording to be able to work out that the art room was occasionally used for teaching gymnastics.

### Question 3 (*Ein Bauernhof im Schwarzwald*)

Candidates listened to a short podcast in German about the changing profile of a farm in the Black Forest.

Generally, this passage was well-understood and candidates were able to choose the correct words to fill the gaps. Many scored full marks here. However, (d) proved challenging for some which demanded a high level of inference about how the commune would react to Karoline's father's suggestions about the management of the farm. A common wrong answer was *verachten* which may have been confused with *beachten*.

### Question 4 (*Die digitale Kunst*)

Candidates were required to answer questions in German on the content of an Austrian artist about her use of artificial intelligence in the creation of digital art.

Many candidates scored well on parts (a) and (e). Some failed to gain the full 2 marks on (b) because they confused *aufbrechen* with *ausbrechen* or because they only gave the first part of the answer. At (c), most were able to explain that Angela used the computer as a tool, but not all could express that she still had to use her own creative initiative. At (d), the most common error was to assume that she had not used artificial intelligence, whereas the truth was that she had used it, but that it had never seen a dancer.

## Section B – Reading and Grammar

### Question 5 (*Selfie am Brienzersee*)

Candidates read a short text about the problems of overtourism facing the village of *Iseltwald*. They were required to complete five sentences with four multiple-choice options each.

This was generally well-answered. However, at (a), a significant number of candidates assumed that the village was often flooded, and at (b), A was often a wrong choice rather than B. Parts (c), (d) and (e) caused few problems.

### Question 6 (*Jungpolitiker*)

Candidates were required to answer questions based on a report about a young member of the Green Party and the issue of attracting younger people into politics.

Candidates who read the passage carefully and identified the correct section for each question scored well. While (c), (d) and (e) caused few problems for the majority, the first two questions were often less successful. At (a), some candidates missed the important connection between the level of education and the interest in politics; at (b), those who did not pay attention to the details in the text and the question often confused Matthi's experiences in Bielefeld and his actions during the latest election campaign.

### Question 7 (*Das Leben eines Rollstuhlfahrers*)

Candidates answered questions in German on a text about issues surrounding wheel-chair users in Germany.

It should be noted that in answering questions in German, it is always better to rephrase the ideas from the text in some way without the German becoming too convoluted. Whilst occasionally section of the text can be lifted directly to give the answer, such lifts must be accurate and must not include extraneous material.

This question was generally well-answered: almost half of candidates scored between 8 and 10 marks. The most common reasons for marks being withheld were:

- at (b), omitting to mention that Ilyas could not reach the higher shelves in the shops rather than simply all shelves,
- at (e), failing to realise that the question included the words *im Voraus* which led to the correct answer, i.e. that there were signposts,
- at (f), confusing the issues for visually impaired with the issues for wheelchair-users,
- at (g), failing to realise that *das Risiko von Stürzen* constituted an accident and therefore was not the correct answer,
- at (h), omitting to mention either schools or discrimination in the response.

## Question 8

Most candidates understood what was expected of them in this question and many were able to score full marks.

8(a): Most were able to produce the correct infinitive clause with zu.

8(b): Only a minority made the mistake of thinking they had to repeat the word Altersgruppe. A simple answer was all that was required here.

8(c): This caused few problems: the change from the first to the third person past tense was usually achieved.

8(d): Most gained a mark here as long as they remembered to include the definite article das at the beginning of the subordinate clause.

8(e): This caused very few problems, but occasionally candidates simply added the words schwierig sind which made the new phrase into a nonsense.

8(f): As with (b), this required a very straightforward manipulation and was well-answered.

8(g): The most common answer was the correct Verbesserung, but Besserung was not accepted.

8(h): Most answered this correctly and the mark scheme shows that a number of alternative responses were acceptable as long as körperlich was used as an adverb rather than an adjective.

8(i): Many candidates could not differentiate between the use of wegen with a noun and weil which has to be followed by a clause. Those who produced a clause occasionally lost the mark because they did not remove the -er ending from the adjective.

8(j): The majority of candidates were able to produce a suitable noun to complete the sentence.

## Section C

Marks are awarded in Section C for Content and Communication (out of 15) and Critical Analysis, Organisation and Development (out of 20) as well as for Quality of Language (out of 5). Whilst many candidates write fluently in German using a wide range of complex structures and therefore gain high marks for Quality of Language, there is often a tendency to resort to narrative accounts which lack incisive critical analysis of the question or a failure to select relevant detail from knowledge of the topic, text or film. The least successful candidates simply write down everything they know about their chosen work regardless of relevance to the question.

It is important that candidates structure their essays well to access the top mark bands for Critical Analysis, Organisation and Development. Clear paragraphs with an introduction and a conclusion make the argument easier to follow. Some candidates produce one long paragraph with no attempt to link ideas coherently. Others start well but forget to write a conclusion. Only the most successful have thought carefully about how to present their selected material in such a way as to analyse rather than

describe. A useful guide is to structure the essay so that the argument can be followed by reading only the first sentence of each paragraph.

Performances in the most commonly chosen questions are summarised below:

### **Geografisches Gebiet**

**Question 9(a):** Candidates were often able to say what ethnic minorities were present in their region and occasionally why, though few supported this with statistical evidence. Many explained what measures were taken to encourage integration but sometimes fell short of analysing to what extent integration was successful.

**Question 9 (b):** Those who chose this option described the climate in detail, but only the most successful gave a varied and accurate account including facts and figures. Some added interest to the essay by including details of how climate change was affecting weather, for example with the gradual erosion of Swiss glaciers or of flooding in Dresden. The second part of the essay was often less detailed. Some described the influence on tourists which did not address the question set. Others gave vague generalisations about transport difficulties in the morning rush-hour or absence at work due to seasonal illness, but only the most successful gave specific examples particular to their chosen region.

### **Geschichtliche Studien**

It is important that any historical study is firmly rooted in a German-speaking country or region. General history essays about non-German speaking countries cannot be credited with any marks.

**Question 10(a):** The interpretation of *junge Leute* varied from candidate to candidate. There were some impressive and interesting essays about the lives of young people in Nazi Germany, often drawing comparisons between those who were able to flourish in the Hitler *Jugend* or the BDM and those children of Jewish families whose lives became increasingly insufferable. This often led to a good analysis of the extent to which young people were treated fairly.

**Question 10(b):** The most successful responses focused on an identifiable group and gave details of their relationship with those in power, for example communists in the 1930s or church and peace groups in the GDR. Analysis required careful thought: rather than just describe the conflicts between the dissidents and the authorities, some more successful responses were able to evaluate the wisdom of initiatives or to question in detail why the authorities were resistant to other points of view.

### **Literatur**

**Question 12(a):** Although Ill's family plays a relatively minor role in the play, most candidates were able to present details of the change in circumstances by relating the family to the wider community. This worked well as long as the focus was the family; some candidates strayed into broader generalisations and the essay lost focus. The most successful realised the significance of the interrogative *warum* in the second part of the question. Some surmised that Frau Ill, as well as being tempted by the promise of wealth, gradually realises that her marriage has been a sham.

**Question 12(b):** There were some excellent responses to this challenging essay title and those who chose this option usually managed to avoid the mistake of merely relating the plot. Claire's language was rightly seen as manipulative, powerful, blunt and initially puzzling, while the language of the townspeople was seen as weak and imitative. The relevance of this was analysed only by the most successful. Insightful responses explored language as a barrier to genuine communication, the teacher's use of classical speech patterns or the total honesty of language in the final meeting of Claire and Ill in the forest as opposed to their first encounter.

**Question 13(b):** Essays on *Zonenkinder* addressed Hensel's reasons for writing the work, but often did not go into depth about her reliability as an author.

**Question 15(a):** The most common fault in describing strength of character was to list each character in turn and to say whether or not they were strong. Those who managed to stand back from the essay question and see the wider picture wrote a more coherent argument, sometimes focusing on only two or three characters, typically Antek, Ruth and Kimmich, and leading to a positive conclusion in which they assess which one was the strongest. It was surprising that many chose Willi as being the character who showed the greatest strength of character. When this conclusion was backed up with suitable evidence from the text, the response was given due credit, but this seemed to miss the point of the novel which shows the difference between the superficial qualities of *Jähde* and Willi as opposed to the deeply-rooted convictions of Ruth and Kimmich and ultimately of Antek and Nagold.

**Question 15(b):** This option allowed candidates to show knowledge of one character's role within the novel. It was clear that most were very familiar with the part played by Kimmich. However, only the most successful responses provided a truly analytic assessment of his influence. This meant going beyond a description of how he was a good role model for his granddaughter and a counsellor for Antek. Insightful responses explored the consequences of his differences of opinion with *Jähde* and his strategy for helping the youngsters in saving Abiram.

## **Film**

**Question 16(a):** Responses focused on the characters of Thea and Lilly and usually managed to explain how they affected the two protagonists. More successful responses also analysed the reactions, for example by exploring the depth of Gretel's determination in the face of adversity or Marie's relief at finding a soulmate in Gretel.

**Question 16(b):** Similarly, the methods of the Nazis were mostly clearly explained with reference to their underhand methods to show their superiority. To analyse the reactions of other characters, most referred to Gretel and Waldmann and occasionally to other characters who were less able to withstand the Nazis bullying tactics such as Marie and the American journalist.

**Question 17(b):** The character of André and his role in the film was often described in detail. Although candidates often showed a good knowledge of the film, their responses lacked depth and usually focused on plot rather than analysis. The most successful responses saw the relevance of the second

part of the question and were able to conclude, for example, that Barbara may be flattered by André's advances, but ultimately she is a strong determined woman who can make up her own mind.

**Question 18(a):** The role of money in the film was clear to many candidates. There were some strong answers which compared how Sorowitsch's attitude to money was altered by his experiences in the concentration camp. Less successful responses focused on only one aspect of money, for example its part in the planned attack on the British and American economies.

**Question 19(a):** Many essays described in great detail the scenes in school where Cenk is faced with an identity crisis. Only the best saw the significance of the interrogative *warum* in the second part of the question and could explore why this influences the plot rather than how. An outstanding answer explained that Cenk's questions come at a time when the family is facing a crisis in identifying where they belong.

**Question 19(b):** There were many strong answers to this option. Some explored the various views of different generations of the family. All were agreed that family is of paramount importance to all its members. The most successful answers were able to marshal their information in well-constructed paragraphs usually focusing on themes rather than on each character separately and leading a clear argument through to a strong conclusion which summarised the overall theme of family.

**Question 20(b):** While it is clear that candidates know the content of the film well, they are often unable to select relevant information to suit the demands of the essay title. Some were unable to choose one character to identify which often led to a weak structure and an inconclusive argument. Those who chose one character, often Jule or Jan, concentrated their efforts on this one character and managed to produce a much stronger argument. A common feature of many essays was the number of direct quotations from the script which occasionally outbalanced the essay content and, therefore, became a distraction rather than an advantage.

## Conclusion

To prepare for success in this paper, candidates should:

- familiarise themselves with all topic areas listed in the specification
- develop as wide a range of vocabulary as possible
- practise reading and listening to passages of German with a view to extracting the most important information
- become used to rewording the details in the written or spoken text succinctly
- become familiar with German grammatical usage, concentrating on complex verb forms and the fine details of declension of adjectives and nouns
- research their chosen topic, literary text or film in detail, considering various aspects in the course of their studies
- practise the skill of planning and writing an essay in paragraphs
- focus on structured analysis in answering essay questions rather than on narrative.



