



## External Assessment Report 2013

Subject(s)	German
Level(s)	Standard Grade

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published question papers and marking instructions for the examination.

# Comments on candidate performance

## General comments

There was a decrease of around 11% in the number of candidates presented at this level. The number of candidates receiving an overall grade 1 was very similar to last year, but the number of candidates receiving an overall Credit award was higher than in recent years.

Staff involved in the delivery of Standard Grade German are to be congratulated for their commitment, over many years, to preparing candidates thoroughly for examinations.

## Speaking

The distribution of grades in this skill was similar to that of recent years. Performance at Grade 1 was very slightly lower than in 2012, but higher than performance in 2010 and 2011.

## Writing

Centres had prepared candidates well for the folio. The vast majority of candidates submitted the required three pieces. Performance at Credit level was down slightly compared to 2012. The percentage awarded a grade 7 was slightly higher than in the last two years.

## Reading and Listening

Performance in Reading was strong, particularly at Credit level. Candidates engaged well with the papers at all levels. Performance in Listening was once again much weaker than in Reading, which may be due in part to the double-weighting of the latter and the emphasis centres place on preparing candidates for success in this skill.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

### Writing

Folio pieces were generally well-structured and the content was relevant to the title of the piece. Familiar topics such as 'School', 'Holidays' and 'My town' produced some good performances. Candidate writing on 'Film reviews' have had mixed success in previous years, but markers reported some good performances this year. Many candidates were able to express opinions successfully and there were some good attempts at structuring: zuerst, erstens ... zweitens, alles in allem etc. There were some outstanding pieces where candidates were able to demonstrate the development of ideas and complex structures demanded at Higher level.

### Reading

#### Foundation

Candidates generally followed instructions well and attempted all questions.

- ◆ Questions 1, 3, 8 (third bullet point): Most candidates scored highly in these questions.

## **General**

- ◆ Questions 2a), 4, 6: Most candidates coped well with these questions.

## **Credit**

Candidates performed very well in this paper. Answers were expressed clearly and concisely.

- ◆ Questions 1e), 1f), 2a), 2b), 2c), 2d), 2e), 2f), 3b), 3c), 3e): Most candidates answered these questions well.

## **Listening**

### **Foundation**

- ◆ Questions 1, 11, 12, 13: Most candidates gained marks in these questions.

### **General**

- ◆ Questions 1, 4, 6, 10: Many candidates did well in these questions.

### **Credit**

- ◆ Question 3: Plural nouns have proved challenging in the past, but many candidates recognised 'Züge' and also picked up on the comparison.
- ◆ Question 6b): There was good recognition of 'Büro'.
- ◆ Questions 9a), 11: Many candidates scored maximum points here.

## **Areas which candidates found demanding**

### **Writing**

Essays about self, family and routine often did not provide candidates with the opportunity to develop their ideas, and were therefore particularly restrictive for some candidates. Where centres allowed candidates to use a template, this did not always serve candidates well, as some candidates struggled with the length and/or content and the rote learning of a piece that was not personal to them. Markers highlighted problems with capital letters and umlauts. Lack of paragraphs and punctuation also let some candidates down.

### **Reading**

#### **Foundation**

- ◆ Question 2: With the exception of some centres, most candidates were unable to gain maximum points in this question.
- ◆ Question 5: Many candidates did not understand the basic daily routine vocabulary tested here.
- ◆ Questions 8: Many candidates wrote '13th/30th' for 'dritten' and failed to read the headings carefully enough to avoid picking 'Mannheim' as the answer. Many candidates struggled with the word 'Lieblingsschauspieler' and some just guessed based on the picture.
- ◆ Question 10: Many candidates lost marks in a question that was testing basic vocabulary on the familiar 'where I live' topic.

## General

- ◆ Some candidates did not attempt some questions at all, including, rather unusually, some of the supported questions.
- ◆ Question 3: Very few candidates achieved full marks in this question, which required them to understand whole ideas.
- ◆ Question 9: Many candidates saw the key word 'Schokolade' and did not read the rest of the compound noun carefully enough.
- ◆ Question 10: Many candidates appeared unwilling to work for their answers by this stage of the paper.

## Credit

- ◆ Question 1a): Most candidates — even those who scored highly in this paper overall — wrongly wrote '18th' for 'achtzigsten'.
- ◆ Question 1b): Many candidates ignored the verb (gedruckt).
- ◆ Question 3a): Some candidates had difficulty with 'Hier können junge Leute die Regeln bestimmen'. Some candidates lost a mark for omitting the detail ('eine halbe Stunde').

## Listening

### Foundation

- ◆ Question 2: Candidates from some centres tended to do better than others in this question which tested numbers and time.
- ◆ Question 3: Some candidates did not recognise 'Stief-'.
- ◆ Question 4: Many candidates wrongly ticked 'perfume' for 'Blumen'.
- ◆ Question 5: There was disappointing recognition of the basic vocabulary for places in town.
- ◆ Question 7: Many candidates did not recognise 'Woche' and 'Erdkunde'.
- ◆ Question 10: Many candidates wrote 'spine' for 'Bein', despite this being a commonly taught piece of vocabulary.

## General

- ◆ Question 3: There was poor recognition of the basic food items here.
- ◆ Question 9b): Many candidates did not recognise the basic items of clothing tested in this question.
- ◆ Question 11: Only a minority of candidates recognised 'Halsschmerzen'.
- ◆ Question 13: Many candidates failed to identify 'Brücke' and 'linken'.

## Credit

Poor recall of basic vocabulary was evident in this paper. Some candidates showed from their note-taking that they had picked out key words but could not recall the English meaning.

- ◆ Question 1: Very few candidates got a mark here, with most guessing around the word 'Eltern'.
- ◆ Question 2: Few candidates picked up the idea of never having time.
- ◆ Question 3: Some candidates wrote 'narrow' for 'schmutzig'.
- ◆ Question 4: Some candidates thought that 'nach Hause kommen' was 'The House of Commons'.

- ◆ Question 5: Few candidates recognised 'reise' and this question produced a lot of guesses.
- ◆ Question 6: 'Ausland' was misunderstood as 'Iceland' or 'Austria'.
- ◆ Questions 8a), 8b): Very few candidates recognised 'Fluss' or 'alkoholfreien'.
- ◆ Question 9b): Few candidates recognised 'Wald'.

### **Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates**

When preparing future candidates for examinations at a similar level, centres should consider the following:

- ◆ Centres should try to devote time and attention to developing all four skills, including the important skill of Listening.
- ◆ Although centres will want to equip candidates with skills, this should go alongside a sound grasp of basic vocabulary. Time should be devoted to drilling and revising common words so that candidates remember more than the topics covered just before the examination.
- ◆ Candidates should be given regular opportunities to engage with longer, more complex Reading texts and Listening passages.
- ◆ Teachers should encourage candidates to give detailed responses to Reading and Listening questions and to understand whole ideas, rather than just identifying one or two key words and guessing around those.
- ◆ Giving candidates a working knowledge of the grammar concepts expected at that level should both aid their comprehension of written and spoken texts, and allow them to talk and write with more flexibility and accuracy.

**Statistical information: update on Courses**

**STANDARD GRADE**

<b>Number of resulted entries in 2012</b>	5016
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<b>Number of resulted entries in 2013</b>	4415
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**Statistical Information: Performance of candidates**

**Distribution of overall awards**

Grade 1	18.6%
Grade 2	25.8%
Grade 3	24.8%
Grade 4	19.0%
Grade 5	8.2%
Grade 6	2.5%
Grade 7	0.0%
No award	1.0%

**Grade boundaries for each assessable element in the subject included in the report**

Assessable Element	Credit Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		General Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		Foundation Max Mark	Grade Boundaries	
		1	2		3	4		5	6
R	26	21	16	32	21	14	33	23	17
L	25	18	11	26	18	12	27	18	14

## General commentary on grade boundaries

- ◆ While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary), it is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.
- ◆ Each year, SQA therefore holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Business Manager and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.
- ◆ An exam paper at a particular level in a subject in one year tends to have a marginally different set of grade boundaries from exam papers in that subject at that level in other years. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in, say, Higher Chemistry, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter boundaries in their prelim exam in Higher Chemistry. The two are not that closely related, as they do not contain identical questions.
- ◆ SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.