



Course report 2025

National 5 German

This report provides information on candidates' performance. Teachers, lecturers and assessors may find it useful when preparing candidates for future assessment. The report is intended to be constructive and informative, and to promote better understanding. You should read the report with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

For information about the performance–talking, which is internally assessed, please refer to the 2024–25 Qualification Verification Summary Report on the [subject page](#) of our website.

We compiled the statistics in this report before we completed the 2025 appeals process.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2024: 1,522

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 1,323

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	769	58.1	58.1	85
B	227	17.2	75.3	72
C	180	13.6	88.9	60
D	93	7.0	95.9	47
No award	54	4.1	100	Not applicable

We have not applied rounding to these statistics.

You can read the general commentary on grade boundaries in the appendix.

In this report:

- 'most' means greater than or equal to 70%
- 'many' means 50% to 69%
- 'some' means 25% to 49%
- 'a few' means less than 25%

You can find statistical reports on the [statistics and information](#) page of our website.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

The 2025 National 5 German course assessment performed as expected and was considered fair and accessible, offering an appropriate level of differentiation. The assessment sampled language across all contexts and the content that was familiar and relevant to candidates. Most candidates coped well with the level and were able to complete the assessment within the allocated time.

Most candidates attempted all questions. There were fewer no responses in the writing paper compared to last year. There were issues relating to legibility of handwriting, and to general literacy and expression in English.

Question paper 1: Reading

The reading question paper consisted of three texts on the contexts of learning, culture, and employability. There were three supported questions. The texts were relevant to candidates.

The assessment performed as expected and allowed for a full range of responses. The marking instructions allowed candidates to give a range of answers to demonstrate their understanding from a range of contexts.

There were fewer no responses compared to last year, but most candidates attempted all questions.

Most candidates did well in this question paper, however, there was an increase in candidates gaining fewer than 15 marks.

Question paper 1: Writing

In the writing question paper, candidates had to respond to a job advert for young people seeking work at an international holiday village. As part of the assessment, candidates should respond to six bullet points: four predictable bullet points and two unpredictable bullet points.

There was a full range of performances, with many candidates achieving 12 or 16 marks. Although fewer candidates achieved the maximum mark of 20, the overall number of candidates achieving higher marks increased this session, with many achieving 12 marks and above. Some candidates were awarded 0 or 4 marks, and a few did not attempt the paper at all.

Question paper 2: Listening

The context of the listening question paper was society. The monologue focused on young people and their free time, and the dialogue explored free time and healthy living. The texts sampled vocabulary from all contexts. The range of topics and vocabulary sampled ensured broad coverage within the context of society. Due to the familiarity of the topic, candidates performed well with the level of challenge in this paper. The question paper performed as expected with most candidates coping well with the grammatical structures required at the upper end of this level.

There was a range of performances. The marking instructions were sufficiently adapted to ensure that candidates could provide a range of answers, and to help identify answers that were guessed when candidates had not understood the answer.

Assignment–writing

The assignment–writing performed as intended, with candidates selecting a range of topics from the three contexts of society, learning and culture.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper 1: Reading

Most candidates performed well in the reading question paper. Some candidates achieved full marks. They engaged well with the texts, and many performed better in text 1 and text 2.

Text 1 (learning)

- question 1(b): most candidates were able to convey the idea of good preparation
- question 1(c)(i): most candidates gained at least 2 marks. Most candidates were able to identify that an exchange can be expensive, pupils were homesick, they missed their families and friends or did not get on well with their host family or felt overwhelmed
- question 1(d): most candidates achieved both marks and had understood that it was Anna's first time away from home, that she became more confident or that she had broadened her horizons

Text 2 (culture)

- question 2(a): most candidates gained 2 marks and identified that young Germans spent their summer holidays on Spanish islands, in the Mediterranean or in European cities. Many candidates had written 'Spain' and were unable to identify the plural form of *Stadt*
- question 2(b)(i): most candidates gained the mark and were able to identify that it was cheaper or more environmentally friendly to go by bike. A few had written that it was an adventure
- question 2(b)(ii): most candidates were able to pick out that they were staying at a camping site on the beach. There was some confusion with the preposition, however, this was not necessary to get the mark

- question 2(b)(iii): many candidates gained at least 1 mark in this question and said that she was looking forward to spending time with her friends or seeing the clear, blue water
- question 2(c): supported question, most candidates were able to pick out the two correct statements

Text 3 (employability)

- question 3(b)(i), supported question: most candidates were able to identify the two pieces of information required for the mark, 'exhausting' and 'varied'
- question 3(c): most candidates were able to gain at least 1 mark by identifying that the right food, regular exercise or behaviour training was important for the health of the animals

Question paper 1: Writing

Most candidates attempted the first four predictable bullet points, demonstrating a varied range of vocabulary, grammatical structures, and tenses. Most appeared well-prepared for the task, and the overall quality of writing was strong.

Question paper 2: Listening

Candidates performed very well in this paper, demonstrating a secure grasp of key vocabulary related to free time and healthy living.

Item 1: monologue

- question 1(a): most candidates gained at least 1 mark and were able to identify that many young people have lots of stress at school, they have to learn for their exams, they are bullied or there are arguments at home
- question 1(c)(i), supported question: most candidates were able to pick out the correct number
- question 1(c)(ii): most candidates gained both marks and were able to mention the benefits of sport on mental health, that young people can make new friends,

or they can concentrate better. A few wrote that young people could forget about their problems at home and at school

Item 2: dialogue

- question 2(a): most candidates gained at least 1 mark by providing enough detail
- question 2(b): most candidates gained both marks. The most common answers were to work in a team and to solve problems or conflicts
- question 2(c)(i): most candidates gained the mark for the cognate handball
- question 2(c)(ii): most candidates got the time phrase correct

Assignment–writing

Candidates engaged well with the assignment–writing and produced texts on a range of topics, including family and friends, school, healthy living, home area, holidays, and film studies. The quality of writing was good, and candidates engaged well with the task. Many assignments were descriptive.

Most candidates chose appropriate topics and were able to write in depth on their chosen subject. Candidates who did well produced well-structured assignments, including a clear introduction and conclusion. Most candidates demonstrated a range of detailed language, including subordinate clauses and inversion. Most candidates included relevant opinions and ideas to support their writing.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper 1: Reading

Some candidates missed out on marks by not including enough detail from the texts, not using the dictionary appropriately, or attempting to guess answers rather than basing responses on evidence from the text.

Some candidates did not perform well in text 3 as the language was more challenging. Some did not attempt the final four questions, suggesting they may have struggled with time management.

Text 1 (learning)

- question 1(a): most candidates were unable to identify that *vor* meant 'ago' and were unable to pick out the number
- question 1(c): some candidates are still confusing *kennen lernen* with 'to learn about'. Some candidates did not provide enough detail and missed out the adjective *lebenslang*. Some candidates had written that the German students wanted to improve their German, instead of their language skills
- question 1(e): many candidates were unable to identify that they made memories which will stay with them

Text 2 (culture)

- question 2(a): some candidates wrote 'Spain' for *die spanischen Inseln* and did not gain the mark as this was not enough detail. Some candidates wrote 'the Middle Sea' for *Mittelmeer*. Many candidates were unable to identify the plural noun *Städte* and wrote 'a city in Europe'; however, they still gained the mark
- question 2(b): some candidates were unable to pick out comparative adjectives
- question 2(d): some candidates did not provide enough detail in this question or got the number wrong. Some candidates were not able to identify the noun *Stadium*, with some writing 'stadium'

Text 3 (employability)

- question 3(a): many candidates were unable to understand the meaning of *Seit Ende ihres Studiums* and guessed numbers. This question had the highest number of no responses
- question 3(b)(ii): some candidates did not provide enough detail and wrote 'fixed bones' or missed out the adjective 'lang'. Some confused *gegen Grippe impfen* as 'give cats the flu'
- question 3(d): some candidates struggled and picked the information out from the infinitive clause, and gave responses that did not make sense or contain enough detail
- question 3(e): some candidates were unable to break down the composite noun *Arbeitsmöglichkeiten* or confused *viele* with the idea of not enough

Question paper 1: Writing

Some candidates are still including a formal introduction, which is no longer required, and many struggled to do this well. Despite the predictability of the first four bullet points, a few candidates appeared underprepared. Some candidates only attempted the first or second bullet points, and a very small number of candidates wrote only a few sentences.

Some candidates relied heavily on memorised material and did not fully understand what they were writing, resulting in errors. This was evident where overly complex language was used or where chunks of learned material were omitted. A few candidates had over-prepared the first four bullet points but lacked a secure understanding of the content.

Some candidates did not include a range of tenses, and had difficulty forming the past tense required in bullet point 4. Other areas of difficulty included adjective endings, word order, and verb agreement. A very small number of candidates wrote very little or did not attempt the task at all, which may have been due to poor exam technique or spending too much time on the reading paper.

In bullet point 3, some candidates focused on free-time activities without relating them to the required skills and qualities for the job. For example, listing cinema visits and favourite film genres without linking this to suitability for the role. In bullet point 4, some candidates chose to write in the present tense, limiting the range of tenses they could use, while others provided minimal detail.

Most candidates attempted the unpredictable bullet points 5 and 6, though accuracy declined significantly in these. Many candidates found it difficult to write spontaneously, especially in bullet point 6. Common issues included incorrect word order, use of unconjugated verbs, and failure to form basic sentences involving two verbs. Sometimes it was unclear what candidates were trying to express. There was evidence of dictionary misuse and attempts to express ideas beyond candidates' abilities, resulting in grammar and vocabulary errors. In many instances, simpler, well-structured sentences would have been more effective.

Some candidates kept the final bullet points simple and clear, which contributed positively to the overall quality of their writing.

Question paper 2: Listening

Some candidates did not provide enough detail in their answers or relied on general knowledge rather than information from the recording. Some candidates did not recognise a few straightforward vocabulary items, such as *Oma*, *einkaufen*, and some numbers.

Item 1: monologue

- question 1(c), supported question: many candidates were unable to choose the correct number
- question 1(d): many candidates guessed the answer to this question or confused *sich verstehen mit* with 'understand'

Item 2: dialogue

- question 2(a): some candidates were unable to pick out some straightforward vocabulary, such as *Oma*, *einkaufen* and *Hausaufgaben*. A few candidates said that she worked at a car wash or wrote the wrong person, such as goes shopping with her aunt
- question 2(c)(ii): a small number of candidates were unable to pick out the number
- question 2(e)(i): many candidates were unable to provide enough detail. Some candidates wrote she was going to visit her parents or go the cinema
- question 2(e)(ii): a small number of candidates confused *spannend* with *entspannend*

Assignment–writing

- some candidates chose challenging topics that were beyond their ability or wrote about a range of topics without enough detail
- a few candidates chose to write about a personal profile, which did not allow for any depth or enough detailed language, and was very similar to their job application in the writing question paper
- some candidates used accurate language but did not include a range of opinions or conjunctions or expand on ideas
- some candidates used repetitive language, particularly when talking about family and friends
- a small number of candidates did not demonstrate the level of detailed language expected at National 5, instead producing content more appropriate to National 3 and 4, for example extended noun lists when describing where they live or wrote physical descriptions of family members and pets
- a few candidates did not include a range of opinions and ideas, which is required to achieve the higher marks

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper 1: Reading

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- practise their dictionary skills to help them select the most appropriate translation based on the context of the text
- only answer the question that is being asked. It may be helpful to remind candidates that texts follow a chronological structure and that questions contain hooks to support understanding throughout
- read each question carefully and highlight or underline key words to help locate the correct information in the text
- read the question and their answer at the end of the paper to ensure the response is accurate and makes sense in English
- use the number of marks as a guide to how much information is required
- are aware that two words are required for 1 mark at National 5. They should look at the surrounding text to ensure all relevant detail is included
- are familiar with a range of grammatical structures, as outlined in the productive grammar grid at National 5. This should help them identify the relationship between the words in the sentence, including the tense if there is more than one verb in the sentence
- are aware that comparative adjectives and compound nouns are common features at National 5
- know the tense of the question should give them a good idea of the tense they should be using in their response
- do not give additional information that is not related to the text or the question. This could negate any correct information, and they could miss out on marks

Question paper 1: Writing

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- are aware that a formal introduction or conclusion is not required
- for bullet point 3:
 - the information provided is relevant to the job
 - the context of the paper is a job application
 - if free time is mentioned, they should clearly link it to the relevant skills, otherwise they may not fully address the bullet point
 - focus on describing skills and interests that make them suitable for the job
- in bullet point 4, try to show a range of tenses accurately to achieve a higher mark
- in bullet point 2, avoid listing, particularly school subjects as this limits the opportunity to show detailed language
- practise a range of unpredictable bullet points. Teachers and lecturers may find it helpful to draw on examples from other languages to broaden the range of tasks
- attempt all six bullet points to ensure they have written enough, as incomplete responses can significantly affect their overall mark
- use a dictionary effectively to ensure accuracy
- practise a range of productive grammar skills, including how to form questions, to help use more accurate and varied language
- are aware of the marking instructions, so they know what is expected of them, and to help them to achieve a high mark
- use detailed language, express opinions, and give reasons to support their ideas
- use a range of tenses (where appropriate) and make use of features such as inversion and subordinate clauses to demonstrate control and sophistication in their writing

Question paper 2: Listening

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- read the introduction and are aware of the context
- read the questions carefully
- highlight key words to help them structure the text
- write in bullet points and score out any notes with a single line
- regularly practise taking extensive notes in class
- know that notes should be confined to the side of the paper. Some candidates drew a line down the middle of the paper, which made it more difficult for markers to find the correct answers
- as they hear both the monologue and the dialogue three times, use the third time to check the accuracy of what they have written
- are guided by the number of marks available for each question to that they provide enough detail
- are aware that two words are required for 1 mark at National 5, for example a country on its own would not be enough detail
- revisit some basic vocabulary, for example countries, numbers, weather expressions, transport and question words to ensure that they provide enough detail
- do not provide a range of alternative answers using oblique lines (/). Some candidates missed marks if it was not clear what their answer was, or if the two answers contradicted each other
- provide accurate answers. A few candidates negated the correct answer by providing additional information that was incorrect

Assignment–writing

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- are aware of SQA's current position statement on the use of [generative artificial intelligence \(GenAI\) in assessments](#)
- plan their writing
- avoid writing in pencil or a gel pen
- include an introduction and conclusion
- write about one topic in depth
- include a range of ideas and opinions
- structure their essays
- link sentences and paragraphs
- cover topics that are appropriate to National 5
- avoid listing information, using repeated structures or relying on a small number of verbs
- use detailed language as appropriate to National 5, including inversion, subordinate clauses and adjectives

Appendix: general commentary on grade boundaries

Our main aim when setting grade boundaries is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and levels and to maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

For most National Courses, we aim to set examinations and other external assessments and create marking instructions that allow:

- a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional grade C boundary)
- a well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional grade A boundary)

It is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject, at every level. Therefore, we hold a grade boundary meeting for each course to bring together all the information available (statistical and qualitative) and to make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Members of our Executive Management Team normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors utilise their subject expertise to evaluate the performance of the assessment and propose suitable grade boundaries based on the full range of evidence. We can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the discussion at these meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more, or less, difficult than usual.

- The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
- The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
- Where levels of difficulty are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Every year, we evaluate the performance of our assessments in a fair way, while ensuring standards are maintained so that our qualifications remain credible. To do this, we measure evidence of candidates' knowledge and skills against the national standard.

For full details of the approach, please refer to the [Awarding and Grading for National Courses Policy](#).