



Course report 2024

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.

We compiled the statistics in this report before we completed the 2024 appeals process.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2023: 1,490

Number of resulted entries in 2024: 1,522

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

A	Number of candidates	824	Percentage	54.1	Cumulative percentage	54.1	Minimum mark required	83
B	Number of candidates	271	Percentage	17.8	Cumulative percentage	71.9	Minimum mark required	70
C	Number of candidates	216	Percentage	14.2	Cumulative percentage	86.1	Minimum mark required	58
D	Number of candidates	117	Percentage	7.7	Cumulative percentage	93.8	Minimum mark required	45
No award	Number of candidates	94	Percentage	6.2	Cumulative percentage	100	Minimum mark required	N/A

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 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 2024 National 5 German course assessment broadly performed as expected and was fair and accessible to all candidates, with a range of differentiation. The assessment sampled language from all contexts and the content 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 in the papers and there were fewer no responses in the writing paper compared to last year. Issues were noted relating to legibility of handwriting, and to general literacy and expression in English. Candidates demonstrated a range of performances and wrote texts on a range of topics.

Question paper 1: Reading

The reading question paper comprised of three texts on the contexts of society, learning, and culture. There were two supported questions. Candidates engaged well with the texts and performed better in text 1 and text 2. Some candidates did not perform as well in text 3 as the language was more challenging. Some candidates did not attempt the final four questions, suggesting they may have struggled with time management skills.

The texts were relevant to candidates. The question paper was accessible to all and provided the demand and rigour required at this level. The assessment performed as expected.

There was a full range of performances, and some candidates were able to gain full marks. Some candidates did not provide enough detail from the text to access some of the marks. The marking instructions allowed candidates to offer a range of answers to demonstrate their understanding from a range of contexts. Most candidates performed consistently across all three reading texts.

There were some no responses, but most candidates attempted to answer all questions.

Most candidates did well in this question paper; however, there were more candidates gaining fewer than 15 marks.

Question paper 1: Writing

In the writing question paper, candidates had to reply to a job advert for a seasonal worker at a youth hostel in Rostock. The job application required candidates to respond to six bullet points, four of which were predictable and the final two bullet points were unpredictable. The unpredictable bullet points were about sporting interests and how candidates could help in the kitchen.

There was a full range of performances, and a good number of candidates were able to achieve 16 or 20 marks. The number of candidates achieving the higher marks decreased this session with fewer candidates achieving 12 marks and above. There was an increase in candidates achieving 0 or 4 marks this session, and a small number of candidates did not attempt the paper at all.

Question paper 2: Listening

The context of the listening question paper was employability. The monologue was about apprenticeships and the dialogue was about work experience in a café. The texts sampled vocabulary from all contexts. Due to the familiarity of the topic, candidates performed well with the level of challenge in this paper. There was a range of topics included within the context of the paper that sampled a wide range of vocabulary.

Overall, the question paper performed as expected. Most candidates coped well with the structures expected at the upper end of this level, but there were a few items of basic vocabulary that some candidates were unable to identify, such as *Hund* and *Eis*.

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

Assignment–writing

The assignment–writing was reinstated this session. Candidates wrote about a range of topics including family and friends, school, healthy living, home area, holidays and film studies. The quality of the writing was good, and candidates engaged well with the task. Teachers and lecturers provided a range of stimuli. Many writing assignments were descriptive in nature. Not all candidates included a range of opinions and ideas, which is required to achieve the higher marks.

Performance–talking

The performance–talking performed as expected.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper 1: Reading

Text 1 (society)

- ◆ question 1(a): most candidates were able to identify the south of Switzerland
- ◆ question 1(b): most candidates gained at least 2 marks in this question. Most candidates were able to identify that there was no electricity, and the wood came from the forest or was used for cooking and heating
- ◆ question 1(c): there was a choice of six answers and most candidates gained both marks in this question. The most common answers were 'they work long hours' and 'they don't see their friends as often'
- ◆ question 1(d): most candidates gained the mark for identifying that there were 'no phones or internet' and that 'his friends live far away'
- ◆ question 1(e): most candidates were able to identify that he wanted to move to a small town or city

Text 2 (learning)

- ◆ question 2(a): most candidates gained the mark and knew that her mum got a new job. Some candidates did not expand that it was in an international company; although, in this case it was not required for the mark
- ◆ question 2(c): most candidates gained at least 1 mark in this question and were able to find 'public transport' in the dictionary
- ◆ question 2(d): most candidates were able to identify the shorter school day and that in German schools there was no uniform
- ◆ question 2(e): supported question, and most candidates were able to identify the two correct activities

Text 3 (culture)

- ◆ question 3(a): most candidates gained the mark and correctly identified that many people want to go on holiday to spend time with family and friends, experience new cultures and travel the world

Question paper 1: Writing

Most candidates attempted the first four predictable bullet points, displaying a varied range of vocabulary, grammatical structures and tenses. Most candidates seemed well-prepared for the task.

Question paper 2: Listening

Item 1 (monologue)

- ◆ question 1(b): most candidates were able to identify one or more of the jobs mentioned
- ◆ question 1(c): many candidates were able to correctly identify that you get paid, you gain qualifications and learn from colleagues
- ◆ question 1(d): most candidates said that you have to be motivated or have good grades

Item 2 (dialogue)

- ◆ question 2(a): most candidates were able to correctly identify that the café was in the town centre
- ◆ question 2(d)(i): most candidates were able to deal with *unfreundlich* or *schwierig*
- ◆ question 2(e): most candidates chose the two correct boxes in this supported question

Assignment–writing

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

Performance–talking

Candidates generally performed well when the topics chosen for the presentation were covered in detail with well-structured responses and opinions, including an introduction and conclusion.

All candidates covered a different context in the conversation. Overall, most candidates coped well with the conversation.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper 1: Reading

Text 1 (society)

- ◆ question 1(a): some candidates thought *Bauernhof* was the name of a town
- ◆ question 1(b): some candidates confused *kein* with *klein*. A small number of candidates said that 'they use no electricity', which changed the meaning of the text. Very few candidates confused the time phrase, and that the family had lived there for 100 years
- ◆ question 1(c): some candidates did not provide enough information in this question and wrote that 'they grew their own fruit' and omitted 'vegetables'. Some were unable to identify the animals. Very few candidates got the point about the family 'living off the land.' Some candidates found the separable verb *anbauen* challenging with some writing 'build' or 'create'
- ◆ question 1(d): some candidates did not provide enough detail to gain the marks
- ◆ question 1(e): some candidates missed the idea of engineering to gain the mark. Other candidates were confused by *Ingenieurwesen* and added a type of engineering. This issue was addressed during marking to ensure candidates were not disadvantaged

Text 2 (learning)

- ◆ question 2(a): some candidates were unable to find the noun *Stelle* in the dictionary, or chose the wrong meaning
- ◆ question 2(b): some candidates did not provide enough detail to achieve the marks and missed out key details, such as 'her whole life'. Some wrote that she only knew French but missed out that she had learnt it at school. Some were unable to break down the composite nouns with *Sprach-*, such as *Sprachbarriere* and *Sprachkurs* or had written that she had completed a speech course
- ◆ question 2(c): some candidates confused getting up early with waking up early
- ◆ question 2(e): a few candidates only chose one box, when they were asked to 'Tick the two correct activities'
- ◆ question 2(f): some candidates did not provide enough detail and chose generic answers, such as 'misses Scotland'

Text 3 (culture)

- ◆ question 3(a): some candidates did not provide enough detail and wrote spend time with family and missed out friends. Others wrote about visiting family and friends. Some candidates were unable to find the verb *erleben* or *bereisen* and guessed their answers using the surrounding nouns
- ◆ question 3(b): some candidates missed the idea that it was the parents taking responsibility for everything and organising the activities
- ◆ question 3(c)(i): some candidates struggled with *Mittelmeer*, with some writing 'Middle Sea' or 'in the middle of the sea'
- ◆ question 3(c)(ii): some candidates mixed up *den ganzen Tag* and wrote 'every day' or did not provide enough detail. Some candidates wrote 'where and when' instead of 'where and what'
- ◆ question 3(d): many candidates did not do this question well, either by not providing enough detail or thinking *Pläne* was 'planes'

Question paper 1: Writing

- ◆ some candidates are writing a formal introduction, which is not required, and some struggled to do this well
- ◆ in the first four bullet points, some candidates were not well-prepared, despite the predictability
- ◆ a few candidates only attempted the first and/or second bullet points
- ◆ some candidates did not always understand what they were writing and made errors when writing from memory
- ◆ some candidates did not provide a range of tenses, and some had difficulty in forming the past tense, particularly in bullet point four
- ◆ some candidates only coped with the language in the first two bullet points
- ◆ other points of difficulty for some candidates were adjective endings, word-order and verb agreement
- ◆ a small number of candidates wrote very few sentences or did not attempt the task at all, which could be the result of exam technique, or they spent too much time on the reading question paper
- ◆ a few candidates had over-prepared for the first four bullet points, and it was clear that they did not always understand what they were writing
- ◆ the language was complicated in parts and some candidates made errors that detracted from the overall impression, particularly where chunks of learned material were missed out
- ◆ bullet point 3: a few candidates wrote about free-time activities with no mention of skills and qualities. Free-time activities were often mentioned without any relevance to the job, for example going to the cinema and their favourite types of films
- ◆ bullet point 4:
 - some candidates chose to write in the present tense, which limited the range of tenses in the piece overall
 - a few candidates had very little detail
- ◆ most candidates attempted bullet points 5 and 6. The accuracy of the bullet points deteriorated significantly in the last two bullet points and a considerable number of candidates were unable to form basic sentences using two verbs. The result was unconjugated verbs and incorrect word order
- ◆ bullet point 5, some candidates:
 - made serious errors and at times it was not immediately obvious what they were trying to say
 - showed evidence of dictionary misuse
 - instead of writing detailed language, tried to express ideas that were beyond their writing ability in German
 - tried to write extended answers but made significant errors in terms of grammar and vocabulary
- ◆ bullet point 6, some candidates:
 - tried to write beyond their ability
 - were unable to conjugate the present tense

- ◆ most candidates attempted all six bullet points. Many encountered difficulties in the final two unpredictable bullet points, particularly number 6, indicating that writing spontaneously was challenging
- ◆ many candidates kept the final two bullet points simple, which worked overall

Question paper 2: Listening

Item 1 (monologue)

- ◆ question 1(a): some candidates were unable identify *Chancen* or had written generic answers
- ◆ question 1(c): some candidates guessed that they get work experience. Few identified that they could 'work with their hands' and confused *Händen* with 'mobile phones'
- ◆ question 1(d): some candidates translated *gute Noten* as 'good notes'
- ◆ question 1(e): most candidates only gained 1 mark in this question

Item 2 (dialogue)

- ◆ question 2(a): some candidates were unable to identify places in the town or the correct prepositions
- ◆ question 2(b): some candidates guessed the answers with a range of chores carried out at a café, for example wiping the table, sweeping up, dealing with money
- ◆ question 2(c)(i): some candidates were unable to identify that the café was dog friendly. Many wrote that the staff were friendly
- ◆ question 2(c)(ii): many candidates found this question challenging
- ◆ question 2(d)(ii): many candidates found this question challenging

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 the 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 few candidates did not use detailed language, and the language was more appropriate to National 3 and 4, for example extended lists of nouns when writing about where they live or wrote physical descriptions of family members and pets.

Performance–talking

A few candidates had prepared a presentation that did not include detailed language expected at this level. Some candidates used their job applications for the basis of their presentation, which covered a range of topics. The presentations that did well were structured and stayed on the same topic but went into detail.

Some conversations and discussions were unnecessarily long or too short. Particularly when conversations and discussions were short, candidates were unable to demonstrate detailed language.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper 1: Reading

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- ◆ practise dictionary skills to help them select the most appropriate translations in the context of the text
- ◆ only answer the question that is being asked
- ◆ are aware that the questions and answers are in a chronological order
- ◆ read each question carefully and highlight or underline key words to help them find the correct answer in the text
- ◆ read the question and their answer at the end of the exam to ensure that the question has been answered and what they have written in English makes sense
- ◆ are guided by the marks available for each question and provide as much detail as they have understood. Some candidates did not provide sufficient detail to gain the marks
- ◆ are aware that two words are required for 1 mark at National 5. They should look at the surrounding text to ensure that all the necessary 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 composite 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 should be relevant to the job
 - the context of the paper is a job application
 - if free time is mentioned, it should be linked to the skill, otherwise the bullet point may not be covered
 - remember that the bullet point is looking for information on skills and interests that make them right 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
- ◆ for the unpredictable bullet points, have opportunities to practise a range of these. It may help teachers and lecturers to look to other languages for ideas

- ◆ attempt all six bullet points to ensure that they have written enough, as this can have an impact on their overall mark
- ◆ check that they cover all six bullet points and use their dictionary to check the accuracy of what they have written
- ◆ practise a range of productive grammar skills, including how to form questions
- ◆ are made aware of the marking instructions so that they know what is expected of them, and to help them achieve a high mark
- ◆ can use detailed language and give opinions and reasons
- ◆ use a range of tenses (where appropriate) and include examples of inversion and subordinate clauses

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 ensure 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:

- ◆ plan their writing
- ◆ write in black or blue 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

Performance–talking

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- ◆ use detailed language as per the productive grammar grid. At this level, long lists of nouns (for example places in the town and school subjects) or repetitions of straightforward descriptions (for example names, ages, pets and descriptions of hair and eyes) are unlikely to allow candidates to use a suitable range of structures and vocabulary to access the higher pegged marks
- ◆ are guided carefully in their choice of topic, and avoid topics that are better suited to Higher and require greater levels of maturity (for example smoking, drinking alcohol), or a variation of the job application, or a presentation with a range of topics that does not allow sufficient depth
- ◆ are guided to choose one topic and use a range of structures, tenses, and vocabulary appropriate to the level
- ◆ avoid overly rehearsing discussions: the discussion at National 5 should contain spontaneous and natural language
- ◆ prepare for their assessment independently to personalise their performance. This means candidates can select their own topics of interest, vocabulary, and grammatical structures
- ◆ do not respond to questions with mini presentations. Longer answers can appear to be overly rehearsed, and conversations should include a range of short and long answers
- ◆ have a range of strategies for asking questions to be repeated, or language structures and phrases to say when they have not understood an aspect of the discussion

Teachers and lecturers could make use of the Understanding Standards materials for National 5 German performance–talking performances (IACCAs) published on SQA’s secure website. These are available through your SQA co-ordinator.

Appendix: general commentary on grade boundaries

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

For most National Courses, SQA aims 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, SQA holds 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 SQA's 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. SQA 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.

During the pandemic, we modified National Qualifications course assessments, for example we removed elements of coursework. We kept these modifications in place until the 2022–23 session. The education community agreed that retaining the modifications for longer than this could have a detrimental impact on learning and progression to the next stage of education, employment or training. After discussions with candidates, teachers, lecturers, parents, carers and others, we returned to full course assessment for the 2023–24 session.

SQA's approach to awarding was announced in [March 2024](#) and explained that any impact on candidates completing coursework for the first time, as part of their SQA assessments, would be considered in our grading decisions and incorporated into our well-established

grading processes. This provides fairness and safeguards for candidates and helps to provide assurances across the wider education community as we return to established awarding.

Our approach to awarding is broadly aligned to other nations of the UK that have returned to normal grading arrangements.

For full details of the approach, please refer to the [National Qualifications 2024 Awarding — Methodology Report](#).