

Southend High School for Boys

Sixth Form German

Course Guide



This booklet contains information on:

- the structure of the examination at A-Level, in summary and in detail
- course books and about the work you will be doing
- suggested background knowledge with bibliography and other sources of information
- some further ideas for success
- some preliminary work you can do before September

General outline of the examination

You will have three examinations at the end of Yr13 (A-Level examination). We are following the AQA specification.

There is *no* coursework element for the A-Level examination. All examinations are written on the day or are oral.

The three modules are outlined below in brief.

A-Level

Paper	Outline	Time	Weighting (%)
Paper 1 60 marks	Listening, Reading, Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Listening task (30 marks)- Reading task (50 marks)- Translation into English (10 marks)- Translation into German (10 marks)	2 hours 30	50%
Paper 2 80 marks	Writing Essay on the play "Der Besuch der alten Dame" (choice of two questions) and the film "Das Leben der Anderen" (choice of two questions), around 300 words per essay	2 hours	20%
Paper 3 60 marks	Speaking <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Discussion of sub-theme, based on stimulus card (5 minutes)	16-18 minutes (+ 5 minutes preparation)	30%

	- Presentation (2 minutes) and discussion (9-10 minutes) of the individual research project		
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General Topic Areas

Like GCSE, the vocabulary you will be expected to know is taught and learned through the study of topic areas. These reflect higher levels of knowledge, language and thinking than those required at GCSE level.

There are three very broad topic areas in **Year 12**:

1.	Aspects of German speaking society	1. The changing state of the family 2. The digital world 3. Youth culture: fashion, trends, music, TV
2.	Artistic culture	1. Festivals and traditions 2. Art and architecture 3. Cultural life in Berlin, past and present
3.	Film	Das Leben der Anderen

There are five areas at **A-Level**, although one (film) will have already been covered in yr12 and the focus of the research project is your own choice:

1.	Multiculturalism	1. Immigration 2. Integration 3. Racism
2.	Aspects of political life	1. Germany and the EU 2. Politics and Youth 3. German re-unification and its consequences
4.	Literature	Der Besuch der alten Dame
5.	Research project (for Speaking Exam only)	Own choice

A few of the topics in Year 13 actually link back to what will have been covered in Year 12 (highlighted in red), which will make the Year 13 course slightly less dense, allowing for extra exam practice towards the end of the course.

Further notes on the units of the course

In all units, it is essential that you have done wider background reading in addition to the topic material covered in class. This will give you great advantage in the examinations. Wider reading enables you to augment your vocabulary, and to develop a feel for German style. A wide range of reading material is available to you and therefore there is no problem in locating suitable texts to cater for every interest. Quality websites on the internet, such as broadsheet newspapers like *Die Welt*, *Die Zeit*, are very useful. Reading parallel texts, articles or items of news, is also hugely beneficial.

It is strongly recommended that you visit one of the German-speaking countries during the course, at least once. This will undoubtedly enhance your competence and confidence in spoken and written German. Seeing things for yourself rather than just reading about them in the textbook will undoubtedly give you an advantage when it comes to your examinations.

The examination puts great stress on oral and written competence. It is therefore in your interest to contribute as much as possible to oral work in class and to use the medium of German as a matter of course.

You will be working from October with the German Assistant on your topics and on conversation in general. These are essential periods that form a **compulsory and integral part of your course and timetable**. You must always attend (registers are completed by the assistant) and you must give your apologies in advance in the event of any planned absence for good reason.

Classwork during the year

Writing German

For some questions on some papers, particularly at AS, short answers are required. At the other end of the scale, essays must reflect competence in formal German at increased length, as essays will require you to write 250 words (AS) or 300 words (A2).

Grammar

Most of the grammar needed for the course will have already been covered in KS3 and KS4, so revising those key aspects over the summer will really help you to have a great start in September (cases, verb endings, tenses, word order...). You will also learn a few new grammatical concepts as part of the course, but providing your understanding of KS3 and KS4 grammar is secure, you should be able to deal with those new concepts with relative ease.

Oral and written work during the course

Oral work

During the course, you will have a regular period with the German languages assistant, starting in early October until the end of May. He or she will also work with you on Units 1 (Lower Sixth) and 3 (Upper Sixth). The course and the examination puts great emphasis on oral competence and fluency, so we are very lucky to have German Assistant and to be able to provide you with additional speaking practice to support you in becoming more confident in speaking German.

Oral work in German in class may take the form of

- giving short answers to questions on a text
- explaining terms
- discussions
- seminars
- questioning each other
- critique
- group work
- preparing and giving a point of view which may not be your own, etc.
- interpreting exercises
- presenting your chosen topic (A2 unit 3)

You should willingly try and communicate in German in general in order to practise as much as possible with a view to developing fluency.

Written work

Written work in German and English in class and at home may include

- short answers to questions on a text
- grammar and syntax exercises
- summaries
- tabulated information (advantages/disadvantages, arguments for and against, in bullet-point form), etc
- short accounts
- letters
- translation from German
- translation into German
- essays on topics

None of this is essentially different to GCSE, but the material will naturally be more complex and many more answers will involve *deriving* conclusions from what you hear or read, as opposed to simple factual recall.

How to organise your books/files

I suggest working in a folder rather than a textbook, so you can arrange all your files in the relevant sections, according to topics. This will help your revision.

Other notes:

1. Rough work – **always separate from other work** - should be kept at the back of your file if necessary or desired.
2. Each piece of work given to you should be completed **on a new piece of file paper** and should be presented ready for handing in with your name, date, reference and the proper title. Do not mix rough and neat work on the same piece of paper.

Wider and background reading

During the course, you should take the opportunity to read, listen and watch more widely *in German* than the demands of routine work otherwise require. You may be set additional reading, but your own interest should take you to a wide variety of sources.

For the speaking exam, you are expected to refer to Germany, Austria or Switzerland, therefore independent reading about the various topics in German is crucial in order for you to have sufficient insight into the situation in a German speaking country (e.g. you can't just speak about the use of social media in general – it needs to be about how social media is used in Germany/Austria/Switzerland (one of these, not all three). Keep notes whenever you read, so you build your own selection of revision material for this cultural background knowledge.

The internet represents an excellent resource for quick reading. Reading and listening to news items, say, once a week in German is invaluable, as you will absorb vocabulary and expressions useful for your development in the subject. Of greatest use are current affairs because you will already know something about the subject before you tackle a German text. This will help you with understanding. Also useful are articles which exist in both German and English. This will help you identify vocabulary and idioms very quickly.

The online-encyclopaedia de.wikipedia.org is an invaluable resource, but is not always totally accurate and should **never** be used as the sole source of information.

The site www.wwitv.com allows you to watch German, Austrian and Swiss television channels through the internet.

All German newspapers have a website, as does *Der Spiegel* (www.spiegel.de current affairs magazine) and *Focus* (www.focus.de).

In bold are aspects of history, which are directly linked to the course.

History

- The foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland* ('West Germany') and the German Democratic Republic *Die Deutsche Demokratische Republik* ('East Germany') in 1949 and the ensuing Cold War
- Reunification 1990 and the associated issues *Die Wende / Die Wiedervereinigung*
- European integration and the Euro; role of Germany in Europe today *Die europäische Integration, die Europäische Union*

Some key issues in Germany, Austria and Switzerland today:

- impact of the financial crisis
- nuclear power, energy, privatisation
- elections and electoral systems
- involvement in other world conflicts
- rise of the *AfD*, *Schweizerische Volkspartei* and the *Österreichische Volkspartei*
- employment and unemployment, etc.
- migrant crisis
- immigration, integration, racism
- Germany's role in the EU
- German culture (music, film, tv, influencers...)

A very readable and concise book on the history of Germany is:

- Fulbrook, Mary 1990 (rev. 2000) *A Concise History of Germany* Cambridge University Press

Politics, administration, geography

In addition, by the end of the course in Year 13, you should know the basics of the political systems of Germany, and, possibly to a lesser extent, Austria and Switzerland.

- political parties
- systems of government
- leaders
- policies
- recent political trends

Familiarise yourself with the geography of the German-speaking countries, and of the political divisions, and other spheres of German life. The site www.germany-info.org may be a good starting point.

- German *Länder*
- Austrian *Länder*
- Swiss *Kantone*
- cities, regions and rivers
- German education
- German healthcare
- Transport
- food and drink
- local traditions
- the differences between German spoken in the various regions of Germany

REFERENCE

Coursebooks and other reference materials

Coursebooks

The central coursebook for the examination is *AQA AS and A Level* (Oxford University Press). It will be supplemented by handouts and other materials, to be found on Kerboodle.

Reference materials

You should invest in a good **bilingual dictionary**. Choose the largest you can afford. Both the *Oxford-Duden German-English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press) and the Collins Dictionary are very good. You will find both these in the school library. Use them frequently and get to know them. They will be very useful to you. Remember that library copies are for reference only.

Monolingual dictionaries are also a great way to boost your vocabulary

The Goethe Institute

The Goethe Institute is the body responsible for promoting German cultural interest internationally. They have amongst other things a library which holds a large lending stock of books, videos and audio-cassettes on all aspects of German culture and history. A reader's card is available at a reasonable cost. Some resources for AS and A2 levels are available over the internet: www.goethe.de/alevel. The site includes electronic texts and useful links on a smaller range of topics relevant to A Level study.

The library is open on Saturdays till 5 pm.

Contact:

The Goethe-Institut
50 Princes Gate
Exhibition Road
LONDON SW7 2PH

Tel 020 7596 4000

www.goethe.de/london
mail@london.goethe.org

Web resources

The scale of web resources is rapidly becoming vast, but the following search engines may be of use:

1. www.goethe.de [designed for A Level students, website of the Goethe Institut]
2. www.osterreich.online.at [Austrian search engine with good links]
3. www.bluewin.ch
4. <http://www.dw.com/en/learn-german/s-2469>
5. www.news.ch Swiss news website. Very accessible.
6. www.germany-info.org (general information in English on Germany)
7. [www.\[any city\].de](http://www.[any city].de) (gives a variety of information, political, cultural, news, tourist, etc)
8. [www.\[any city\].at](http://www.[any city].at) (ditto)
9. [www.\[any city\].ch](http://www.[any city].ch) (ditto)
10. www.ch.ch (general information about Switzerland)
11. www.schule.de
12. www.delernen.de site for foreigners learning German maintained by the Lutheran Church
13. www.wikipedia.de online encyclopaedia, German version (not simply a translation of the English)
14. www.bundesregierung.de (German political information)
15. www.ard.de television website, news items often condensed for easy consumption
16. www.zdf.de television website, news items often condensed for easy consumption
17. www.wwitv.com (TV channels from around the world on the Internet)

Newspapers and magazines

18. www.welt.de (daily newspaper)
19. www.zeit.de (weekly newspaper)
20. www.focus.de (weekly magazine)
21. www.spiegel.de (weekly magazine, linguistically demanding)
22. www.bild.de (widely-read tabloid newspaper)
23. www.presse.at (Austrian national daily)
24. www.nzz.ch (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung* online)
25. www.bernerzeitung.ch

26. www.facts.ch (an online news magazine from Switzerland: formerly a paper magazine, which ended in 2007)

Literature and literature-related books and websites

Major text for study in the Upper Sixth:

- Friedrich Dürrenmatt *Der Besuch der alten Dame*

Websites for major text:

www.duerrenmatt.com

www.cdn.ch (website of the *Centre Dürrenmatt* at Neuchâtel, providing biographical and other information on Dürrenmatt)

www.duerrenmatt.net (forum and discussion)

Film

The following film is studied in the Upper Sixth:

Das Leben der Anderen (set in East Germany of the 1980s)

Dictionaries – paper and online

German-English/English-German paper

The *Oxford –Duden* dictionary and the Collins

Online German-English/English-German

<http://dict.leo.org> - is very good, but *do* read the forums

www.wordreference.com - good, but *do* read the forums

www.linguee.de – good, but make sure the examples you see are used on *German* websites.

Online monolingual

www.duden.de The Duden is to German what the Oxford English Dictionary is to English and gives full information.

Work you can do during the summer holidays after GCSE

- Buy a good large dictionary
- Do background and listening, reading, watching as outlined above
- Read newspapers and magazines in German
- Listen to German radio or podcasts
(Coffee Break German, Easy German...)
- Watch German TV or change language settings on Netflix etc to German
- Acquaint yourself with some general knowledge about the German-speaking countries as suggested above
- Catch up on German Vocabulary and Grammar from GCSE German (keep revisiting revision guides, use online textbook)
- Watch clips on Youtube to help with understanding of grammar and vocabulary linked to GCSE German
- Use memrise, quizlet, conjugamos, BBC Bitesize or duolingo for basic German vocabulary and grammar revision to keep it fresh in your memory throughout the summer

Think seriously about opportunities to go to Germany, with or without the school.

Tips for success

- Enjoy your study and take an active interest
- Organise your file properly
- Hand in work on time – give it proper priority
- Research and investigate thoroughly
- Balance the demands of the various parts of the course
- Keep up to date with new vocabulary and grammar
- Ask for extra help if you need it
- Share ideas and problems
- Keep to all deadlines
- Participate and be pro-active
- Attend every lesson punctually and with the right materials
- Use people – your teachers, the librarian and the assistant and others you may know outside school – as a resource.

Best of luck!

VMC June 2025

WIDER READING

Date	Reference	Subject	Findings

Date	Reference	Subject	Findings

Date	Reference	Subject	Findings

Date	Reference	Subject	Findings