

## Chief Reader Report on Student Responses: 2021 AP<sup>®</sup> German Language and Culture: Free-Response Questions

• Number of Readers	56			
<b>Total Group</b>				
• Number of Students Scored	4,315			
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At	
	5	776	18.0	
	4	842	19.5	
	3	1,191	27.6	
	2	1,013	23.5	
	1	493	11.4	
• Global Mean	3.09			
<b>Standard Group*</b>				
• Number of Students Scored	3,049			
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At	
	5	209	6.9	
	4	543	17.8	
	3	993	32.6	
	2	892	29.3	
	1	412	13.5	
• Global Mean	2.75			

The following comments on the 2021 free-response questions for AP<sup>®</sup> German Language and Culture were written by the Chief Reader, Harald Menz, Professor of World Languages and Cultures (German), Bethany College (WV). They give an overview of each free-response question and of how students performed on the question, including typical student errors. General comments regarding the skills and content that students frequently have the most problems with are included. Some suggestions for improving student preparation in these areas are also provided. Teachers are encouraged to attend a College Board workshop to learn strategies for improving student performance in specific areas.

**Question #1****Task:** Email Reply**Topic:** Invitation to Work at a Dog-Sitting Business**Max. Points:** 5**Total Group Mean Score:** 3.69**Standard Group Mean Score:** 3.56***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

This task assessed writing in the interpersonal communicative mode by having the student write a reply to an email message. Students were allotted 15 minutes to read the message and write the reply. The response received a single holistic score based on how well it accomplished the assigned task. Students needed to be able first to comprehend the email and then to write a reply using a formal form of address. The reply must address all the questions and requests raised in the message, as well as ask for more details about something mentioned in the message.

The course theme for the email reply was Family and Community (*Familie und Gemeinschaft*). The task required the student to reply to an email from Brigitte Loranzi, owner of “Hunde-Gitti,” a small at-home dog-sitting business. Ms. Loranzi summarizes the service the company provides and describes a job opening for dog lovers who like to be outdoors and have their own means of transportation. She then identifies the specific tasks the dog sitter would fulfill. She also presents an alternative job opening with the company: administrative assistant. The email asks two questions: 1) In which of the two positions would you be more interested and why? and 2) When and how often could you work? In closing, Ms. Loranzi offers to answer any questions the student might have.

***How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?***

In their responses, most students were able to maintain the interpersonal exchange in an appropriate manner by answering the two questions with some degree of elaboration and posing an additional question. While both questions were relatively specific, the first question allowed students to elaborate on the reason for their preference, and the second question lent itself to talking about their daily schedules. This allowed students to draw on some of the many topics AP German curricula typically incorporate (topics such as summer jobs, daily schedules and activities, and, of course, family pets were regularly addressed). Strong responses incorporated varied and appropriate vocabulary and idiomatic expressions for describing their preferences and explaining when their schedules allowed them to work. Strong responses also featured culturally appropriate writing conventions and register, varied and appropriate vocabulary, and a range of simple, compound, and complex sentences.

***What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?***

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some students did not fully comprehend that <i>they</i> were the ones applying for the position. Instead they thought that they were offered the services by the company. This occasionally resulted in inappropriate responses, incorrect responses to the questions, and requests for further information that were not appropriate within the context of the task.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In strong responses, students offered clearly appropriate responses to the questions and asked for applicable additional information.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some students had problems with the noun <i>Tätigkeiten</i> (activities, tasks) in question 1, leading to somewhat vague responses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong responses expressed a clear preference for the desired task and elaborated on the reasons for the choice.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although most students opened and closed their email replies in an appropriately formal manner, some students struggled to maintain a formal register throughout the email reply, addressing the recipient by her first name or shifting to informal pronouns in the body of the email.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In strong responses, students were able to maintain a formal register throughout their email replies, not only by providing an appropriately formal greeting and closing, but also through consistent formal pronoun usage (<i>Sie/Ihr/Ihnen</i> vs. <i>du/dein/dir</i>) and word choice appropriate to the situation.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some students completed all task requirements by providing answers to questions and posing an additional question, but only in a minimal, unelaborated manner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong responses offered clearly appropriate responses with frequent elaboration, which demonstrated ease and clarity of expression in the writer's use of German.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although most students responded to the two questions posed in the email, many neglected to ask for more details about something in the message, as specified in the task directions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong responses addressed all task requirements, including asking for more details about something in the message.</li> </ul>

**Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?**

- The email reply is primarily an interpersonal writing task, but it also requires skill in interpretive reading. Teachers should provide students with frequent opportunities to read and analyze emails before writing replies, drawing students' attention in particular to the functions and referents of personal pronouns.
- Teachers and students should not underestimate the complexity of this task because the time spent on it is relatively brief, especially in comparison with the much longer argumentative essay. Because students have only 15 minutes to read and respond to the email on the exam, it is helpful for teachers to set time limits for students to write practice emails.
- Students should imagine that the email is addressed to them personally and not be confused by impersonal salutations like "Dear Student." Students should keep in mind that they, as writers, will always use "*ich*" and will always be addressed as "*Sie*."
- It is imperative that students adhere to the task directions, answering all the questions posed in the email *and* asking for more details. Teachers could suggest that students make a list of the task requirements and check them off as they complete them.
- Students should work on maintaining a formal register throughout their email replies and pay close attention to how register is reflected in pronouns and word choice, as well as in salutations and closings.
- Overuse of memorized phrases should be avoided because it may hamper student production of meaningful content in their email replies.

**What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?**

- The AP German Language and Culture Course and Exam Description (CED) contains suggestions in the Unit Guides for building students' skills in writing successful email replies. The email reply task model is presented and practiced in Units 1, 3, and 5. The CED can be accessed here: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/pdf/ap-german-language-and-culture-course-and-exam-description.pdf?course=ap-german-language-and-culture>
- Teachers should become familiar with all the online resources available to support instruction and assessment for AP German Language and Culture within AP Classroom: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/instructional-resources/ap-classroom>

- Through AP Classroom, teachers can access the AP Question Bank. This is a searchable collection of past AP Exam questions where teachers can find and access email replies from previous exams.
- Teachers can also access 3 Practice Exams in the AP Question Bank, which provide practice in the email reply and can be scored using the provided scoring guidelines.
- Teachers should view the AP World Language and Culture Online Module on interpersonal writing, *Interpersonal Communication: Developing Writing Abilities* by Nyan-Ping Bi, to learn some strategies that focus on developing students' interpersonal writing skills. Teachers can access this online module here: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/resources/ap-world-language-culture-interactive-online-modules>
- Teachers should meet with colleagues who teach AP French, Italian, and Spanish Language and Culture to determine what common shared issues there are across languages for this task and to share strategies that will improve student performance.
- Teachers should download the scoring guidelines for this task available on the AP German Language and Culture Exam page and use them to review expectations for student performance: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-german-language-and-culture/exam>
- Teachers should choose a sample Email Reply prompt from the posted free-response questions (from 2012-2021) and access the corresponding student sample responses of high, mid, and low performances to share with students so they can examine student work vis-à-vis the scoring guidelines. This will inform them further of expectations for performance on this task, as well as the evaluative criteria for each score point: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-german-language-and-culture/exam?course=ap-german-language-and-culture>
- Teachers should assign Email Reply prompts for students to complete under the same conditions and time constraints as on the exam and then score them using the scoring guidelines. Feedback to students should focus on what students should do to move their performance to the next higher level.

**Question #2****Task:** Argumentative  
Essay**Max. Points:** 5**Topic:** Should one drive an SUV?**Total Group Mean Score:** 3.70**Standard Group Mean Score:** 3.60***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

This task assessed writing in the presentational communicative mode by having the student write an argumentative essay on a given topic while referencing three sources of information about the topic. Students were first allotted 6 minutes to read the essay topic and the two printed sources. Then they listened to the one audio source. Afterward, they had 40 minutes to write the essay. The response received a single holistic score based on how well it accomplished the assigned task. Students needed to be able first to comprehend the three sources and then to present the sources' different viewpoints. They also had to present their own position and defend it thoroughly, using information from all of the sources to support the essay. As they referred to the sources, they had to identify them appropriately. Furthermore, the essay had to be organized into clear paragraphs.

The course theme for the argumentative essay task was Global Challenges. Students had to write an argumentative essay on whether one should drive an SUV (Sport Utility Vehicle). After offering some statistical information about the SUV boom in Germany the first print source, "Larger, Higher, Wider: More and More SUVs on our Roads," offers a variety of reasons that speak against the purchase of SUVs. Safety for SUV passengers is mentioned in the article, which then concludes that SUV usage displays disregard to the health of the environment and others. The second print source, "SUVs: A Market Success with Severe Consequences," offers a graphic showing the increase in SUV registrations in Germany between 1995 and 2017. A second table and graphic compares two accident scenarios and the lethality for persons in either SUVs or standard-sized vehicles. An audio source, "AutoMobil: Boom of the SUV," features an interview with Paolo Tumminelli, a professor at the Cologne International School of Design. In the interview, Professor Tumminelli explains the reasons why Germans are drawn to the SUV, but also mentions the various negative consequences of the SUV boom.

***How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?***

In their responses students were, for the most part, able to offer an effective or suitable treatment of the topic of whether one should drive SUVs. The question was very accessible and led to very few misunderstandings. In some cases, students interpreted the parenthetical explanation of the term SUV in the essay topic as an invitation to compare SUVs and off-road vehicles or mistranslated the term "*Geländewagen*" to mean "standard-sized vehicle." However, most students were familiar with the topic and were readily able to relate their own personal experiences and opinions of SUV usage. The three sources offered more arguments against SUV usage, but there was an array of perspectives and information, and in the strongest essays, students were able to compare and contrast information from the sources and use it to support their own viewpoints. Strong essays were further marked by a clear organization that was facilitated by effective use of transitional words and cohesive devices, as well as varied and appropriate vocabulary, and a variety of simple, compound, and complex sentences.

**What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?**

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students misunderstood the parenthetical explanation of the term SUV as an invitation to compare SUVs with off-road vehicles or misinterpreted the term <i>Geländewagen</i> to mean “standard-sized vehicle,” hampering their chances for an adequate essay.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students showed a clear understanding of the terms SUV, Sport Utility Vehicle, and <i>Geländewagen</i> as interchangeable.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students neglected to state their own viewpoint on the question (of whether one should drive SUVs) clearly from the outset of the essay, thus hampering their ability to build an effective argument.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong essays opened with a clear statement on the question of whether one should drive SUVs less. Some students were even able to construct more complicated (Yes, but...) arguments successfully.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students summarized source material instead of integrating it into their own arguments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong essays were characterized by an integration of source material into the student’s argument; in doing so, students tend to draw on information from the sources that is most relevant to their own point of view. In some strong essays, students were frequently able to refute information from the sources by presenting a counter-argument, drawn either from their own experiences or from the source material.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students misunderstood the source material, as shown by inaccurate paraphrases or by a failure to address one or more of the sources in their essays.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong essays integrated key information and relevant details from the source material, thereby demonstrating a high degree of comprehension of the sources.</li> </ul>

**Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?**

- Teachers should continue to encourage students to read the overview to each of the three sources (*Übersicht*) carefully before diving into the source itself, because the overview will often preview key terms and points of view found in the source. Many students used this strategy successfully.
- Teachers should explain to their students that parenthetical information provided in the essay topic is meant to provide examples or clarification of terms used. It is not meant to compare or contrast the items listed in parentheses.
- Students should learn to develop a clear outline for their essays before they begin writing. Although working on an outline during the exam may take time away from writing, a relatively short essay that is well organized and concisely argued will receive a higher score than a longer essay that is repetitive or rambling.
- Students should be encouraged to state their thesis (i.e., their answer to the question) early and draw on the source material to support that thesis rather than begin with a summary of the sources.
- Students can and should take advantage of words and phrases from the source material in building their arguments, but they should be reminded to use quotation marks if they are citing the sources verbatim. In general, students should use direct quotes sparingly, since paraphrasing source material is a better way to demonstrate their comprehension of the material than direct citations. It is critical that students cite the sources as they draw on

them, and students should feel free to use a short parenthetical citation form (e.g., Q1 for *Quellenmaterial 1*) to save time.

- If students do not know the German translation for a particular English word, they should do their best to circumvent it rather than simply insert an English word. While it is helpful for students to learn phrases typically found in academic essays (such as *laut des Textes* or *meiner Meinung nach*), they can detract from the persuasiveness of the student's argument when used too frequently or inappropriately.
- Teachers should remind students that legible handwriting and correct punctuation, especially commas, contribute enormously to the readability of their essays. Students should practice producing legible handwritten essays in pen and under a time limit.

**What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?**

- The AP German Course and Exam Description (CED) contains suggestions in the Unit Guides for building students' skills in writing successful argumentative essays. The argumentative essay task model is presented and practiced in Units 2, 4, and 6. This task is scaffolded to build students' skills and confidence. The first time it appears in Unit 2, students write an argumentative essay responding to a prompt using only two sources, and subsequently, in Units 4 and 6, they write essays using three sources. The CED can be accessed here: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/pdf/ap-german-language-and-culture-course-and-exam-description.pdf?course=ap-german-language-and-culture>
- Teachers should become familiar with all the online resources available to support instruction and assessment for AP German Language and Culture within AP Classroom: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/instructional-resources/ap-classroom>
- Teachers can access the AP Question Bank through AP Classroom. This is a searchable collection of past AP Exam questions where teachers can access argumentative essay tasks from previous exams.
- Teachers can access three Practice Exams in the AP Question Bank, which provide practice with the essay task and can be scored using the scoring guidelines provided.
- Teachers should view the two AP World Language and Culture Online Module on Presentational Writing; the first: *Presentational Communication, A Focus on Writing*, by Federica Santini, and the second: *Building Students' Skills in Developing Effective Arguments*, by Ann Mar, to learn some strategies that focus on developing students' presentational writing skills. Teachers can access these two online modules here: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/resources/ap-world-language-culture-interactive-online-modules>
- Teachers should meet with colleagues who teach AP French, Italian, and Spanish Language and Culture to determine what common shared issues there are across languages for this task and to share strategies that will improve student performance.
- Teachers should download the scoring guidelines for this task available on the AP German Language and Culture Exam page and use them to review expectations for student performance as well as the evaluative criteria for each score point: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-german-language-and-culture/exam>
- Teachers should choose a sample essay prompt and its sources from the posted free-response questions from 2012-2021 from AP Central: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-german-language-and-culture/exam> and access the corresponding student sample responses of high, mid, and low performances to share with students, so that they can examine student work vis-à-vis the scoring guidelines. This will further inform them of expectations for performance on this task.
- Teachers should assign other argumentative essay prompts for students to complete under the same conditions and time constraints as on the exam and then score them using the scoring guidelines. Feedback to students should focus on what students should do to move their performance to the next higher level.

**Question #3****Task:** Conversation**Topic:** Problems with Smartphones and School Rules**Max. Points:** 5**Total Group Mean Score:** 3.64**Standard Group Mean Score:** 3.42***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

This task assessed speaking in the interpersonal communicative mode by having the student respond as part of a simulated oral conversation. Students were first allotted 1 minute to read a preview of the conversation, including an outline of each turn in the conversation. Then the conversation proceeded, including 20 seconds for students to speak at each of 5 turns in the conversation. The series of 5 responses received a single holistic score based on how well it accomplished the assigned task. The responses had to appropriately address each turn in the conversation according to the outline as well as the simulated interlocutor's utterance.

The course theme for the conversation task was Contemporary Life. In the task, the student had a simulated conversation with Paula, another student.

The student needed to respond to the following five audio prompts:

1. Paula asks how the student is doing and inquires about any news in the student's life.
2. Paula says her smartphone is broken and she needs it urgently. She asks what she should do.
3. Paula appreciates the advice but continues to complain how her broken phone will complicate her life. Then she mentions the school rules about smartphone use and asks the student's opinion about an upcoming ban on smartphones in school.
4. Paula complains about other school rules, particularly no eating in class. She asks the student's thoughts on that rule.
5. Paula states she is hungry now and suggests going to a restaurant, unless the student has other plans.

***How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?***

In general, responses to the task showed that students understood the situation and related to the topic of smartphone usage and school rules. In some cases, the switch from the discussion of the broken smartphone to school rules caught students by surprise. In strong and good responses, students were able to maintain the conversation despite the switch in topic across all five turns in a clearly appropriate and fully comprehensible manner, drawing on varied vocabulary and demonstrating accuracy in grammar, syntax, and usage.

***What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?***

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students did not adhere to the conversation overview and responded inappropriately or only partially to the interlocutor's statements and questions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong responses followed the conversation overview and demonstrated knowledge of idiomatic language for various kinds of speech acts (stating opinions and reasons, giving advice, etc.)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students did not respond idiomatically or fully to opening questions in turn 1 (<i>Wie geht's?</i> <i>Was gibt's Neues?</i>) thus missing a chance for elaboration and leading to some awkward opening responses or prolonged silences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong responses were characterized by clearly appropriate, idiomatically correct responses in the first turn of the conversation and featured frequent elaboration.</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students mistook the imagined in-person conversation with a phone conversation, leading to awkward openings and closings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong responses clearly “bought into” the situation and played along with the flow of the conversation, creating natural responses appropriate for the context of the conversation.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students were confused by the mention of different aspects of smartphones in turns two and three, leading to some halting or repetitive responses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong responses clearly differentiated between each of the prompts and addressed the issues addressed in each of the turns.</li> </ul>

**Based on your experience at the AP<sup>®</sup> Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?**

- Students should be reminded to read the task overview, since it may contain words and phrases that are relevant to the task itself. They should listen carefully and follow the lead of the interlocutor. “Playing along” with a conversation, even if it may not always seem completely logical, is a better strategy than refuting the interlocutor’s reasoning.
- Students should practice responding correctly and idiomatically to common conversation openers such as *Wie geht’s?* or *Was gibt’s Neues?* and to use turn 1 as an opportunity for some simple elaboration.
- Students should actively learn the vocabulary items typically used in the conversation overview—both the meanings of the words (such as *begründen* or *Meinung geben*) and the phrases that one would use to support an opinion, offer advice, and so on.
- In practicing the conversation, teachers should remind students to adhere to the overview and to avoid taking the conversation in a different direction, because that would undercut their ability to maintain the exchange with appropriate responses.
- Although students are not required to fill the 20 seconds in which they respond to each turn, they should be encouraged to elaborate within their responses and say as much as they can (while still maintaining the appropriateness of their responses). Unelaborated responses offer only limited information about students’ vocabulary usage, grammatical accuracy, and ease and clarity of expression.
- The improvisational nature of the conversation lends itself to all kinds of role-playing in the classroom. From the earliest stages of the curriculum, teachers should provide students with opportunities to take on a role and practice responding appropriately in an unfamiliar situation. Within this context, students should learn words and phrases for opening and closing conversations, responding to questions, giving opinions, and dealing with complications.
- While cultural accuracy is not part of the scoring guidelines for this task, responding appropriately to the context in which the conversation takes place adds to the positive feel of a strong, fully appropriate response.

**What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?**

- The AP German Language and Culture Course and Exam Description (CED) contains suggestions in the Unit Guides for building students’ skills for engaging in the conversation task model. This task model is specifically presented and practiced in Units 1, 3, and 5. The CED can be accessed here: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/pdf/ap-german-language-and-culture-course-and-exam-description.pdf?course=ap-german-language-and-culture>
- Teachers should become familiar with all the online resources available to support instruction and assessment for AP German Language and Culture within AP Classroom: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/instructional-resources/ap-classroom>
- Teachers can access the AP Question Bank through AP Classroom. This is a searchable collection of past AP Exam questions where teachers can find and access conversation tasks from previous exams.
- Teachers can also access three Practice Exams in the AP Question Bank which provide practice with the conversation task and can be scored using the scoring guidelines provided.
- Teachers should go to AP Central and view the AP World Language and Culture Online Module by Clarissa Adams-Fletcher in order to learn about strategies, resources and activities that focus on developing interpersonal speaking

skills. Teachers can access this online module here: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/resources/ap-world-language-culture-interactive-online-modules>

- Teachers should meet with colleagues who teach AP French, Italian, and Spanish Language and Culture to determine what common shared issues there are across languages for this task and to share strategies that will improve student performance.
- Work with students so they can learn to respond with elaboration and detail in the 20 seconds they have for each of their five responses in this task.
- Teach students how to use the conversation outline to their advantage. Look at commonalities from year to year so students can anticipate possible types of responses.
- Teachers should download a copy of the scoring guidelines for the conversation task available on the AP German Language and Culture Exam page and use them to review expectations for student performance. They should have students listen to the sample student responses and use the scoring guidelines to understand how performance is assessed on the exam: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-german-language-and-culture/exam>

**Question #4****Task:** Cultural Comparison**Max. Points:** 5**Topic:** The Role of Cultural Institutions**Total Group Mean Score:** 3.30**Standard Group Mean Score:** 3.20***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

This task assessed speaking in the presentational communicative mode by having the student make a comparative oral presentation on a cultural topic. Students were allotted 4 minutes to read the topic and prepare the presentation and then 2 minutes to deliver the presentation. The response received a single holistic score based on how well it accomplished the assigned task. The presentation had to compare an area of the German-speaking world to the student's own or another community, demonstrating understanding of cultural features of the German-speaking world. Furthermore, the presentation had to be organized clearly.

The course theme for the cultural comparison task was Beauty and Aesthetics. Students were asked about the role cultural institutions (e.g., theaters, museums, radio stations, or orchestras) play in the everyday life of a community. In their oral presentations, students had to compare perspectives on this question in a German-speaking community with those in their home community or another community. Students could reference their own observations, experiences, or what they had learned in school as support for their claims.

***How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?***

In general, students had difficulty with the term cultural institutions (*Kulturinstitutionen*), specifically with the role these institutions play in both their own and the German-speaking communities. Even good answers tended to be fairly general in nature, rarely getting into a detailed comparison of the role cultural institutions play in the two communities. There also seemed to be a disparity in the quality of responses between test takers who identified themselves as being from an urban rather than a rural community, where cultural institutions (like those mentioned parenthetically in the topic) are less widely available. Overall, the topic seemed to be less accessible to students, leading some to delve into general comparisons of cultures rather than focusing on the topic at hand.

***What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?***

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students neglected to address the <i>role</i> of cultural institutions in German-speaking communities and their own community, offering instead only facts about these institutions, often in the form of lists, or point-by-point comparisons, and divorced of context.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong responses provided not only information about cultural institutions but also explained the <i>role</i> these institutions play in their home communities and in German-speaking cultures.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students offered a list of similarities and differences related to cultural institutions but did not offer further explanation or detail.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong responses frequently focused on a limited number of similarities and differences, which allowed students to develop their examples with depth and detail within the 2-minute time frame.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students ran out of time before they were able to demonstrate an understanding of the target culture.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong responses typically begin with a thesis statement or controlling idea that includes both cultures, and then proceed with a discussion of the target culture but are organized well enough to include a discussion of both cultures.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students lacked an understanding of the role of cultural institutions in either or both communities they attempted to compare.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong responses were able to focus on at least one cultural institution to compare in some depth in both cultures, and showed facility in comparing their roles.</li> </ul>

**Based on your experience at the AP<sup>®</sup> Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?**

- When preparing for the cultural comparison, teachers should remind students that they must both address the topic *and* compare the two cultures. The prompt for the cultural comparison always takes the form of a question, and students must make an effort to answer that question in their presentations. The question may require students to address the **meaning** of a particular cultural phenomenon, the **role** that it plays in German-speaking and American societies, or its **influence** on those societies. It is therefore important that students not only **describe** cultural phenomena, but also **explain** their importance or impact. Students should be aware of the fact that they may focus on a single cultural phenomenon in their presentations, as long as they address both cultures and answer the question with depth and detail. Teachers should take care to discuss the role, meaning, and influence of cultural phenomena, rather than simply presenting them.
- Students may want to consider beginning their presentations by addressing the German-speaking culture in order to maximize their opportunities to demonstrate knowledge of the target culture. Since they will naturally have more to say about their own communities, discussing their own culture later in the presentation may help them avoid running out of time before they are able to make an effective comparison. Alternatively, students may want to alternate between the two cultures in making points related to the topic of the presentation.
- In their presentations, students should avoid vague generalities by giving concrete examples from a specific region or city in the German-speaking world with which they are familiar. Mentioning the source of their information (a literary text or news article, an exchange student, or their teacher) makes their statements more convincing and adds to the overall effectiveness of the presentation.
- Use of phrases such as “the Germans” or “in Switzerland” can lead to overly broad generalizations, and teachers should encourage students to use qualifiers such as “*some* Germans” or “*many* Germans” instead, or focus on specific regions within the countries they discuss. Practice expressing nuanced cultural differences (*es kommt darauf an, manchmal*, etc.) instead of creating stereotypes (e.g., *Deutsche lieben Natur mehr als Amerikaner*).
- Students can develop strategies for organizing their presentations by learning appropriate phrases for opening and closing the presentation and for transitioning between topics. At the same time, it is important that students keep their organizational statements brief in order to maximize the amount of time they have to communicate information.

**What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?**

- The AP German Language and Culture Course and Exam Description (CED) contains suggestions in the Unit Guides for building students’ skills in the cultural comparison task model. This task model is specifically presented and practiced in all six units and is scaffolded to build students’ skills and confidence over time. For example, in Unit 1, students give a 1-minute cultural presentation about an aspect of culture learned in that unit; in Unit 2, they do a 1-minute cultural comparison; in Unit 3, a full 2-minute cultural comparison, and subsequent full comparisons on topics of increasing difficulty in Units 4, 5, and 6. The CED can be accessed here: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/pdf/ap-german-language-and-culture-course-and-exam-description.pdf?course=ap-german-language-and-culture>

- Teachers should become familiar with all the online resources available to support instruction and assessment for AP German Language and Culture within AP Classroom: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/instructional-resources/ap-classroom>
- Teachers can access the AP Question Bank through AP Classroom. This is a searchable collection of past AP Exam questions where teachers can find and access cultural comparison tasks from previous exams.
- Teachers can access three Practice Exams in the AP Question Bank, which provide practice with the cultural comparison task and can be scored using the scoring guidelines provided.
- Teachers should go to AP Central and view the AP World Language and Culture Online Module on presentational speaking by Angelika Becker to learn about strategies, resources, and activities that focus on developing presentational speaking skills. Teachers can access this online module here: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/resources/ap-world-language-culture-interactive-online-modules>
- Teachers should meet with colleagues who teach AP French, Italian, and Spanish Language and Culture to determine what common shared issues there are across languages for this task and to share strategies that will improve student performance.
- Teachers should download a copy of the scoring guidelines for this task available on the AP German Language and Culture Exam page and use them to review expectations for student performance: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-german-language-and-culture/exam>
- Teachers should have students apply the scoring guidelines to student samples of cultural comparisons posted on AP Central on the exam page to help them understand how the scoring guidelines are applied to student work.