



Chief Reader Report on Student Responses: 2024 AP[®] German Language and Culture Free-Response Questions

• Number of Readers	36			
Total Group				
• Number of Students Scored	4,185			
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At	
	5	1,091	26.1	
	4	851	20.3	
	3	981	23.4	
	2	840	20.1	
	1	422	10.1	
• Global Mean	3.32			
Standard Group*				
• Number of Students Scored	2,761			
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At	
	5	334	12.1	
	4	549	19.9	
	3	808	29.3	
	2	721	26.1	
	1	349	12.6	
• Global Mean	2.93			

The following comments on the 2024 free-response questions for AP[®] German Language and Culture were written by the Chief Reader, Burkhard Henke, Professor of German, Davidson College. 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: Participating in a panel discussion on social media

Max Score: 5

Total Group Mean Score: 3.55

Standard Group Mean Score: 3.42

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 had to 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 Science and Technology (*Naturwissenschaft und Technologie*). The task asked the student to reply to an email message from Birgitt Baum, the head of Jugend-Netzwerk, or “Youth Network.” The student received the message because they had previously expressed interest in a panel discussion sponsored by Frau Baum’s organization, entitled “Social media and its influence on young people.” In her email she explains that her group is looking for young people who can talk about their experiences, positive or negative, with social media. In preparation for the panel discussion, she asks two questions. First, what discussion topics might the student suggest and why? Secondly, how could the panel discussion be best promoted to encourage young people to attend? In closing, Frau Baum offers to answer any questions the student might have and states that she looks forward to hearing back from the candidate.

As is the case with all email tasks, students were expected to demonstrate comprehension of the email, make cultural connections as well as connections in and across disciplines, and make meanings from words and expressions. Responses were also assessed on the strength of the student’s interpersonal writing skills, specifically their ability to use appropriate communication strategies and varied syntactical structures.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

Most students found the email topic of social media within the Science and Technology theme accessible, although some struggled to grasp the concept of a panel discussion. The email task inherently involves reading comprehension, of course, and one of the tested skills is that of determining the meaning of familiar and unfamiliar words in context. The most common challenge of this type was decoding the meaning of the word “*Werbung*” (advertisement), despite the contextual clue contained in the subordinate clause that follows the word. Understanding and applying appropriate communication strategies in interpersonal writing is another skill required in successful responses. Less successful responses relied heavily on memorized phrases. Strong responses provided enough elaboration to demonstrate a variety of simple and compound sentences and some 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>
<p>Just as in previous years, some students completed all task requirements by providing answers to the questions and posing an additional question, but only in a minimal, unelaborated manner.</p>	<p>Strong responses engaged with the two questions posed by Frau Baum in clearly appropriate ways and fleshed out their answers with explanations or other kinds of elaboration, thereby demonstrating ease and clarity of expression in the student’s use of German.</p>
<p>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 writer Frau Baum by her first name or shifting to informal pronouns in the body of the email.</p>	<p>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 vs. du/dein/dir</i>) and word choice appropriate to the genre and the situation.</p>
<p>Some students struggled with the term “<i>Werbung</i>” (advertisement) in the second bulleted question despite the fact that its purpose is described in the next clause: “<i>damit viele junge Menschen kommen</i>” (so that many young people come [to the panel discussion].)</p>	<p>In strong responses, students answered the second bulleted question by not only naming a possible advertising strategy, but also by elaborating on that strategy and explaining, for example, why it would be particularly effective.</p>
<p>Frequently, we saw students respond to the question of “<i>Welche Diskussionsthemen ...</i>” only with the provided example “<i>Online-Freundschaften.</i>” Unsuccessful responses responded with a topic that was not clearly connected to the larger discussion of social media, for example “<i>Wir können über Sport diskutieren.</i>”</p>	<p>In good and strong responses, students were able to explain and elaborate on subtopics that are clearly connected to social media.</p>

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

- The interpersonal writing task is accessible for students in lower levels of German instruction and should be practiced there in order to reinforce the basic features of an appropriate email (salutation, answering direct questions, closing formula). In the upper levels, students should be encouraged to elaborate on their responses to the questions within the email. The complexity of sentence structures rather than length is an appropriate goal to set for students.
- Students at all skill levels (including, and perhaps especially, native, heritage, or otherwise advantaged speakers) should familiarize themselves with the task directions and understand the requirements. Failing to ask a question was even more prevalent this year than on previous exams.
- Legible handwriting is a must. Readers cannot score samples that are impossible to read. Students should practice writing their responses by hand in a legible fashion and should receive teacher feedback regarding the legibility of their responses.
- The email reply is always written in the formal register. Most students are able to formulate the greeting and the closing in the formal register, distinguishing between male and female, single or multiple addressees. However, they sometimes struggle to use consistent pronouns and possessive adjectives in the body of the email. Practice with communicative activities will help students utilize the appropriate register while conveying a message.
- Students should practice elaborating on their answers by giving reasons (e.g., proper construction of *weil* and *denn* clauses).
- Students should practice asking additional questions that pertain to the context of the email.
- It is advisable that students practice writing their responses within the given time frame, especially because the AP Classroom version of the email task does not impose a time limit.
- AP Classroom has a library of email prompts available for practice. Free response questions from previous AP German Exams are available on AP Central as well.

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://myap.collegeboard.org/login>. Units 1, 3, and 5 provide teachers and students with a series of videos that explain the task model Email Reply in detail and explain the task requirements thoroughly.
- 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://secure-media.collegeboard.org/ap/modules/world-languages-cultures/developing-interpersonal-writing-abilities/story_html5.html.

- 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/media/pdf/ap24-sg-german-language.pdf>.
- Teachers should choose a sample Email Reply prompt from the posted free-response questions (from 2012–2024) 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-andculture>.
- 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

Topic: Is Work the Most Important Aspect of Life?

Max Score: 5

Total Group Mean Score: 3.51

Standard Group Mean Score: 3.37

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 audio source. Afterward, they had 40 minutes to compose their 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 were also instructed to present their own position and defend it robustly, using information from all three sources to support the essay. As they referred to the sources, students were expected to identify them clearly and appropriately. Furthermore, the essay had to be organized in clearly discernible paragraphs.

The course theme for the argumentative essay task was Personal and Public Identities (*Persönliche und Öffentliche Identität*). Students had to write an essay on the question whether work was the most important part of our lives. As the title of the article, "Why Work Need Not Be Fun," suggests, the expert who is being interviewed is critical of the notion that a job must be exciting and play a central role in one's life. Volker Kitz observes that many young people today view a regular job as not being good enough and blames the media for idealizing the workplace. Society, he concludes, would suffer if many of its less glamorous but nonetheless essential routine activities were no longer being performed. The chart shows the results of a poll among Germans who were asked about the role of work in their lives. While family and partner took top spot with 39%, work was a close second, as 34% of those polled felt that work was most important to them. Of those individuals, work security ranked as the most desirable aspect of an ideal workplace, followed by flexible hours, high income, and other considerations. Finally, the audio source presents work as a positive, fulfilling aspect of our lives. First broadcast in 2021 by Austrian Public Radio (ORF) under the title "Live to work—or work to live?," the audio text poses the fundamental question whether the ideal state of human beings is a kind of land of milk and honey where no one has to work, or, on the contrary, whether our happiness in fact lies in work. While the invited theologian acknowledges that both are always true, she is nevertheless convinced that work can have an impact and can give our lives meaning like no other activity can. We should therefore always endeavor to do things that hold and create meaning, for us and others.

As is the case with all argumentative essay tasks, students were expected to demonstrate comprehension of various text types (written, visual, and audio), make cultural connections as well as connections in and across disciplines, and make meanings from words and expressions. Responses were also assessed on the strength of the student's presentational writing skills, specifically their ability to use appropriate writing strategies and express a perspective with details and examples to substantiate their opinion.

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

Most responses constituted a suitable or effective treatment of the topic. The topic was accessible to students, indicating that the coursework in the AP German classroom prepared them well for this question. Students were, of course, also able to relate to the topic because of their own experience with work, or that of their parents, and were thus attuned to the question of the importance of work in our lives.

Most responses demonstrated at least a moderate degree of comprehension of the sources. It was nice to see that two of the three sources, the graph and the audio text, included information that could be used to support either position—that work is, or is not, the most important part of our lives. Thus, good and strong responses were able to use all three sources in support of their argument without simply discrediting a source’s viewpoint as being “wrong.” Strong integration of source content throughout the essay seemed to be difficult for students. In fact, even strong responses sometimes followed a pattern in which each source was treated in a separate paragraph. A structure that used the respondent’s perspective on the topic as the organizing principle of the essay was helpful in achieving a higher degree of source integration throughout.

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>
Sometimes, weaker responses tended to unsuitably treat the topic as being about the amount of fun one should have in their work or the importance of money in life.	Responses at the medium-high to high range clearly addressed the prompt and expressed a stance on whether work is the most important part of life or not.
There was an occasional misconception of what source 2 (the graph) was showing. A few students misinterpreted the bar graph on the left as showing how the survey respondents divide their time among the different aspects of their lives (e.g., 39% of the time is spent on <i>Familie/Partnerschaft</i> , 34% of time is spent on work, etc.).	Most responses were not hobbled by this misunderstanding. Only a few responses in the medium-high to high range made use of the information in the list on the right side of the graph.
Students summarized source material instead of integrating it into their argument.	Strong essays were characterized by an integration of source material into the students’ arguments. In doing so, students tended to draw on information from the sources that was most relevant to their own point of view.
In source 3, some students were misled by the interviewees’ comments on the balance between work, home life, and putting children to bed. They incorrectly interpreted the interviewee as arguing that work is not important, whereas home life (including putting one’s children to bed) is.	Students whose responses fell in the medium-high to high range correctly understood the arguments of the theologian, who spoke about the fulfillment that work can bring and the balance between rewarding and onerous aspects of both life and work.

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

- Instruct students to include a clear thesis statement in the first paragraph that directly answers the prompt. Ideally, that statement should be revisited in the conclusion of the essay.
- Students at all skill levels (including, and perhaps especially, native, heritage, or otherwise advantaged speakers) should familiarize themselves with the task directions and understand the requirements. Teach students to read the summary (*Übersicht*) for each source. It often includes useful information and explanations of terminology.
- Practice reading and listening to authentic sources and interpreting data/graphs.
- Teach students how to organize essays (using paragraphs), and to make clear references to source materials (Q1, Q2, Q3, or equivalents).
- Explain the integration of sources vs. summary and teach paraphrasing vs. direct quoting; paraphrasing helps integration.
- Legible handwriting is a must. Readers cannot score samples which are impossible to read. Students should practice handwriting their responses in a legible fashion and should receive teacher feedback regarding the legibility of their responses.
- Teach vocabulary that is used frequently, but often incorrectly. Examples from this specific task included verbs relating to spending time (*Zeit verbringen*) and finding something important (*etwas wichtig finden, etwas priorisieren*).

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://myap.collegeboard.org/login>. Units 2, 4, and 6 provide teachers and students with a series of videos that explain the task model Argumentative Essay in detail and explain the tasks requirements thoroughly.
- 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. Teachers can access the online module here: https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/ap/modules/world-languages-cultures/presentational-communications-writing/story_html5.html.
- 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/media/pdf/ap24-sg-german-language.pdf>.
- Teachers should choose a sample essay prompt and its sources from the posted free-response questions from 2012–2024 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: Loaning a bicycle to a friend

Max Score: 5

Total Group Mean Score: 3.65

Standard Group Mean Score: 3.35

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 five turns in the conversation. The series of five 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 (*Alltag*). In the task, the student had a simulated conversation with their friend Sofie, who tells the student about the mountain bike she had loaned to a friend.

The student was asked to respond to the following five audio prompts:

1. Hi, I was just looking for you. Do you have a few minutes for me, or are you busy?
2. Mmmm, I see. You know, I have a great new mountain bike. A friend of mine wanted to borrow it for a bike tour. But I was afraid for my beautiful bike. How do you react when someone wants to borrow something from you?
3. You're probably right. So: it goes on. I loaned my bike to a friend, but she brought it back broken. The repair will be very expensive, and I'm supposed to pay for it!? What should I do?
4. Yes, that's true. It's all really complicated. I don't want to argue with my friend, but sometimes you really have to say something, don't you? What do you do when you have problems with your friends?
5. Well, that's life. Hopefully things will get back on track! By the way, we should go biking together sometime. You like cycling, don't you?

As is the case with all conversation tasks, students were expected to demonstrate comprehension of the audio text, determine the meaning of familiar and unfamiliar words and expressions, and establish both cultural and interdisciplinary connections. Responses were also assessed on the strength of the student's interpersonal speaking skills, specifically their ability to understand and apply appropriate oral communication strategies and use various syntactic structures.

How well did the responses 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 most students understood the situation and related to the topic of a friend returning something borrowed in a broken state. The second turn of the conversation contained vocabulary that was challenging for some students (*ausleihen/leihen*) along with more accessible vocabulary (*Fahrrad/Angst*); these more familiar words led to misunderstandings and sometimes vague statements about fear in general. Turn three allowed many students to regain footing by presenting a concrete situation in which the friend had returned a mountain bike in broken condition. Strong and good respondents were able to give Sofie solid advice regarding her next steps. Many respondents also replied thoughtfully to the broader question of their own approach to stressful situations with friends. For others, continuing to give Sofie advice on how to handle the stress of the situation with their friend was also a logical and often fruitful avenue to pursue. Overall, the strongest students successfully maintained the conversation 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>
<p>Although Sofie does not ask, “<i>Wie geht’s?</i>”, many students seem to have been trained to expect this question and answered it anyway before continuing to respond to the actual question posed.</p>	<p>Students demonstrated strength by elaborating on what is going on in their life (“<i>...hast du viel zu tun?</i>”): “<i>Ich habe ein paar Minuten für dich, aber bald muss ich arbeiten.</i>” Students also seem to be well trained to expect the interlocutor to present a problem.</p>
<p>Students often misunderstood the question in turn two due to the challenging vocabulary of “<i>ausleihen/leihen.</i>” They latched onto “<i>Fahrrad</i>” or “<i>Angst</i>” in their attempt to answer the question “<i>Wie reagierst du, wenn jemand von dir was leihen will?</i>” Some misunderstood “<i>ausleihen</i>” and seemed to hear “<i>Ausland,</i>” which led to answers that were less successful in maintaining the exchange.</p>	<p>Students demonstrated proficiency by either answering how they would react or by telling Sofie how to react to this specific situation, for example by advising “<i>Du solltest dein neues Fahrrad nicht ausleihen.</i>”</p>
<p>Although the terms “<i>bezahlen</i>” and “<i>Reparatur</i>” were uttered by Sofie, weaker students often resorted to simplistic phrases such as “<i>soll ... gib Geld</i>” when attempting to say what the borrower of the bike should do.</p>	<p>Students demonstrated understanding by providing elaborate answers that frequently expressed sympathy or even outrage at Sofie’s predicament, for example by proclaiming that the friend should step up: “<i>Sie muss die Reparatur bezahlen. Sie hat das Fahrrad kaputt gefahren, nicht du!</i>” Another feature of strong responses was their ability to refer to more abstract categories such as “<i>Schuld.</i>”</p>

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

- Proctoring needs to improve. Students should not be starting and stopping their recordings between turns of the conversation.
- The use of starter phrases (“*Lass mich mal denken ... Das ist eine gute Frage.*”) at the beginning of a turn can be helpful on occasion, but those introductions run the risk of leaving students without sufficient time to respond fully to the question.
- Scoring is holistic. If students miss a turn, they should not attempt to revisit their answer during the next turn, but rather keep going and respond as fully as possible to the interlocutor’s next question.
- Responding in the negative, especially on turn one, impairs the logic of the conversation. In general, students should follow the rule of improvisation: “Yes, and....” If they chose to go negative on the last turn (often a suggestion or invitation), they should elaborate on the rejection.
- Help students understand the correct usage of “*sehr*” vs. “*viel*.” An over-reliance on „*sehr*“ was seen in many responses (*sehr Spaß/sehr Angst/sehr Geld/sehr besser*). Likewise, help students understand the difference between “*sagen*” and “*sprechen*” (*Ich würde es ihnen sprechen*).

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://myap.collegeboard.org/login>. Units 1, 3, and 5 provide teachers and students with a series of videos that explain the task model Conversation in detail and explain the tasks requirements thoroughly.
- 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 to learn about strategies, resources and activities that focus on developing interpersonal speaking skills. Teachers can access this online module here: https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/ap/modules/world-languages-cultures/interpersonal-communications/story_html5.html.
- 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 that 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. <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/ap24-sg-german-language.pdf>.
- Teachers should choose a sample Conversation from the posted free-response questions from 2012–2024 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 and how the performance is assessed on the exam.

Question 4

Task: Cultural Comparison

Topic: The Role of Art

Max Score: 5

Total Group Mean Score: 3.57

Standard Group Mean Score: 3.44

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This task assessed speaking in the presentational communicative mode by having the student give an oral presentation on a comparative cultural topic. Students were given 4 minutes to read the topic and prepare the presentation and then another 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 (*Schönheit und Ästhetik*). Students were asked about the role of the arts (including visual media, film, music, etc.) in a German-speaking community with which they are familiar. In their oral presentations, students had to compare perspectives on this role in a German-speaking community with those in their home community or another community with which they are familiar. To support their argument, students were free to cite their own observations and experiences as evidence as well anything they had learned in the AP classroom and elsewhere.

While their main charge was to make both cultural and interdisciplinary connections, students were, of course, also expected to make meanings by using words and expressions appropriate for the task. In addition, responses were assessed on the strength of the student's presentational speaking skills.

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

Given that students were free to address any art form(s) they wished, it is unsurprising that most found the topic very accessible. Students were often able to compare films they had watched in the AP classroom to American films and connect the historical contexts of the German-speaking films to the American ones. Strong responses clearly indicated how aesthetic considerations were driven by the historical context of the production, the plot, or the director. Weaker responses resorted to listing names of famous artists, typically musicians (Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, Brahms) or painters (Dürer, Klee) of the German-speaking world. Sadly, female artists remained conspicuously absent.

Strong responses were expected to speak directly to the *role* of art. Single words (*wichtig, verbreitet, bekannt, beliebt, populär*) could be considered sufficient for that purpose, but strong responses provided explicit reasons and/or contexts. Weak responses, on the other hand, often failed to refer to the role (*Rolle, Bedeutung*, or a reason introduced in a *weil* clause) or make comparisons between their own community and a German-speaking one.

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>
Students neglected to address the role of art in German-speaking communities and their own community. Instead, they listed individual artists or films without delving into their particular significance.	Strong responses tended to focus on German-speaking communities. They addressed and contextualized the role that various art forms play in Germany and other, often regional, German-speaking communities while still maintaining a clear comparison to the student's home community.
Students offered a list of artists or art forms in a German-speaking community but failed to provide elaboration or context.	Strong responses frequently integrated specific historical contexts when explaining the role of art in a German-speaking community.
Students began the presentation with references to their own culture but ran out of time before they were able to demonstrate a detailed understanding of the target culture.	Strong responses typically addressed the topic in the first sentence before focusing their presentation on the target culture.
Students made general observations about art forms in both countries but failed to provide any relevant examples.	Strong responses addressed the role and value of art in both cultures and completed the task in a clear and articulate manner.

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer 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. Students are expected 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 significance, impact, or role; a good way to do this is in a short clause beginning with *weil*. It is usually best to think about these reasons or impacts in the context of everyday life. Students should know they may focus on a single cultural phenomenon in their presentations so 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 present them.
- Students may want to consider beginning their presentations by addressing the German-speaking culture to maximize their opportunities to demonstrate knowledge of the target culture. Teachers should ensure that students are making a comparison between two communities and not present only one community. Since students 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. Instead, concrete examples, details, and elaborations pertaining to a specific region or city in the German-speaking world with which students are familiar will strengthen the response. Mentioning the source of their information (a literary text or news article, an exchange student, or their teacher) makes statements more convincing and adds to the overall effectiveness of the presentation.
- Phrases such as “the Germans” or “in Switzerland” invite generalizations. Teachers should encourage students to use qualifiers instead, such as “*some* Germans” or “*many* Germans,” or focus on specific regions within the countries under discussion. Students should be given ample opportunity to practice expressing cultural difference in a nuanced fashion (*es kommt darauf an*, *manchmal*, etc.) instead of falling back on stereotypes (e.g., *Deutsche...*). In any case, students should know how to use demonyms, such as *Deutsche*, *Schweizer*innen*, *US-Amerikaner*innen*, etc.
- Opening statements are welcome and appropriate, but teachers should advise students to keep organizational overviews brief—or, better yet, avoid them completely—so as to maximize the time students have to present information and elaborate on it.

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://myap.collegeboard.org/login>. All Units provide teachers and students with a series of videos that explain the task model Cultural Comparison in detail and explain the tasks requirements thoroughly.
- 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://secure-media.collegeboard.org/ap/modules/world-languages-cultures/presentational-communications-speaking/story_html5.html.
- 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/media/pdf/ap24-sg-german-language.pdf>.
- 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.