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# AP<sup>®</sup> German Language and Culture

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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#### **Task 4—Cultural Comparison**

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### Question 4: Cultural Comparison

5 points

#### General Scoring Note

When applying the scoring guidelines, the response does not need to meet every single criterion in a column. You should award the score according to the preponderance of evidence.

## AP® German Language and Culture 2025 Scoring Guidelines

1 Poor	2 Weak	3 Fair	4 Good	5 Strong
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Almost no treatment of topic within the context of the task</li> <li>Presents information only about the target culture or only about the student's own or another community, and may not include examples</li> <li>Demonstrates minimal understanding of the target culture; generally inaccurate</li> <li>Little or no organization; absence of transitional elements and cohesive devices</li> <li>Barely understandable, with frequent or significant errors that impede comprehensibility</li> <li>Very few vocabulary resources</li> <li>Little or no control of grammar, syntax, and usage</li> <li>Minimal or no attention to register</li> <li>Pronunciation, intonation, and pacing make the response difficult to comprehend; errors impede comprehensibility</li> <li>Clarification or self-correction (if present) does not improve comprehensibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unsuitable treatment of topic within the context of the task</li> <li>Presents information about the target culture and the student's own or another community, but may not compare them; consists mostly of statements with no development</li> <li>Demonstrates a limited understanding of the target culture; may include several inaccuracies</li> <li>Limited organization; ineffective use of transitional elements or cohesive devices</li> <li>Partially understandable, with errors that force interpretation and cause confusion for the listener</li> <li>Limited vocabulary and idiomatic language</li> <li>Limited control of grammar, syntax, and usage</li> <li>Use of register is generally inappropriate for the presentation</li> <li>Pronunciation, intonation, and pacing make the response difficult to comprehend at times; errors impede comprehensibility</li> <li>Clarification or self-correction (if present) usually does not improve comprehensibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suitable treatment of topic within the context of the task</li> <li>Compares the target culture with the student's own or another community, including a few supporting details and examples</li> <li>Demonstrates a basic understanding of the target culture, despite inaccuracies</li> <li>Some organization; limited use of transitional elements or cohesive devices</li> <li>Generally understandable, with errors that may impede comprehensibility</li> <li>Appropriate but basic vocabulary and idiomatic language</li> <li>Some control of grammar, syntax, and usage</li> <li>Use of register may be inappropriate for the presentation with several shifts</li> <li>Pronunciation, intonation, and pacing make the response generally comprehensible; errors occasionally impede comprehensibility</li> <li>Clarification or self-correction (if present) sometimes improves comprehensibility</li> </ul> <p><b>Scoring note:</b> A response that does not explicitly compare may earn a score of 3 if it provides a suitable treatment of the topic, including a basic understanding of the target culture and the student's own or another community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally effective treatment of topic within the context of the task</li> <li>Compares the target culture with the student's own or another community, including some supporting details and mostly relevant examples</li> <li>Demonstrates some understanding of the target culture, despite minor inaccuracies</li> <li>Organized presentation; some effective use of transitional elements or cohesive devices</li> <li>Fully understandable, with some errors that do not impede comprehensibility</li> <li>Varied and generally appropriate vocabulary and idiomatic language</li> <li>General control of grammar, syntax, and usage</li> <li>Generally consistent use of register appropriate for the presentation, except for occasional shifts</li> <li>Pronunciation, intonation, and pacing make the response mostly comprehensible; errors do not impede comprehensibility</li> <li>Clarification or self-correction (if present) usually improves comprehensibility</li> </ul> <p><b>Scoring note:</b> A response that does not explicitly compare may earn a score of 4 if it provides a generally effective treatment of the topic, including some understanding of the target culture and the student's own or another community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective treatment of topic within the context of the task</li> <li>Clearly compares the target culture with the student's own or another community, including supporting details and relevant examples</li> <li>Demonstrates understanding of the target culture, despite a few minor inaccuracies</li> <li>Organized presentation; effective use of transitional elements or cohesive devices</li> <li>Fully understandable, with ease and clarity of expression; occasional errors do not impede comprehensibility</li> <li>Varied and appropriate vocabulary and idiomatic language</li> <li>Accuracy and variety in grammar, syntax, and usage, with few errors</li> <li>Mostly consistent use of register appropriate for the presentation</li> <li>Pronunciation, intonation, and pacing make the response comprehensible; errors do not impede comprehensibility</li> <li>Clarification or self-correction (if present) improves comprehensibility</li> </ul> <p><b>Scoring note:</b> A response that does not explicitly compare cannot earn a score of 5.</p>

**Score of 0: UNACCEPTABLE**

- Mere restatement of language from the prompt
- Clearly does not respond to the prompt; completely irrelevant to the topic
- “*I don’t know*,” “*I don’t understand*,” or equivalent in any language
- Clearly responds to the prompt in English

**NR: no response although recording equipment is functioning**

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**Clarification Notes:**

- The term “community” can refer to something as large as a continent or as small as a family unit.
  - The phrase “target culture” can refer to any community, large or small, associated with the target language.
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## Question 4

**Note:** Students’ responses are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors. In the transcripts of students’ speech quoted in the commentaries, a three-dot ellipsis indicates that the sample has been excerpted. Two dots indicate that the student paused while speaking.

### Overview

The question overviews can be found in the “Chief Reader Report on Student Responses” on [AP Central](#).

### Sample: 4A

**Score: 5**

### Transcript of Student’s Response

*Ja, de, die Rolle, Gesundheit spielt in Deutschland und äh in den USA ist sehr verschieden. Ich komme aus den Süden in USA und gesund, die Gesundheit spielt nicht so, äh, spielt eine kleine Rolle hier, aber in Deutschland, es spielt ein groß, ein wichtiges Rolle, deshalb ist das sehr äh verschieden. Fitness spielt ein wichtiges Rolle in Deutschland. Deutschen lieben Laufen und Swim . . . Schwimmen. Sie sind sehr aktiv und sie machen viel Fitnessaktivität, wie wandern, tanzen, läuf-, lauf-, laufen. Es ist sehr häufig. Aber ähm ich komme aus den Süden USA und Sport spielt eine kleine Rolle in der Täglichkeit hier. Meistens Erwachsene machen nie Sport, aber Teenager und junge Kinder machen, machen Fit-, machen Fitness. Ähm Das ist, das ist weil die, weil, das ist weil die, weil Wissenschaft ist sehr wenig hier. In den Süden USA auch wenige Leute wissen über gesunde Essen. Junk-Essen wie Burger und Cola sind sehr billig, aber Gemüse und Obst sind sehr teuer. Wenige Leute in Süd essen gesünder als in Norden Amerika, weil Wissenschaft über Gesundheit sehr selten ist. Aber in Deutschland, uh, gesunde Essen ist billig und sie wissen, wie ihre Ernährung zu schützen. Ähm. Die, äh, gesunde, äh, gesunde Essen wie Obst und Gemüse ist sch-, äh statt, statt, ähm. Ähm. Es ist, es ist sehr*

### Commentary

This response is a strong performance in Presentational Speaking. It constitutes an effective treatment of the topic within the context of the task because it effectively carries out the assigned comparison (“die Rolle . . . ist sehr verschieden”) with clarity and thoroughness. Health in the southern United States, according to the response, forms a stark contrast to health in Germany (“die Gesundheit spielt . . . eine kleine Rolle hier, aber in Deutschland, es spielt ein . . . wichtiges Rolle”). This thesis is carried through the presentation and supported with details and relevant examples that reveal differences between the two cultures across many categories of fitness and diet (“Schwimmen”, “wandern”, “tanzen”, “laufen”, “Gemüse und Obst”) as well as, interestingly, science. The culture of the southern United States is portrayed as having little knowledge about nutrition and fitness (“Wissenschaft ist sehr wenig hier”), while Germans are implicitly praised for regulations that keep food healthy (“sie wissen, wie ihre Ernährung zu schützen”). Significantly, this response directly addresses the role of health in each culture, explaining why it matters and what its impact is. A concern about or an interest in health drives Germans’ desire to be active, and scientific knowledge about health drives efforts to protect the food supply, while roughly the opposite is asserted about the southern U.S.: a lack of concern about health explains why U.S. adults “never do sports,” and their relative lack of scientific health knowledge likewise explains why they eat nutritionally poor junk food. Despite some overly broad generalizations and a few minor inaccuracies in this depiction (Is scientific knowledge about health in the southern United States “sehr selten”? Is healthy food

### Question 4 (continued)

actually cheap in Germany?), the response can also be said to demonstrate a good understanding of the target culture.

The presentation is organized mainly as a point-by-point comparison between the two regions in which a statement about one region is followed by a contrasting statement about the other, usually prefaced with “*aber*” (“*Deutschen . . . machen viel Fitnessaktivität . . . Aber ähm ich komme aus den Süden USA und Sport spielt eine kleine Rolle in der Täglichkeit hier.*”). The response is fully understandable with ease and clarity of expression. There is varied vocabulary and idiomatic language; notably, the neologism “*Täglichkeit*” is well-constructed and easy to understand in context. Grammar, syntax, and usage have only a few errors (“*sie wissen, wie ihre Ernährung zu schützen*”). The pronunciation, intonation, and pacing make this response comprehensible, and minor errors (“*Wenige Leute in Süd*”) and occasional hesitations do not impede comprehensibility. The response contains some self-correction (“*läuf-, lauf-, laufen*”) that improves comprehensibility. Overall, this is a strong response, and it accordingly received a score of 5.

#### Sample: 4B

Score: 4

#### Transcript of Student’s Response

Hallo, heute spreche ich über die Rolle von Gesundheit in deutsche Städte und in, äh, meine Commu-, meine, äh soziale Umwelt . . . Umfeld, **bleep**-Stadt. Ich denke, dass in deutsche Städten, äh, die Menschen hat bessere Gesundheit als in **bleep**-Stadt. Erstens, in deutschen Stadten, äh, Menschen kann laufen oder äh Fahrraden. Aber in **bleep**-Stadt, es gibt viele Autos und es gibt nicht viele, ähm, Platz, wo man kann laufen oder man kann Fahrraden. Es gibt zu viele Auto, so es ist nicht so gesund. Zweitens, in Deutschland gibt es viele Natur wie Bergen oder Walden, aber in **bleep**-Stadt, es ist nur eine, äh, eine Stadt, und, äh, alle ist, äh, artifiziel, äh, alle ist nicht so gut für die Gesundheit. Äh, z-, drittens in Deutschland man isst mehr Obst und Gemüse und nicht so viele ungesund Essen, aber die typisch Amerikaner esst zu viel und es ist nicht so gesund. Äh, überall ist die Gesundheit in deutsche Stadten wie äh Berlin oder München besser als in **bleep**-Stadt. Danke für deine Zuhören und das ist alle ich habe.

#### Commentary

This response constitutes a good performance in Presentational Speaking, demonstrating a generally effective treatment of the topic within the context of the task. The response fulfills the lion’s share of the task requirements by comparing the target culture in Germany (“*deutsche Städte*”) with the situation in the student’s own city (name suppressed and rendered as “**bleep**-Stadt”). The thesis at the heart of this comparison is that people in German cities are healthier than in the student’s hometown (“*in deutsche Städten, äh, die Menschen hat bessere Gesundheit als in bleep-Stadt*”). The body of the presentation is structured around three main points in support of the thesis, cleanly signposted with numeric transitions (“*Erstens*”; “*Zweitens*”; “*drittens*”). The three points have to do with health-relevant aspects of transportation, nature, and food, respectively. For each category, a statement about German cities is followed by a contrasting “*aber*” and a statement about the student’s own town: In Germany, people walk or ride bikes, while in the student’s area there is no place to do these activities, and there are lots of cars. In Germany there is nature, but in the U.S.

### Question 4 (continued)

city, everything is artificial. In Germany people eat fruit and vegetables, but in the U.S., people typically eat too much and are not healthy. These statements have a number of supporting details (“*in deutschen Stadten, äh, Menschen kann laufen oder äh Fahrraden*”) and accordingly demonstrate an understanding of the target culture, albeit with some fairly sweeping generalizations (“*die typisch Amerikaner esst zu viel und es ist nicht so gesund*”).

One important thing that sets this response apart from one at score point 5 is that this response does not explain the role or show the impact of health as a cultural value. The response presents Germany and the Germans as consistently health-conscious, and contrasts this with a portrayal of Americans who live in “*bleep-Stadt*” as lacking healthy habits, without exploring underlying cultural values. A presentation operating with the same set of facts could easily have been in contention for a score of 5 if it had argued that a respect for or interest in health does things—for instance, if it had argued that German cities have bike lanes because Germans think health is important, or if it had observed that Americans eat too much because they lack an interest in bodily health.

The response is fully understandable, with some errors that do not impede comprehensibility (“*man kann Fahrraden*”; “*in Deutschland gibt es viele Natur*”). The vocabulary in this response is at the level of what is generally appropriate, which allows for some unsuccessful attempts (“*überall*”) and repetitions (“*es gibt*”), and there is a similarly general control of grammar, syntax, and usage, something exemplified in the misuse of “*so*” as a conjunction, in the relatively few subordinating clauses, and in verb errors that include those of word order (“*die Menschen hat*”; “*Platz, wo man kann laufen*”). The pronunciation, intonation, and pacing of this response make it mostly comprehensible. Errors of pronunciation (“*Stadten*”) do not impede comprehensibility. Overall, this response is a good performance, and it accordingly received a score of 4.

#### Sample: 4C

Score: 2

#### Transcript of Student’s Response

Hallo, Klasse, welcome zu meinen Vortrag über Gesundheit in Deutschland und Amerika. Ähm in Deutschland die Erfahr–, Erfahrungen sind frei und sehr hat . . viel ähm . . aber in Amerikan es ist nichts frei. Und die Menschen in Deutschland denken, dass die Gesundheit und Fitness ist . . ist wichtig, denn sie es, en es ist mehr wichtig als Amerikan. Und es ist mehr wichtig und sie haben . . Aber in Amerikan, sie haben ein anderes . . Ähm ähm viel-, denn sie denken, dass sie ist nicht wichtig. Ähm, vielen Dank für Ihren Ausmerkeit.

#### Commentary

This response is a weak performance in Presentational Speaking. It constitutes an unsuitable treatment of the topic within the context of the task because it attempts but does not succeed in making a true comparison between the target culture and the student’s own community. The student appears to argue that health and fitness are more top of mind for Germans (“*die Menschen in Deutschland denken, dass die Gesundheit und Fitness . . . ist mehr wichtig als Amerikan*”; “*in Amerikan, . . . sie denken, dass sie ist nicht wichtig*”). Due to slow pacing and self-corrections, though, this simple thesis statement takes up more than half of the response. There is a brief attempt at a more

**Question 4 (continued)**

specific comparison (“*In Deutschland die Erfahr–, Erfahrungen sind frei und sehr hat . . viel ähm . . aber in Amerikan es ist nichts frei*”), however the language here is only partially understandable, and the point is ultimately unsuccessful. Overall, then, there is very little informational content, and the response is able to demonstrate only a decidedly limited understanding of the target culture.

In terms of linguistic skills, it is indicative that the response consists largely of statements with no development. The halting language, fragmented sentences, mispronunciations, and inconsistent and unclear pronoun use make this response only partially understandable. The unsuitable task completion, limited vocabulary, and limited control of grammar all confirm a weak performance, which accordingly received a score of 2.