



A-level **Polish**

7687/1 Reading and Writing

Report on the Examination

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General Overview

The number of students sitting the exam this year has increased in comparison to the previous examination series. The quality of work produced was on the whole of a good or a very good standard. As in previous years, some questions discriminated very well, including question 3, question 5 and long answers in Section B.

It was clear that many students have used the past papers available during their preparation for this year's exam. The information from the indicative content sections present in previous years was often used as evidence, illustration or basis for evaluation of this year's essay questions. On the whole this was a very positive sign and a valid examination preparation technique, but in some instances the information used was not relevant to the question set, and therefore did not help the student gain more marks. Additionally, in some cases it was clear that the past papers were the only source of information and this was neither helpful, nor is it advisable.

Despite the change in the number of entries and the availability of more past papers, some essays, especially on topics for questions 7 and 8, continued to lack the knowledge and depth required for achieving marks in the higher bands. Comparably to the previous series, students who chose topics for questions 6 or 9 seemed to have been better prepared and as a result were awarded more marks for their answers.

The number of not attempted questions was minimal, which was another positive change.

SECTION A

Question 1

This question was well answered, with the majority of students scoring full marks in 1.1 and particularly 1.3. Question 1.1 has attracted some interesting and curious answers, including *Internet był czasobierny* and *na rynku brakowało sklepów*. The expression *ślimaczyć się* was very often copied, although many students paraphrased it correctly and mentioned the fact that the Internet was slow. The least successful answers were seen in 1.2 where many students failed to explain that one could buy literally anything in Allegro, thus scoring 2 marks out of 3.

Question 2

This year students performed very well in this question, with almost two thirds of all students scoring six marks out of the possible seven available for AO2, and almost 80% of all students scoring four or five marks for AO3. This was a better performance than last year. The short excerpt from Żeromski's novel was well understood and the idea of houses made of glass struck a cord with the current generation. As a result, lifting from the text, which was prevalent in previous years, was rarely seen, students used their paraphrasing skills and scored more marks in both AO2 and AO3. There were some unexpected answers, for example *Polska to kraj, w którym jest dużo ekologicznych domów* or *w Polsce jest dużo domów budowanych z wykorzystaniem zaawansowanej technologii, np. energii słonecznej do ogrzewania*. Others concluded that Cezary's father described a utopian or dream like idea of Poland, with others using a contemporary way of summarising this idea as *glamoryzująca opowieść o Polsce*. Many of these answers, provided that their logical connection to the text was not lost, were accepted and awarded accordingly.

A number of students was unfamiliar with the name Cezary, and as a result would use Cezar in their summaries. On the whole, this did not affect students' ability to score a maximum number of marks available.

Centres should remind students that if an answer contains around 50% of the words required, it is highly likely that the number of marks for AO3 could be affected.

Question 3

This true/false/not in the text task was generally well done and as in question 2, students this year performed better than in previous years. Questions 3.1, 3.3, 3.6 and 3.8 were very straightforward with a vast majority of students answering them correctly. The rest, and specially 3.4 and 3.7, were answered less successfully with the latter proving to be particularly difficult, possibly because of the failure to notice the verb *ma*, which was necessary for drawing the correct conclusion. Question 3 continues to discriminate well between students.

Question 4

There was a wide range of marks scored and the question discriminated well between students. In question 4.1 more than half of all students were awarded 2 or more marks. Those who were not able to score full marks have not managed to find the information in the text that in the Polish education system, both less and more able pupils are equally well looked after. Those who copied the old saying that was present in the text (*Zapamiętać, zdać, zapomnieć.*) were not awarded a mark.

Question 4.2 was quite challenging and just over half of students scored full marks. Some students repeated their answer to question 4.1 thus losing a mark or two. Similarly to question 4.2 many students scored just one mark in Question 4.3. Here again, many students copied the expression *Zapamiętać, zdać, zapomnieć*. This was unfortunate, as the text included a lot of information that could have been mentioned in the answer to that question, eg the same method as in secondary schools, students should not challenge opinions of their university professors, only a few Polish universities feature in the international rankings, therefore the most able students often choose studying abroad.

Question 5

This was the translation task. This was well answered by many students with around 80% scoring at least seven marks out of ten available. The topic was familiar, and this provided students with an opportunity to focus on and show their translation skills. Below are some examples of vocabulary that proved to be more challenging:

- *zaprzeczyć* was sometimes translated as *lie*
- *skojarzenia* was often rendered as *stereotypes*, which was not accurate
- erroneous renditions of *cierpienie* – it was often translated as *pain* (Pol. *ból*)
- *powaga* was often omitted
- *festynowa* was often translated as *festival*, which was not accepted
- *naród* was often (interestingly) rendered as *country*, as opposed to *nation*
- *przede wszystkim* was sometimes translated as *before everything* or *however*.
- finally, and rather surprisingly, the simple phrase *potrzebujemy rozrywki* seemed to be a challenge for some, who translated it as *have to have a hobby* and *playing around*.

It is worth reminding teachers to use as wide (when possible) range of sources and materials to help students build up varied vocabulary, knowledge of idioms, become familiar with different styles and provide opportunities to practise both Polish grammar and spelling.

SECTION B

Students were required to write one essay related to the research topic which would have been chosen at the beginning of the course. They had to use information from the source text provided in the exam paper (AO2) and while linking this information to the knowledge gained during their individual research, write an essay on the question set.

Those students who gained in-depth knowledge and understanding of the research topic, were able to present relevant information supporting their argument and form an appropriate conclusions, thus scored the highest number of marks for AO4.

Similarly to last year, essays on the topics related to communism in Poland (Q6) and the resistance movement (Q9) were of a better quality than essays of students who chose either question 7 (racism) and question 8 (tourism).

Students who used a good or wide range of vocabulary appropriate to the context and the task, showed a good grasp of grammar and were able to manipulate complex language accurately were able to score marks in higher bands in AO3. Around 90% of students scored 6 or more marks in this category.

There was a wide range of marks for AO2. There seemed to be an increasing number of students who used very little of the information from the source text, with some not using it at all. It is difficult to see whether they failed to see the connection between the text and the question set, whether they were so eager to share their knowledge (therefore forgot to use the information from the source) or simply were unaware of the requirement to use it. Those who score highly for AO4, did so as well for AO2. For example, students who were responding to question 9 on average scored 6 or more marks for AO2, while those who wrote about the topic on racism (Q7) averaged less than 5 marks for AO2.

Question 6

This was the second most popular choice. Many students produced essays that were detailed and fully relevant to the question set. They showed an excellent knowledge and understanding of the role the Round Table talks played at the end of communism. The open question in the form of statement and an invitation to agree or disagree seemed to help students to discuss and evaluate which are both necessary skills for higher bands in marking. No matter whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement in the question, many students showed a detailed knowledge about strikes (including places and dates), the role of the Church in opposing the communist ideology, the Solidarity movement and geopolitical situation. All of that was effectively used to illustrate and then form a valid evaluation of the question set and as a result many students who chose that topic performed very well.

Those who scored less marks were not able to provide enough relevant arguments or support them with relevant and appropriate evidence. Some, for example, would express their agreement or disagreement with the statement, while providing very little or none of appropriate evidence. In such cases students were not able to score more than 4 marks for AO4.

Students wrote in a generally good language, showing a good grasp of grammar and a good range of vocabulary relevant to the context and the task. Over 80% of students scored 7 marks or more for the AO3, which was a very pleasing result.

Question 7

This question was chosen by less students than last year. Similarly to question 8, this topic seems to be perceived as relatively easy, but the essays showed once again that not many students were thoroughly prepared for it. Only a small number of essays contained evaluation, evidence and information about particular projects within the education sector, facts about co-educational projects, or relevant stats. All of that should be included and form a support for students's arguments and views. Instead, students were using general knowledge, personal experience (*w mojej szkole nic się nie mówi o rasizmie*) or stereotypical statements similar to *edukacja jest ważna, ale myślę, że tego nikt nie uczy w polskiej szkole i polscy rodzice też nie uczą swoje dzieci, że trzeba być tolerancyjnym.* Some students acknowledged the importance and role of education, used some of the information from the source text (information about the International Day of Fighting Racism was often cited), but failed to add any extra information or evaluation. As a result, many were scoring well for AO3, were less successful in AO2, and failed to obtain more than 4 for the AO4.

However, it is worth noting that some essays contained very thoughtful and mature arguments, including information about interesting collaborations between secondary schools and Polish NGOs promoting tolerance and fighting racism and discrimination within the young generation. Some students argued that a widespread usage of technology can help to promote inclusiveness, and therefore social media have the biggest role to play in educating young people. There were some students who, while agreeing with such thesis, were pointing out that many media platforms are promoting exactly opposite values.

Question 8

This was the most popular choice in this section. Nearly 40% of students chose tourism as their research topic. The topic continues to be considered as relatively easy, mostly because of personal experiences of travel to Poland and a perceived 'excellent' knowledge of the country that is so frequently visited. The results this year again showed that this is not enough in order to write a good quality essay on the topic of tourism.

This year's question centred around the infrastructure and its impact on the environment. The source text contained some information about the Malopolska region and how mass tourism influences its biodiversity and natural features. Students were asked to compare it to one extra, chosen region in Poland. While some students were able to do so (mentioning Biebrzański National Park, Białowiecki National Park, Pomorze, Hel, and Kujawy), most failed, focusing instead on Małopolska which was mentioned in the source text. Some students used information from past papers, for example about Kujawy and Białowiecki National Park. On average students scored 10 marks for AO4.

Those who did not write about the question set, describing for example culinary wonders like oscypek, pierniki or St. Martin's croissant were not able to score many marks. While it is encouraging to see students studying past papers, writing about anything one wishes is not recommended. The relevance to the topic and the question set has to be present in both AO2 and AO4.

It is worth reminding teachers and all involved in making research topic choices by the students that the Tourism in Poland overarching topic includes three different subtopics, and they should all be studied

carefully and in detail. In order to be awarded high number of marks for AO4 essays should include evidence, conclusions and evaluation of the question set.

Question 9

Again this year, the topic related to the resistance movement during the WWII was least popular (chosen by slightly over ten percent of all students this year), but those students who chose it performed better than others. Around 40% of students scored 15 or more marks for AO4.

The question set was open and allowed many students to write with details and conviction. Many essays were well exemplified, contained facts about different military actions, their outcome, dates, impacts on the civilian population. Actions like *Kutcherą, Główni, pod Arsenalem, pod Celestynowem, w Jaśle* were mentioned most often. There were essays where students voiced their strong opinions about the statement from the question set. (*Według mnie, wszystkie akcje zbrojne, nawet jeśli nie skończyły się sukcesem, miały sens. Polacy walczyli przecież z dwoma okupantami i nie mogli zachować się inaczej.*) Their arguments and evaluation was presented in a clear and appropriate style, using various and rich topical vocabulary, hence scoring high marks for both AO3 and AO4.

Nearly 75% of students scored 6 or more marks for AO2 (using the source text), which was the best outcome for all Section B topics.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.