



GCSE

Polish

8688/WH Writing (Higher)

Report on the examination

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General Overview

The number of entries was slightly higher than last year. The difficulty of the paper was comparable to previous years.

The quality of work produced was generally at a good level. As expected, the paper differentiated well, and students were able to score marks over a variety of questions. The quality of work seen in the overlap questions was of a higher standard than at the Foundation tier. The variety of vocabulary, ability to use a range of tenses and more complex language was, as in previous years, at varied levels. Many students were able to convey a lot of information, expressed and justified their opinions with confidence and coherence. At the same time, there were some answers that would benefit from further justification and illustration, especially in question 2. It seemed that, similarly, to last few years, students spent more time on writing detailed and interesting responses to question 1, and as a result were rushing when writing second essay, sometimes not ever reaching the required length.

A number of answers written phonetically, although still present, seemed to decrease further, which was encouraging and pleasing.

Question 1

In this question students could be awarded maximum 10 marks for Content and 6 marks for Quality of Language. They had to choose between 1.1 and 1.2 and were required to write approximately 90 words in total, about four different bullet points. All bullet points must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage of the bullet points. Everything that students write is read and marked, even if it is well over the recommended length.

Both options were popular, with slightly more students choosing Question 1.1 which covered the topic of music. Most of the students were able to respond successfully to all the bullet points. Some, however, did not mention the least favourite type of music, which was required in response to second bullet point. Three quarters of all students (in both 1.1 and 1.2) scored seven or more marks for Content. Students who failed to score high marks, have either omitted or misunderstood one of the bullet points or did not manage to use time frames or tenses required. For example, in response to bullet point one in question 1.1 some students wrote *Słucham muzyki często* or *Słucham muzyki codziennie*. While it is a perfectly correct structure, it does not provide the answer to the bullet point and does not refer to the time frame which is encouraged in this bullet point.

Similarly, just mentioning most and least favourite types of music without adding any further details was not enough to score marks in higher bands for Content. A good example of basic answer containing lifted and repetitive language would be *Mój najbardziej ulubiony rodzaj muzyki to pop, a najmniej ulubiony rodzaj to musi być rap*. Answers to bullet point three were interesting and well developed. It seems that the topic of influence of music on young people is close to many students, and many showed their strong opinions about how powerful that influence is or could be. It is worth mentioning that a fair number of students seemed to confuse a musical event (*wydarzenie muzyczne* as seen in bullet point number four) with playing an instrument. Having said that, most students were able to answer this bullet point successfully and score marks accordingly.

Question 1.2 focused on the My studies topic, more precisely it asked students about their preparation for the language exam, their opinions about learning a foreign language, online homework and skills or subjects they would like to learn at school in the future. Those who included many details, for example *Dużo się uczyłam przed egzaminem, rozmawiałam po polsku ze swoimi koleżankami. Zwykle rozmawiamy po angielsku, ale przez ostatnie tygodnie postanowiłyśmy mówić ze sobą tylko po polsku. Czytałam też trochę wiadomości po polsku i nawet wspólnie z moja mama przeczytałamy całą książkę. Bardzo mi się podobała, a poza tym nauczyłam się dużo nowych słów, więc myślę, że było warto. W szkole uczę się francuskiego, myślę, że akcenty są trudne, ale jak pojedę kiedyś do Francji, to na pewno będzie mi łatwiej się dogadać.* did score in higher bands, both in Content and Quality of Language.

Many answers in this question were detailed and contained original and interesting thoughts on the prescribed topics. Students attempted to use a variety of language, eg different adjectives, particularly around expressing opinions; used variety of structures with references to various time frames and appropriate linking words. On the other hand, the quality of language could be higher as students lost marks for major grammar errors and frequent inaccuracies which caused delays or breaks in communication. It should be reminded that colloquialisms (for example *gadać* instead of *mówić* or *powiedzieć*), or vulgar expressions should not be used in the examination paper. Overall, students who chose option 1.2 performed slightly better in Quality of Language with over 75% scoring seven or more marks.

Question 2

For this question, there are 15 marks for Content, 12 marks for Range of Language and 5 marks for Accuracy. Students have to choose between 2.1 and 2.2 and are required to write approximately 150 words in total about two different bullet points. In order to access highest bands of marks, both bullet points must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage of the bullet points. Generally, students tended to write just about a required 150 words or less, counting words on the margin, which is neither needed nor recommended. It looked like some students were under impression that they should not be writing more than the recommended number of words thus leaving out the last bullet point or stopping in the middle of the sentence. It is worth reiterating once again that the whole answer is read and marked. It is the question 2 that carries most of the marks in the paper, so students should be making sure that there is enough time left to answer this question.

Similarly to last year, the quality of answers this year was mixed. Option 2.1 focused on topic of traditions, whereas option 2.2 provided an opportunity to write about neighbourhood and regions students live in. Once again, option 2.2 was nearly twice more popular than option 2.1. Many students were able to provide detailed responses, convey lots of or some information and include justified opinions. Nearly half of those who chose 2.2 scored 12 or more marks for Content, while for question 2.1 that figure was a bit lower. This shows a slight fall in the average number of marks awarded for Content on last year.

Many students were able to write fluently in response to both bullet points. They wrote with details about celebrations during their last Sylwester, although some mixed it up with Wigilia or Boże Narodzenie. Many recognized the value of carrying on and celebrating traditions, of spending time with families and their importance for their identity and finding place in today's globalized world. The second bullet point question 2.1 was generally answered well, but some students struggled with ideas writing simply that living abroad is a main difficulty. Additionally, there were frequent issues with declension of

the word *młódzież*. It was striking how many students who chose question 2.2 wrote about lack of cleanliness and low safety in the areas they live. Many wrote with details about ways of tackling dirty streets, homelessness, improving air quality or increasing levels of safety, all of which would, in students' opinions, attract more families and young people to their areas. One single and most frequently mentioned improvement was building a facility dedicated entirely to young people and containing a gym, cinema and a club or bar. What was astonishing was a number of students writing about areas in different countries.

As in previous years, some students failed to indicate that they were stating their **own** opinions. Teachers and students should be reminded once again that opinions may be expressed simply, e.g. *Lubię ..., ... podoba mi się*. Any positive or negative adjective is only classed as an opinion or a justification if it is preceded by something like *Myszę, że ..., Uważam, że ..., Wydaje mi się, że ...*. Students who failed to indicate that, scored less marks. Regarding Range of Language and Accuracy, students performed in both questions similarly.

Question 3

The translation was not done as well as in previous years. Around 40% of all students scored five or more marks for Conveying the key messages, but over 60% were awarded four or more marks for the Application of grammatical knowledge. Both figures are lower than last year. If one of the key messages contained a minor error, it was still credited for Application of grammatical knowledge. On the other hand, if a key message was written inaccurately (and accuracy seems to be falling down year on year), but communication maintained, a tick was awarded. However, an accumulation of such errors had an overall effect on the number of marks awarded for the Application of grammatical knowledge. As a result, the mark for application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures was often lower than the mark for conveying key messages.

More details regarding particular key messages are listed below.

Last Sunday morning	This was generally conveyed correctly, but some students did translate it without using a correct grammatical structure, translating it literally as <i>Ostatnia niedziela rano</i> .
I went to church	Apart from some grammar errors (<i>poszedłam</i>) this was done generally well.
and then did homework.	Again, this was done generally well.
I spent the afternoon	Some students rendered <i>afternoon</i> as <i>evening</i> or <i>noon</i> .
with my sister.	This was generally conveyed correctly, <i>z siostrą</i> was accepted as well.
We ate in a small café.	<i>Kafeteria, kafejka</i> were often used and both were accepted. Lifting <i>café</i> from the source was not.
I forgot my mobile,	This was done generally well, although some students used the word <i>mobile</i> or <i>telephone</i> , both were rejected.
so we were a bit bored,	<i>Byliśmy znudzeni, znudzone, nudziliśmy się</i> , were all accepted. <i>Byliśmy nudni</i> was not accepted.

while waiting for the meal.	Meal was often rendered as <i>danie, posiłek, jedzenie, obiad</i> – all were accepted.
Next Thursday	<i>Thursday</i> posed quite a challenge, similarly to <i>Tuesday</i> last year. It would be reasonable to think that days of the week belong to a very basic knowledge in any foreign language, so this difficulty is puzzling. Some students rendered it as <i>wtorek</i> or were not able to write it, ending with something like <i>chvartek</i> . Many students did not use preposition <i>w</i> , writing just <i>następny czwartek</i> .
I will meet a famous designer.	<i>Famous</i> was often omitted. The word designer proved to be quite challenging, with many students lifting the word in English. Other mistranslations included: <i>modny celebryta, modny stylist, krawiec, projektor, faszjonista, ustrajacz, stylizant, stworzyciel</i> .
My dream is to work in fashion	Some students struggled with the word <i>dream</i> and translated it as <i>sen</i> , which was not correct in this context. Other incorrect renditions included <i>śnie, sypiam, śpię</i> . <i>Fashion</i> was another word that many students struggled with, with such erroneous renditions as <i>praca w ćuchach, praca z czuchami</i> .
and buy a country house.	Although a straightforward and relatively easy word, <i>country</i> seemed to pose quite a challenge when next to a <i>house</i> . A very simple <i>dom na wsi</i> or <i>wiejski dom</i> have proved to be quite difficult for this year's cohort and resulted in some creative translations such as <i>dom krajowy, dom na obrzeżach, fajny dom w krainie, dom w górach, dom w opolu, dom na polu, dom na wybrzeżu</i> .

Advice to students

- To prepare for questions 1 and 2, read the bullet points and the scene setting carefully, ensuring you know exactly what they require in terms of response.
- Ensure that your response relates to the bullet points in some way.
- Check each bullet point to make sure you know what time frame they refer to.
- Sometimes, the language used in the bullet point can be manipulated to help you write a successful response. However, try not to lift phrases or whole sentences, as this may affect the number of marks awarded for Quality of Language.
- When including complex language, check that your verbs and spellings are accurate, check singulars and plurals of verbs and adjectives.
- Do not count your words. Remember that all is read and marked.
- For translation, practise high frequency words and phrases, especially time markers, connectives, possessives and prepositions.
- Proofread your work by looking out for verb tenses and formations, genders, spellings, omissions.

Concluding Remarks

The difficulty of the exam was comparable to previous years. The quality of work produced was, on the whole, good. The paper differentiated very well in that students were able to score marks over a variety of questions. The vast majority of students had been entered appropriately for this tier. The quality of work seen in the overlap questions was of a higher standard than at the Foundation tier. The ability to use a range of tenses and more complex language was impressive and students were also able to express and justify opinions well.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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