



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
June 2011**

Polish

PLSH1

(Specification 2685)

Unit 1: Reading and Writing

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

Entries for both AS and A2 Polish have risen. 1092 students took the AS exam last year and 1223 took it this year.

As last year, students performed over a range of different levels. There were a large number of students who wrote Polish to a good standard. They did not, however, prepare properly for the exam. They appeared to believe that their fluent knowledge of Polish would be enough to pass. While this was true, they did not achieve good grades.

The results overall were pleasing with a high number of students achieving good grades. This was particularly true for A2, where more students achieved the 'A' grade than last year. Regrettably, there were many untidy, badly written scripts which made scrutiny difficult.

It is of paramount importance that centres make sure that the students they have entered, read the specification so that they understand what the exam requires them to do. Students should seek some form of tuition if the school cannot offer this, and there are many Polish Saturday Schools throughout the country running classes which prepare students for 'A' level exams. Students are reminded to read the instructions carefully and to study past papers for practice. In this way, they will know what is expected of them and will fully understand the demands of the exam questions.

Section 1: Comprehension

The comprehension questions were well answered overall. Marks were lost because of carelessness and poor exam technique rather than the level of challenge. Generally speaking, the majority of students scored very high marks on the comprehension, typically in the high thirties, if not forties. The number who achieved less than thirty marks was very small.

As in previous years, there were still omissions from answers or insufficient pieces of information given for the full quota of marks per question to be credited. There were also answers based on what was thought to be in the text or on students' personal opinions, rather than on the text itself. The best illustration would be the answers to question 1(a) (xii) *Co było ważne dla Chopina?* which were *"Jego przyszła żona", or "...aby się nie sprzedać w tej branży"*.

Question 1(a) (i)

Dlaczego Chopin był częstym gościem na kulturalnych salonach w 2010?

This question was answered correctly by more than 90% of students. There were, however, some unusual answers such as *"nie gościł bo odszedł w 1849r/ nie gościł bo nie żył"*. Students did not notice that, in the first sentence, it states clearly that *"Często gościł na kulturalnych salonach bo w 2010 roku przypadła 200 rocznica jego urodzi i był to Rok Chopinowski."* The answer was in the text if only students had read attentively.

Question 1(a) (ii)

Question 1(a) (ii) was answered well.

Question 1(a) (iii)

Gdzie Mikołaj poznał przyszłą żonę?

Some students clearly did not read the text properly and their answers were based only on imagination: *“Mikołaj poznał swoją żonę w Paryżu/ w Krakowie w pracy”*.

Question 1(a) (iv)

Most students answered this question correctly.

Question 1(a) (v)

Dlaczego Fryderyk nie skończył liceum?

Some students based the answer on their own speculation rather than on the text: *“...bo zaczął naukę w konserwatorium, bo był słaby, musiał wyjechać.”*

Question 1(a) (vi)

Dlaczego uznano go za cudowne dziecko?

Most answers were correct. Some less able students, however, answered: *“bo był przeciążany pracą, bo nie koncertował publicznie dla pieniędzy, bo różnił się od innych dzieci”* and one gave the more unusual answer: *“sam się nauczył grać na skrzypcach”*.

The sentence in the text *“Chopin nie był jak inne, cudowne dzieci przeciążany pracą”* presented a challenge for some of the less able students. This serves to illustrate that simply finding a key word in the text does not always guarantee success.

Question 1(a) (vii)

Jak wychowywali go rodzice?

Most answers to this question were correct but some students, again, did not read the text carefully and produced answers such as: *“na modnisia, na księcia, na osobę poukładaną”* which were incorrect.

Question 1(a) (viii) and 1(a) (ix)

These questions were generally answered correctly.

Question 1(a) (x)

Ile lat miał Chopin, kiedy skomponował pierwsze utwory i dał pierwszy koncert?

The majority of students read the text carefully and answered this question correctly. There were unexpected answers, however, such as *“Miał 22 lata”, or “12”*.

Question 1(a) (xi)

Co było ważne dla Chopina?

This question illustrated the difficulties which can arise if students do not pay attention to what is in the text. Some gave *“chciał grać i tworzyć”* as their answer, a reasonable supposition since Chopin was a major composer. There were also wrong answers such as: *“tworzyć muzykę z uczuciem, a nie na siłę/aby się nie sprzedać/Jego przyszła żona”*. The question was in fact referring to Chopin's fashion sense, and not his music. Credit should be given here to the majority of students who spotted this. The information given in

the article that Chopin never went out without taking his gloves made a very strong impression, as most included this in their answers.

Question 1(a) (xii)

Dlaczego Chopin opuścił Warszawę?

The answers to this question were very varied but mostly incorrect. *“Ponieważ wyjechał do Paryża/aby napisać operę narodową/ponieważ nie lubił grać z orkiestrą”*. Some students forfeited the mark because they were not specific enough: *“bo nad Warszawą zaczęły gromadzić się chmury/nasilił się bunt przeciw carowi”* were not acceptable as they failed to mention the avoidance of an uprising.

Question 1(a) (xiii)

Dlaczego Chopin był chętnie widziany zarówno na salonach towarzyskich Warszawy jak i Paryża?

There were a wide variety of answers to this question. Among the frequently seen incorrect answers were those such as: *“bo każdego wieczoru chodził do teatru i na koncerty/bo był znany i uwielbiany/Bo opiekowali się nimksiażę Potocki i Czartoryski/bo ludzie wiedzieli, że miał talent/bo ładnie grał”*. Some answers had no logical connection to the question: *“dawał sześć lekcji dziennie/ przez Wiedeń, Berlin dotarł do Paryża/chciano aby napisał operę narodową”*.

Question 1(a) (xiv)

Jaką kobietą była George Sand?

Most answers were correct. There were some unexpected responses, however: *“była kobietą z Baranowa”*. Perhaps the fact that George Sand was a baroness confused the student here. This was another rather unusual response: *“była troszkę jak chłopczara/była bohaterką romansu Chopina”*.

Question 1(a) (xv)

Czego nowego lub ciekawego dowiedziałeś się o Chopinie?

The final comprehension question, which students were expected to respond giving their own opinion and ideas, was not well answered. Although this has also been the case in previous years, answers seemed particularly poor this year, with students giving their responses without considering the text they had just read: *“ze urodził się we Francji/ że potrzebował kobiety, aby się nim zajęła/że komponował piosenki, które uczyły o życiu”*.

This is a good example of what sort of answer was expected: *“Zdałem sobie sprawę, że Chopin był bardzo utalentowany, ale nie wiedziałem, że umiał odtworzyć ze słuchu każdą muzykę kiedy miał tylko sześć lat. Myślę, że ten fakt i drugi, że w tak młodym wieku 7 lat dał pierwszy koncert są fascynujące.”*

With reference to the 10 marks available for Knowledge of Grammar, students are clearly asked to give their answers in full sentences but many failed to do so and gave just one word or two: *“7lat/ skrzypce,flet i książki Woltera”*. Use of capital letters and a lack of punctuation also caused some students to lose marks.

Question 1(b)

Wpisz do kratki P(prawda), F(falsz) lub ? (nie wiadomo)

Some students wrote “N”, “T” or “X”. Students should be reminded to read instructions carefully. Overall, the results were very pleasing with the majority of students scoring full marks.

Section 2 Translation

Students performed better on the translations from Polish to English than in previous years, with fewer students leaving the page blank. There is still room for improvement as many students’ knowledge of grammar and spelling is of a poor standard.

Students from Poland continue to improve their English. They compensate for their lack of knowledge, however, with their vivid imagination and creativity in finding new words, expressions and substitutes for what they hoped was in the original text.

The title of the translation presented the first challenge. The passage referred to a well known short story by Dickens, “Christmas Carol”. Most students were not familiar with the book’s title, but succeeded in rendering it as “Christmas Eve Story”. Some immediately lost marks, however, by writing: “Christmas evening/Supper story/Day before Christmas” and “Easter story”. “Unreal monsters” was an imaginative translation of ‘ghosts’.

The words and expressions which presented challenges were: “*Napisana na zamówienie/z miejsca podbiła serca*”. Unexpectedly, the word “*Brytyjczyków*” was rarely correctly translated. The word “*świecki*” was largely ignored or the word “Swedish” or “ancient” appeared. Only the more able students translated it correctly.

There were some unexpected translations of “*skąpiec*” where the English equivalent was not known. “Selfish gay/cheeky/scrater/hyprcrapt and scabby old man” were some of the attempts at this translation.

It should be stated that the examples mentioned above have been collected from a range of work and most students managed to score between 50% and 60% of the allocated marks.

Section 3: Essay

In the 2011 exam, students were invited to write about the role of music in their own life as well as in the life of others. Each year we are privileged to read some very good essays and this year was no exception.

“Od najmłodszych lat ludzie stykają się z muzyką. Kiedy dzieci są małe i płaczą, matki zaczynają im nucić jakąś melodię, zaczynają śpiewać, aby dziecko się uspokoiło. Muzyka pozwala im wtedy zrozumieć, że melodia i słowa przynoszą ukojenie. Kiedy matka śpiewa, ono zapada w sen, zaznaje spokoju i czuje miłość matki. W późniejszych latach dziecko wie, że to właśnie w muzyce znajduje się spokój i ukojenie.”

Like the student who wrote the above, many equated music to calm, rest and relaxation. Others went further on that theme, citing the therapeutic value of music both in terms of the clinical treatment of depression and other illness and also in their own anger management: *“Gdy włączam muzykę czuję się lepiej, bardziej spokojna i zadowolona. Często śpiewam, żeby wyładować agresję i złość, którą odczuwam.”*

Other students focused more on the social aspect of music and its role in bringing people together. Whether in a film, in a night club or at a wedding or even in school as a tool to help children learn, music is all around us, they pointed out, enhancing and enriching our lives. This dynamic aspect of music and the vitality that it brings was something that the best students wrote about at some length, often with no small measure of hyperbole.

“Kiedy opuszki moich palców sięgają po przycisk” play” czuję wtedy niesamowity przyływ energii jakbym zobaczyła lwa, który zamierza mnie zjeść, czuję adrenalinę w żyłach. Ten oto przycisk jest jak cudowny wehikuł czasu, który może sprawić, że znajduję się w innym, lepszym świecie.”

A very wide variety of points was made in these essays, perhaps more than is usually the case, with many students scoring very high if not full marks for Response to Written Language. Not everyone, however, performed so well. There were digressions away from the role of music towards the role of technology in contemporary music, or lengthy discourses on the pitiful state of the music industry.

“W tym momencie 90% piosenek to kicz, głupota, po prostu debilizm, w przyszłości mam nadzieję, że to się zmieni, bo na razie cięcie metalu daje lepszy efekt i dźwięk, niż to co leci w radiu.”

Although students were passionate in their views and articulated them well in their essays, students are reminded that the key to success in the essay is to focus as much as possible on the question.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the **Results statistics** page of the AQA Website.

Convert raw or scaled marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion.