



General Certificate of Education

Polish 2685 *Specification*

PLSH2 Reading and Writing

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - June series

Further copies of this Report are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

Copyright © 2010 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334). Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX

General Comments

This was the first year of the new Specification for Unit 2. The change was mainly in the mark allocation and in the introduction of true/false/not in text questions. 20 marks are allocated for the comprehension, 20 for the translation and the remaining 60 for the two essays, each carrying a maximum of 30 marks.

The change makes the PLSH2 paper more accessible for candidates with a fluent command of Polish. It is very regrettable, therefore, that these candidates did not succeed in passing the exam with flying colours only because they had not prepared themselves with the correct study.

Section 1

Comprehension

As in Unit 1, candidates found the comprehension the most accessible part of the paper. Marks were lost because of carelessness and poor exam technique rather than because of the level of challenge.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1(a)(i)

This question was worth 3 marks and there were four possible answers to choose from. Most candidates gave all four. However, some just mentioned a rise in living standards and the improving political situation, while others just wrote about advertising and marketing. Both of these answers resulted in a forfeit of one mark.

Question 1(a)(ii)

As with question 1(a), some candidates did not provide all the information necessary. Three pieces of information were required for all three marks.

Question 1(a)(iii)

Co oprócz produktów oferują sławne firmy? The key word was 'sławne'. Four famous companies are named in the text: Nike, Coca-Cola, Nokia and Heineken. To gain the three marks it was sufficient to identify the marketing strategies of three of these global giants. Most candidates were able to do so but some failed again to provide a full answer.

Question 1(a)(iv)

W zależności od czego marketing dzieli ludzi na grupy? This was the easiest question and most, if not all candidates, answered correctly.

Question 1(a)(v)

Co myślisz o tym artykule i opiniach w nim zawartych? This question was met with a good response. Candidates were generally quick to point out that advertisements are not real life, even if they do have their place in the world in which we live. Some, however, failed to give enough pieces of information to gain full marks. That was especially true of those who wrote just one or two short sentences.

Question 1 (b)

True / false / not in text

It did not necessarily follow that those who scored full marks in the first part of the comprehension did well in the second part, which suggests that different cognitive skills are required to succeed in both; attention to detail, on the one hand, and reasoning, on the other.

It appears that some candidates missed out on a perfect score because there was no false assertion among the five statements included in this year's paper. I think that more candidates would have scored the extra mark had they based their answers on the text and disregarded their inclination to believe that true/false/not in text questions always contain at least one of each.

Section 2

Translation

The translation into Polish was done well by the majority of candidates. There were, however mistakes, which I did not expect from candidates who were born in Poland and who had already attended English schools for some time, usually for four or five years at least. Again a lack of common sense and resourcefulness was evident in some work.

The text contained words that often form part of the GCSE exam: 'March, spring, and windy' yet many candidates had problems with all these rendering them as: *jesiemy, zimowy, letni, wiatrowy*. Here are some examples to illustrate the difficulty candidates had with very simple sentences.

The sentence: 'my brother Sam rang me to say that our mother was going to die, perhaps that night.' was rendered: *mój brat zaskoczył mnie mówiąc, że mama jest w drodze do śmierci/ że nasza mama prawie umarła tej nocy/ że nasza matka umierała prawdopodobnie tej nocy Pierwszy dzień mój brat Sam podbiegł do mnie i powiedział że jego mama poszła umrzeć, robi to wieczorem.*

'Flew to Paris': *pofrunąłem do paryża.*

There were some unexpected translations of 'At Orly airport I bought a Cartier watch for myself'. Here, the noun 'watch' was understood in some cases to be a verb thus resulting in unusual sentences such as: *Na lotnisku Orly kupiłem Cartiera, żeby mnie pilnował/zapłaciłem kurierowi, aby popilnował mnie/ kupiłem Cartiera aby popilnował za mnie/ wykupiłem portiere, któru uważał na mnie.*

'Cartier watch' had appeared later in the text as *zegarek łańcuchowy/kieszonkowy/przenośny/zegarek/kreskówki.*

The word 'numbness' is not part of our everyday lexicon, but within the context it was used it did not cause difficulty for the candidates who understood the text and conveyed the meaning, even if it they did not provide the perfect translation. Some guessed incorrectly at the meaning.

Here are some examples: *Poszczególne głupoty przewijają nad tobą kiedy słyszysz o złych wiadomościach/pewne oszołomienie cię prześciga jak się dowiadujesz o złych wiadomościach/ pewne rzeczy biorą górę/ pewni idioci cię wyprzedzają/ pewne słabości pokonują ciebie/ nerwy biorą górę/ umysł mnie wyprzedza/ zanurzam się w myślaniach.*

There were many correct fully acceptable renderings, such as: such as: *niemoc/ Cię ogarnia/ odrętwienie*. Some more examples of different variations on the last two sentences; 'Across the Channel, England was green below and grey above. This was one of the reasons why I had left

the land of my birth and bought the cottage in France': *To jedny z wytłumaczeń dlaczego zostawiłem moją urodzielską działkę I kupiłem sobie budkę we Francji/że odeszłem z ziemi moich narodzin kupiłem wioskę/, budynek/, farmę/,statek, ser! We Francji/ Przepływając przez kant Anglia była szara w niebie i zielona pod spodem/Anglia była zielona na zewnątrz i szara w środku,szara w niebie/ i siwa na górze!*

The 'badly' in 'I badly wanted these things' was misunderstood by some to be a negation of the verb and was consequently translated as *wcale nie chciałem tych rzeczy*, when only the precise opposite made any kind of sense in the context of the sentence as a whole.

There follows one further example of an unusual translation: *Pragnęłam, tak samo jak wtedy kiedy byłem ubrany w szkocki srtój w kiosku w londyńskim hotelu.*

Section 3

Literary and non-literary topics

It was clear from the scripts received this year that once again some candidates sitting the PLSH2 exam were unprepared for the demands of the examination. One of them wrote: *przepraszam,ale parę dni temu dowiedziałem się że robię test i nie zdążyłem przeczytać książek powtórzę za rok.* There were other candidates who abandoned this section altogether.

It was usual, in the past, for poorly prepared candidates to have been saved by geography questions. However, that option was not available this year and so many found or tried to find their refuge in the history question instead.

There were many beautifully written essays which were well sourced and which contained good analysis, evaluation and personal opinion. There were also many candidates, however, whose performance was very disappointing. They produced essays with no references to the text, and it was evident that the candidate had not read the text. Their essays were just descriptive, relating the plot without any evaluation or personal opinion. Some essays presented interpretations not based on a thorough study of the topics, and this was not acceptable for an A level exam. The mark scheme published in the specification allows only for very low marks for this kind of essay.

Literary essays

Topic 2, 'Moral and social issues as presented in Polish drama' was the favourite choice with most candidates. Question (a) was probably slightly more popular than question (b).

Topic 1

The fight for independence as a theme in Polish literature.

The obvious text of choice for answers 3(a) and 3(b) was *Kamienie na szaniec*. Candidates often also wrote good essays on *Wierna rzeka* and *Rozdziobią nas kruki, wrony*. The essays on *Wierna rzeka* were of not such a good standard this year.

Kamiński's book is such a natural choice for this topic. From the students' point of view, this is a very accessible book requiring some knowledge of history, but otherwise very little further tuition. The production of an essay about *Kamienie na szaniec* should present little difficulty. This year's questions on the fight for independence, however, were tackled with varying degrees of success. There were often too few references to the text. The essays were full of narrative praising many anonymous heroes.

Sometimes there was clear evidence of gaps in knowledge, suggesting a lack of preparation for the exam. *W utworze Żeromskiego Kamienie na szaniec/Walka o niepodległość opowiadana była jako wiersz Renuta Orienta.*

Topic 2

Moral and social issues as presented in Polish drama

Topic 2 was the favourite choice of most candidates. Question (a) was probably slightly more popular than question (b) and *Moralność Pani Dulskiej* remained the least, which was the most often discussed.

Essays on *Zemsta*, *Emigranci* and *Tango* or *Niemcy* were fewer in number but *Niemcy* does seem to be becoming a more popular choice among teachers.

Essays on *Niemcy* were of rather good quality which again suggested candidates had been prepared by their teachers rather than studying unsupervised. There were very many essays on *Moralność Pani Dulskiej* and the result was a little mixed, from essays of a high standard to some of a very poor standard.

The following are extracts from candidates' essays about Dulska: *Nie ważne, że jabłko jest zepsute od środka, ale ważne jest to, że błyszczący i wygląda apetycznie / wszystko co Dulska robi jest sprzeczne z jakimikolwiek moralnymi społecznymi / problemy społeczne i moralne są to sprawy dotyczące ludzi i ich duchowych i wewnętrznych rozterek i sukcesów inaczej zwanych moralnością. Moralność jest cechą indywidualną.*

One candidate thought that one of Dulska's plays that the play was about incest; *Dochodzi do takiej sytuacji, kiedy siostra sypia z własnym bratem / jak dla nich ta sytuacja jest normalna / oni się niczym nie muszą przejmować. Gdzie w dzisiejszych czasach takie coś, nie mieści się w naszych głowach i jest karalne.* Not all students interpreted the play this way and there were some who praised her morality and found her attitude and behaviour commendable.

The following extract illustrates what can be achieved through detailed, careful study and the ability to think and express one's own opinion; important for success at A level.

Główną bohaterkę oceniam źle, bo była osobą chciwą i dwulicową. Na pewno nie chciałabym mieć do czynienia z nikim, kto miałby cechy charakteru Dulskiej, jak również Felicjana, za jego całkowitą uległość i strach przed postawieniem się żonie; Zbyszka, przez jego niekonsekwencje i gołosłowność; Hesi, z powodu jej bezczelności, arogancji i nieczułości na drugiego człowieka; Julisiewiczowej, która była podstępna i dla niej również małe znaczenie miały uczucia osoby, na której jej nie zależało i wreszcie Meli, za jej łatwowierność i widzenie świata przez pryzmat wszechobecnego dobra i miłości.

Non-literary Topics

Topic 1

Polacy i Polska w okresie drugiej wojny Światowej.

There was no clear bias shown towards one or the other of the two history questions. There were as many attempts at question 5(a) as there were at 5(b). However, there were very few essays that could be described as being genuinely factual, giving facts, names and dates and this is information that one expects from a history essay.

Most of the work presented ranged between the vague and the impressionistic. This was particularly evident in the essays on question 5(b). In choosing the Battle of Britain and the Battle of Monte Casino as the two battles Poles had fought in, candidates invariably wrote about the legend of distinguished service in these two conflicts, rather than about the facts themselves.

Question 5(a), concerning the resistance movement in Poland during World War II was answered in a similar way. Here, the September Campaign and the Warsaw Uprising were singled out for particular attention, neither with any great degree of success.

Some based their answer on *Kamienie na szaniec* that provided them with some factual knowledge but not enough to obtain high marks. These essays were generally better for being based on a textual source than on common knowledge, or in some cases on no knowledge at all, as demonstrated by sentences such as: *ruchami oporu dowodził marszałek Piłsudzki*.

Some candidates described the battle of Grunwald, or Katyn or the concentration camps, indeed mentioned anything they knew about Polish history, whether it was appropriate or not.

Topic 2

The films of Wajda – ‘Ashes and Diamonds’ and ‘Man of Marble’

Wajda’s films have remained popular with students. There were a variety of essays, ranging from excellent ones to very poor. Some did not watch the prescribed films or decided to attribute films such as *Krzyżacy*, *Ogniem i mieczem* to Wajda.

Question 6(a) was more difficult and could be tackled properly only by students who had had some proper tuition. Those who had had this benefit produced beautiful essays but others thought of romanticism not as a trend in literature but as romantic love. The following examples illustrate this point:

Filmy Wajdy nauczyły mnie wierzyć w miłość. I właśnie moim ulubionym jest Popiół i diament – diament w popiele nieraz traci swój blask i piękność – właśnie jak w filmie. Tylko żal, iż wszystko się kończy. Życie się zmienia raptownie. Ktoś przychodzi, ktoś wychodzi, ktoś zostaje.

Tego nauczył mnie ten film. Nauczył mnie starać się o miłość i marzyć. Ach, aby tak stać się diamentem!

*Wajda nakręcił filmy o czasach o których już raczej nikt nie pamięta
Popiół i diament dzieje się w czasach powstań listopadowych i styczniowych
Maciek był czułym kochankiem. Podrywacz i wolny strzelec
bohater Człowieka z marmuru własną siłą wznosił stoczną Gdańską, która upadła na wyzyny
W filmie widzimy zmagania bohatera chociaż nigdy go nie poznajemy
W Popiele i diamencie bohater postanawia zabić obecnego prezydenta Polski*

Many candidates who were not sure about question (a) or thought it was an easy option wrongly assuming it concerned love, would no doubt have fared much better had they attempted question 6(b) instead. One examiner commented, ‘This to my mind is an absolute gift of a question. There is so much to write about the Polish aspect of Wajda’s oeuvre’ and that is precisely what many candidates did in writing many pages on the subject. Sometimes the observations drawn were quite profound: *Birkut pokazał dobroć, przebaczenie i przede wszystkim wiarę i miłość do ojczyzny gdy powiedział, ‘Ludzie, różnie bywało, ale Polska to nasz kraj.*

As the above quotations demonstrate the essays written on Wajda were on a par with many excellent essays that candidates have written over the years. It is pleasing to know that these

candidates have learnt a great deal about Polish history, life, and the turbulences that our country went through in the XX century by studying these two films.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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