



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2011**

Polish

46852

(Specification 4685)

Unit 2: Reading

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

This year saw the first examinations for the new GCSE specification. As in previous years student entry consisted almost entirely of recent arrivals from Poland and on the whole, the standard of student responses remained extremely high.

A notable change to Unit 2 is the requirement that all questions and answers are written in English. It is therefore of paramount importance that students read questions carefully and ensure that they respond clearly, giving a level of detail commensurate with the number of marks available for each question. Far too often students wrote short – even one word – generic answers for higher level questions carrying several marks, and in a minority of cases, students answered in Polish. No marks could be awarded for answers written in a language other than English.

In some cases students wrote in almost illegible handwriting or had a very poor command of English spelling, making marking more difficult. A few students used inappropriate slang or bad language, which was not awarded marks. Such instances are routinely reported to AQA.

Finally, there was little doubt that whilst the vast majority of students entered for the examination had understood the Polish texts, it was obvious that many were not aware of the need for exam technique or their technique was poorly developed. These students lost marks by not reading instructions, copying verbatim or by translating large sections of text unnecessarily.

Students who do not attend Polish Saturday schools will find it difficult to prepare adequately for the examination, as they will not have had exposure to different question types or rigorous practise with these. Nor will they have had explanation of the numerous conventions within the exam which would avoid misunderstandings. This exam goes beyond testing the mere comprehension of language. At the higher level questions it is about the interpretation and communication of information which has been read and, it is hoped, understood.

Questions 1 – 7

These were answered well with very few difficulties.

Questions 8 & 9

The majority of students answered well although some students either misunderstood or did not realise the importance of *dziesięć minut później* in Q9(b).

Question 10

Again, this was answered well by many students. Whilst students found question 10(a) very accessible, question 10(b) proved more challenging. Some students did not read the second paragraph in sufficient detail and missed vital clues such as *do listopada/do końca roku/kolejnych*. Questions 10(c) to 10(e) also served to differentiate between the more and less able students.

Question 11

Overall, this question was answered well by many students. Those lacking exam technique were unaware that every answer option would have to be chosen at least once, and a significant number of students did not read texts in sufficient depth to understand that the opinion of the writer in some cases was both positive *and* negative, thus P+N.

Question 12

This question presented a difficulty to a large number of students, who did not distinguish between 'modern' and 'dangerous' in 12(a) and 'clean' and 'beautiful' in 12(c).

Question 13

Students were forced to read in detail here, as all the multiple choice options were included in the texts. Question 13(d) presented the greatest challenge with a large number of students choosing option B despite Krysia's unhappiness with the service, food, standard of cleanliness and overall price of the hotel.

Question 14

Some students did not refer to both girls *and* boys in their response to 14(a) causing them to lose marks. Question 14(b) was very accessible and most students were awarded both the marks available if their answers were recognisable, as spelling in some cases was very poor. However, question 14(c) proved challenging for many students, who often answered too generally without giving any explanation as to why boys invite girls to restaurants for dinner. Moreover, students who referred to 'having a meal with a partner' were not credited with any marks, as their response did not indicate the notion of 'going out', which was integral to the mark scheme to distinguish between a meal in a restaurant and a meal eaten, for example, at home.

Question 15

Question 15(a) was relatively straightforward and students performed well. The remaining three descriptions produced a variety of answers, notably 'doctor' instead of 'dentist' in 15(c) and 'waiter/waitress' instead of 'air-hostess' in 15(d). Again, spelling was weak in many cases and this impeded communication at times.

Question 16 & 17

Question 16 was very accessible for the vast majority of students. The agony aunt's response (which formed the basis of question 17) was also well received by many students. A significant number, however, were let down by a poor knowledge of English as they failed to communicate meaning in 17(a). Similarly, some students did not make it clear who the personal pronouns 'they' or 'she' referred to in their answers and several combinations were logically possible ('the mother/the daughter/the friend(s)/the mother and the daughter').

A minority did not write answers based on the text but gave their own personal opinions and suggestions instead. Clearly, no marks were awarded for such responses.

Question 18

This question targeted tense recognition and students were invited to list the things that Agnieszka did to help the environment. Some answers included things that Agnieszka planned to do *in the future* and these answers were not credited.

Question 19

This question was often left blank by less able candidates. Furthermore, in parts (a), (b) and (c) many referred to a 'shop, restaurant or food store' instead of a 'market', which negated their answer.

Parts 19(b) and (c) also proved challenging to a large number of students, who did not include a reference to the 'boss', 'manager' or 'chef' in their answers and were therefore not able to get full marks for these sections.

Students should be reminded of the importance of precision and a thorough approach to their answers in order to gain access to the full mark range.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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

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