



**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
June 2011**

**Polish**

**46854**

**(Specification 4685)**

**Unit 4: Writing**

***Report on the Examination***

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## General Comments

This was the first examination for the new specification. There were 3 questions to answer, Question 1 (a short list), and Questions 2 and 3 where students had a choice of topics and were required to write essays.

Some students were clearly unaware of the new format and the basic requirements of the examination and wrote short answers to all questions. As a result, they lost a large number of marks.

To obtain higher marks for Question 2, students had to use a variety of grammatical structures (referring to two time frames) and express their personal opinions. In Question 3, students were required to write descriptively or imaginatively, expressing and explaining ideas and points of view. As in Question 2, they had to use a variety of grammatical structures, including reference to at least two time frames. The stimuli were written in English and the suggested content points were in English. The new criteria for Content require students to include an opinion in order to obtain 4 marks.

The highest marks were obtained by those students who used sophisticated vocabulary, formed well developed sentences with a range of subordinate clauses, made reference to past, present and future events and gave personal opinions with justification.

The standard of written Polish in the examination was quite high, but year on year it is becoming clear that children do not practise their writing skills as much as they should. Most students do not attend Polish schools and they do not have enough opportunity to work on their writing skills. As a result they increasingly use colloquialisms (*pierw, wcinać*), English words ('uniform, art, detention') and jargon.

As in previous years, there were a few students who did not have sufficient command of English to understand the instructions. Some students also lacked examination technique whereas others clearly lacked the intellectual maturity to deal with the requirements of the examination.

Some students, whilst understanding what was being asked of them, produced poorly punctuated pieces of work, with little or inappropriate use of commas. There were many very untidy and sometimes barely legible scripts which made marking difficult.

The overall examination results were not as good as in previous years, but since it is the first year of the new specification, this may change once students get used to the new format. Teachers and exam officers are asked to make sure that students are fully aware of the requirements of the specification.

## Question 1

Most students obtained the two marks allocated to this question, as the names of vegetables were well known. A few students lost marks as they confused vegetables with fruit or wrote their answers in English.

Despite mostly correct answers, the spelling in some cases was very poor (ie *marhefka, ogurek*) and teachers should consider paying more attention to this area of the Writing exam.

## Question 2 – General comments

For Question 2(a) students had a choice of topics. They could either choose to write about Lifestyle (healthy living, sport, the role of healthy eating for Q2(a), or Education (school and favourite teacher, likes and dislikes about school, studying abroad for Q2(b)).

This question was quite well answered but some students did not follow the rubric and wrote about their diets without any reference to the suggested points. Although not compulsory, the suggestions are designed to help students express points of view, which are required for the higher bands in Content. It should be stressed that marks given for Range of Language and Accuracy are directly dependent on the mark awarded for Content.

### Question 2(a)

The majority of answers were direct replies to the letter and many students did not make use of the suggested points. Many of the answers contained simple statements written in very simple language, lacking variety and confidence. Some students, who had difficulty recognising what was required of them, wrote letters containing details of their daily diets (eg *'Ja jem bułkę, potem mama gotuje mi obiad, a wieczorem jem tylko kanapkę'*, *'Jem dużo owoców, jabłka, banany, lubię jogurty, unikam chleba'*, etc. As most of these answers did not contain any opinions, it meant loss of marks for Content and, therefore, fewer marks for Range of Language and Accuracy.

Many students, however, managed to write interesting and insightful essays, recognising the importance of good diet and sport activities. They gave advice about how to stay healthy and explained why cooking skills can be useful (eg *'Dobre odżywianie jest bardzo ważne, bo wspomaga nasz rozwój'*, *'Umiejętność gotowania jest bardzo przydatna, bo można gotować samemu zdrowe posiłki, można pomóc mamie, a nawet wykorzystać to w przyszłej karierze'*).

### Question 2(b)

The students who chose this question provided more developed answers, including points of view and explanations. The subject of school is obviously one with which everyone is familiar and many students took the opportunity to express their opinions. Most gave a very flattering picture of their school, particularly liking the fact that their teachers are very approachable and understanding and that they have much less homework than in their previous schools. Many students saw the value of school rules and regulations but were also able to suggest changes, especially about the school uniform.

Many students chose to write about teachers who helped them to adapt in a new environment. Their answers, therefore, were full of details and passionate statements (eg *'Nie wiem, czy bym sobie poradził bez pani Rydel, ona jest dla mnie jak mama.'*).

They constructed arguments, listing the benefits and drawbacks of studying abroad. Their responses were often supported by personal experiences, as most of the students are native Poles and so are students living in a foreign country.

## Question 3 – General comments

Students had a choice of topics. They could either choose to write about Leisure (their last and future holidays, the role of local tourist offices and the internet in planning holidays) for Question 3(a) or the Environment (the advantages and disadvantages of living in town/village, giving their views on big shopping/leisure centres and their impact on our lifestyle and environment) for Question 3(b).

Although this question is aimed at the more able students, almost all students attempted it with some degree of success. Answers to Question 3 were more developed and detailed, therefore gaining more marks for Content, which led to more marks for Range of Language and Accuracy.

Again, the highest marks were obtained by those students who used sophisticated vocabulary, formed well developed sentences with a range of subordinate clauses, made reference to past, present and future events and gave personal opinions with justification.

### **Question 3(a)**

Most students chose to describe their last holiday. Many explained that the internet plays a very important role in planning holidays, and as examples of this mentioned buying tickets, booking tickets for various attractions, checking opening times, hiring a car, etc. There were some excellent descriptions of places with good use of adjectives and figures of speech. It seems that the most popular holiday destinations are Poland, Spain and Egypt.

Many students wrote about the important role of local tourist offices in helping to find the most interesting places, giving directions to local attractions, helping to find the best transport etc but some students misread the stimulus and wrote about travel agents. As long as students wrote descriptively and with details, they did not lose marks for this as their Content fell within the general context of the question.

It was noticeable, however, that many students who wrote well did not time themselves properly and therefore did not finish this question. Some of them decided to change to Q3(b), crossing out good responses, which would otherwise have been awarded a high number of marks.

### **Question 3(b)**

This was the best answered question. The suggestions made in the stimulus material about the changes in our environment and its impact on our lifestyle and the planet in general, clearly inspired many of the students. Some students offered practical ideas about tackling environmental problems, ie using less water, switching off computers, regular recycling.

Many wrote with passion and even anger and gave their views on the loss of green spaces and their use for creating new giant shopping and/or leisure centres. Many students argued in favour of these changes and explained that this was the result of our changing lifestyles, consumers' needs and expectations. (*To jest po prostu rezultat komercjalizacji i rozwoju naszego kraju, więc powinniśmy się cieszyć z nowych galerii handlowych*).

It should be noted that not many students wrote about the advantages and disadvantages of living in a town/village, but those who did, scored the highest marks as this was an opportunity not only to express opinions, but also to justify them.

Overall, the highest scoring students expressed and justified their opinions, demonstrated close attention to detail, used a wide range of vocabulary in complex sentences and imaginative use of language. The lowest scoring students relied too much on their mother tongue and neglected to prepare for the exam.

### **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](http://www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion)

## Guidance Notes for Examiners

The following guidance, provided to examiners during the marking period, is reproduced below for information.

### 1. Principles of marking

- 1.1 All marking must be done in accordance with the published criteria for assessment.
- 1.2 The stress is on effective communication. Credit should be given for the language successfully conveying the target message without ambiguity.
- 1.3 In Questions 2 and 3 there is no need to count the number of words used to answer each question. The sole criterion is completion of the two tasks.

### 2 Mechanics of Marking

#### 2.1 Question 1 Content

Marks	Content
0	No understandable words
1	1-2 words conveyed without ambiguity
2	3-4 words conveyed without ambiguity

- 2.2 Question 2 - Suggested content points are not compulsory. No automatic penalty can be applied if candidates choose not to address these particular points in their answer.
- 2.3 Question 3 – Suggested points are not compulsory. No automatic penalty can be applied if students choose not to address those particular points in their answer.
- 2.4 Assessment Criteria for Questions 2 and 3

Content	
Marks	Criteria
13-14	<b>Very Good</b> Fully relevant and detailed response to the task. Sound ability to convey information clearly, express and explain ideas and points of view. Well organised structure.
10-12	<b>Good</b> Mostly relevant response to the task and shows ability to convey a lot of information clearly, express and explain ideas and points of view.
7-9	<b>Sufficient</b> Response to the task is generally relevant with quite a lot of information clearly communicated. Points of view are expressed and ideas are developed.
4-6	<b>Limited</b> Limited response to the task with some relevant information conveyed. Simple opinions are expressed and there is some development of basic ideas.
1-3	<b>Poor</b> Very limited response to the task with little relevant information conveyed. No real structure.
0	The answer shows no relevance to the task set. A zero score will automatically result in a zero score for the answer as a whole.

<b>Range of Language</b>	
<b>Mark</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
5	Wide variety of appropriate vocabulary and structures. More complex sentences are handled with confidence and verb tenses are used successfully.
4	Good variety of appropriate vocabulary and structures used. More complex sentences are attempted and are often successful.
3	Some variety of vocabulary and structures used. Including attempts at longer sentences using appropriate linking words which are sometimes successful.
2	Vocabulary is appropriate to the basic needs of the task and structures are mostly simple.
1	Inappropriate vocabulary with little understanding of language structure.
0	No language produced which is worthy of credit.

<b>Accuracy</b>	
<b>Mark</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
5	Largely accurate, although there may still be some errors especially in attempts at more complex sentences. Verbs and tense formations are secure.
4	Generally accurate with errors occurring in attempts at more complex sentences. Verb and tense formations are usually correct.
3	More accurate than inaccurate. Verb forms and tense formations are sometimes unsuccessful. The intended meaning is clear.
2	Many errors which often impede communication. Verb forms are rarely accurate.
1	Limited understanding of the most basic linguistic structures. Frequent errors regularly impede communication.
0	No language produced which is worthy of credit.

- 2.5 The mark awarded for Range of Language must not be more than one band higher than the mark awarded for Content. (See table below)
- 2.6 The mark awarded for Accuracy must not be more than one band higher than the mark awarded for Content. (See table below)
- 2.7 If a mark is awarded for Content, this will inevitably lead to the award of a mark for Range of Language and for Accuracy. (See table below)
- 2.8 If a mark of zero is awarded for Content, this will automatically result in a zero score for Range of Language and for Accuracy. (See table below)



2.9

<b>Content</b>	<b>Marks for each of Range of Language and Accuracy</b>
0	0
1-3	1-2
4-6	1-3
7-9	1-4
10-12	1-5
13-14	1-5

2.10 To score a mark of 5 for Range of Language, the candidate needs to use successfully a minimum of two verb tenses.