



**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
June 2012**

**Polish**

**46852**

**(Specification 4685)**

**Unit 2: Reading**

***Report on the Examination***

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## General Comments

The overall standard remained extremely high, with the entry once again characterised by a large number of students from Poland who have in recent years come to settle in the UK.

Nevertheless, students must read the rubric on the front of the paper and familiarise themselves with standard conventions prior to undertaking the examination. 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.

Similarly, the number of scripts displaying almost illegible handwriting or a very poor command of English spelling gave cause for concern. Students should be reminded of the importance of clear presentation in their answers to ensure that their knowledge and understanding is evident and therefore appropriately rewarded. Moreover, the use of slang or text message spelling is considered inappropriate in an external examination. A few students used bad language, which was not awarded marks. Such instances are routinely reported to AQA.

Finally, as in previous years, it was clear that the vast majority of students entered for the examination had broadly understood the Polish texts, but were not aware of, or had a poorly developed, exam technique. These students lost marks by not reading instructions, copying verbatim or by translating large chunks of text unnecessarily.

It is widely acknowledged that students who do not attend Polish Saturday schools will find it much more difficult to prepare adequately for the examination, as they will not have had the exposure and rigorous practice of the different question types, nor will they have had explanations of the numerous conventions within the exam that often help students avoid pitfalls. Whilst the texts are not written to trip students up deliberately, they are constructed to go beyond testing mere understanding of language in isolation. To achieve the highest grades, students should be reflecting upon the texts and analysing the information contained therein, consequently showing their understanding through clear, concise and pertinent responses.

## Questions 1 – 7

These were answered well with very few difficulties.

## Question 8

The majority of students answered well although some students seemingly forgot or did not realise that the question mark symbol (?) could be used to denote something that was not mentioned in the text.

## Question 9

Most students displayed a robust understanding of the young people's opinions and attitudes towards Northampton, navigating through several distractors to arrive at the correct answer. Nevertheless, some students misunderstood the nuance in Question 9(f), believing the response to be negative when in fact the writer praises the town's university. Perhaps some students failed to notice that *gdyby nie dobry uniwersytet...* implies a significant positive element, rather than a wholly negative attitude. Either way, the subtle introduction is complemented by a more explicit *przynajmniej są dobre warunki do nauki* in the final line of the short text.

Equally, some students did not read texts in sufficient depth to gather that the opinion of the writer in some cases was both positive *and* negative, thus P+N.

### **Question 10**

Again, this was answered well by many students. Whilst most parts of the question posed hardly any problems, Question 10(c) proved more challenging, with less able students selecting tourism as their answer, presumably because they had seen the word *turyści*. However, it was the problem of pollution that was being discussed on the internet forum, with various items of floating rubbish in the river given to illustrate the impossibility of bathing there.

### **Question 11**

Overall, this question was answered well by many students. The use of tenses in this question also served to differentiate between more and less able students, especially in Question 11(a) & Q11(d). The ability to identify main points and extract details from texts that may relate to past and future events is an explicit requirement at grade C.

### **Question 12**

Overall, this question was answered well, but again many students did not identify the answer requiring the question mark symbol (?) to denote that one of the statements given did not appear in the text.

### **Question 13**

This question caused a problem to a fairly large proportion of the entry. Students were forced to read in detail here and evaluate all of the suggested options, as they all sounded plausible at first glance. Question 13(a) proved to be the most complicated, as the percentage was not explicitly denoted as a figure in the article. Nevertheless, this differentiated between the more able, analytical students, and those who had difficulties engaging with longer texts.

### **Questions 14 & 15**

Question 14 posed few problems to the vast majority of students. However, some omitted to include homework in their answer to 14(a). Joanna is not merely unhappy that her daughter chooses spend time at the shopping centre instead of coming straight home after school, rather she wants her daughter to complete her homework before engaging in more leisurely pursuits. Students who did not mention the link to homework/schoolwork did not gain the mark for this question.

The agony aunt's response – which formed the basis of Question 15 – was also well received by many students, although a significant number were let down by a poor knowledge of English as they failed to communicate meaning in 15(a). Similarly, some students did not understand nor make it clear that perhaps the mother needed to consider changing her lifestyle if her own shopping habits could be having a negative effect on her daughter.

A minority of students 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 16**

This question was often left blank by less able students who were unable to formulate a coherent explanation as to why Tilly (whose situation was described almost poetically) was blissfully unaware of what was going on around her. However, a pleasing number of students understood the link between financial problems forcing a possible closure of the cats' home and went on to explain the situation in a clear and cogent manner.

### **Question 17**

Again, parts of this question were left blank by less able students. Although traditionally the most challenging question on the paper, this year the final question juxtaposed the challenging with the accessible, thus a significant proportion of the entry at least gained some marks on Question 17(b).

Parts 17(c) and (d) proved challenging to a large number of students, who either gave vague answers or merely wrote odd words related to the topic and were therefore not able to get full marks for these sections. Equally, many students mixed up their answers to these final two parts, or duplicated their responses in both parts of the question.

Moreover, students should be reminded of the importance of precision and thoroughness in their answers – especially in higher level questions – in order to gain access to the full mark range.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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

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