



GCSE

POLISH

8688/WH Paper 4 Writing Higher Tier
Report on the Examination

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General Overview

There were more than 7000 entries this year and this is a record number of students sitting this qualification. It is both very pleasing and encouraging, especially in times when numbers of students taking other languages is falling.

The quality of work produced was generally on a good level. The paper differentiated well and students were able to score marks over a variety of questions. The quality of work seen in the overlap questions was of a higher standard than at the Foundation tier. The variety of vocabulary, ability to use a range of tenses and more complex language were at varied levels. Many students were able to express and justify opinions well. On the other hand, it is worth mentioning that many answers would benefit from further justification and illustration and from trying to follow the suggested bullet points. A number of answers written phonetically seemed to increase, which affected the communication and as a result the number of marks for the quality of language.

It is worth pointing out that while the difficulty of the paper as a whole was comparable to previous years, the spread of marks was a bit wider which means that the questions this year differentiated really well.

Question 1.1 and 1.2

For this question, there are 10 marks for Content and 6 marks for Quality of Language. Students have to choose between 1.1 and 1.2 and are required to write approximately 90 words in total, about four different bullet points. All bullet points must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage of the bullet points. All that students write is read and marked.

Most of the students have chosen Question 1.2 (it was four times more popular than 1.1) which covered the topic of travel and holidays. The bullet points were well understood and most of the students were able to respond successfully to all of them. Nearly 70% of all students who chose this option scored seven or more marks in 1.1, and of those who chose 1.2 that figure reached 80%. Students who did not score high marks either omitted or misunderstood one of the bullet points or did not manage to use the tenses required. A good example would be *Ostatnia uroczystość to maraton* or *Lubię wakacje, a najlepiej te w Polsce*. Some students did not see that bullet 4 in question 1.1 was asking about the differences in celebrating various occasions in Poland and England (eg in Poland Christmas Eve's on 24th Dec is the day when main Christmas celebrations take place while in England families gather and celebrate Christmas Day on 25th Dec), and simply said that in Poland they spend this time with their families, while in England they do not.

Some students who chose Question 1.2 have misunderstood bullet point two which referred to interesting places which they would recommend to visit. It seems that the word *zwiedzić* has been understood erroneously, because many students mentioned swimming pools, beaches, restaurants or hotels, which are not *zwiedzane*, but *odwiedzane*. It well may be the fact that their perceived similarity (both have the same root word, but begin with a different prefix), has caused this unexpected difficulty.

Many answers in this question were detailed and contained original and interesting thoughts on the prescribed topics. Students attempted to use a variety of language, eg different adjectives, particularly around expressing opinions; used variety of structures with references to various time frames and appropriate linking words. On the other hand, the quality of language could be higher as students lost marks for major grammar errors and frequent inaccuracies causing delays or breaks in communication. There seems to be a growing trend of using colloquialisms, eg *hejka*, *siemka*, *gadać*. Overall, students who chose option 1.2 performed best in this criterion, with nearly 60% scoring marks in the highest band for QofL.

Some students, as seen in previous years, were under the impression that they should not be writing more than the recommended number of words (around 90 words in Q1) thus carefully counting written words and limiting themselves to a couple of sentences for each bullet point. This sometime resulted in leaving out the last bullet point or stopping in the middle of the sentence. It is worth reiterating that all of the answer is read and taken into account when marked.

Question 2.1 and 2.2

For this question, there are 15 marks for Content, 12 marks for Range of Language and 5 marks for Accuracy. Students have to choose between 2.1 and 2.2 and are required to write approximately 150 words in total about two different bullet points. In order to access highest bands of marks, both bullet points must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage of the bullet points.

Similarly to last year, the quality of answers this year was mixed. Option 2.1 which focused on a topic related to ability and usefulness of speaking a second language was twice as popular, as option 2.2 which provided an opportunity to write about relationships and future weddings. Many students were able to provide detailed responses, conveying a lot of or some information and include justified opinions. 55% of those who chose 2.1 scored 12 or more marks for Content, while for question 2.2 that figure was around 40%.

Whereas many students were able to write fluently in response to both bullet points, there were some who found some difficulty in addressing the more open-ended tasks, and sometimes wrote just simple statements, eg *Dobrze jest znać inny język, bo można wtedy zdawać ten egzamin* or *Trudno powiedzieć, co wpływa na to, że ludzie się dogadują albo nie, bo ludzie są różni*. It was fascinating to read many interesting and thoughtful ideas regarding future weddings (*kto wie, może śluby będzie można zawrzeć przez internet?* – asked one of the students or *To smutne, ale coraz mniej ludzi bierze śluby w kościele; ja uważam to za ważne i takie romantyczne. Marzę o takim ślubie i mam nadzieję, że znajdę kogoś kto myśli tak samo jak ja.*) or students' experiences when their knowledge of Polish became very useful.

As in previous years, some students did not indicate that they were stating their own opinions and this was more evident in answers to question 2.1. Teachers and students should be reminded once again that opinions may be expressed simply, eg *Lubię ... , ... podoba mi się*. Any positive or negative adjective is only classed as an opinion or a justification if it is preceded by something like *'Myślę, że ... , Uważam, że ... , Wydaje mi się, że ...* Students who did not add that, scored fewer marks.

Additionally, it should be noted that more and more students are writing phonetically and this was reflected in marks for Accuracy, where in questions 2.1 and 2.2 10% and 20% of students gained two or less marks respectively. It should be stressed that this impacted marks awarded for Content as well as for Language.

Similarly to Question 1, it seemed that some students were under the impression that they should not be writing more than the recommended number of words thus leaving out the last bullet point or stopping in the middle of the sentence, so it is worth reiterating once again that the whole answer is read and marked.

Question 3

The translation was generally done well, but not many students were awarded five or six marks. However, around 50% of all students scored four or more marks for Conveying the key messages. If one of the key messages contained a minor error or errors, it was still credited for Application of grammatical knowledge.

However, an accumulation of such errors had an overall effect on accuracy. There was usually a direct correlation between the two marks. Most frequent issues faced by students are listed below.

I have known my best friend Adam for twelve years.	Many students translated <i>I have known</i> erroneously as <i>znałem/am</i> in past simple This was generally conveyed correctly.
We used to go to the same school, but last month he left our city.	Again, this was done well, although <i>kiedyś / dawniej / przedtem</i> was often omitted This was generally done well, but some students rendered <i>left</i> as <i>zostawił</i>
We call each other often, play computer games, both like watching documentaries and writing stories.	<i>Often</i> was frequently omitted, some omitted <i>each other</i> This was done generally well <i>Documentaries</i> proved to be challenging, many students translated it as <i>dokumentacje, dokumentarie</i> or simply omitted it <i>Stories</i> proved to be not straightforward to translate, some students rendered it as <i>bajki, baśnie lub historie</i>
Last August we did work experience in a local bicycle hire shop.	<i>Last August</i> posed quite a challenge, and in attempts to try an accurate word, students tried pretty much all other names of months in Polish. It would be reasonable to think that names of months belong to a very basic knowledge of any foreign language, so this difficulty is puzzling. <i>Work experience</i> posed another challenge and was often translated as <i>doświadczenie pracowe</i> , or simply <i>praca</i> <i>Local</i> was often omitted, as it was <i>hire shop</i> . It was an excellent differentiator as only those most able succeeded and translated it accurately as <i>wypożyczalnia rowerów. Sklep, w którym można wypożyczyć rowery</i> was also accepted. It would be fair to say that this difficulty was surprising, especially in an era of huge popularity of cycling and widely available bicycles hire schemes.
Next year we are going rock climbing in Pieniny.	This was done generally well. <i>Rock climbing</i> was another good differentiator. Students rendered it as <i>chodzenie po kamieniach, chodzenie po skałach, wchodzenie na kamienie, wdrapanie się na kamienie. Wspinaczka</i> was used by fewer students than expected. As with cycling, this is a very popular free time activity, so it was surprising than students found it challenging.

Advice to students

Question 1

- Attempt to write something about them rather than omitting any bullet points. Tick off the bullet points on the question paper once they have been covered.
- Identify which bullet points target the different time frames and check that your verb formation is accurate.
- Make sure you include opinions as required by the task.

Question 2

- Read the bullet points ensuring you know exactly what they require in terms of response and ensure that what you write relates to the bullet points.
- If you have time at the end of the exam, check that your verbs and spellings are accurate.
- Make sure to include opinions with justifications.

Question 3

- Practise high frequency words and phrases.
- Check carefully that you do not miss out any parts of the translation by accident.
- If you are not sure how to translate something, have a go as it may score you a mark. Leaving it blank will not.
- Check verb tenses (whether they match the original text) and endings.

Last, but not least, try to read, listen to or watch something in Polish as regularly as you can – this will definitely help to widen your vocabulary, awareness of structures and style and as a result will increase the chances of success during 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.