
GCSE

Polish

8688/WH

Report on the Examination

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General Introduction to the November Series

This has been an unusual exam series in many ways. Entry patterns have been very different from those normally seen in the summer, and students had a very different experience in preparation for these exams. It is therefore more difficult to make meaningful comparisons between the range of student responses seen in this series and those seen in a normal summer series. The smaller entry also means that there is less evidence available for examiners to comment on.

In this report, senior examiners will summarise the performance of students in this series in a way that is as helpful as possible to teachers preparing future cohorts while taking into account the unusual circumstances and limited evidence available.

Overview of Entry

This exceptional exam series was put in place to give students who were disappointed with their grade in the summer the opportunity to take an exam to try to improve their grade, and to give those private students who were unable to get a grade in the summer the opportunity to take an exam. As expected, entries for this exceptional series were relatively low. There were just over 300, a tiny fraction of over 4500 entries we would expect in a summer series. With such small numbers, the students who sat the exam were only to an extent representative of those in the summer cohort.

Having said this, the quality of work produced in this unique series was generally of a good standard. The paper differentiated very well and the students were able to score marks over a variety of questions. The ability to use varied vocabulary, a range of tenses and more complex language was impressive. The majority of students were also able to express and justify opinions well. While spelling was on the whole on a good level, some answers were written phonetically, which obviously impacted on the marks awarded for the quality of language.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1

Both questions 1.1 and 1.2 were equally popular, and both covered topics, which students are very familiar with, namely 'healthy lifestyle' and 'life at school'. The bullet points were well understood and most of the students were able to respond successfully and in full. There were some who responded to just the first two bullet points, thus losing marks. In particular the bullet point about the changes they would like to make to their diet in the future was often either omitted or answered with one sentence only, e.g. *Żeby byc bardziej zdrowy, chciałbym jesc wiecej wazyw.*

Students attempted to use a variety of language, e.g. different adjectives and synonyms particularly around expressing opinions.

It seemed that some students were under the impression that they should not be writing more than the recommended number of words (around 90 words in Q1) thus leaving out the last bullet point or stopping in the middle of the sentence, so it is worth reiterating that there is no limit to the number of words used and the whole answer is marked.

Question 2

Question 2.1 which was focused on topics related to sport and physical activity was less popular than question 2.2 which provided an opportunity to write about holidays and the role of relaxation in young people's lives. Whereas many students were able to write fluently in response to both bullet points, there were some who found great difficulty in addressing the more open-ended tasks. For example, in question 2.2 many students omitted the fact that the bullet point related to young people ie them (in most cases), and instead they were writing about the role of rest in general offering basic statements like *Odpoczynek jest ważny, Trzeba znaleźć czas i odpoczywać*. 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 (around 150 words in Q2) thus leaving out the last bullet point or stopping in the middle of the sentence, so it is worth reiterating that the whole answer is marked.

Question 3

This question was generally done well. However, there were several words that seemed to differentiate between lower and higher attaining students, e.g. *We plan to grow* was often erroneously rendered as *Planujemy rosnać*, *environment* was conveyed by some as *nature*; but the most problematic phrase proved to be *a small digital camera* which was translated literally, like a calque *mała digitalna kamera* (*maly cyfrowy aparat fotograficzny* is the correct translation). Similarly, *a photographer* was rendered as *fotografer* as opposed to the correct rendering *fotograf*.

Concluding Remarks

Generally speaking, despite the extraordinary circumstances and the substantial difference in entries, the outcomes of the paper were broadly comparable to those from previous years. While most students have performed very well, there are still some who would benefit from remembering that those who express their opinions and points of view by giving reasons and illustrations always gain more marks and by definition, better grades. Taking this into account, it is worth ensuring that during preparation for the exam, all students should have enough time to practise this skill. This could be done by, for example:

- using reading passages with a number of opinions and justifications so that students can identify them and then know how to use them in their own work
- practise the use of some linking words such as: *więc, ponieważ, dlatego że, w celu, po to by*, to help students justify opinions
- finding out (any chosen number) opinions or points of view of a famous writer, a politician, etc about a certain topic, for instance education or traditions, which can then be shared in the classroom and discussed
- watch a movie, and then give and justify their opinions about the characters.

Also, it is worth reminding students of the need to write their answers as clearly and neatly as possible, as illegible writing might result in the unnecessary loss of marks.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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