



GCSE

POLISH

8688/WH

Report on the Examination

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General Introduction to the November Series

This has been another 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 was a second year when an 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. As expected, entries for this exceptional series, especially in comparison to the normal year so to speak, were very low. There were just below 200, a tiny fraction of over 4500 entries we would expect in a summer series. With such small numbers, it would be unrealistic to say that the students who sat the exam were representative of those in the usual summer cohort.

The quality of work produced in this unique series was generally of a good standard. The ability to use varied vocabulary, a range of tenses and more complex language was on a fairly good level. The majority of students were also able to express and justify opinions well, although it is worth mentioning that many answers would benefit from further justification and illustration. While spelling was on the whole on a good level, some answers were written phonetically, which affected the communication and was reflected in the lower marks for the quality of language.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1

Due to the unique situation, there was one more option this year, as Question 1 included an additional Question 1.3. Most of the students have chosen either Questions 1.1 or 1.3 (most popular), and both covered topics with which students are very familiar, namely 'traditions and customs' in Q1.1 and 'life at school' in Q1.3. The bullet points were well understood and most of the students were able to respond successfully to all of them. There was a number of answers to Q1.1, however, where some students seemed to repeat information when reacting to bullets 1 and 4, and those who were able to distinguish between traditions and customs scored highest for Content. Some marks were lost due to giving limited or basic response to bullet points, e.g. *Święta spędziłam fajnie*, or *Ostatnio podobała mi się chemia*. Question 1.2 which was on the topic of volunteering has proved to be least popular. Having said that, those who chose this topic produced detailed answers with justified opinions.

In the case of all options the last bullet points seemed to have sometimes been omitted or answered with one simple sentence only.

Students attempted to use a variety of language, e.g. different adjectives, particularly around expressing opinions; a variety of structures and appropriate linking words.

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 limiting themselves to a couple of sentences for each bullet point, leaving out the last bullet point or stopping in the middle of the sentence. It is worth reiterating that the whole answer is marked and in order to score the highest number of marks a lot of information should be conveyed.

Question 2

Question 2.1 was focused on the topic related to friendship and was the most popular, whereas Question 2.2, which provided an opportunity to write about the environment and the role of young people in looking after it, proved to be least popular. Question 2.3, where students had an opportunity to write about their search for a summer job and how it could be useful when choosing a future profession, was fairly popular (chosen by a third of students) and students were able to provide detailed responses, conveying a lot of information. 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, e.g. *Przyjaźń jest ważna* or *Rola przyjaźni jest duża*, which are basic and very general sentences. Those who were more able would produce sentences in style *Wydaje mi się, że taka praca bardzo by mi pomogła, bo nauczyłabym się obsługi komputera oraz pracy w zespole*. 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. *Although he does not like studying* was often erroneously rendered as *Nawet on nie lubi studiować* or *Jeśli on nie lubi studiować*; *scholarship* was conveyed by some as *nagroda*; but the most problematic phrase proved to be *a eastern Poland* which was also most astonishing, since it contained a simple vocabulary – it was rendered as *zachodniej polsce*, *południowej Polsce*, *po lewej stronie Polski* or *na zachodzie Polski*. Additionally, *at a food bank* was rendered as *bank dla bezdomnych* or *bank dla jedzenia* as opposed to the correct *bank żywności* or *bank żywnościowy*, some able students who were not sure about the appropriate translation have used a valid translation technique and described this place as *centrum rozdawania jedzenia osobom, które nie mają wystarczająco pieniędzy* which was acceptable. Some students had their marks lowered due to a word or an entire phrase omission, but, overall, the source text was followed closely, with attention to all details.

Concluding Remarks

It has to be acknowledged that the group of students who sat the exam in this series was neither representative nor typical, hence there was the difficulty of reaching any meaningful conclusion regarding their cohort performance. One area that perhaps should be mentioned again is the number of errors in translating some of the common vocabulary in Q3, so students are advised to go through the vocabulary list which is available on the AQA website – being able to translate most of the words there, would definitely help to avoid loss of marks in the future. It is worth pointing out that the spread of marks was comparable to previous years, as was the difficulty of the paper as a whole.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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