
A-LEVEL POLISH

7687/2 Paper 2 Writing
Report on the Examination

7687/2
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General overview

Students successfully attempted all of the questions on the paper and the majority demonstrated a good or reasonable level of knowledge of the books and the films. Additionally, they presented good understanding of the questions and some degree of critical and analytical depth in answering their chosen questions.

However, with some works, students showed a marked preference for one question over the other. For the literary texts, by far the most popular were *Tango* by Sławomir Mrożek (with 605 entries) and *Panny z Wilka* and *Brzezina* by Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz (with 191 entries). For the films, the most popular was *Katyń* by Andrzej Wajda (with 621 entries). The totals for all the other questions were in the tens rather than the hundreds.

All completed answers demonstrated some/good level of knowledge and understanding, ranging from critical and perceptive to some that were rather more limited. Most students relied mainly on description and narration; their responses lacked relevant examples from the text and critical evaluation. At times, the process of planning was clearly not in place. Often, responses were not coherent, lacked focus and were logically undeveloped. At times, it was clear that the students had not watched the film or read the literary text sufficiently carefully as the answers were vague and/or full of repetitiveness.

On average students scored 53% of the total mark in AO4, which is the excellent or good bands for AO4: knowledge of texts and films was mostly accurate and detailed and was used to good effect to defend and support judgements made. The overall impression was that students had engaged with their study and enjoyed the questions they chose. The openness of the questions enhanced critical and analytical approach and encouraged students to express their opinions freely.

There was clear evidence that, where students had taken time to prepare and plan their answers, this was reflected in the quality of the response produced. The process of planning allows for the specific focus of the question to be considered and for knowledge to be organised around a number of key points that are relevant to that question. Essays where detailed planning had not occurred tended to be recycled versions of essays written previously, which may or may not be fully relevant to the question chosen.

Some students did not indicate clearly the chosen question or wrote more essays than requested. Very rarely, poorly prepared students referred to books/films not from the specification or just referred to their life experiences to answer the questions. There were a number of students who clearly hadn't read the books or watched the films and presented only glimpses of information that were not backed up by the evidence from sources. A number of essays presented factual errors (wrong names, dates, events).

Section A: Observations on specific questions

Questions 01.1 and 01.2

Tango was by far the most popular literary text chosen by the students. Around 58% of students opted for question 01.1 and approximately 16% for 01.2. Students who chose question 01.1 presented a balanced view, analysing the elements of both comedy and tragedy. The comedy included the language of comedy, comedy of the situation and comedy of the characters. There were also some original responses considering the tragedy elements: mainly focused on Artur's defeat, but also considering Stomil's failure and the corruption of morality ('Sypiam z Edkiem').

Generally speaking, the students understood the author's message and the question allowed them to show their knowledge of the text in an evaluative and critical way.

The students who chose 01.2 overall displayed a lower level of understanding of the question. Some did not understand the key word 'hasło', therefore didn't answer the question correctly. Some only described the attitude, behaviour and the dress code of the characters without going deeper into analysing whether these characters truly believed in their values and acted according to them. Some students presented a very good analytical and critical approach focusing mainly on Stomil, Artur and Eleonora. Some presented Edek as the one who was faithful to his values. Not many could present moments of the characters' doubts (eg Stomil or Eleonora).

Questions 02.1 and 02.2

The second most popular literary choice were the stories by Iwaszkiewicz. Question 02.1 (14%) was by far more often chosen than 02.2 (9.2%).

The first question (02.1) required students to analyse the role of love. Significantly, the students chose the relevant examples from the text; nevertheless, their responses lacked critical thinking and evaluation. Some students presented excellent knowledge of both stories, full and deep analysis of the meaning and importance of love for the main characters – Wiktor, Stanisław or Bolesław. More able students referred to secondary characters like sisters from Wilko or Ola.

In question 02.2 some essays clearly lacked insightful evaluation. Some students made a few interesting conclusions about the similarities and differences between Wiktor from *Panny z Wilka* and Stanisław from *Brzezina*. More able students focused simultaneously on similarities and differences, highlighting the vitality of Stanisław in the face of death and analysing his physical relation with Malwina, as well as his enthusiasm for life (fortepian, muzyka). This was compared to Wiktor's passive attitude. Others observed that Wiktor never used countless opportunities to be happy; whereas Stanisław attempted to live life to the full before death. However, there was a number of responses to Iwaszkiewicz's short stories that lacked depth and were superficial. At times, it was clear that the answers were vague and lacked thoughtful consideration and planning.

Questions 03.1 and 03.2

Surprisingly, in comparison to last year's exam, *Popiół i diament* by Andrzejewski was nearly as popular as Iwaszkiewicz's stories. Although only 3% of students chose Q 03.1, over 9% chose Q 03.2.

The structure and openness of question 03.2 allowed a personal and evaluative response, asking which characters were 'ashes' and which were 'diamonds'. The advantage of this question was that the interpretations were not prescribed, which gave students the freedom to generate unique and critical responses as long as the points were justified.

However, most responses to 03.1 lacked logical development, knowledge and thorough evaluation, despite interesting points. Many students who chose this question struggled to refer to any female character other than Krystyna. Many presented only one character, often showing that their knowledge was based on the film adaptation of the book, not the book itself.

Section B: Observations on specific questions

Questions 04.1 and 04.2

Question 04.1 was by far more popular (9%) than question 04.2 with approximately 4%.

Generally speaking, the first question (04.1) was relatively more approachable as it relied on personal engagement and speculation. Interpretations were not prescribed as long as the points were fully justified and illustrated by relevant examples. A few students offered some thoughtful considerations about the ending of the third version of Witek's life. Some interpretations included the historical context; others referred to a moral compass and religious connotations, some included spiritual reasons and referred to karma. Less able students only summarised the plot of the film, and although they included all three versions of Witek's lives, did not present deeper analysis and interpretation of why he died only in the third version.

Although there was a small number of students who chose question 04.2, their work was very interesting and some students exceeded our expectations. They not only analysed the main character – his values, attitude and behaviour in the first version of his life, but deeply evaluated Wagner and Adam too. Less able students missed out completely on these two secondary characters. Some referred also to the militia officers presenting their brutality in the second version of Witek's life.

Questions 05.1 and 05.2

Q 05.1 (approx. 41%) was more popular than Q 05.2 (35%), particularly among well prepared and more able students. Many students showed excellent knowledge of the film and its characters.

Q05.1 was a very popular question because of the critical nature of the question. Students were meant to analyse the moral principles of the characters; the majority analysed the characters of Anna, Andrzej, Tadzio, Generalowa and Agnieszka, or even Irena, as examples. Many students showed a deep analysis of the characters showing a great knowledge of the film, including events, behaviours and even quotes from the film.

For Q 05.2 there were some vague responses: 'massacre' was mentioned without further detail of factual historical knowledge. Surprisingly, no students mentioned the powerful performances of the main actors or the film's artistic qualities (music by Penderecki, costume design or cinematography). The majority of students included the narrative perspective of female characters as one of the reasons for the film's popularity. This comment was usually linked to Wajda's personal experience, referring to Wajda's personal reason to make *Katyń* (his father died in Charkow in 1940; the trauma of Wajda's mother who waited for his father's return) and to diaries written by prisoners that were the base for the film. The historical factors were also mentioned as one of the reasons for the film's popularity. The educational aspect was highlighted by many students.

There were many answers that simply referred to women presented in the film (Specimen Paper question), which unfortunately did not respond to the question. Occasionally, students summarised the plot of the film without any reference to the issue in the question. Some students argued that *Katyń* is not a historical film and presented accurate evidence to support their view.

Assessment Objective 3

The mean mark for AO3 was 58%. Students presented good knowledge and application of grammar, good spelling and vocabulary. Some struggled in more complex grammar structures and occasionally used English equivalents of the words needed to express their thoughts and opinions. Some also presented difficulties with spelling (particularly in words with either rz or ż, ch or h, ó or u), but mainly in the most difficult areas. Occasionally there was wrong gender or person in the verb conjugation or wrong case in the noun or adjective declension.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website.