

May 2014 subject reports

Polish A: Literature

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 18	19 - 34	35 - 46	47 - 59	60 - 71	72 - 83	84 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 16	17 - 31	32 - 45	46 - 58	59 - 68	69 - 80	81 - 100

Higher level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 25	26 - 30

The range and suitability of the work submitted

In the second year of new Polish A: Literature course, the IA was generally carried out very appropriately, especially with regard to the selection of extracts. IB procedures and instructions were carefully followed in almost all cases.

All centres submitted their samples by the required deadline. The passages were well chosen and were appropriate in terms of the length and level of difficulty. In a small number of cases, however, guiding questions focused on the work as a whole rather than the specific

poem/extract.

None of the recordings were stopped in between the commentary and discussion part of the examination. Teachers listened to the commentaries without interruption and almost always asked subsequent questions. Teachers should, however, be careful to observe the prescribed time limits as there were a few occasions where candidates produced overly long commentaries, which generally resulted in some repetition. Centres should also take care to complete the accompanying forms accurately, as there were a few occasions where the teachers' notes were omitted.

Although the quality of the recordings was generally very good, centres should ensure that suitable conditions are provided for the examination, in particular a quiet environment as background noise can disturb and confuse candidates.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Knowledge and understanding of the poem

The majority of candidates demonstrated very good knowledge of the selected poems/extracts. However, there were a few cases where they focused on additional information which was not directly connected with the context of the work (for example relating to the author's biography or history of literature).

Criterion B: Appreciation of the writer's choices

Candidates were generally able to identify literary features, but did not always comment on their effects. References to the reader's perspective were quite frequent and well justified. Unfortunately, many candidates still confuse blank verse with contemporary verse that is free from rhyme and rhythm. Some candidates merely summarized the poem without engaging in any real textual analysis. There was also some unnecessary repetition in a few of the commentaries.

Criterion C: Organization and presentation of the commentary

In general, candidates performed better against criterion B this session, but it remains one of the weaker areas of the commentaries. Many commentaries were well planned and organized, although some were full of structural repetitions and would have benefited from more careful planning.

Criterion D: Knowledge and understanding of the work used in the discussion

Candidates generally performed well against this criterion. They generally had very good knowledge and understanding of the works discussed, as well as excellent contextual knowledge and there were very few misunderstandings on the whole.

Criterion E: Response to the discussion questions

In almost all cases the candidates' responses demonstrated independent thought and very

good or even excellent knowledge of the context.

Criterion F: Language

Although language was generally clear and appropriate, it was still one of the weaker areas for many candidates. Register and style were generally effective and appropriate, but there were many linguistic errors, especially grammar. The most common factor responsible for lower marks was - as in previous sessions – the use of colloquial register in some parts of the response.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Centres must ensure that the examination takes place in a suitably quiet room.
- Teachers should be careful to observe the prescribed time limits.
- It is helpful to provide two guiding questions, with the first question focused on the content of the poem/extract and the second on form and style.
- The subsequent questions should be based on the selected poem/extract rather than the poet's work as a whole. Teachers should also encourage candidates to talk about the effects of the literary features employed in the poem/extract, rather than simply identifying them.

Standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 12	13 - 16	17 - 19	20 - 23	24 - 30

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The majority of the selected extracts were appropriate for the task, although a small minority were perhaps a little too challenging for standard level candidates. The length of the extracts was appropriate in almost all of the cases and the guiding questions were generally suitable. The quality of the recordings was also good on the whole.

Teachers should be aware that both the candidates' commentaries and subsequent questions should be carried out within the prescribed time limit.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Knowledge and understanding of the extract

The candidates generally understood the core of the selected poems/extracts, but some struggled to situate the text within the context of the larger work and quite frequently they tended simply to summarize the whole work. However, the candidates generally recognized the extracts, placed them in a wider context (for example psychological, philosophical, historical, social etc.) and responded to both the guiding and subsequent questions.

Criterion B: Appreciation of the writer's choices

The responses were generally supported by relevant references to the extract. They did, however, tend to focus only on interpretation and it would be helpful also to consider the functional aspects of the writers' choices. Too frequently candidates summarized the passages and they often merely listed the different literary devices without commenting on their role in the poem/extract or their influence on the reader. However, while literary features were often underestimated, errors in literary terminology were quite rare. Some candidates seemed simply to repeat the teachers' ideas without expressing their own opinions.

Criterion C: Organization and presentation

This was the weakest area in the oral commentaries, as many of the commentaries lacked an organized structure or sense of coherence. The majority of candidates used a traditional structure for their commentaries, but often approached the extract in a very simplistic and mechanical way: line by line or stanza by stanza.

Candidates often began their commentaries with a very general introduction (about the writer's biography, history, etc.), so they did not have the opportunity to carry out an in-depth analysis within the first part of the examination. Some candidates were unable to conclude their commentaries properly.

Criterion D: Language

On the whole, the language used was suitable. It was generally quite clear and varied, although some lapses did occur, particularly relating to contemporary spoken Polish.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Centres must ensure that the examination takes place in a suitably quiet room.
- Candidates often use popular clichés and follow standard patterns in their commentaries. It would be useful if teachers encouraged discussions of frequently used texts from different perspectives, which could help to show candidates how they can use independent thought to discuss literary works.
- Candidates should be advised to make brief notes only during the preparation time, not an entire essay to be read aloud during the exam.

- The subsequent questions should fill less of a guiding role and not possess within themselves a suggested answer.
- Some poems (especially some by Boleslaw Lesmian and Wislawa Szymborska) may be too difficult for this level.
- More emphasis should be put on the structure and composition of oral commentaries. It is also important is to remind candidates to avoid using informal language during the examination.
- Teachers should highlight the role of language and literary features in the extracts and make candidates aware of the importance of analyzing rather than merely summarizing the texts.
- Teachers should closely observe the candidates' responses to their questions in order to avoid asking them about something that they have already commented on in the subsequent questions.

Higher level written assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 20	21 - 25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

All works submitted were suitable in terms of the format and the range of topics selected.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Fulfilling the requirements of the reflective statement

Many candidates were able to achieve full marks under this criterion. However, many of the reflective statements would benefit from further development of the candidates' understanding of cultural and contextual elements in terms of their impact on the interpretations. Criterion A states: "Reflection on the interactive oral shows some development of the student's understanding of cultural and contextual elements." However, many reflections lacked cultural or contextual significance. Candidates should therefore be reminded of the following requirement: "Explanation of how knowledge and understanding of cultural, philosophical, historical, political etc. context presented in interactive oral is to some extent developed".

Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding

The candidates generally demonstrated sufficient knowledge and understanding of the works in their assignments and a significant number of candidates also used relevant sources to support their interpretations.

Criterion C: Appreciation of the writer's choices

The strongest responses focused directly on the form of works. However, some candidates only addressed the authors' artistic choices indirectly and so they should be reminded that stylistic analysis is essential in all assignments, whatever the topic.

Criterion D: Organization and development

The majority of the assignments had an appropriate basic structure and the arguments were consistent and coherent. However, at times the references to the works studied were too general.

Criterion E: Language

Despite some lapses, the register was generally appropriate for a formal essay.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers should pay special attention to criterion A, as it seems that some candidates did not fully understand the nature of the reflective statement.
- In the light of criterion C, teachers need to strengthen the candidates' awareness of what it means "to appreciate artistic choices of the author". Some examples of effective and functional analysis might help in this task.
- It is helpful to set one of the prompts based on analysis, rather than focusing only on interpretation.

Standard level written assignment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 20	21 - 25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

All work submitted was suitable for the subject and the demands of the Written Assignment with respect to the literary works chosen. The range of works selected was generally limited to those from around the basin of the Mediterranean Sea, the US and sometimes Latin America.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Fulfilling the requirements of the reflective statement

A significant number of reflective statements only addressed, in one or two sentences, some important cultural or contextual issues before moving onto explanations of a chosen aspect (quite often reflected in the very topic of the assignment) without showing how they influenced the candidates' interpretations. Many reflective statements did not demonstrate adequate development of the candidate's understanding of cultural and contextual elements.

Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding

Candidates generally demonstrated good knowledge of the selected works, but many relied on simply paraphrasing the texts. There were some cases where the assignment topics were too broad for effective treatment within the specified word limits.

Criterion C: Appreciation of the writer's choices

A small number of candidates addressed authors' artistic choices directly in their assignments, but the majority dealt with them only in an implicit or a rather casual manner.

Criterion D: Organization and development

Almost all assignments had an appropriate basic structure, either chronological and linear or diachronic. However, in several of the assignments the references to works were very general, at times even when the topic focused specifically on the artistic choices of the author.

Criterion E: Language

The register was generally well chosen and appropriate for a formal essay on literature, although there were some lapses, usually syntactic and related to punctuation.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers should pay special attention to criterion A, as it seems that some candidates did not fully understand the nature of the reflective statement.
- In the light of criterion C, teachers need to strengthen the candidates' awareness of what it means "to appreciate artistic choices of the author". Some examples of effective and

functional analysis might help in this task.

- Teachers should ensure candidates are aware of what is meant by cultural and contextual background, and provide some examples of this.
- Candidates should be familiar with standard conventions of formal essays on literature (bibliography, phrasing, references etc.).
- It should be stressed that the structure of the essay is equally acceptable whether it is linear (chronological) or diachronic.

Further comments

It was noticeable that the variety of chosen topics was quite limited which suggests that candidates perhaps guided too much in their selections.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 20

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Many candidates struggled to identify the most significant aspects of the passage/poem and consequently tried to write about everything they had found in the texts (this was a particular issue with the poem).

Candidates were generally able to identify literary devices, but were not always able to comment on how the style, language, syntax, etc. shaped the meaning of the texts.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Candidates generally organized their commentaries appropriately, which in most cases were coherent and easy to follow. The majority of candidates demonstrated good knowledge of literary devices, especially in poetry.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Prose

The prose passage seemed to be more challenging for the candidates than the poem this session, perhaps because there was no clear and obvious message. Often, when attempting to interpret the prose passage, the candidates tended merely to paraphrase the content rather than carrying out a detailed analysis of literary devices and their functions in the text. Many candidates were also confused by the narrative perspective and many of them believed that the narrator was a boy (when it was actually a grown man recollecting past events). One of the most important aspects of this passage was a discussion between the narrator's father and an older man about God. Unfortunately, in many of the commentaries this part of the prose was omitted or simply repeated without any interpretation of its significance.

Many candidates were successful in identifying elements that contributed to the mood of the text as well as describing the relationship between the father and son.

Poetry

The weakest part of the commentaries was, as in previous years, confusing free verse and blank verse. It must be stated that blank verse (wiersz biały) is regular, it has stanzas and regular amount of syllable in each verse, but it does not have rhymes. Free verse is not regular, however sometimes it does have rhymes.

The greatest strength in the poetry commentaries was a clear indication of the speaker in the poem as well as the situation of speaking. Most candidates also correctly identified the relationship between the speaker and the recipient of the lyrical monologue. They generally recognized and interpreted metaphors as representing the state of mind of the speaker. Disrupted and toxic relationships between men and women were recognized as well, however only a few candidates identified feminism as a context.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers should try to raise candidates' awareness of prose literary devices and their functions.
- Teachers should try to encourage candidates to think critically, helping them to find less obvious interpretations and ideas and to justify their opinions through close analysis of the text.
- Candidates should be reminded of the importance of clear and adequate references to the text, which are crucial in a literary commentary.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 8	9 - 11	12 - 13	14 - 16	17 - 20

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

As in previous years, many candidates were unable to adapt their use of language appropriately for the task and consequently they often used colloquial rather than formal language. In addition, many struggled to identify the correct the genre of the prose passage.

The candidates were able to identify and name literary features, but many were unable to show how these literary devices shaped the meaning of the text.

The commentaries were generally organized in quite a basic manner, with candidates either structuring their responses around the guiding questions or following the construction of the texts.

Candidates frequently neglected the more difficult aspects of the text, which were often also the most significant.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Candidates were able to select adequate examples to justify their claims and made good use of the guiding questions to identify the main themes and ideas of the texts. Some candidates were also able to demonstrate independent and critical thinking in their analysis of the texts.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Prose

Candidates identified the central ideas of the text and were able to interpret the role of narration in the passage. They understood the methods used by the author to create the main character in the text as well as how the main character's motivation was portrayed. Some candidates were also able to put the prose passage into the broader context of homelessness.

However, some candidates neglected to comment on some of the key features of the extract and consequently they did not explain fully the motivation of the main character. Only a few

candidates were able to identify the genre (prose non-fiction). Some candidates discussed stereotypes associated with gypsies rather than interpreting the passage. A very common issue was with candidates simply paraphrasing the content rather than analyzing the text. It was very rare that details and subtleties such as contradictions or irony, etc. were observed.

Poetry

Many candidates were able to identify the main literary devices and their roles in the poem. Although they sometimes struggled with the more difficult ideas in the poem, they often found interesting alternatives to comment on, such as the passing of time and the theme of death. Philosophical context was sometimes recognized as well.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers should encourage candidates to focus more on the structure of their commentaries. In particular, opening and closing paragraphs are very important in academic writing. It is therefore important candidates to practice writing them, especially conclusions.
- Teachers should provide candidates with a diversity of texts, both poetry and prose, to be analyzed during the course which will help to prepare them for the examination texts.

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 21	22 - 25

The areas of the programme and examination, which appeared difficult for the candidates

Understanding of the questions and presentation of the topics proved to be the most difficult area for candidates this session. Some of the responses did not relate closely enough to the chosen question or did not present the issues thoroughly enough.

Presentation of literary conventions was also an issue. Candidates often neglected to mention them at all, or only identified the literary features without commenting on their function or relation to the chosen works. In many cases, especially in response to questions on drama or poetry, the consideration and analysis of literary features should have been much deeper. There were only a few responses where the examples of literary conventions were perceptively identified and persuasively developed with clear relevance to the question.

There was generally quite a weak presentation of comparative elements. There were also several cases where candidates only produced summaries of the works, with very little analysis or evaluation.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Candidates generally dealt very well with criterion A (knowledge and understanding). Many candidates were able to demonstrate very good knowledge and understanding of the part 3 works in relation to the question. In most cases, essays were well structured, concise and effective with well chosen and convincing arguments. The structure of the essays was generally logical and consistent, with the main arguments clearly identified. The language used in the responses was very often rich, very clear, effective, carefully chosen and precise, diversified with a high degree of accuracy in grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction; register and style was effective and appropriate to the task.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

It is very difficult to indicate the strengths and weaknesses in this paper, as almost every question was approached in a variety of ways. However, in most cases candidates handled questions 1, 2 and 3 from the Drama section well or very well. Question 7 posed most problems, where definition of the term “styling language” proved to be very challenging. Question 8 was also problematic at times, as candidates often identified examples of description but failed to analyze their role in novellas and short stories. Question 11 was challenging for many candidates, as they did not seem to be familiar with the term “contemporary historical prose” and only discussed contemporary prose. Candidates also tended to summarize the works rather than examining the features of autobiographies in Question 13. However, in most cases, responses based on the questions in the autobiography/diary section were well written. In a very small number of cases, the literary genre of the works discussed did not match the genre of the chosen question.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates must be acquainted with the assessment criteria, which would undoubtedly help to improve the quality of their responses. In particular, they should be made aware of the importance of criterion C.
- Teachers could also practice functional writing about literary features and genres more in class. This is important in order to show candidates how to incorporate an appreciation of literary conventions of the genre into comparative essays.
- Candidates should be taught how to read and analyze the question in order to be able to use all the implications of the question in their responses.
- Teachers should also prepare exercises on understanding and interpretation of different

literary terms. This would help candidates to understand the questions better and lead to an improvement of performance under criterion B.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 13	14 - 16	17 - 18	19 - 21	22 - 25

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Functional writing about literary and genre features was the most challenging part of the examination for candidates this session. Some responses did not contain this element at all, making it impossible to achieve high marks under criterion C. There were also cases where candidates only identified the genre features of the selected works, without commenting on their effects. In many cases, especially in response to questions on drama or poetry, the consideration and analysis of literary features should have been much deeper.

Responses often lacked efficient evaluation which was largely due to a lack of understanding or a simplification of the topic presented in the question. As in previous years, many candidates relied on paraphrasing or summarizing the content of the selected works, with very little analysis or evaluation. In a few cases candidates made some major factual mistakes or referred to the wrong context (e.g. the incorrect historical background), thereby demonstrating a lack of knowledge of the selected works. In a small number of responses, the language used was unclear which suggested a poor knowledge of Polish.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Candidates generally achieved highest marks against Criterion A (knowledge and understanding). Many candidates were clearly well prepared for this criterion, as perceptive knowledge and understanding of the part 3 works was clearly apparent in their responses. Another area where candidates seemed well prepared was in their use of language. The candidates' essays were generally good or at least satisfactory against criterion E and in most cases language was clear with a good degree of accuracy in grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction, and the register was well suited to the task. The structure of the works was effective and logical, and candidates were able to produce responses that were well organized, coherent and well developed.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

As mentioned above, it is very difficult to indicate the strengths and weaknesses in this paper, as almost every question was approached in a variety of ways. However, candidates generally dealt well with questions 1 and 2 under Drama, although some struggled with defining of the “fourth wall” (despite the hint) in question 3. The majority of candidates performed well when writing about novellas and short stories (questions 7, 8 and 9). Question 11 was quite challenging for candidates as they often seemed not to recognize the term “contemporary historical prose” and only discussed contemporary prose. In question 12, some candidates failed to understand the term “*porte parole*” and so they were unable to evaluate the topic. Describing recipients’ reactions to the autobiographical works also proved to be quite difficult in question 14.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates must be acquainted with the assessment criteria, which would undoubtedly help to improve the quality of their responses. In particular, they should be made aware of the importance of criterion C.
- Teachers could also practice functional writing about literary features and genres more in class. This is important in order to show candidates how to incorporate an appreciation of literary conventions of the genre into comparative essays.
- Teachers must ensure that candidates are familiar with the structure and layout of Paper 2 and highlight the importance of selecting questions from the correct genre.
- Candidates should be taught how to read and analyze the question in order to be able to use all the implications of the question in their responses.
- Teachers should also prepare exercises on understanding and interpretation of different literary terms. This would help candidates to understand the questions better and lead to an improvement of performance under criterion B.
- It would be useful to dedicate more time in class to teaching candidates how to structure their essays appropriately.
- More lessons should also be devoted to formal aspects of essay writing, such as presentation, structure and various linguistic aspects, such as register, syntax, spelling, punctuation etc.