

LOTE: Polish GA 2: Oral examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

In 2001 the standard was generally very good with some outstanding performances and research by many students.

The manner of delivery in all of the tasks was good. Overall, accuracy of pronunciation and level of appropriateness of the vocabulary were high. Good communicative strategies adopted by students included body language, eye contact, appropriate gestures. Some students brought some very interesting visual displays which formed the basis of their report topic.

Part 1 – General conversation

The overall performance of the students was very good, as they were willing to deal with the content of a conversation on various topics. Most students were keen to complete their presentation and initiate topics without support from the assessors and were relaxed and confident during the task. However, a few students did not give full answers when required and this restricted their ability to deal appropriately with the content of the conversation.

Part 2 – Report and discussion

There was a wide variety of interesting and imaginative topics, many of which showed a high level of research. Student reports were generally of a high standard and good use was made of visual material. Reports were often innovative, mostly successfully introduced and well developed. The level of language used in this task was very high. Students were well prepared for the discussion on their chosen topics. The topics which led to an interesting discussion included:

- the importance of earning your own money
- the life of young people in Australia
- aggressiveness of the young generation
- the life of Vegetarians
- danger of narcotics for young people in Australia and Poland.

Common problems arise from choosing a descriptive report topic, as it can be difficult to lead such topics into a discussion. A small percentage of students were not sufficiently prepared and there was the occasional student who read the report, even after reminders, and was consequently penalised.

Part 3 – Situational role-play

Few students performed excellently in this task. Most students developed the content of the chosen scenario only to an adequate standard. Students at times did not seem relaxed enough to fully develop ideas and possibilities (this task is the most difficult and artificial for many students).

Students would benefit from more practice with their teachers and need to be encouraged to display more variety in their performances, e.g. practice strategies which would enable them to respond more imaginatively. It is most important for students to role-play with teachers or at home with parents, not only with other students in class.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Overall the students performed competently and demonstrated that they had worked hard to reach the required standard.

Successful students:

- had a broad range of vocabulary
- handled grammatical structures capably
- answered written and oral questions logically and accurately
- showed evidence of careful preparation.

Conversation, report and discussion

This part of the examination focused on students' oral skills in using Polish in the interpersonal and informational domains.

The first five minutes of the examination were spent on a face-to-face conversation on topics of general interest raised by the assessors. Many students were able 'to initiate and sustain conversation' at a high level, and most scored well against the criteria of 'pronunciation', 'clarity of expression', and 'cultural appropriateness'. Students who did not score very well against the criterion 'cultural appropriateness' had difficulties using proper grammatical forms, words, and expressions when addressing adults.

In the next two minutes of the examination students were expected to speak on one of the two topics that they had chosen and prepared during the year (the topic was chosen by the assessors).

Most students selected from a very interesting, informative, and diverse range of topics. Most topics related to Poland and its customs and culture, but then different topics were 'Training guide dogs for blind people', 'Cloning – its moral aspects', and 'Volkswagen Beetle – comparing the old car and the new beetle'. In a few cases students did not base their topics on research, only on their opinions. This made it difficult for them to score well against the 'capacity to present and convey information' criterion. Most students showed that they had prepared thoroughly for this part of the examination because there were some fluent, informative presentations.

During the next phase of the discussion students were easily able to understand most questions and present their own thoughts with very little support from the assessors. The incorrect declension of nouns and adjectives and incorrect conjugation were common problems.

Overall, students used quite complicated linguistic structures and handled them well. However, in some cases the range and variety of vocabulary were not broad enough. Students repeated the same words rather than use synonyms and, consequently, questions asked by assessors had to be rephrased.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Paper 1 – Processing spoken information

This task focuses on students' ability to comprehend and use spoken information. The two recorded passages described the requirements a person needs to meet before obtaining a diving licence, what is needed by an average diver and why, dangerous situations divers are exposed to when diving, and underwater attractions. Students generally understood the passages, but their answers were not always complete.

Part A – Tasks on the two spoken passages

Part A consisted of four questions on Passage 1 and three questions on Passage 2, with responses to be written either all in Polish or all in English. Most students followed these instructions carefully and answered the questions in Polish.

Part B – Task drawing on both passages

In Part B students were asked to write a talk to be presented at school by the chairperson of the school diving club. In the talk students had to encourage their peers to take up the sport and include details of the difficulties and risks involved. Students gave a lot of information; however, some had difficulties in using the information appropriately.

Overall, against the 'form and organisation' criterion, students scored satisfactorily. Many students scored poorly against the criterion 'effective expression' (control of the language), having difficulties with the declension of nouns and adjectives through cases and the conjugation of verbs. In some cases there was a lack of tense agreement and a lack of consistency between verbs and subjects

(e.g.: 'gdy się staje lepszy nurkowca'; 'Nurek muszą byli odważni, aby poszły pod wodę';

'Jak macie'; 16 lat, to by mogliście robić egzamin). A number of students did not observe basic spelling rules

(e.g.: 'struny oddehowe', 'gdy się staje leprzym nurkowca', 'może pujść; na examin').

Paper 2

Part A – Writing in Polish

Question 1 was the most popular question, followed by Questions 2, 3 and 4.

Generally, in every task the requirements of the discourse form were observed. However, a number of students did not meet the ‘clarity of expression’ and ‘variety and appropriateness of vocabulary and sentence structure’ criteria.

Students made linguistic and grammatical mistakes similar to those in the general conversation and Paper 1:

(e.g.: ‘ludzkość mnie znalazła’, ‘kiedy patrzę nazewnącz to mi się czuję niedobrzy’, ‘bez nikogo chyba nikt inny się nie ratował ponieważ obchodził całą wyspę trzy razy, a jak się obudziłem to wędrowałem do tego lasu’, ‘papierosy tyle złego robią organizmu’, ‘ta nikotyna zachęca twoją zdrowia’, ‘papierosy to tylko ci robią szkodliwość pomyśl o tym, ty płacisz za coś co atakuje i szkodliwi twój organism, czy ty zgłupiał’).

Part B – Reorganising written information

Most students performed at a satisfactory level in this part of the examination. Many wrote more than the suggested length because of difficulties with presenting their thoughts concisely and selecting from the number of facts provided in the texts.

Generally, students coped poorly with the discourse form – a letter to the editor of a local newspaper – instead writing an informal letter or a newspaper article.

Several students did not use their own words but rewrote large parts of the texts provided, and these scored poorly against the criterion ‘effective expression’ (degree of independence). As in previous parts of the examination, many students had difficulties with ‘control of the language required to complete the task’ – there were many grammatical, linguistic, and spelling mistakes. For example:

‘Przerabianie odpadów ulepszył by stan wód w Polsce’, ‘Jakby te fabryki spędzili czas na czyszczenie te węgle, to może by nasze powietrze było świeże’, ‘Pisze do was aby wyrazić moji wielkie zaniepokojenie środowiska w którym bieżąco mie szkamy’, ‘Rzeki i jeziora polskie mogą być porównane do ścieków, posiadają one bakterie, które nie są dobre do picia. Przez to dużo Polaków choruje na różne choroby, te mogą składać się z astmy, raka płuc . . . ’

Paper 3 – Discussing a theme

(completed by interstate students)

This task required students to respond to one of two themes that they had studied throughout the year, using the resources suggested in the syllabus.

Generally, students’ responses in this section showed sound evidence of preparation and good knowledge of the resources studied. However, many students had difficulties in analysing the resources and in using them appropriately in their writing. In some places students had misinterpreted some events from the literature. In many cases students wrote a summary of materials studied or what they knew about friendship, instead of concentrating on the issue and discussing the question. Many students showed a limited ability to plan their work logically and to discuss major points. The space provided for notes in the examination paper was hardly used and the final version of students’ writing was at times not sequential, chaotic and not well thought out.

A very small number of students did not complete the ‘resources used’ box. Others listed the resources in the box but did not refer to them in their writing. These students scored lower marks against the criterion ‘understanding and appreciation of the works’. On a few occasions students used resources not listed in the syllabus.

Question 4 was the most popular question, although students had difficulties with the prescribed discourse form – the opening speech of a debate. In Question 3, students covered the first part of the question, ‘Friendship enriches individuals’, but the second part, ‘... and allows them to become better people’, was neglected. Questions 1 and 2 from the theme ‘Youth Issues, Past and Present’ were not popular.

Generally the level of students’ language in this part of the examination was satisfactory. In some cases, although the language used was correct, vocabulary and sentence structure were very basic.