



Embassy
of the Republic of Poland
in London

A-LEVEL POLISH GUIDE FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Embassy of the Republic of Poland in London



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A-level Guide for Students and Parents

State examination of Polish as a foreign language at A-level in the UK

Advanced Level Qualification in Polish GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION (GCE)

In the UK, the A-level exam in Polish as a foreign language is typically taken by students aged 16 and above.

A-level Polish examination is part of the General Certificate of Education (GCE), which is one of the main qualifications taken by secondary school students in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. It can also be taken in Scotland.

A-level Polish examination represents an advanced stage of language education, allowing students to develop their knowledge of Polish further and enhance their listening, reading, and writing skills at a higher level. Students preparing for this exam delve into more complex topics, such as social, cultural, and political issues related to Poland, while also analysing Polish literary texts and films. The A-level curriculum emphasises advanced grammar and vocabulary, fosters critical thinking, and develops the ability to express opinions in writing on a variety of topics.

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1. A simplified overview of the educational stages in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The United Kingdom does not have a unified education system. Each country—England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland—has its own education system and unique qualification frameworks. Although the education systems of England, Wales, and Northern Ireland are relatively similar, the Scottish system differs in superessential aspects. This is why this Guide has a separate section on the Scottish education system and the country's examination situation (see [1.3\). Scotland](#)).

For a summary cross-section of the UK's education systems, see the chart compiled by Ecctis under [Educational Pathways](#).

British GCSE level exams are usually taken around age 16, at the end of compulsory schooling, in the UK (i.e., in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland).

1.1. England and Wales

The education system is divided into five main stages; each stage is called the key stage.¹

- KEY STAGE 1 – (Y²1-Y2) – for children between the ages of 5 and 7 (year one and year two of primary school)
- KEY STAGE 2 – (Y3-Y6) – for children between the ages of 7 and 11 (from year three to year six of primary school).
- KEY STAGE 3 – (Y7-Y9) – for young people between the ages of 11 and 14 (year seven to year nine of secondary school)
- KEY STAGE 4 – (Y10 – Y11) – for young people between the ages of 14 and 16 (year tenth and year eleventh of secondary school) - this is the time when most young people take their GCSE level exams

¹ Before primary school, there is a preschool stage, *Early Years Foundation Stage*, for short EYFS, for children ages 3 to 5. In descriptions the pre-school stages have been omitted for simplicity.

² „Y” is the first letter of the English word *Year*.

- KEY STAGE 5 - for young people between the ages of 16 and 18 - during this time, some of those remaining in the British education system are preparing for their A-level exams.

[Ofqual](#) is responsible for assigning qualifications to the appropriate levels in England.

[Qualifications Wales](#) is responsible for assigning qualifications to the appropriate levels in Wales.

1.2. Northern Ireland

- FOUNDATION STAGE3 - (Y1-Y2) - for children between the ages of 4 and 6 (year one and year two of primary school)
- KEY STAGE 1 - (Y3-Y4) - for children between the ages of 6 and 8 (year three and year four of primary school)
- KEY STAGE 2 - (Y5-Y7) - for children between the ages of 8 and 11 (year five to year seven of primary school)
- KEY STAGE 3 - (Y8-Y10) - for young people between the ages of 11 and 14 (year eight to year ten of secondary school)
- KEY STAGE 4 - (Y11 - Y12) - for young people between the ages of 14 and 16 (year eleventh and year twelfth of secondary school) - this is the time when most young people take their GCSE level exams
- KEY STAGE 5 - POST-16 - for young people above 16 - during this time, some remaining in the education system are preparing for their A-level exams.

The [Council for the Curriculum, Examinations, and Assessment](#) is responsible for assigning qualifications to the appropriate levels in Northern Ireland.

1.3. Scotland

Scotland's education system differs from the systems in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland is distinct and independent. The 1998 Act granted the Scottish Parliament full control over education (devolution).

Below is a simplified overview of the Scottish education system leading to the GCSE level.³

- EARLY LEVEL CHILDCARE – (ELC-P1⁴) – for children between the ages of 3 and 5 (covering nursery education and the first year of primary school);
- FIRST LEVEL – (P2-P4) – for children between the ages of 5 and 8 (covering the second to the fourth year of primary school);
- SECOND LEVEL – (P5-P7) – for children between the ages of 9 and 12 (covering the fifth to the seventh year of primary school);
- THIRD LEVEL – (S1-S3) – for young people between the ages of 12 and 15 (covering the first to third year of secondary school);
- SENIOR PHRASE – (S4-S6) – for young people between the ages of 15 and 18 (covering the fourth to sixth year of secondary school). Young people prepare for National 4/5, Higher, and Advanced Higher-level exams³ during this period.⁵

[Scottish Qualification Authority](#) assigns qualifications to the appropriate levels in Scotland.

1.3.1. Examinations in Polish Language within the Scottish Education System

There is no direct equivalent to the Polish as a Foreign Language exam at the A-level in Scotland⁶. However, Scottish universities honour A-level examinations when applying

³ You can read more about the Scottish education system [here](#).

⁴ ELC stands for *Early Level Childcare*, while the letter P stands for *primary school*, and the letter S stands for *secondary school*.

⁵ You can read more about the Scottish examinations [here](#).

⁶ In Scotland, the exams corresponding to A-level are called Advanced Higher, however there is no Polish language exam at this level, you can read more about Advanced Higher exams [here](#).

for university. For this reason, some young people attending Polish Saturday schools in Scotland choose to take the AQA Polish language examinations offered by the English AQA examination board. Preparation for these exams often begins as early as the last year of primary school, and students usually take the exams themselves between years S1 and S6.

However, Scottish students can, between years S3 and S6, take the exam [*The Modern Languages for Life and Work Award*](#) at SCQF level 4 to obtain a qualification confirming their knowledge of Polish. This qualification ranks lower than GCSEs in terms of the level of exam requirements and the credentials obtained. More information about the GCSE exam can be found in the [GCSE Polish Exam Guide](#).

Work is currently underway to address issues related to examination centres where Polish language A-level exams can be taken. The Polish diaspora and educational communities in Scotland are actively working to make these exams more accessible to Polish language students, with the aim of enabling more individuals to take the exams and obtain qualifications in Polish.

2. A-level Examinations

A-level examinations can be taken in a wide variety of subjects that could potentially enable you to get into the university of your dreams. Young people usually sit between three and five A-level exams.

Despite popular belief, it is possible to take the Polish as a foreign language A-level Polish language exam without first taking the Polish language exam at GCSE level. The implied preparation time for the exam is two years, but most examination centres do not enforce this criterion. The exam itself consists of three exam papers, which will be discussed in detail later in this *Guide* (see section 5) The A-level Polish exam is a written exam and, unlike the Spanish and German A-level exams, it does not include an oral component. Examination results are presented on a six-point scale using the letters of the alphabet, where A* is the highest mark and E is the lowest mark (A* > A > B > C >

D > E). Grade U indicates no classification and failure to achieve a qualification at the passed level (see section 6 for more on assessment objectives).

Several exam boards, such as Pearson Edexcel, OCR, WJEC, AQA, and CCEA in Northern Ireland, offer A-level exams.

AQA is the only examination board that offers Polish language qualifications at both GCSE and A-level.

2.1 Where can you take Polish A-level level exams?

Polish can be taken at an accredited examination centre offering examinations prepared by the AQA examination board. In most cases, it is the child's state school. The list of accredited exam centres for AQA can be found [here](#)⁷.

2.2 Where and to whom should I register my child for the A-level Polish language exam?

To register your child for the Polish language examination, contact the head of MFL or an exam officer/exam coordinator at your child's secondary school.

2.3 When do I express my interest in taking the exam?

Expressing your willingness to enrol your child for the exam as early as possible is essential. You can do this by speaking with representatives from secondary education institutions during open days before selecting a secondary school or sixth form/college. Notifying the school about your child's intention to take Polish language lessons during the transition period between primary and secondary school is also recommended.

The AQA Examination Board offers examination centres to enter their students for exams on an initial date (usually mid-February for exams in the summer session). The exam centres may still accept applications after this date (late entry); nevertheless, it is combined with an increased entry fee for the exams (usually as part of a very late entry

⁷An example of an examination centre that is not a school is [The Polish Educational Society Examination Centre in London](#). Intensive work is currently being carried out to open an examination centre in Scotland.

in April).⁸ See [here](#) for more information on AQA's dates for accepting enrolment from exam centres.

Please note that registration deadlines for Polish language A-level exams may vary from one exam centre to another due to their internal regulations. It is advisable to declare your desire to take the A-level Polish language exams no later than at the beginning of the school year in which you want your child to take the exams, and then at the beginning of January, ensure that your child is enrolled. It is best to contact the relevant exam centre for accurate information on the subject.

2.4 Who can take the Polish language A-level exam?

From the perspective of the UK state exam regulators, the Polish language A-level exam can be taken by anyone resident in the UK with no age restriction, usually in Y12⁹ or Y13. In the case of languages, it happens that young people choose to take the exams in the earlier years. However, many centres authorised to conduct examinations reserve the right to accept children only from year eleven (Y11). However, this is not a requirement of the exam regulators, but an internal arrangement of some [exam centres](#). It is advisable to contact the relevant examination centre for accurate information on the subject.

Students are not recommended to enrol in A-levels early, during Year 11, as they are typically preparing for their GCSE exams at this time. This can create unnecessary pressure on candidates and result in overlapping examination dates between the two levels (i.e., GCSE and A-level).

⁸ For more information on payments, see sections 2.5a and 2.11.

⁹ Y12 stands for Year 12, or grade twelve. Similarly, Y13 stands for year thirteen. For Scotland, S5 means year five of primary school, S6 means year six of secondary school.

2.5 What steps to take if the organisation of an exam is refused?

In the large majority of instances exam centres typically enrol candidates in Polish language exams. However, if an examination centre refuses to enrol your child for the exam, you should inquire about the reason.

The most common reasons for refusals are:

- a. Lack of funds to organise the exam,
- b. Unfamiliarity with the requirements of the specification,
- c. Staff shortages, specifically a lack of Polish-speaking teaching staff to provide support for the exam candidates,
- d. The lack of Polish language A-level exam preparation courses at the school,
- e. Late information about the desire to take the exam, making it impossible to prepare the exams adequately,
- f. Child's age, some centres stipulate that they do not enrol children before year eleven (Y11),
- g. Fear of lack of preparation and low exam results for the candidates.

After obtaining the reason for the refusal, seek a solution to the difficulty or, if no agreement is reached, seek another examination centre from the list of [accredited examination centres](#).

Possible solutions to the difficulties reported by the exam centre:

- a. Some people who enrol their child for the exam offer to find another funding source, including private funds, to organise the exam. Costs may include: (i) an administrative fee (an *entry fee*), (ii) hiring an exam supervisor (*invigilator*), (iii) rental of the premises where the exam is held. In London schools, which are also exam centres, the cost of arranging exams ranges on average from £150 to £250. If the exam centre is not also a school, the cost of organising the exam increases. The administrative fee¹⁰ is a fee required by AQA. In 2025, the

¹⁰ The exam administration fee can be checked annually on the AQA website: "<https://www.aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/entries/entry-fees> [accessed: 10th May 2024].

administrative fee for timely enrolment is £141.25¹¹. Once the enrolment deadline is missed (*late entry*), an additional fee is 100% of the base application fee and is added to the child's enrolment fee. When the enrolment deadline is significantly missed (*very late entry*) additional fee is 150% of the base enrolment fee and is added to the child's enrolment fee.

- b. Some parents send their children to Polish language classes at one of the local Polish Saturday schools in the UK or to private Polish language classes, which offer the assistance of qualified teachers who can answer all the exam officer's questions.
- c. It is advisable to hire an external Polish language A-level professional for a few sessions to support your child's preparation or ask a local Polish school for help.
- d. It is advisable to enrol your child in a preparatory course (at a Polish school or with a private tutor) for the exam and keep the English school updated on your child's progress and predicted grade. You can also request a certificate from the educational institution organising the course to confirm the student's regular attendance.
- e. It is advisable to express willingness to take the Polish language exam as soon as possible (see 2.3).
- f. It is advisable to wait until your child reaches the appropriate age or search for another exam centre that accepts younger children.
- g. In this case, a mock exam of the Polish language is advised. Many schools hold mock exams and have them checked by an A-level Polish language teacher from outside the school. Another option may be to conduct tests with the child at home and hire a qualified professional to mark the work and determine the child's level of language proficiency.

¹¹ Source: <https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/admin/library/AQA-ENTRY-FEES-SUMMER2024.PDF> [accessed: 10th May 2024].

2.6 Where can I enrol in the Polish A-level course?

You can enrol in a Polish language course at the A-level at a local Polish Saturday School (for a list of Polish Saturday Schools, see [here](#)) or hire a private Polish language teacher. Some English schools choose to hire a person to teach Polish at A-level Polish language level if more than a few candidates are willing to take the exam.

2.7 How many years should an A-level preparation course last?

AQA recommends – but does not require – a two-year preparation course for the A-level Polish language exam. Polish Saturday Schools offer both year-long intensive courses and two-year courses, as the exam board recommends.

2.8 How many hours should an A-level preparation course last?

AQA recommends – but does not require – around 360 hours of study under the guidance of a teacher¹².

2.9 When are the A-level Polish exams held?

A-level Polish examination is held during the so-called summer exam series – every year, usually between May and June¹³. The first exam includes a paper on reading comprehension, translation, and a research project (see 5.1). The second exam assesses knowledge of cultural texts (see 5.2), while the final exam evaluates listening, summarising, translation, and writing skills (see 5.3). The exam dates are published at the beginning of the new school year. You can find the dates of A-level exams organised by AQA, published annually, [here](#).

2.10 Do I need to enrol my child in an A-level preparation course?

No, there is no such requirement from AQA. The child can prepare for the exam independently. Nevertheless, some exam centres require taking such a course. Preparing for an exam on your own can be challenging for candidates, particularly as you need to master and understand elements of Polish history, literature and film in

¹² Source: <https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/languages/AQA-MFL-AS-A-FAQ.PDF> [accessed: 10th May 2024].

¹³ Written exams are held between May and June and are taken one at a time: Paper 1, Paper 2 and Paper 3.

addition to your language skills, so it is worth considering enrolling in an A-level Polish exam preparation course.

2.11 Are the A-level Polish language exams fee-based?

Yes, in many cases. A-level Polish language exams are fee-based. The exam fee is usually charged to candidates by the school or exam centre where they take the exam. The cost of the exam may vary depending on the exam centre. However, many schools cover the cost of organising the exams. It is advisable to contact the relevant examination centre for accurate information on fees. (see 2.5a).

2.12 What information is needed to enrol for the Polish language A-level exam?

When enrolling a child for an exam, in addition to basic personal information for verification processes, the exam centre may also ask about:

- type of exam - A-level,
- The name of the exam board - AQA,
- Specification number - 7687,
- UCI Number.

The exam centre assigns a UCI (*Unique Candidate Identifier*) number, which is an individual identification number, to all those taking GCSE level exams. The UCI number helps exam boards and educational institutions accurately identify candidates along their exam path. It ensures that scores, coursework, and a history of marks earned are correctly assigned to the correct individuals and helps maintain the integrity and security of the examination process. Each candidate receives an individual UCI number when enrolling for the exams through their school or educational institution.

If a child takes an exam at a centre that is also his or her school, the school provides the UCI number. If a child enrolls in an exam outside of his or her lead school, the assigned UCI number should be given to the new centre, or a new number should be requested. It is crucial to inform educational institutions about the status of the UCI number to avoid assigning two numbers, which could make it difficult to collect the child's results in the right place. The UCI number is included in the GCSE results slip if your child has

previously taken GCSE exams in any subject. An example of the design of such a results section can be seen [here](#).

3. Is the A-level exam popular?

Yes, Polish language exams are gaining popularity, including the A-level exam. Since the changes to the specification in 2020, the exams have become increasingly popular. See Table 1 for a summary of AQA examination statistics since the introduction of the new Polish language specification at A-level 7687.

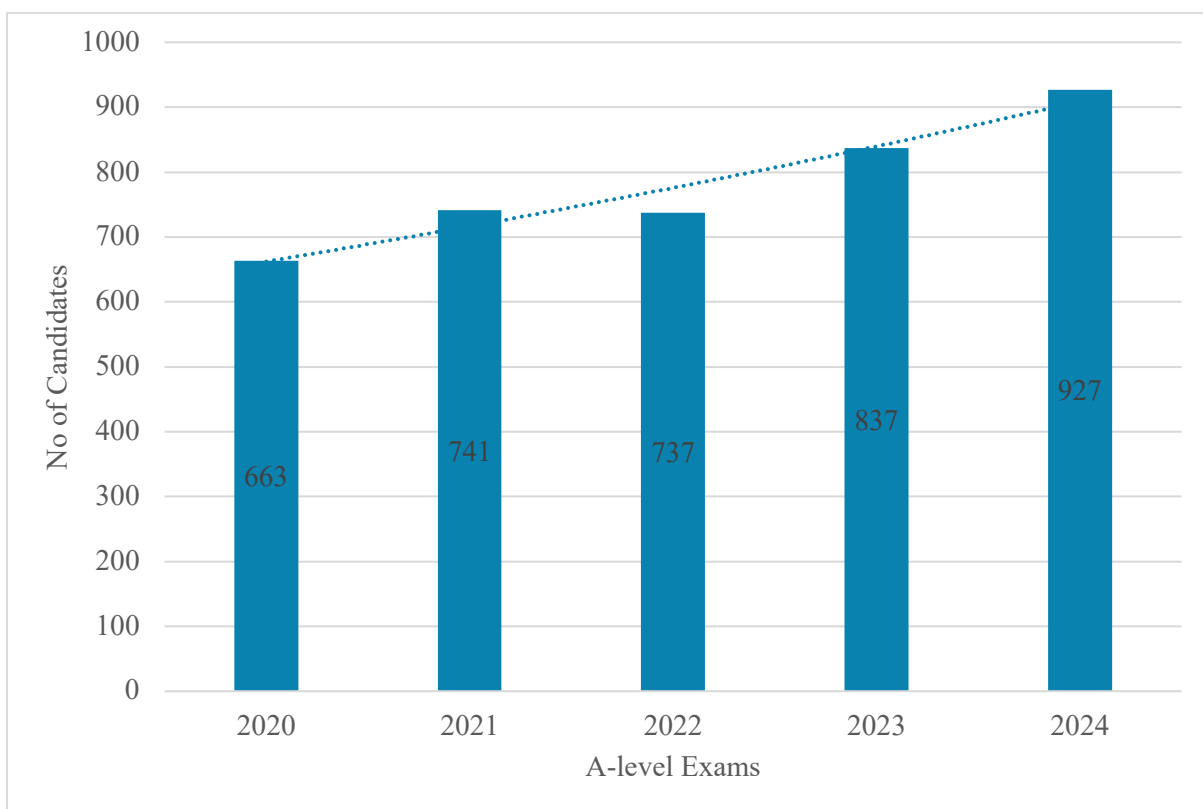


Table 1. Number of people taking the Polish A-level exam.¹⁴

4. Specification - A-level Polish 7687

Each specification carries its unique number. The number of the specification for Polish as a foreign language at A-level level in effect as of 2018 is 7687. The Polish language

¹⁴ The data is based on AQA examination statistics. Source: AQA. *Results Statistics Archive*. 2024, <https://www.aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/results-days/results-statistics/results-statistics-archive>.

specification is divided into five main sections: (i) introduction, (ii) specification at a glance, (iii) subject content, (iv) scheme of assessment, and (v) general administration. The A-level Polish course should be based on specification number 7687– the link to the specification *A-level Polish 7687* can be found [here](#).

4.1. Subject Content

The A-level 7687 specification for Polish as a foreign language clearly defines learning content focused on two themes (see 4.1.1, literature and film (see 4.1.2), grammar (see 4.1.3), a research project (see 4.1.4), and communication strategies.

4.1.1. Themes

The A-level specification covers two themes: social issues and trends and political and artistic culture in Poland.

Social issues feature aspects of Polish society in the past and current trends, such as changing roles within the family, the generational gap, traditional and modern values, the evolution of the digital world, the impact of the internet, social media and digitalisation. The second theme concerns social issues such as social diversity, mobility, education, people on the margins of society, tolerance, and emigration's impact on Polish society.

Political and artistic culture includes an analysis of festivals, traditions, regional heritage, and Polish cultural life – cinema, art and music. In terms of politics, Poland's role in the European Union, the benefits and challenges of EU membership, young people's involvement in politics, and their priorities and values are covered. Both themes require working with various sources to better grasp Poland's contemporary and historical social, cultural and political features (see Table 2 for a graphical presentation of the thematic circles).

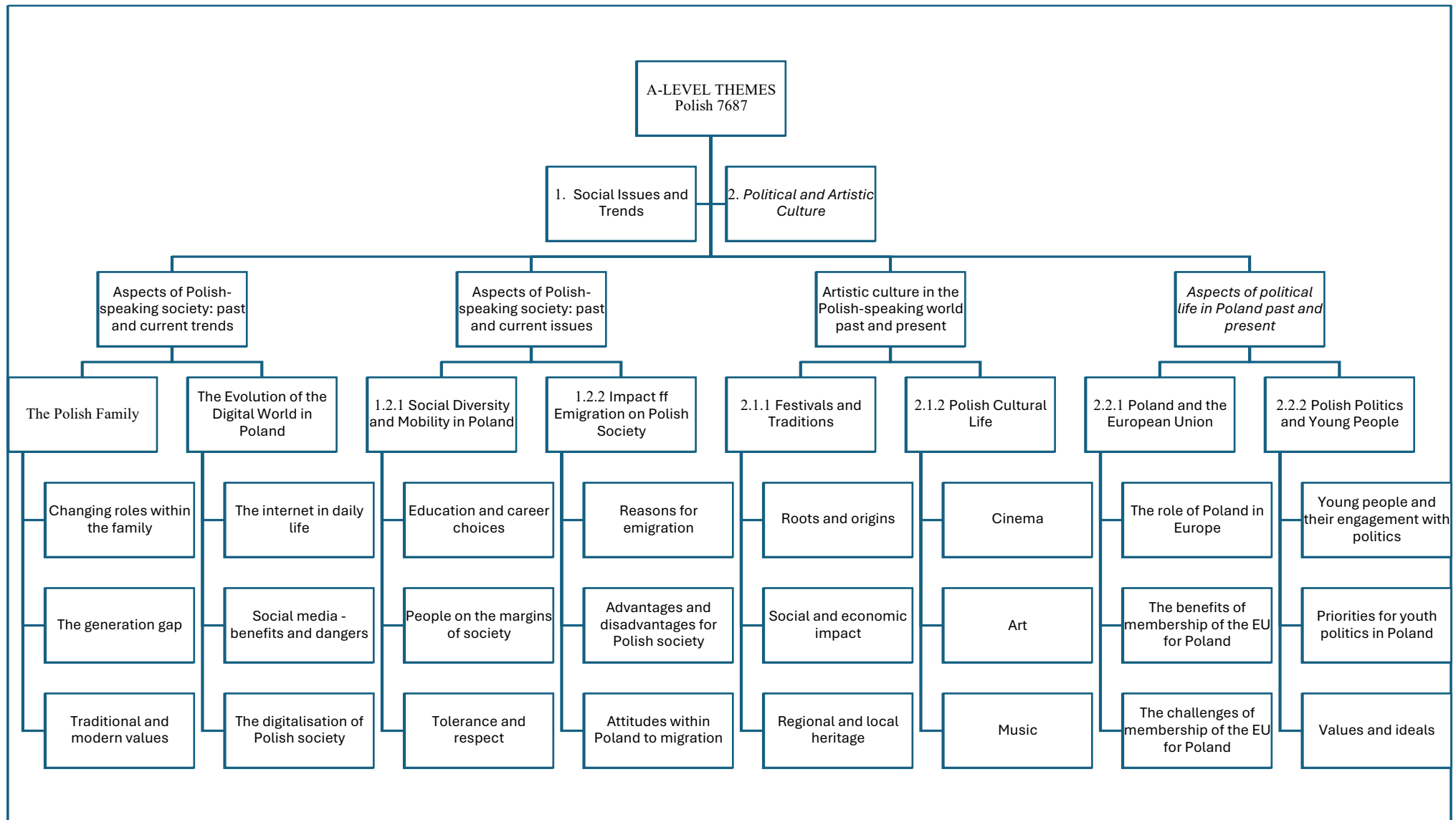


Table 2. Overview of the content of the examination circles within the core curriculum at A-level in Polish (AQA 2017: 12-16)

4.1.2. Literature and film

As part of the Polish language A-level exam, those taking the exam must study two books or one book and one film. Two films cannot be selected. Literature choices include *Tango* by Sławomir Mrożek, two short stories by Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz which count as one reading *Panny z Wilka* and *Brzezina*, as well as *Popiół i diament* by Jerzy Andrzejewski. Among the films to be selected are *Katyń*, directed by Andrzej Wajda, and *Przypadek*, directed by Krzysztof Kieślowski. Familiarity and comprehension, evaluation and interpretation of a selection of literature and film items is being tested by Paper 2 (see 5.2).

4.1.3. Grammar

The Exam Board has also prepared requirements for grammatical topics applicable to each exam (see Table 3). A list of the required grammatical content is available [here](#). Candidates for the A-level exam are expected to have studied the grammar and language structures during the course. Knowledge of the grammar and structures specified for A-level level is expected and is available [here](#).

4.1.4. Research project

One of the assignments in the Polish language A-level exam is a research project, which is examined in Paper 1 (see 4.1). The research project offers candidates the opportunity to explore one of four research topics: Poland during the communist era, racism in Poland, tourism in Poland and the resistance movement in Poland during the World War II.

Each research topic contains three subcategories to be explored and examined autonomously and in-depth: the first topic is Poland under communism, looking at the impact on everyday life, the influence of the Catholic Church and the Solidarity movement. The second research topic is about racism in Poland, with particular attention to its origins, victims and the fight against racism. The third research topic covers tourism in Poland, including the development of tourist infrastructure, popular tourist sites/places of interest and regional gastronomy. The fourth research topic

focuses on the resistance movement in Poland during the World War II, analysing national liberation movements, forms of resistance plus actions and operational see Table 3.

<u>1. SOCIAL ISSUES AND TRENDS</u>	<u>2. POLITICAL AND ARTISTIC CULTURE</u>	<u>3. GRAMMAR</u>	<u>4. RESEARCH PROJECT</u> (one to choose)
<i>Theme 1.1 Aspects of Polish-speaking society: past and current trends</i>	<i>Theme 2.1 Artistic culture in the Polish-speaking world past and present</i>	3.1 NOUNS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender Singular and plural forms Declension/cases Agreement 	4.1. POLAND DURING THE COMMUNIST ERA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on daily life Influence of the Catholic Church The Solidarity movement
THE POLISH FAMILY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing roles within the family The generation gap Traditional and modern values 	FESTIVALS AND TRADITIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roots and origins Social and economic impact Regional and local heritage 	3.2. PRONOUNS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declensions Personal, Demonstrative, Possessive, Numeral, Reflexive Forms of address 	
THE EVOLUTION OF THE DIGITAL WORLD IN POLAND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The internet in daily life Social media - benefits and dangers The digitalisation of Polish society 	POLISH CULTURAL LIFE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cinema Art Music 	3.3. ADJECTIVES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender Agreement Declensions Comparative and Superlative Interrogative and Possessive 	4.2. RACISM IN POLAND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Origins of racism Victims of racism The fight against racism
<i>Theme 1.2 Aspects of Polish-speaking society: past and current issues</i>	<i>Theme 2.2. Aspects of political life in Poland past and present</i>	3.4. ADVERBS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparison Interrogative 	4.3. TOURISM IN POLAND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of a tourist infrastructure Popular tourist sites/places of interest Regional gastronomy
SOCIAL DIVERSITY AND MOBILITY IN POLAND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education and career choices People on the margins of society Tolerance and respect 	POLAND AND THE EUROPEAN UNION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The role of Poland in Europe The benefits of membership of the EU for Poland The challenges of membership of the EU for Poland 	3.5. VERBS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infinitive Tenses: present, past and future Aspects: imperfective, perfective Interrogative, Impersonal and Negation forms Imperative, Conditional Participles Active, Passive Voice Prefixes 	4.4. THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT IN POLAND DURING WORLD WAR II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resistance organisations Forms of resistance Actions and operations
IMPACT OF EMIGRATION ON POLISH SOCIETY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasons for emigration Advantages and disadvantages for Polish society Attitudes within Poland to migration 	POLISH POLITICS AND YOUNG PEOPLE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people and their engagement with politics Priorities for youth politics in Poland Values and ideals 	3.6. INDIRECT/DIRECT SPEECH	
5. LITERARY TEXTS AND FILMS either two texts or one text and one film)	5.1. Literary texts to choose from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sławomir Mrożek – <i>Tango</i> Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz – <i>Panny z Wilka</i> and <i>Brzezina</i> Jerzy Andrzejewski – <i>Popiół i diament</i> 	3.7. PREPOSITIONS	
		3.8. CONJUNCTIONS	
		3.9. NUMBERS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cardinal, Ordinal, Indefinite, Collective, Fractions 	
		3.10. QUANTITY AND EXPRESSIONS OF TIME	
		3.11. SYNTAX	
		5.2. Films to choose from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Andrzej Wajda – <i>Katyń</i> (2007) Krzysztof Kieślowski – <i>Przypadek</i> (1981) 	

Table 3. Overview of specific content within the specification at [A-level in Polish](#) (AQA 2017: 12-16) Translation and design of own tables - Kozińska

5. Examination structure

The Polish language A-level exam consists of three Papers. The Polish language Unlike the GCSE and other A-level exams in modern languages, a-level exam does not have an oral component. All three examination papers are in written form. Polish language A-level examinations are held annually in the summer session between May and June. You may not use a dictionary when solving the exam tasks, nor may you use your notes.

	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3
Duration	2 hours 30 minutes	2 hours	2 hours 30 minutes
Number of points	85 marks	80 marks	75 marks
	$85 \times 2 = 170$	$80 \times 1 = 80$	$75 \times 2 = 150$
Assessment weightings	42,5%	20%	37,5%
Number of tasks	6 tasks	2 tasks	6 tasks
Overview	Section A: Reading comprehension and Translation Section B: Research Project	Two essays on a selection of two written texts or a text and a film	Section A: Listening comprehension Section B: Translation Section C: Multi-skilled Task

Table 4. A review of the content of the Polish language A-level Paper.

It is worth noting that the number of points awarded on Papers 1 and 3 is doubled. As a result, the maximum number of points to be awarded is added up to 400 points. The following sections focus on covering the structure of the Paper.

5.1. Paper 1

Reading and Writing. The exam lasts 2 hours and 30 minutes, and the maximum number of points to be achieved is 85. The Paper contains nine tasks, of which each candidate must complete six. The Paper is divided into two sections:

Section A contains five tasks: three reading comprehension tasks (true/false, open-ended tasks), one task that requires a summary of a text fragment and a translation task.

Section B consists of writing an essay on a topic chosen from a list of Research Projects. The candidate is given a source text related to the chosen project topic and writes an essay answering the project question based on this and their knowledge.

The AQA exam board suggests an hour and fifteen minutes for each section. Instructions are expressed in both Polish and English. All questions apart from instruction five – the English translation – should be answered in Polish. There is no access to a dictionary or your own notes in the exam. The task texts in Section B cover the Themes contained in Table 2.

A sample paper for exam Paper 1 at A-level can be found [here](#).

The answer key for the sample A-level exam Paper 1 can be found [here](#).

5.2. Paper 2 Writing

The exam lasts 2 hours, and the maximum number of points to be awarded is 80, with 40 points for each essay. Each candidate must write two essays on two texts or one text and one film from the list of recommended texts and films (see 4.1.2). Each essay should be approximately 300 words in length, but candidates can write any length they wish, as regardless of the length, the entire paper written for the exam is assessed. For each text and film, the exam board prepares two exam questions so that candidates can choose those topics that are more familiar to them. Answers to the questions should demonstrate a critical and analytical response to the issues raised by the works

studied. Candidates should be able to provide feedback on, for example, literary techniques or camera work in the case of films. One cannot answer two questions about the same literary or cinematic work.

A sample paper for exam Paper 2 at A-level can be found [here](#).

The answer key for the sample A-level exam Paper 2 can be found [here](#).

5.3. Paper 3 Listening, reading and writing

The exam lasts 2 hours and 30 minutes, and the maximum number of points to be achieved is 75. The Paper contains six tasks and three sections. The exam board suggests spending around 45 minutes on Section A - i.e. listening - and the remaining 1 hour and 45 minutes on Sections B and C.

Section A tests listening skills with understanding and includes a cross-section of questions to be answered in Polish or non-verbally. In addition to the standard methods of testing listening, as in Paper 1, there is a summary (this time of the text listened to). During the entire exam, the candidates can monitor their recording, i.e. stop, rewind or listen to it several times at any time.

Section B contains a translation task from English into Polish of a fragment of a text (minimum 100 words) on a topic from the Themes identified in the specification. The Polish-language introductory text, which contains some of the vocabulary that can be used to translate the text, makes it easier for candidates.

Section C of the exam paper involves multiple language skills and is an attempt to compensate for the lack of an oral component in the modern language exam paper, as the speaking exam is only proposed for German, Spanish and French. It consists of three stages: 1. reading a fragment of a text on a given topic, 2. listening to a recording on the same topic and then, based on these two source texts, writing an essay of approximately 200 words.¹⁵

¹⁵ Along with the research project.

A sample paper for exam Paper 3 at A-level can be found [here](#).

A recording for exam Paper 3 at A-level can be found [here](#).

The answer key for the sample A-level exam Paper 3 can be found [here](#).

6. Assessment objectives

At A-level, testing is based on four assessment objectives (AOs). The Examination Board noted that the examination in question does not fall under the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages language proficiency scale,^{16,17}.

CLARIFICATION OF ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES / EXPECTED SKILLS		
Assessment objectives	Skills	Weight
A01	Understand and respond in writing to spoken language drawn from a variety of sources.	20%
A02	Understand and respond in writing to written language drawn from a variety of sources.	30%
A03	Manipulate the language accurately, in written form, using a range of lexis and structure.	30%
A04	Show knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically and analytically to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken.	20%

Table 5. Explanation of assessment objectives based on the A-level syllabus Polish 7686¹⁸

Examination results are presented on a six-point scale using the letters of the alphabet, where A* is the highest mark and E is the lowest mark (A* > A > B > C > D > E). A mark of U indicates no classification and failure to achieve a qualification at the passed level.

At A-level, each mark from A to E indicates a pass in the exam, but each mark has a different value of UCAS points, considered for university entry.¹⁹

¹⁶ Council of Europe (2001) The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment. Online edition: "https://rm.coe.int/1680459f97 [accessed: 15th May 2024]"

¹⁷ Source: <https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/languages/AQA-MFL-AS-A-FAQ.PDF> [accessed: 4th November 2024].

¹⁸ Kozińska, M. (2022) 'Zrozumieć A-level Polish, czyli o angielskiej maturze z języka polskiego jako obcego', *Języki Obce w Szkole*, (2/2022), pp. 107–116. Available at: <https://doi.org/DOI:10.47050/jows.2022.1.107-116>.

¹⁹ UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) is the UK organisation that manages the higher education admissions process, you can read more about the organisation [here](#).

Here's how A-level marks translate into UCAS points:

- A*: 56 marks UCAS
- A: 48 marks UCAS
- B: 40 marks UCAS
- C: 32 marks UCAS
- D: 24 marks UCAS
- E: 16 marks UCAS

UCAS points are crucial when applying to UK universities, as each university may require a different number of points depending on the prestige and popularity of the course. Therefore, a higher mark at A-level not only demonstrates a better understanding of the material, but also increases the chances of admission to your dream university.²⁰

²⁰ Source: UCAS. 'UCAS Tariff Points'. UCAS, <https://www.ucas.com/applying-you-apply/what-and-where-study/entry-requirements/ucas-tariff-points> [dostęp: 14 października 2024 r.].

6.1.1. How many marks should you get for the highest grade?

It is worth noting that grade boundaries may vary slightly between different exam series, depending on factors such as the papers' difficulty. Table 6 illustrates these slight differences in the mark thresholds between 2020 and 2024, i.e. in 2024, 322 points out of a possible 400 were required for the highest mark.

EXAM SERIES	A*	A	B	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF MARKS TO BE SCORED
2021	327	267	234	400
2022	296	250	212	
2023	317	257	221	
2024	322	265	227	

Table 6. The table shows the number of points to be gained for the three highest assessed grades - A*, A and B between 2021 and 2024²¹

6.1.2. Polish language A-level results so far

Candidates taking the Polish language A-level exams are generally very well prepared and achieve high grades. In 2024, as many as 81.2% of candidates received the mark B or above²².

6.1.3. Where and when can I receive my A-level exam results?

A-level exam results can be collected on the day the results are announced in August at the exam centre where the exam was taken. A-level exam results are available each year in the first half of August. The date of the announcement of the results is posted annually [here](#).

²¹ Statistical data sources [accessed: 20/09/2024]:

2021: https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/over/stat_pdf/AQA-A-LEVEL-GDE-BDY-NOV-2021.XLSX

2022: https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/over/stat_pdf/AQA-A-LEVEL-GDE-BDY-JUN-2022.PDF

2023: https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/over/stat_pdf/AQA-A-LEVEL-GDE-BDY-JUN-2023.PDF

2024: https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/over/stat_pdf/AQA-A-LEVEL-GDE-BDY-JUN-2024.PDF

²² Source: https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/over/stat_pdf/AQA-A-LEVEL-STATS-JUN-2024.PDF [accessed: 20 September 2024]

7. The benefits of A-level in Polish

According to information provided on the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA) website, passing three A-level exams in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland confirms the attainment of secondary education outside Poland. These qualifications also serve as the basis for applying for undergraduate and integrated master's degree programmes.

More details can be found [here](#).

Passing the A-level exam in Polish with a good grade is a significant advantage when applying for university admission. It demonstrates the candidate's linguistic abilities, reflecting their broad cognitive horizons and capacity to engage with academic literature in more than one language. Such a qualification in an additional language highlights an interdisciplinary approach to education and an openness to diverse cultures.

Obtaining an A-level in Polish enables students to master the language at a level that allows for the confident use of formal Polish, which is essential for conducting business and professional communication. An A-level in Polish also facilitates more profound engagement with discussions on Polish literature, art, cinema, and other cultural aspects. Moreover, it provides an opportunity to learn and understand Polish history, from World War II and the communist era to contemporary times, offering better insight into events shaping Polish society and modern Europe.

Potential career paths after obtaining an A-level in Polish include areas such as translation, international project management, tourist guiding, teaching, journalism, foreign service, editing, international relations, politics, and many more. Proficiency in an additional language is particularly valuable in the era of globalisation, where international collaboration and communication are key to the development of many industries. This skill makes establishing connections, building business relationships, and understanding diverse cultures easier, significantly enhancing prospects for professional success.

8. Final Information

The information in this A-level Guide is current at the time of publication. Still, it may be subject to obsolescence with the dynamically changing examination situation and should be reviewed regularly by those who use it. The author and the publishers of the A-level Guide shall not be liable arising from the use of the information contained herein. Any clarification regarding the exams should be sought from your exam centre and directly from [AQA at the website](#), or by calling 01423 534 381 or mfl@aqa.org.uk.



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