# GCSE

# **ITALIAN**

8633/LH: Listening (Higher)
Report on the Examination

8633
November 2020

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**General Introduction to the November Series**

This has been an unusual exam series in many ways. Entry patterns have been very different from those normally seen in the summer, and students had a very different experience in preparation for these exams. It is therefore more difficult to make meaningful comparisons between the range of student responses seen in this series and those seen in a normal summer series. The smaller entry also means that there is less evidence available for examiners to comment on.

In this report, senior examiners will summarise the performance of students in this series in a way that is as helpful as possible to teachers preparing future cohorts while taking into account the unusual circumstances and limited evidence available.

**Overview of Entry**

Fewer than 200 students sat the Italian GCSE winter 2020 examination;approximately 6% of the corresponding figure for the summer 2019 series. The students were predominately 16 and 17 year olds, with a few younger ones, presumably sitting it a year early as tends to happen in this subject, with more female students than male, which is a normal centre profile. The standard of work was higher than the usual summer entry with more than 25% of students scoring 45 or more out of 50.

**Comments on Individual Questions**

There are a number of recurring question types on the listening paper which students handle with varying degrees of success. Teachers should ensure that students are well prepared to deal with the demands of each question type.

The questions offering a choice of phrases to complete a sentence were well answered, in both sections A and B, with the exception of Q23.1, where half the students did not make the connection between "l'arrivo di un fiore" and "fiesta del tulipano".

The same is true for the questions involving the selection of a phrase from a list, with only question 16 posing any problems, where almost half the students didn't connect "shopping centre" with "bisogna andare fuori città".

The P; N; P+N opinion question and the PNF time frame question were both handled well, suggesting that students were well prepared.

The three types of open response questions were all less successfully handled by many of the students.

The two-mark questions whereby students had to register two problems and/or advantages were challenging although most students did score one mark on these.  Question 3.2 caused some difficulty with students struggling to express in English the phrase "non si sviluppa la memoria e la creatività del bambino".

The open response to *What/How/Why* questions proved the most challenging of all. Two out of three of these questions were two-mark questions, Q19 and Q20, and although most students scored at least one mark, there was a significant drop in those scoring full marks.

In question 7.1, where the exam question matched the interviewer's question there was a good degree of success.  However where there was a discrepancy between the exam question and interviewer's question as in 7.2 and 7.3, many students struggled to convey the correct information.

The third type of open response question required students to complete a sentence, which was initiated in the question. On the whole students performed better in these than in the other open response questions, although only 40% scored on question 8 where the sentence "the study holidays are aimed at ….", had to be completed. They struggled to articulate in English the phrase "se fin ad oggi non avete avuto successo con i corsi online".

Overall, the two-mark questions showed the widest spread of marks, with the vast majority of students scoring one mark with a significant drop off on the second mark.  This would suggest that identifying, retaining and communicating two pieces of information from one source is much more cognitively demanding than the one-mark questions.

Surprisingly, perhaps, the questions that were handled least well overall were some of the overlap questions.

Two of these caused no problems (Q2 and Q22) but fewer than half of the students scored full marks on question 1, a two-mark question which required students to identify advantages and problems and to then construct their own responses.  The word "mais" was interpreted as *mice* by a number of students which caused confusion.

Another overlap question which caused some difficulty was question 21, where many students failed to make the connection between "offrono un'esperienza lavorativa in Italia" with "si impara un lavoro in un hotel del luogo".

**Concluding Remarks**

Overall this paper was very well handled, reflecting a high calibre of student entry. It is broadly comparably to the Summer 2019 series, offering similar cognitive challenges through a broad range of question types and contexts. As an increasing bank of past papers develops in this new examination format, students will grow in confidence in dealing with the demands of the different question types.  Teachers would do well to ensure that open response questions are well rehearsed, if the top grades are to be secured.

**Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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