



GCSE ITALIAN

8633/RH Reading Higher Tier
Report on the Examination

8633
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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

Due to the very low number of entries, it seemed superfluous to comment on certain questions where nothing noteworthy came to light; therefore, comments have been made only for those questions where a meaningful analysis was possible. Entries were very low, at less than a tenth of what we would normally have in Italian; across those entries, the paper went fairly well, but this might not be very indicative due to the fact that the majority of those who did sit the autumn series were of a very high ability and there is some indication that many may have been native or near native speakers.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

Question 1

This first question on the paper was a literary adaptation from Carlo Collodi, and was dealt with extremely well on the whole. The majority did not get confused with the usual demanding question of discerning between false/not in the text. The only question with a lower success rate was 1.5, where only 68% answered correctly.

Question 2

Darwin's thoughts on marriage generated very interesting responses from the students; the majority did very well in the first part of the question, and were able to identify both advantages of marriage. On the other hand, the disadvantages, of which were three, were not identified so easily. Most of the students managed to pinpoint freedom, however they lost marks for the other two: firstly, the vast majority seemed unaware of the 2 meanings of the word "la spesa", and all translated it as the grocery shopping instead of "the expense", which was needed in this context. The second mistake was surprising at higher tier, the vast majority of students understood "parenti" as parents, rather than relatives. Less than a third of the students scored 3 out of 3 in this part of the question.

Question 6

Questions dealing with news extracts are usually demanding and indeed proved challenging this year as well. Students dealt better with the first news item, about modern women and cooking, as the mark scheme was quite flexible here and allowed for a variety of responses/phrasing. The second news item was not difficult to understand, however a lack of precision led students to lose marks here. Students were required to pay particular attention to question items where the word **exactly** is used, in bold, and they were expected to be as detailed as possible in their responses; most students did appear to understand some of what was required, but failed to convey both elements in their answer, which were needed for the mark: namely, the majority of their free time, and the inappropriateness of the programs. Often students answered correctly but not precisely enough, with statements such as “kids watch tv programs not for them”, which did not qualify for the mark. Only 37% gained the mark for question 6.2.

Question 7

This question presents some similarities to the previous one, in that students lost marks when they weren't precise in their answers. Some parts of this question were well answered, however in other parts students simply rephrased the question again. For example, in 7.1 many students answered “what do we know about her interest in how things work?” with “she isn't interested in how things work”, rather than providing the answer from the text which was “she isn't interested in science experiments”. It is a very subtle re-phrasing but it made all the difference in gaining or losing the mark. The exact same problem presented itself with question 7.3, where students again repeated the question as a statement “she is very willing to share her passion”. Only 50% of the students gained the mark here.

Question 8

This adaptation from Pirandello's *Uno, Nessuno e Centomila* was a question in common with the Foundation paper, and was perhaps the most successful of this tier as around 80% of the students achieved full marks, and 93% attained 3 out of the 4 available marks.

Question 9

Students were required to identify the 3 time frames here, and did so extremely successfully, over 85% achieved full marks.

Section C- Translation

Question 12

The translation this year was dealt with well by students, 36% scored full marks and 71% scored at least 8 out of 9. The second part of the translation was usually accurate, with most mistakes occurring in the first part.

A common structure which poses problems is the translation of the present continuous, namely the Italian “present tense + da...time frame” which is often translated as present tense + from in English; this structure also appeared in the 2019 translation, and yet still posed some problems on this occasion, with students unaware of how to express this in the correct tense in English. Strangely enough, many students also lost marks for translating “noioso” as annoying rather than boring; this seems an unlikely mistake at Higher Tier, but it occurred in quite a few cases.

These were in general the only two sections of the translation which posed problems.

Concluding Remarks

As stated in the introduction, this was a very successful paper. Students were able to deal with the challenging elements that are part of the reading exam, namely the literary extracts and the translation. The longer passages were also dealt with well. However, comments on this series should be considered in the context of this very unusual year, where it was clearly more difficult to produce meaningful analysis due to the very small number of entries, and the different type of cohort which sat this examination.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.