



GCSE

ITALIAN

8633/WH Writing Higher Tier
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

The entry for the Higher tier was fairly low compared with the numbers usually seen in the summer series, however the calibre of the students sitting this examination was strong. The mark distribution shows a strong cohort with very few students at lower marks, and the mean mark for the whole paper is very similar to that of 2019 at 46.8. Where students did not succeed in reaching full marks was mainly due to the misinterpretation or omission of the bullet points which affected the content marks. With some students the uncertainty of accurate verb construction or the lack of using a range of tenses affected communication and variety. However, there were a number of students who were able to use a range of tenses and the range of complex language was impressive, resulting in coherent and fluent pieces of writing. On the whole, the word count was adhered to.

Comments on Individual Questions

Questions 1.1 and 1.2

Question 1.1, based on the Travel and Tourism topic, proved more popular and was answered more successfully than 1.2. Although most students had not been on holiday in 2020, most made reference to the global pandemic and there were a few instances where students wrote extensively for the fourth bullet point which asked about an ideal holiday. Quite a few students misinterpreted the first bullet point which asked specifically about a *favourite* holiday. The bullet point is not answered if students simply write about holidays in general without mentioning *why* the holidays were special or favourite. Similarly, in question 1.2, bullet point one which asked about a favourite celebration, some students wrote about celebrations in general without saying which one was their favourite. As a result, the bullet point was not answered, affecting the number of marks they could achieve for Content. The remainder of the bullet points were answered reasonably well with many making sure that opinions were expressed.

Students who scored well on Content, followed the structure of the bullet points - their work was well thought out and clear. Evidence of basic note making next to the bullet points informed the structure of the piece which was welcome as one could clearly see the students' thought process and the tenses they intended to use. It is good advice to inform students that if they wish to cross out words/sections written, to simply put a line through so that it is still legible. Reading crossed out segments at times helps the examiner with any ambiguity the piece might otherwise create. A point to be encouraged is to use the rubric to start their answer such as, 'le mie vacanze preferite sono....,' 'un viaggio che è andato male era...,' 'la mia festa preferita è..'

Questions 2.1 and 2.2

Question 2.2 was a more popular choice amongst students, but some did not answer the first bullet point fully as they wrote about exams in general but not about the *importance* of exams. More confident and clear answers were expressed in the second bullet point regarding an ideal job. Many used the structure *mi piacerebbe* followed by the infinitive and this was also a clear beginning to the second bullet point. In question 2.1, second bullet point, some students missed the point of *future* lifestyle plans, hence missing out on a higher Content mark. Some good answers for the bullet point regarding the avoidance of stress, included linking healthy eating and looking after one's health during exam time.

Compared to the 2019 series, students managed to express opinions and justifications more clearly, although at times justifications were less succinctly expressed and examiners had to re-read the piece several times and search for them. It is prudent to train students to express an opinion clearly and follow it immediately with a justification, therefore eliminating any ambiguity.

Overall quality of language for Questions 1 and 2.

The key features of the criteria for assessment here are variety of language, attempts at complexity, time frames and accuracy.

- Variety of language – the range of vocabulary used in response to both questions was appropriate and reasonably extensive. *Mi piace* and *preferisco* were quite often used to indicate liking or preference.
- Attempts at complexity – there were some well worked longer sentences using a variety of connectives such as *e*, *ma*, *comunque*, *poi* and *però*. However the lack of accent on **però** affected communication – a very common mistake in this series.
- Time frames – most students were able to make an attempt at all three time frames and the bullet points were designed to encourage this.
- Accuracy – most students were able to write accurately in the present tense using the first and third person singular. There were however six common issues:
 - The use of Spanish crept in considerably in this series with words such as *cuando* and *cuesto* appearing instead of *quando* and *questo*.
 - The omission of the accent on 'è' when required is a major error as it changes the meaning of the sentence.
 - The mis-use of the prepositions **a** and **in** front of countries and cities.
 - Wrong use of : *a /ha o/ho*
 - Incorrect use of vocabulary, eg: **spendere tempo**; **passare** un esame; **attendo** una scuola; **applicare** ad un'università; fare un'**applicazione**.
 - Lack of accents changing the meaning of a word or verb: **sara** instead of **sarà**
 - Inconsistency in accurate adjectival agreements,

Question 3

Some common issues with the translation were:

- Missing accents
- Not knowing the vocabulary for sports centre, mark and/or mobile phone
- Using plurals where it should be singular, eg *maestri* instead of *maestro*
- Spanish-esque spellings such as *sabado* instead of *sabato*
- Incorrect construction of the perfect tense, *mia datto* instead of *mi ha dato*.

Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures

As in series 2019, there were a considerable number of responses or part responses in Spanish rather than in Italian. Minor errors did not prevent marks being awarded for conveying key messages provided they were communicated. However, when awarding marks for application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures, inaccurate language was considered. Although not exclusive, the vocabulary used in translations is largely taken from the vocabulary lists in the specification, therefore students do need to have a sound knowledge of these words.

Concluding Remarks

On the whole students were prepared well in choosing themes in which they were confident, resulting in clear and concise pieces. The output was in line with what students produced in the 2019 series. Not reading the bullet points carefully in both questions 1 and 2 was the downfall of some and this resulted in their missing out on full marks on Content. A few students answered all four choice questions - only two were needed. This often resulted in work being rushed since students were answering all four questions in the time provided as opposed to two; it is important that rubrics are read carefully.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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