GCSE

ITALIAN

8633/RH: Reading Higher
Report on the Examination

8633
June 2022

Version: 1.0

General comments

Notwithstanding the last 2 years of disruption due to the Coronavirus pandemic, performance on this paper was good; when compared to 2019 (which is the last time public examinations were properly conducted), for the most part, students attempted logical, coherent answers to most of the questions. In 2019, some more challenging questions were occasionally left unanswered or were total guesses, so considering this cohort's particular difficulties and challenges, they did very well in this paper.
Students did particularly well in the two literary questions (question 1 adapted from Elena Ferrante's *L'Amica Geniale* and question 8 from Luigi Pirandello's *Amicissimi*), showing an increased ability to deal with this type of text compared with similar questions in 2019. This cohort also did well in the translation altough they struggled to accurately convey the present perfect structure. The most challenging question in the paper was question 6 on voluteering, pinpointing perhaps that social issues remains a daunting topic for some; on average students only scored about 50% across all 3 parts of that question.

Section A – Questions and answers in English

Question 1

The literary question, an adaptation from Elena Ferrante's *L'amica genial,* was dealt with quite well; over 81% scored full marks, which is very encouraging because the true / false / not in the text format often poses difficulties but this year, for the first time, students coped well with both aspects of this challenging question.

Question 2

This question was on new technologies, a popular topic amongst students, however the questionnaire format often puts students off their stride. This year they dealt with most parts of the question well (perhaps they could relate to it, as it described young people's excessive use of the internet). The exception was part 2.3 where only half of the cohort answered correctly; for the most part students were not far from the correct answer, with many stating that Tommaso spends all or most of his free time on the internet This was not precise enough however, as the mark scheme explicitly required the element of being bored without the internet.

Question 3

Students performed reasonably well in all parts of this question, despite this being one of the more challenging GCSE topics (healthy lifestyle and social issues). It contained some challenging vocabulary such as *donne incinte* and *norme in vigore* but also included statistics which perhaps helped some students find the text more accessible.
Across all parts of the question most students scored around 85%, with 79% accessing full marks which is very good considering the difficulty of this topic.

Question 4

This question was not as easy as it initially appeared. The topic of sport is usually accessible and popular due to the high number of cognates however the questions here were quite similar and

required the students to really look for the details required. There were some pleasingly high scores, for example over 95% of students gained the marks for 4.4 and 4.5. Only 64% answered correctly for question 4.2 however; most of the texts contained some negative opinion related to sport, which made it harder to identify which one specifically did not like sport due to not being good at it.

Question 5

This was without doubt one of the most challenging questions on the paper, requiring students not only to understand the text on holidays but also to have good knowledge and understanding of tenses so as to be able to fill in the gaps with the correct words. Students were required to distinguish between *passato prossimo* and *imperfetto*, as well as to be familiar with the correct agreement of the past participle in the context provided. Some of the choices were not straighforward (eg *trascorso*); indeed, full marks were achieved by fewer than 60% of students, making this one of the most significant questions to really identify students of Higher tier calibre.

Question 6

This was one of the least successful questions on the paper: social issues is always a tricky topic, even in normal circumstances, and can often present more difficult vocabulary. However there were a high number of cognates in the text, which were intended to render it less difficult for some. Students tended to lose marks for giving rushed responses, lifted from the text; for example in 6.1 many wrote that the appeal of *volontourism* is 'an adventure abroad' rather than explicitly stating that it allows one to combine travel and volunteering.
The most challenging part of this question where only 41% of students gained the mark was 6.3; here students, though not completely off track, often phrased their answer poorly in English, with statements like 'help in their original community' which again is lifted straight from the text and actually conveys little meaning in English. What was actually required was: 'help in the community they are from'.

Question 7

This question on environmental issues was quite successful, particularly the first half which dealt with Luisa's actions to help the environment, while the question about Paolo proved much more challenging, particularly question 7.3 which was the most difficult in the whole paper with only 33% of students scoring the mark.
Some students were unclear on the difference between being a vegan and being vegetarian, and did not score a mark for 7.1 for stating that Luisa decided to become vegetarian (or similarly, they wrote that she gave up meat, rather than gave up all animal products).
Question 7.3 was answered correctly by most, though in less detail than was required. Many students did understand that Paolo buys fruit from the greengrocer's rather than the supermarket, (this was the most common answer and was not false), but did not gain the mark as their answers included no reference to the absence of plastic packaging around the fruit, which was the key element required to gain the mark in this question.
For future reference, students should be reminded to pay particular attention when the words they require in their responses appear in the question; in Higher tier, this will invariably indicate a need for precision and attention to detail which they should convey in their answers in order to to gain the marks. It is not uncommon for students to miss out on marks, not because they have

completely misunderstood but because they have not provided all the details required in their responses.

Section B – Questions and answers in Italian

Question 8

This adaptation from Luigi Pirandello's "*Amicissimi*" was very well dealt with, in fact more than 87% of students scored full marks.

Although the text was not without difficulty, the content was quite accessible as was the nature of the questions (multiple choice), making this the most successful question on this Higher tier paper. This is a positive outcome indeed considering literary extracts are usually feared by students who consider them obscure and difficult to deal with due to the cross-topic nature of the texts.

Question 9

Question 9 required students to identify the 3 different time frames thus rendering the recognition of vocabulary and grammatical structures more challenging. This question appeared in both the Higher and Foundation tiers and Higher tier students dealt with it very well with over 83% scoring full marks.

Question 10

This text about Ferragosto was not too challenging at this level in the sense that Italian customs and holidays are now taught as part of the syllabus for this examination, so the majority of students are likely to be familiar with this Italian celebration. However, the last 2 years will have undoubtedly had an impact on how much time teachers were able to dedicate to the study of this particular topic, so those students who did examine the text closely would have noticed the questions which required them to think particularly carefully about their responses.

To be more specific, 55% of this cohort scored all 4 marks but many others gained only 3 marks as they selected C ('*importante per gli animali'),* as one of their answers because in the text they saw a reference to '*cavalli e altri animali'.*

Question 11

The true / false / not mentioned in text question style is often unpopular and not always successful with students, but that was not the case this year and the success rate here was quite high: 75% of students scored full marks across all 6 parts of this question.

It is particularly noteworthy that the "not mentioned" answers which are usually the challenging ones were dealt with very well (91% answered correctly on 11.2 for example), but questions 11.3 (false) and 11.5 (true) had the lowest success rate.

Section C - Translation

Question 12

Overall, the translation was dealt with very well by students, although only 8% gained full marks. This was mainly due to the incorrect translation of the present perfect tense with either present or past tense structures.

Section 1
The most common overall error in this question this summer was the translation of '*da cinque anni abito'* with 'I live or I lived since 5 years' rather than 'I've been living for 5 years'.
'I have lived for 5 years' was accepted, however teachers are advised to reinforce the use of the *da* + present tense construction carefully in future because it is frequently translated incorrectly by students.
The other striking feature of this section of the translation was the incorrect translation (by a great many students) of the word *paese* with 'town' instead of 'village' or 'country'. Context is extremely important when translating the word *paese* so although a small number of students managed to translate the present perfect structure correctly, several then lost the mark for translating *paese* incorrectly. This explains why only 8% of this cohort scored full marks for question 12, in contrast with 20% in 2019, even though that was the first year of the new specification.

Section 2
This section posed no issues and was well translated by the vast majority of students.

Section 3
This section was quite successful overall but occasionally students lost the mark for clumsy translations of *'non vado d'accordo con mia madre'* with 'I don't agree' or 'I'm not in agreement with my mother', neither of which were awarded a mark.
A minority of students were also unfamiliar with the word *purtroppo* and did not even attempt it, thus failing to score marks for that entire section.

Section 4
As with the previous section, the vast majority of students demonstrated some understanding of the text in this section but may have lost the mark for omitting or mistranslating the word *'Allora'* at the start.
The mark scheme clearly states that a student can lose a mark for omitting any part of a particular section, however small, so teachers should advise future students to always go over their work with care to ensure that marks awarded for translation are not compromised by any type of omission, however small or insignificant they may consider it to be.

Section 5
This was second part of the translation which posed the most challenges, either because students did not translate the word *presto* as 'soon' (or left it out completely), or because they translated *'dovro' partire'* as 'I will leave' instead of 'I will need to leave' which could have conveyed the same meaning, however in doing so it left out part of the text. The idea of necessity, leaving and the future tense were all required to score the mark here, so once again it is good practice to remind future students that accuracy and precision are both of utmost importance in the translation question .

Section 6
This appeared to be the most straightforward section in the translation and was highly successful; often when students scored only 1 mark out of the possible 12, it was for this chunk of text.

Section 7
The majority of students did well here, but several did not gain the mark for this section as they failed to translate *ancora* as 'yet', so although they demonstrated some understanding here, if they omitted to translate that seemingly insignificant adverb *ancora* they did not score the mark. When it was translated as 'still' instead of 'yet', the mark was awarded, but if no adverb was present then the student scored no marks.

Section 8

This part was correctly translated by most and did not pose particular difficulties; however, a small number of students wrote 'I will find a job' instead of 'I will look for a job' (or I will try to find a job) and lost the mark due to lack of precision.

Section 9
This section, although longer and perhaps a little more complex than others, had a very high degree of success ('here' was not needed for the mark) and students correctly translated the key idea in the future tense.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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