
GCSE ITALIAN

8633/WF: Writing Foundation
Report on the Examination

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General Comments

The quality of work produced for this examination varied according to the question. The paper differentiated very well in that students were able to score marks over a variety of questions. The vast majority of students were entered appropriately for this tier, however as in 2019, a small percentage of students would have benefitted from being entered for the Higher tier. It is important that centres carefully assess students before deciding the entry, particularly if a student has recently arrived from Italy.

The ability to use a range of tenses was evident for the most part and students were also able to express opinions well. Where students failed to score marks, was where inaccuracy caused a delay in communicating messages. This was mainly due to inaccurate verb formation or students misinterpreting or omitting the bullet points in Questions 2 and 4. The suggested word count was, on the whole, adhered to, a large improvement on the 2019 paper.

Question 1

Teachers are reminded that students are required to write four sentences about what is in the photo. Each sentence is marked separately and is worth a maximum of two marks. The best responses included successful use of phrases such as 'c'è', 'ci sono' or 'vedo'. The majority of students dealt well with the content of the photo and knew words such as *riciclaggio/riciclano/stanno riciclando/puliscono*. There were also quite a few physical descriptions of the people in the photo. Care should be taken when talking about the weather. It is acceptable to say 'fa bello/fa brutto/c'è il sole etc,' however avoid commenting on the temperature unless followed by a reason: eg: *fa freddo perché portano un maglione*. One cannot see the temperature in the photo. There were very few instances of students not attempting to write full sentences or not writing anything at all. Where students failed to score marks, it was mainly for the following reasons:

- the accent on the 'e' on 'c'è' was omitted – to avoid this recurrent error a suggestion could be for students to use the phrase: *(nella foto) vedo...*
- the verb 'vado' was used instead of 'vedo,' which although a conjugated verb, made little sense to the sentence
- the use of 'che' and 'ce' instead of 'c'è'
- a statement about the temperature: *fa freddo; fa caldo*
- inaccuracy causing a delay in communication. The main issue here was when students wrote longer sentences than they needed to and often created errors as a result.

Advice to students

- 1) Keep the sentences **simple** to ensure that a clear message is being communicated.
- 2) If you don't know how to conjugate the verb but know the infinitive, use the infinitive.
eg. *una donna riciclare* = 1 mark
- 3) FORGET connectives and longer sentences for this question.
- 4) Don't leave blanks – write at least ONE word.
- 5) Avoid repeating the same piece of information.

Question 2

Teachers are reminded that there are 10 marks for Content and 6 marks for Quality of Language. Students are required to write approximately 40 words in total about four different bullet points. All bullet points are compulsory and must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage of the bullets.

Content

The criteria for assessment address both coverage of the bullet points and clarity of communication. The most successful responses were concise and addressed all bullet points. Students could write anything in relation to each bullet point.

'*La tua città, un attività in centro*' were the most accessible bullet points and students addressed these well. '*Un problema nella tua zona*' and '*il riciclaggio*' were omitted in some cases which limited the marks that could be awarded for Content, as did inaccurate language that led to a delay in communication, and hence 'lapses.' A few students answered bullet points 3 and 4 in the same sentence allowing for only one bullet point to be credited. At times the wording of the bullet point was copied from the rubric and not changed into the first person singular eg. '*La tua città è grande*'. This causes a lapse in understanding. Many students wrote extensively including opinions and various time frames and were therefore given credit for coverage of the required information.

Quality of language

The vast majority of students were able to score three marks and above. There were good attempts at variety, for example using different ways of expressing opinions and different persons of the verb. Where students failed to score marks, it was when verb formations were not accurate, such as just writing the infinitive and when they had attempted to write much more than the 40 words required. This created more scope for error. It is not a requirement for this question that students write in three time frames. The present tense is sufficient.

Advice to students

- Stick to the word limit. Aim to write roughly the number of words required.
- Learn the possessive adjectives and how to change the rubric from the second person singular to the first person singular eg. *tuo* changes to *mio* when writing the answer.
- Mention **ALL** of the bullet points. Attempt to write **something**, such as an opinion for each bullet point. Tick off the bullet points once you have addressed them.
- Only write in the present tense and use simple connectives. Leave the complex sentences for Q4.

Question 3 - Translation

For this question, there are 5 marks for *Conveying key messages* and 5 marks for *Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures*. Given that the level of demand of the messages was aimed at covering grades 1 to 5, the question differentiated well, with all students able to score some marks.

The sentences were divided into 12 key messages, as in the table below.

Conveying key messages

	Message	Main Issues
1	I like school.	Not many issues here – various spellings on <i>scuola</i>
2	I prefer the train	Issues with 'I prefer' – <i>mi(o)preferisco/preferito</i> . Omission of the word <i>treno</i> – or missed out completely
3	because it's fast.	Missing accent on <i>è</i> for 'is' which changes the meaning of the word. <i>Fast</i> often translated as <i>speedo</i> or <i>fasto</i> or omitted
4	The teacher is	The word for teacher written in the plural; missing accent on <i>è</i> for 'is' which changes the meaning of the word/sentence
5	nice and very intelligent.	The translation of 'nice' was generally not known. Most translated 'very' accurately
6	The library has	Confusion with the word <i>libreria</i> Omission of <i>ha</i> / <i>ha</i> written as the preposition <i>a</i> / 'has' written as <i>aveva</i>
7	three interesting books.	The plural agreement of the adjective and noun were generally not known. The word order was very often inaccurate, eg: <i>tre interessante libro</i>
8	Last month	Translated as <i>l'altro mese/l'ultimo mese/l'anno scorso/mese</i> spelt as <i>mezzo</i>
9	I ate	Occasionally <i>mangiavo</i> written instead of <i>ho mangiato</i> ; the auxiliary <i>ho</i> omitted or written as <i>o</i>
10	in an Italian restaurant	Word order was an issue here – <i>italiano ristorante</i> and various variations on the spelling of <i>ristorante</i> . Occasionally there was the omission of the preposition 'in'
11	and the food	Not many issues here. <i>(il) cibo</i> was widely known. Some omission of <i>e</i>
12	was delicious.	Not many issues here – just the spelling of <i>delizioso</i> caused a few issues

Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures

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. Language such as ‘**in** an Italian restaurant, **and** the food, the teacher **is**, last month,’ were often omitted or incorrect. The most common error was the omission of the accent on the ‘e’ and this influenced the marks awarded for application of grammatical knowledge and structures. Inaccurate adjectival and noun agreements, incorrect tenses, incorrect use of singular or plural nouns, were also a concern. The vocabulary used in translations is largely taken from the vocabulary lists in the specification, cognates and KS3 vocabulary, therefore students do need to have a sound knowledge of the words in the vocabulary lists.

Advice to students

- Practise high frequency words and phrases.
- Check carefully that **all** aspects of the translation have been addressed accurately, particularly the little words such as ‘in’, ‘and’, ‘very’ as mentioned above.
- Learn the difference in meaning of ‘e’ and ‘è’.
- If you are not sure how to translate something, have a go as it may score you a mark. Leaving it blank will not.
- Check verb tenses and endings.

Question 4

For this question, there are 10 marks for Content and 6 marks for Quality of Language. Students are required to write approximately 90 words in total, about four different bullet points. All bullet points must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage of the bullets. The quality of work varied considerably, with many students able to provide extended responses which demonstrated their ability to develop ideas, express opinions and refer to different time frames. Where students were less successful, this was mainly due to misinterpretation, omission of bullet points and grammatical errors which changed the intended meaning. As mentioned in Question 2, at times the wording of the bullet point was copied directly from the rubric and not changed into the first person singular. This caused lapses in the intended meaning as did the influence of Spanish and/or French. There was an increased use of idiomatic expressions in this series which enhanced the complexity of the answer.

Content

The criteria for assessment focus on four elements: coverage of the bullet points, development of ideas, clarity of communication and expression of opinions. Students need to be reminded that coverage of the bullet points is key, as misinterpreting or omitting even one bullet point means that the award of a mark above 6 is impossible, given that for the award of marks in the range 7 – 10, all aspects of the task must be covered. In addition, although students had no difficulty in developing ideas and expressing opinions, there were occasions when inaccuracy led to a lack of clarity of communication (referred to as ‘lapses’ and ‘break down of messages’) and this impacted on marks awarded. Each of the bullet points gave students scope to answer using three time frames and invited opportunity for an opinion. If information was given in relation to all four bullet points, but there were lapses in clarity and a lack of **two** opinions, students could not necessarily score a mark of 8 or 9.

Quality of language

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, but a fairly common error was the omission of the second verb in the infinitive eg. *preferisco vedo* or ‘I prefer’ written as *mi preferito* or variations on it.
- Attempts at complexity – there were some well-worked longer sentences using a variety of connectives such as *e*, *ma*, *comunque*, *poi* and *però*. However more so in this series, the accent on *però* was very often missed out, changing the intended meaning. A repeated error such as this resulted in students achieving no more than a mark of 4 for content due to the messages breaking down.
- Negatives were well-handled but once again this series *no* crept in at times when *non* was needed.
- Time frames – most students were able to make an attempt at all three time frames and the bullet points were designed to encourage this. Students were given credit for an accurate time frame even if it was followed by an inaccurate conjugation; eg. *in futuro io andare*
- Accuracy – most students were able to write accurately in all three tenses using the first and third person singular and at times also the second person plural. There were however common errors:
 - attempts at the perfect tense were the most inaccurate, often with either no auxiliary verb, an auxiliary verb with an infinitive, the incorrect auxiliary verb or mis-spelling of the various parts of the conjugation *avere*
 - the use of a time marker with the wrong tense
 - the use of modal verbs with a conjugated verb eg. *voglio vado*
 - the omission of the accent on ‘e’ when required is a major error as it changes the meaning of the sentence.
 - wrong use of : *a /ha* and *o/ho*
 - incorrect conjugation of reflexive verbs: *vorrei rilassarsi*
 - the lack of accent in the simple future of *farò*, *sarò*, *sarà* were regular errors, changing the meaning of the sentence resulting in message break downs
 - students struggled with possessive adjectives often using the pronouns *lui/lei* to mean him/her eg. *lui film è fantastico*
 - spelling of *noioso/a/i/e*
 - persistent use of *chello/cello* (ce lo/ce l’ho...).

Advice to students

- Aim to write roughly the suggested number of words. The emphasis needs to be on **quality** and not **quantity**.
- Mention **all** of the bullet points. Attempt to write something about them rather than omitting them. Tick off the bullet points in the rubric once they have been addressed.
- Identify which bullet points target the different time frames and check that your verb formation is accurate.
- Make sure you include at least **two** opinions as required by the task.

Most of the work seen was legible however there were instances where students should have taken greater care in their handwriting as their work was illegible.

Question 4.1

This was the second most popular task chosen. A few students had issues with changing bullet point 3 – *che cosa hai fatto il weekend scorso* to the first person singular. Construction of the perfect/imperfect tenses was tricky for some. Not many were able to use simple future constructions, however the conditional *vorrei/mi piacerebbe + infinitive* was acceptable to cover the future time frame. The use of opinions was in abundance. It was refreshing to see that many students followed their opinions with justifications. Although not a specific requirement for this question, it helps students produce complex structures.

There were many good responses for this and hardly any students missed out any bullet points.

Question 4.2

This question was the least popular out of the three options. Many students were able to give a clear advantage of going on holiday in their own country. The aspect of the task that was often not covered, was bullet point 2 which required students to write about a disadvantage of going on holiday with parents. Bullet point 3 which asked about a recent excursion, was also well covered, however some misinterpreted bullet point 4. Instead of talking about wanting to live abroad, they wrote about going on holiday abroad. Unfortunately this caused some to miss out on coverage of the bullet point. It is important that students read the rubrics carefully and do not assume that all four bullet points are linked to the same topic within the theme but that the bullet points could be taken from different topics within the same theme, or in a regular exam series, across themes.

Question 4.3

This was the most popular choice with students. It was a topic with which students are familiar and the advanced information allowed most students to prepare for this topic well.

Bullet point 1, which asked about a favourite day at school caused a few issues. Some students missed referring to it completely, some made reference to it in a different tense, hence not allowing for the bullet point to be covered, some gave reasons about liking school. Bullet points 2 and 3 were answered well allowing many to use different time frames as elicited by the rubric. Bullet point 4 which asked what students will study next year, was missed out by some students and some just made reference to what they will do in general.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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