



GCSE

ITALIAN

8633/RH Paper 2 Reading Higher Tier
Report on the Examination

8633/RH
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General comments

Changes were made to the 2023 papers to reflect the removal of the regulatory requirement to test vocabulary outside of the published vocabulary list.

This year's performance in the reading paper at Higher Tier was very good; students appear to have become more familiar with the literary extracts and are performing better in those questions; they are also becoming more confident at attempting questions which were perceivably more challenging, rather than leaving some of these blank. This was particularly obvious in the translation, where in the past more students did not even attempt the task whereas this year very few did that.

Although quite challenging in sections, the paper itself was clearly at the correct level for this cohort, which was made clear with the reduced number of completely random responses where an extended answer was required. We can say with some confidence therefore, that this paper and the student cohort sitting it are slowly but surely reaching pre-pandemic standards.

Section A

Question 1

The poem by Gianni Rodari on the popular topic of holidays was fairly successful, except for part 1.3 due to the fact that the correct answer was both A+B. All were able to identify that the holidays were either active or in the summer, with around 65% identifying them as "in the summer" (which was true), but failing to also notice that active was part of the correct answer.

The literary questions are still proving quite difficult for some but this is the first year where students seem to cope much better, scoring good marks overall across all 3 parts of the question.

Question 2

This question on work experience was one of the best questions on this paper in terms of performance with over 90% success rate across 3 out of 4 parts.

Question 3

Students responded quite well to this question which dealt with a popular topic (free time) but presented a tricky format, not used in an examination paper before. 2 marks were awarded for selecting the correct favourite activity and also the right reason. Students coped with this extremely well, although for part 3.2 only 63% scored both marks. Many found it difficult to select the correct reason, although they were able to identify the activity as walking. The majority selected 2 (does not cost much) rather than 1 (convenient), which was the correct answer due to the presence of the word "soldi" in the text. These students clearly failed to consider the whole picture and fell for an easy bait.

Question 4

Social media is always a popular topic but this question posed some challenges particularly in the second part (identifying the disadvantages). 71% of students scored both marks for identifying the advantages. When a mark was lost it was due to not specifying that Gina could reconnect with old classmates that she had lost contact with, rather than just vaguely expressing the concept of keeping in touch with classmates. However, that part of the question was fairly successful. More problems were caused by the phrasing of the second disadvantage (she feels sad when she sees friends on social media having more fun than her). Here students lost marks due to incorrect

phrases such as “having fun without her”, which was not the intended meaning, or forgetting the element of comparison altogether. Only 56% managed to score both marks in this section.

Question 5

After much debate among examiners, it was decided that the correct ratio of centenarians was not necessary here to score marks for part 5.1 (as the statistics were given in the text in digits rather than in Italian, it was felt that it would be unfair to penalise their reading skills). Therefore, 80% of students ended up scoring marks here, as long as 100 years old/centenarians was used rather than the generic elderly people, and that it was specified that the number was extraordinarily high/one of the highest in the world.

On the other hand, over half of the students who sat this examination failed to score any marks for 5.2 for failing to correctly translate “augurare” as wish. Most students thought that the expression was used in Sardinia to congratulate the centenarians on having reached a long life, rather than to wish that to someone.

The rest of the question did not pose many issues although occasionally the 2 factors were swapped and students lost marks.

Question 6

This question was aimed at top students and had an incredible rate of success with over 90% of them scoring marks in 3 out of 4 parts of the question. Home, town and environment can be a tricky topic and it is pleasing to see that students did so well here.

Question 7

This question on environmental issues was one of the most challenging on the paper, being on quite a difficult and advanced topic area (insect-based foods) and also being an extended text adapted from a newspaper article. The question format is also a difficult one since students had to choose between A, B, and A+B. Where students lost marks, it was due to their selecting just one of the letters rather than both (so even if they answered half the question correctly, they would have lost the mark completely, by only recognising one detail and not the other). For example, for question 7.2 where both A+B were required, about a third lost marks for only identifying A (better for the environment) and not B (can help save water). A was not incorrect, but both were necessary to score the mark.

Question 8

This question was the second most successful on the paper, with over 90% of students scoring marks in 2 out of 4 parts.

Part 8.1 was answered correctly by 73% of this cohort. Those who lost the mark generally forgot to specify where the noise came from (upstairs or neighbours).

For future reference, whenever the word “exactly” appears in a question, students should be taught to be specific and look for every possible detail given; not being specific enough and not paying attention to detail as required is a recurrent issue across the last few years of marking this component.

Question 9

This adaptation from Edmondo De' Amici's “Cuore” proved quite accessible to the Higher level students, particularly the second parts of the question with over 87% of the students able to score

all 3 marks. Despite being a literary extract, this question was used in both Foundation and Higher Tier and aimed at the lower grades.

Question 10

This text on the Carnevale di Viareggio was well dealt with by students, 73% scored all 4 marks and when mistakes occurred this was due to their choosing the incorrect verb ending, or length of time; for example, costare was often chosen instead of the conjugated costa, or pagare instead of paga which showed a good understanding but needed more refinement in terms of knowledge of Italian grammar.

Question 11

Exactly the same success rate as the previous question was in evidence here: 73%. Where students lost the mark, it was in most cases when F (mangiare cibo biologico) was chosen instead of E (limitare dolci e zuccheri), which might be explained by the presence of the word “insalata mista” in the text.

Question 12

Students did very well on this question on marriage, with 81% of them scoring full marks.

Question 13

This question proved quite difficult for a large number of this student cohort, with many losing marks particularly on part 13.2 where the vast majority didn't know the meaning of the word “imballaggio” (58% put riciclaggio as the answer which was incorrect, perhaps due to the presence of the word rifiuti which they probably would have known from the study of this topic area).

Section C - Translation

Question 14

The translation was dealt with extremely well on this paper, with 26% of those who sat it scoring full marks (which is a 6% improvement on the 2019 paper). There was also barely a response left blank for this question, as opposed to previous years.

Section 1

This chunk almost always gained marks, except on the rare occasion when a student forgot to include the word “really” or “a lot” and simply wrote “I like living here”.

Section 2

This part was the most successful as all students scored marks here.

Section 3

This part was highly successful although occasionally the day of the week was incorrect and translated as Sunday.

Section 4

Again, most students gained the mark here, this part did not pose any problems as the word “insieme” (together) was not necessary to score the mark.

Section 5

This is the part that gave birth to the most original translations, and it was indeed a challenge. Some students tried to beautifully convey the Italian idiom with an English one, writing “at a stone’s throw from my house”. This was probably the best translation, however, a lot of varied responses were accepted including the literally clumsy “at two steps from my house”, or ‘near my house’ and similar. Other translations which indicate a longer distance were not accepted such as “two blocks” or “two streets away from my house”. “Next to my house” was also not accepted.

Section 6

The majority of students did well here, although a minority lost the mark for using the present instead of past tense.

Section 7

As with the previous section, students did well here but lost the mark if they used the present tense instead of the future. In the translation section using the correct tense is important or the mark is lost.

Section 8

The mark scheme was strict here and although the vast majority of students got the gist of what was being expressed in this section, quite a few lost the mark for forgetting to put in “much” before time. However, “I will not have a lot of time” was also accepted, as long as a quantifier was present rather than time on its own.

Section 9

Nearly every student managed to attain the mark, making this the most successful section in the translation. Both past tenses were needed here to score the mark, but students did not seem to find that an obstacle and when a student did not score marks in this section, it was due to omitting either “on holiday” or “in the summer” .

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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