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# GCSE ITALIAN

8633/SF Paper 3 Speaking Foundation Tier  
Report on the Examination

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**Introduction**

Students and teachers are to be congratulated on a successful speaking examination season in 2023. There appear to have been fewer problems than in the past.

It was pleasing to note that there were very few incidences of poor-quality sound recordings and very few technical issues.

However, there are always ways in which to do better and the following examples of what went well and what did not will hopefully help teachers when preparing students for future examinations.

**General comments on the themes and topics.**

Using the sequence chart in the Teacher's Booklet allowed for students to cover all three themes during their test. On the very few occasions when one of the themes in the General Conversation was the same as the theme of the Photo Card, a penalty was applied.

This year there seemed to be a marked improvement in the way students handled topics such as technology and environmental and social issues. As always, it is essential that students are familiar with all topics in the specification as they can occur in any of the elements of the test.

**Role plays**

In general, the students did well but here are a few points which caused difficulty to be considered for future examinations.

Some teachers seemed to be setting a timer but this element of the test is not timed.

A small number of teachers re-worded a question in order to elicit an answer. In the Role Play this is not allowed. Even if the student subsequently gave an appropriate response, it could not be credited. Teacher-examiners are not permitted to ask a question for a second time after a student has given a complete but incorrect response.

It was noticeable that in many cases the unpredictable question proved to be problematical. Often students were unable to grasp the essence of the question, possibly not recognising the key question word or form of question. You will see examples of this below.

There were often problems of manipulation of verbs from second to first person, eg: a question using 'Preferisci...' a significant number answered with 'preferisci' rather than 'preferisco'.

**The question task**

There was a marked improvement in how students asked questions though not all were successful. Some students asked a random question unrelated to the stimulus. A few did not seem to be aware that ? meant that they had to ask a question. Again, some asked a question with totally flat intonation so it sounded like a statement so 'Ti piace la tua casa,' rather than 'Ti piace la tua casa?'. This could not be credited.

**Role play 1**

It was surprising that simple vocabulary such as days and times sometimes caused difficulties for students. Giving an unambiguous time sometimes proved difficult. Many could not ask any kind of suitable question about 'dieta particolare'.

**Role play 2**

Sometimes the students did not grasp the actual question word and answered a different question. In task 3, the -!- task, in reply to 'Con chi abita?' gave details of **where** they live.

**Role Play 3**

In task 2, 'Quante stanze ci sono?' many did not grasp the actual question and listed the rooms in the house. Also, in response to the stimulus 'Oggetti nella tua camera' some answered that they liked their room, what they did in it or things like the colour or that it was on the first floor.

**Role Play 4**

In task 4 some did not grasp 'Come?' and gave an inappropriate reply about travelling.

**Role Play 5**

For task 3, students seemed not to be able to use bigger numbers. They tended to give numbers more likely to be the number of pupils in their class rather than the school. However, as there are some very small schools, anything reasonable was accepted.

In task 4, some did not realise that 'Quali' meant that they should name the languages rather than just something like 'io studio l'italiano'.

**Role play 6**

In task 3, some students could not think of two positive attributes of a teacher other than 'simpatico'.

In task 4, some students had difficulty with a suitable amount of hours to do homework and did not grasp the meaning of 'Quante ore...?'

**The Photo Card**

There were many interesting and imaginative descriptions of the photos.

The Photo Card task is timed and when students were very slow to respond or were allowed to continue with long answers, the 2 minute time limit was reached and sometimes the response to the final question was not credited.

Many students had realised that the highest marks required at least three verb clauses in at least three responses. As they could prepare the first three responses, many did appropriately extend these first three answers, also including the required justified opinions. However, some high attaining students did not seem to be aware of the requirements of the mark scheme and so did not score as highly as they could have done.

A very small number of students were asked only the first three prepared questions and not the remaining two unprepared questions. This unfortunately resulted in a loss of marks.

Some questions involved a 'Perchè?' and some students were not prompted to answer this part of the task.

Teachers are allowed to paraphrase aspects of a question in this part of the test but in so doing, some gave away key vocabulary or meaning, perhaps by giving alternatives or suggestions, so that any subsequent appropriate answer given could not be credited. An example would be in Photocard C task 4: 'Quali spazi verdi ci sono vicino a casa tua?' when 'Ci sono parchi e giardini ...?' was given, it gave away key vocabulary.

Students did better when expecting a non-present tense question within the first three prepared questions and also a non-first person question somewhere. This latter question form did cause many problems, for example 'Chi ti aiuta con i compiti?'.

### **Photo Card A**

In task 3, an answer in the present tense was sometimes given.

In task 4 often only one attribute was given.

### **Photo Card B**

A few students did not grasp 'Con chi...?' in task 2.

Some students struggled with the concept in task 5 and the 'Why?'

### **Photo Card C**

Some students found the photo hard to describe but most did manage to find sufficient details to mention.

'Spazi verdi' was not always understood and sometimes key vocabulary was given away.

### **Photo Card D**

Some did not notice the past tense in task 3.

There was some confusion between 'sano' and 'salute'.

### **Photo Card E**

In task 5, some did not quite understand the question asking if they **always** do homework and gave confused replies about homework in general.

### **Photo Card F**

Surprisingly some did not understand the question in task 3.

There was some confusion with 'lavorare' and 'lavare'

### **The General Conversation**

The majority of students were well prepared and were able to engage in an interesting and meaningful dialogue. In general, there were many genuinely interesting conversations. Many students skilfully 'recycled' vocabulary from the questions asked but sometimes were not able to adapt the verb to the appropriate ending. In most cases it was clear that teacher-examiners knew their students well and the kinds of content they would be comfortable to discuss. However, a significant number of students seemed to be reliant on pre-learned answers sometimes remembering the incorrect response.

### **Question types**

Most students were asked questions at a suitable level of difficulty and based on the appropriate designated themes. However, once again, in some cases the teachers simply used the 'exemplar' questions given in the Teacher's Booklet. These are unrelated examples of question types which may or may not have been at an appropriate level of difficulty for any given student. The 'flow' was almost always compromised when using only these questions.

Occasionally students were asked closed questions which did not allow for able students to give full replies and others students were asked unstructured questions beyond their ability. Students did best when they were answering questions at an appropriate level and on a topic which interested them.

Given that students are required to offer and explain opinions to score in level 3 or above for Communication, some students answered too many opinion questions at the expense of narration and use of different tenses.

**Themes and topics**

The full range of topics was covered, some in imaginative ways. This year students seemed much more comfortable answering about topics such as technology and environmental and social issues. They knew more of the topic specific vocabulary and answered well. A small number of students were asked questions on the same theme as the Photo Card and a penalty was applied.

**Asking a question**

It was noted that many more students were asking their question during the first theme of the conversation so this meant that there were fewer occasions of questions being timed out at the end of the second theme. The 'E tu?' option was popular and in many cases worked perfectly when the question previously asked by the teacher made it grammatically suitable, eg teacher: 'Dove sei andato in vacanza l'anno scorso?' the student then replied with where they went then 'e tu?'. In some cases, it did not work: 'teacher: 'Com'è la tua casa?' – student answer + 'e tu?'. A good option for some was for the student to give a statement followed by 'e tu?', eg: 'Ho due sorelle, e tu?'. This usually worked well.

A few students still asked a question with flat intonation so it was a statement and not a question. 'Abiti a Bristol' rather than 'Abiti a Bristol?'. This could not be credited.

**Timing of the General conversation**

The timing of the test remained an issue for a significant number of students. Some tests exceeded the 5 minutes allowed and nothing was assessed once any utterance started before the limit was completed. This included any question asked by the student after the time limit.

On a few occasions the first theme was too long and so did not allow the minimum 1½ minutes for the second theme before the time limit was reached. In both of the above cases, a penalty was applied in line with the mark scheme.

**Conclusion**

In general, most students did as well as they were able and will achieve the grades they deserve.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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