



GCSE ITALIAN

8633/WF Paper 4 Writing Foundation Tier
Report on the Examination

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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.

As in previous years, 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 and the vast majority of students were entered appropriately for this tier. Where students performed well, it was due to their ability to use different time frames and express opinions, allowing them to meet the assessment criteria of Questions 2 and 4. Where students failed to score marks, it was where inaccuracy caused a delay in communicating messages. This was mainly due to inaccurate verb formation or students misinterpreting or omitting bullet points in Questions 2 and 4. The suggested word count was on the whole adhered to. Other barriers to achievement were due to a lack of knowledge of key vocabulary and the inability to respond to the targeted rubrics and bullet points. This year also saw an increased number of scripts where hand writing was very difficult to read.

Question 1

The best responses included successful use of phrases such as 'c'è', 'ci sono' or 'vedo'. There were increased instances where students did not write in full sentences and a majority only wrote one or two sentences or nothing at all. Teachers are reminded that students need to write four sentences about what is in the photo. Many did not know the vocabulary for woman/women resulting in 'uome.' Where students failed to score marks it was mainly for the following reasons, some of which are similar to the 2022 series:

- 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 in the sentence
- the use of 'che' and 'ce' instead of 'c'è'
- the use of *c'è sono*
- a statement about the photo being in black and white
- inaccuracy causing a delay in communication – use of English, French or Spanish words that do not exist in Italian or incomprehensible key vocabulary

Advice to students

- 1) Keep the sentences **simple** to ensure that a clear message is being communicated – there is no need to use connectives and longer sentences for this question
- 2) If you don't know how to conjugate the verb but know the infinitive, use the infinitive.
eg *una donna lavorare* = 1 mark
- 3) Don't leave blanks – write at least one word.
- 4) Avoid repeating the same piece of information.
- 5) Avoid mentioning the weather when the photo is indoors.

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 four bullet points. Students could write anything in relation to each bullet point.

Where students failed to score highly was due to the misunderstanding of the rubric. Some students wrote extensively on just one bullet point, mistakenly thinking they had a choice of four topics, rather than four different elements on the same topic. Many candidates answered bullet point 1 and bullet point 2 reasonably well, however, difficulties included translating ‘presents’: ‘*le regole*’ and ‘*presente*’ eg ‘*a Natale ricevo molto presente,*’ and insecure knowledge of foods such as *pesce*: ‘*A Natale mangiamo pesca.*’ A common error in bullet point 3 where the bullet point could not be credited, was due to not changing the possessive adjective *tuo* to *mio* or the use of *mi* for *mio*. In bullet point 4, there was a lack of understanding of the word ‘*matrimonio.*’ Some candidates ran out of space and didn’t use additional pages, answering three bullet points well and then stopped when they ran out of room. Teachers are to remind students that the requirement for this question is only 40 words.

Quality of language

The vast majority of students were able to include a good variety of appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures. 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 opportunity for error. It is not a requirement for this question that students write in three-time frames. The present tense is sufficient.

Errors in sentence structures included: ‘*Mi piace il mio compleanno perché è bravo.*’ There was also an inability to use *è*: ‘*Non mi piace il matrimonio perché ci sono molto noioso*’ and the construction of *non mi piace* to *no mi piace*, changing the meaning of the phrase. Some students tried to use complex language where not appropriate: ‘*Penso che sia il Capodanno e molto interessante.*’

There were also a considerable number of students who found manipulating the sentence construction with the verb ‘*piacere*’ a challenge, eg ‘*mia madre non piace Capodanno.*’ Lower ability students could be taught to use the verb *amare* in the negative such as ‘*mia madre non ama.*’

There was some evidence of students basing their written language on wrong/inaccurate pronunciation, for example *cucine* instead of *cugine* (*parlo con la mia cucina sul cellulare*); *pero* instead of *però*; *poso/posiamo* instead of *posso/possiamo*; *visitare* instead of *andare a trovare/vedere/andare da*. Therefore it is important that students not only learn the correct pronunciation, but continue to use it.

Many students avoided the bullet point on *Capodanno*.

The mis-spelling of *però* and *è* without accents created a change in the meaning of the phrase and so did not convey messages well.

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 in the rubric once they have been answered.
- Only write in the present tense and use simple connectives.

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. 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

	Key message	Comments
1	I listen to music.	One main issue was the use of the infinitive <i>ascoltare</i> , the past participle: <i>ascoltato/ascolta</i> , <i>escucha</i> , <i>listeno</i> and <i>sento</i> .
2	I do not like	<i>No mi piace</i> – changing the meaning <i>mi piache</i>
3	the town.	Generally an easy tick to obtain but not a lot of accents on the <i>à</i> mis-spelling – <i>cita</i> – changed the meaning.
4	My cousin studies	The use of the infinitive <i>studiare</i> was a common error. Many did not know the vocabulary for <i>cugino/a</i> and used <i>zio/a</i> instead, or mis-spelt <i>cugino/a</i> to <i>cucino/a</i> .
5	Italian at university.	Generally students did well but quite a variety of (accepted and understandable) variations on the preposition: <i>all' / a</i> etc.
6	My sister does not eat chicken	Many found this challenging. Several students not aware of the word for <i>pollo</i> – words used included: 'poultry', 'poule.' Once again the use of the infinitive <i>mangiare</i> , and the use of <i>mango</i> , <i>mangio</i> and <i>no mangia</i> – again changing the meaning.
7	because she is vegetarian.	Quite a few variations on the spelling of <i>vegetariana</i> . Quite a few <i>è</i> were correctly spelt, however it still was problematic in some cases.
8	Last year,	Generally students did well, however misspelling and mistranslating changed the meaning eg <i>l'anno</i> to <i>l'ano</i> / last year to <i>l'ultimo anno</i> .

9	in August,	Generally students did well with minor spelling inaccuracies.
10	I went on holiday	Many had difficulty with the perfect tense translating <i>I went</i> with <i>vado</i> and <i>andrò</i> or using the incorrect auxiliary verb – <i>ho andato</i> .
11	to Italy	Many used the incorrect preposition <i>in</i> with <i>a</i> : <i>a Italia, in italiano</i> .
12	with my family.	Quite a few variations of the spelling <i>famiglia</i> .

Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures

As a general rule for the translation, if a word is spelt incorrectly but does not mean anything else, that part of the answer is accepted. However, if the mis-spelling changes the meaning of the word then that part of the answer is not awarded. Minor errors did not prevent marks being awarded for conveying key messages provided they were communicated. Consistent with previous series, 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, noun, verb agreements, incorrect tenses and incorrect use of singular nouns also continue. As well as cognates and words from KS3, the vocabulary used in translations is from the vocabulary lists in the specification. Therefore students need to have a sound knowledge of the words in the vocabulary lists.

Advice to students

- Practise high frequency words and time expressions: *l'anno scorso, ieri, la settimana scorsa*
- Check carefully that **all** aspects of the translation have been addressed accurately
- Pay attention to the use of prepositions such as when to use *in/ a/ con*
- Learn the difference in meaning of 'e' and 'è'.

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, covering the four different bullet points. All bullet points must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage of the bullets. One of the main issues this series was the illegibility of some student's handwriting. It is important that students are given the opportunity to type their answers if needed.

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 and often meant the bullet point was not addressed.

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 bullet points is key, as misinterpreting or omitting even one bullet point means that the

award of a mark above 6 is impossible. To be awarded marks in the 7 – 10 range, 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.

- Attempts at complexity – there were some well worked longer sentences using a variety of connectives such as *e, ma, comunque, poi* and *però* and there was regular use of accurately spelt *però* and *è* this series.
- Negatives were well handled but once again *no* crept in at times when *non* was needed, changing the meaning.
- 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 *recentemente uso*.
- Conjugation of verbs – many students have been prepared to use *mi piace/mi piacerebbe + infinitive*, also *mi piace ...perché*, however, conjugating verbs in the present tense were not always accurate.
- 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 misspelling of the various parts of the conjugation *avere*.
 - 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 o/ho*
 - The lack of accent in the simple future of *farò, sarà* continues to be problematic, changing the meaning of the sentence resulting in message break downs.
 - Spelling of *noioso/a/i/e*
 - Unknown vocabulary – very often students added an ‘o’ to an English word to make it ‘sound’ Italian eg *expensivo, addictivo*.

Question 4.1

This was the most popular of the two questions. A few had issues with changing the wording – *un’ app che preferisci usare*: bullet point 1 & bullet point 3 – *come hai utilizzato la tecnologia recentemente*, to the first person singular. The inability to change the second person singular to the first person singular continues to be an issue for many students. Practice in changing the wording in the rubric to the first person singular is important to guarantee success in answering the bullet points successfully. As in the last series, construction of the perfect/imperfect tenses were 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 were in abundance and many students followed their opinions with justifications. Although not a specific requirement for this question, it helps students produce complex structures.

Question 4.2

Some students either misinterpreted bullet point 1 – *la tua routine quotidiana* – or omitted it completely. Mentioning one thing they did regularly allowed students to be credited for the bullet point. Bullet point 3 – *la tua casa in passato* – also caused some issues, many referring to their current homes and not to what their past house was like. On some occasions some students wrote about their friend's home, misinterpreting the rubric, '*scrivi al tuo amico Italiano.*' In bullet point 4, a few students wrote about where they would like to work and did not make specific references to where they would live. This had to be inferred.

It is important that students read the rubrics carefully and be aware that the bullet points could be taken from different topics within the same theme.

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 each of them rather than skipping some. Tick off the bullet points in the rubric once they have been answered.
- Identify which bullet points target the different time frames and check that your verb formation is accurate. Use the time markers in the bullet points and include them in your response: *in passato, in futuro, recentemente, mi piacerebbe*.
- Make sure you include at least **two** opinions as required by the task.
- Make sure your handwriting is legible.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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