



GCSE

ITALIAN

8633/WH Writing
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.

The vast majority of students had been entered appropriately for this tier. The quality of work seen in the overlap questions was of a high standard. The ability to use a range of tenses, idiomatic expressions and more complex language was impressive and students were also able to express and justify opinions well. Where students failed to score marks, was where inaccuracy caused a delay in communicating messages. This was mainly due to inaccurate verb formations, students writing extended responses and students encouraged to use complex language which they could not manipulate, allowing more room for error. Another barrier to achievement was omission or misinterpretation of the bullet points.

Question 1

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 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. As in previous series, students were less successfully mainly due to misinterpretation, omission of bullet points and grammatical errors which changed the intended meaning. 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.

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 all 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, as in previous years, 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. On occasion, lapses in clarity of expression and a lack of **two** opinions, prevented students from scoring the higher marks as did the use of a time marker with an incorrect verb tense formation.

Question 1.1

This was the less popular of the two questions. A majority of students answered this question well. Some common issues included the omission of 'mi' for *mi piace* – *un'app che io piace usare/io piace usare Snapchat*, however, on the whole this bullet point was well answered. There were a few issues with answering bullet point 2 – *un problema dell'uso dei cellulari* – where some wrote about technology in general and not about the problems specific to mobile phones. Bullet point 3 caused a few issues with some students who just said that they didn't use technology in the past. This does not answer the bullet point fully and students are reminded that they can use their

imagination to answer bullet points, they don't need to be based on personal experiences. Some students wrote in a different time frame/tense than the one required. Bullet point 4 was well answered and many were able to describe what electronic object they would like to buy in the future.

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. For the most part, the future/conditional tenses were well executed.

Question 1.2

This question was the most popular of the two options. Bullet point 1 which asked about daily routine, was either misinterpreted or omitted completely. Students are reminded to write something, even if it's just one sentence, or give their opinion. Some students missed the '**in passato**' of bullet point 3: '*la tua casa in passato*,' and wrote about their house in the present tense, missing out on receiving credit for the bullet point since their answer was written in the incorrect tense. There was generally an uneven coverage of bullet points with a lot written about one bullet point but very little on the others. Although an even coverage is not required of all bullet points, not doing so could fail to demonstrate the student's ability to manipulate the time frames/tenses required.

Quality of Language

The key features of the criteria for assessment here are variety of language, attempts at complexity, time frames and accuracy. Students were not able to manipulate the rubrics and either wrote their answer in the second person singular as in the rubric, or using the adverb given such as *recentemente* followed with the incorrect time frame.

- 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, however for some this is still problematic.
- 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*.

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.

Question 2

For this question, there are 15 marks for Content, 12 marks for Range of Language and 5 marks for Accuracy. Students write approximately 150 words in total, about two different bullet points. Both bullet points must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage of the bullets. The quality of responses was generally high, with most students able to write about both bullet points, showing good ability to express and justify opinions. Many students were able to produce fluent pieces of extended writing with few lapses and a variety of language. Where students were less successful, it was because they had misinterpreted the bullet points or wrote very lengthy responses, which increased the opportunity for error.

It was evident with some near native students that they did not receive formal teaching of the specification. It was at times detrimental to how they answered the question as many did not justify opinions, not allowing them to access the high marks which they were capable of achieving.

Content

The criteria for assessment focus on four elements: relevance and detail (implicit in this is coverage of both bullet points), amount of information conveyed, clarity of communication and expression and justification of opinions. In this series, students were successful in developing ideas and expressing and justifying opinions. As in previous series, there were occasions where inaccuracy led to a lack of clarity of communication (referred to as ‘ambiguities’) and this impacted on marks awarded. The incorrect use of *è, farò, sarà*, very often written without an accent, prevented some opinions and justifications from being acknowledged as the *e* without an accent changes the meaning of a sentence. For those bullet points that targeted the different time frames, the inaccurate tense formation occasionally prevented the award of marks. Furthermore, in both tasks the majority of students used taught sentence starters such as: *dal mio punto di vista personale..... penso che sia....* and were not sure how to conclude the sentence, creating ambiguity and impacting on marks awarded for Content.

Question 2.1

The less popular choice, this question was accessible to a large number of students with many original answers. There were varying responses to bullet point 1 – the importance of music. Occasionally some students struggled with talking about a future concert they would like to go to.

Some wrote in the present tense therefore not answering the bullet point which required a future tense/time frame. Students need to remember that being creative in their responses is encouraged. Responses do not necessarily have to be based on reality. In this question, there needs to be evidence of two time frames or tenses.

Question 2.2

This was the more popular choice of question for students. Successful, high-quality answers included making reference to both bullet points. For bullet point 1, many wrote about earning money as being one of the primary advantages of having a job with some developing their answers to include references to how they would spend their money. Less successful answers included an account of what the student does for work or has done in the past to earn money. This is an example of the need for students to tailor their knowledge of the topic to suit the demands of the task. In bullet point 2, a few students were not clear enough about the job they would like to do in future eg *vorrei lavorare in un ospedale*. Although given in the rubric, some students were not able to use the word for *job* in Italian, so just attempted to 'italianise' the English word or write *lavoro* as *un lavoro che mi piacerebbe fare*. A few students wrote about what various family members do as a job. Common errors included misspelling of words such as *guadare* instead of *guadagnare* and *piache/piacchiono*.

Teachers need to ensure that students have access to a range of questions when practising in class and be shown how to manipulate tasks given. In general, students were able to use the correct tenses for each bullet point.

Range of language

The key features of the criteria for assessment here are variety of language and a confident ability to produce complex sentences. Idiomatic expressions used accurately in context, added to the complexity of the tasks, including the use of a variety of tenses with accurate use of the subjunctive. Other examples of variety of language included phrases such as negative constructions, intensifiers, conjunctions such as: *quindi, perciò, tuttavia, per di più*, the use of interchange of the perfect and imperfect tenses in the same sentence, the use of direct object pronouns, a variety of adjectives, not just *interessante, facile, difficile*, varied time phrases: *in futuro, da grande, dopo l'università* and infinitive constructions.

In Question 2.2 particularly, there was lots of confusion between *gli* and *li*. This makes a big difference to the meaning of a phrase eg: *'guadagni tanti soldi è gli puoi spendere...'* Often there was insecure usage of *'piacere a'* eg: *mia madre piace, i miei genitori, li piace* and the phrase *'salvare i soldi'* instead of *'risparmiare'* was commonplace, as was the phrase *'spegnere i soldi'* instead of *'spendere'* – quite a different meaning.

Accuracy

The criteria for assessment focus mainly on verbs and tense formations and the type of errors that students make. It is to be noted that a 'major' error is one that interferes with communication, and a 'minor error', while still an inaccuracy, does not. The majority of students were able to produce work worthy of an accuracy mark of 3 and above. Common major errors included the lack of accent on the *e* for the third person singular *essere* and the lack of accent on *pero* and *sara*. Common minor errors included gender agreements, inaccurate adjectival agreements and incorrect possessive adjectives.

Advice to students

- Read the bullet points and the scene setting carefully, ensuring you know exactly what is required in terms of response.
- Ensure that what you write relates to both bullet points.
- When including complex language, check that your verbs and spellings are accurate.
- Structure your response. Avoid writing very long sentences which make it difficult to follow what is being communicated.
- Please do not write numbers on your response as a word count since they get in the way of the response.
- Refer to the list of common linguistic errors towards the end of this report.

Question 3 – Translation

For this question, there are 6 marks for Conveying key messages and 6 marks for Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures. The question differentiated well, with all students able to score some marks.

The passage was divided into 13 key messages, as in the table below.

Conveying key messages

	Key message	Comments
1	I prefer to go	Generally well done. Often the preposition <i>di</i> was added or the reflexive pronoun <i>mi</i> preceding <i>preferisco</i> or the adjective <i>preferito</i> used. <i>Preferisco di andare / mi preferisco / preferito andare.</i>
2	on holiday by the sea	Overall the key message was conveyed however, the preposition was often incorrect: <i>nella /alla vacanza</i> and the omission of <i>vicino</i> was a regular occurrence.
3	because it's relaxing.	Generally well done.
4	I like to eat	Generally answered well although some students translated this as: <i>Mi preferisco/adoro/preferisco mangiare.</i>
5	in restaurants with my friends.	Generally well done although some students were not able to translate <i>nei ristoranti</i> accurately and variations on the word <i>ristorante</i> were commonplace.
6	I get on well with them	Only the most able students were able to translate this. Translations included: <i>mi sento bene con loro, con gli, con li</i>
7	and we often share photos on social media.	Often : rarely translated correctly – translations included: <i>qualche volta, ogni tanto, una volta a settimana.</i>
8	Fortunately, my friends live nearby	Generally well done although some students wrote <i>vicini</i> for <i>vicino</i> , altering the key message.
9	so last week	The key message was often communicated but frequent errors included: <i>l'ultima settimana / la</i>

		<i>settimana scorsa.</i>
10	we went shopping together.	The key message caused some issues here. The incorrect auxiliary verb was used or the incorrect tense: <i>ho andato, abbiamo andati, andiamo</i> . 'Shopping' also caused some issues, with many incorrectly referring to a shop or shopping centre instead.
11	Next year	Generally well done, except for a few occasions: <i>ano (il prossimo ano)</i> .
12	I would like to continue studying	Generally well answered. Occasionally the simple future tense was used.
13	to find a well-paid job.	Generally well done.

Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures

There were considerable number of responses or part responses in Spanish or in English with an added vowel at the end with the intention of making the word sound Italian. 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. For example, language such as '*l'ano prossimo*,' and incorrect tenses used, changed the meaning of the word, negatively influencing marks awarded. At times, the more able students paraphrased, added words or gave a summary of the translation, not always keeping true to the original text. Teachers need to ensure that students are briefed properly as to the exam requirements.

Advice to students

- Ensure you know the difference between e and è and that *sara* and *sarà* mean two different things.
- Practise high frequency words and phrases, especially connectives and prepositions.
- Proofread your work and check that all aspects of the translation have been addressed accurately, particularly the little words (prepositions/articles/nouns in singular or plural).
- If you are not sure how to translate something, make an educated guess as it may score you a mark. Do not leave it blank.
- Check verb tenses and endings.
- Only translate the words in the question. Don't add any words, paraphrase or summarise.

Across all questions, there were persistent linguistic errors which had an impact on all elements of the paper. These are listed below:

- *e/è*
- *ce/c'è*
- *che/ce/c'è*
- *chi/ci*
- *cio/co/c'ho*
- *pero/però*

- *a/ha/ah*
- *o/ho/oh*
- *ai /hai*
- *Poi* instead of *puoi*
- *Annoiante,annoioso*
- *Cuando/cuatro*
- *Salvare soldi*
- *Spendere tempo*
- wrong auxiliary in the passato prossimo : *ho andato,sono fatto ...* or no auxiliary at all
- English/Spanish words have been used

Most of the work seen was legible however there were occasions where students work was difficult to read. It is important that students are given the opportunity to type their answers if needed.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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