



Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Most students performed well in both sections of the oral examination, with around one-third of all students obtaining nearly full marks. The majority of students demonstrated their knowledge and skill in using spoken Maltese accurately, and most students could effectively engage in conversation. The top students were able to continue the flow of conversation with the assessors and use in-depth responses, whereas a few weaker students required some prompting in order to continue the conversation.

The majority of students were well prepared for the Discussion. The topics chosen were varied and many included historical events relating to Malta's involvement in World War II. Most students expressed their opinions and views clearly and responded well to the task criteria. A few students had learnt the information by rote and could not continue with the discussion once they lost track of their pre-learned material while answering questions from assessors. These students could not provide the correct answers to questions posed by the assessors as they lacked the skills needed to apply the information and answer correctly or to use repair strategies.

The panel of assessors noticed an improvement in pronunciation skills this year. The assessors encourage and recommend those students who are less fluent in speaking the language to use Maltese when communicating with family members and to listen more to spoken Maltese (via media, music, etc.) in order to improve pronunciation and oral communication skills.

Section 1 – Conversation

In this section, students are expected to converse with the assessors about their personal world. The better performing students handled the conversation with confidence and demonstrated an ability to carry the conversation forward with spontaneity. They had excellent pronunciation and intonation skills and maintained the correct tempo in their speech. They demonstrated the correct use of language structures and supported their opinions and arguments with sound reasons.

A small number of students had difficulty in expressing their ideas clearly, perhaps because they were very nervous. In such cases, assessors often found it necessary to intervene and ask a new question. The panel also advises that some students need to develop a greater range of vocabulary and learn the correct language structures and grammatical rules. Weaker students were often unable to self-correct.

Overall, the panel of assessors felt that this year's students demonstrated better oral skills than in previous years and handled this section well.

Section 2 – Discussion

The assessors agreed that most students had thoroughly researched their topic. Most students researched different aspects of the main topic – World War II – and used various resources such as books, interviews with members of the Maltese community, the Internet and news snippets from radio stations. The highest-scoring students demonstrated excellent language skills and presented well-researched information through a series of sequential ideas. These students answered questions asked by the assessors without any hesitation.

The average-scoring students demonstrated knowledge of the texts but did not have enough command over the language to be able to express their ideas clearly. A few students had learnt the information by rote and some had mental blocks. They found it difficult to maintain an exchange with the assessors even when assessors rephrased the questions. Students should, therefore, refrain from learning by rote. Instead, they should practise their verbal communication skills to assist them in giving relevant answers that sound natural and spontaneous.

Most students kept to the time limit and used the correct greetings when entering and leaving the room.



Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

This year, students' performances in the written examination ranged from average to very high. In Section 1 students did reasonably well, although there were common mistakes which could have been avoided if the guidelines were properly followed. Students should listen to and use spoken Maltese as often as possible in order to gain fluency in speaking and understanding the language.

In Part A of Section 2, most students demonstrated an understanding of texts and answered most questions accurately. In Part B of Section 2, most students understood the task but demonstrated poor conventions of letter writing. In Section 3, each question was attempted by some students. In this section quite a number of students supported their arguments with weak and confusing ideas and failed to convince the assessors that they had understood the task.

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Part A

Students listened to five recorded conversations in Maltese and then had to answer in English. The majority of students did well in this section.

Question 1

1a.

One set is for the dough, the other for the filling.

The majority of students answered this question correctly.

1b.

Any two of:

- cocoa
- spices
- cloves.

About 50 per cent of the students answered correctly; the other half gave one or no response.

1c.

Roll to form tubes. Cut and form into rings.

All students answered this question correctly.

1d.

At Christmas or at any festive occasion.

Nearly 70% of the students answered this question correctly.

Question 2

2a.

'Kien ihobb jiftahar'

For this question, students had to give the above phrase in Maltese. A high percentage appeared to misunderstand the question and answered in English, with only 22% answering correctly.

2b.

Mario spent every Saturday with his friends. He always promised that he would never leave them. He used to brag that he would not lie to his friends.

2c.

He was a liar. He was disloyal. He was not strong enough to give the real reason for not meeting his friends.



Nearly all students responded correctly to this question, although a few students gave only one correct answer.

Question 3

Only the top students performed well in Question 3 as the set text was linguistically challenging, though topical in content.

3a.

To reduce the differences which information technology has created in society, especially in the area of online banking.

Only a third of the students answered this question correctly.

3b.

Any four of:

- by educating more people in technology
- by increasing the services to the public
- by making technology more accessible
- by increasing the security
- by making procedures more transparent to the public
- by making providers more accountable.

Nearly 50% of the students included four of the above statements and obtained full marks for this question. The rest of the students gave between three and zero correct statements.

3c.

All of:

- those who have not had an information technology education
- those who are suspicious/fearful of Internet security
- those who cannot afford it.

Only one student included all three statements.

Part B

Question 4

The majority of students performed well in this section and answered most questions correctly. A small number of students answered some questions incorrectly, demonstrating poor comprehension skills.

4a.

To arrange a suitable time for an interview for a job as assistant journalist.

Almost all students answered this question correctly.

4b.

Both of:

- prepare a portfolio
- prepare ideas for a youth readership drive.

Nearly 82% of the students answered this question correctly. The rest included only one correct statement.

4c.

The next Monday at 10 o'clock.

All students answered this question correctly.

Question 5

Nearly 50% of the students responded correctly in this exercise and obtained full marks. A few students left out important information and lost marks.



5a.

Any three of:

- picture of village church
- quaint houses
- links to various topics
- notice board.

Nearly 75% of the students included three items as requested. The others included only two.

5b.

Any three of:

- to congratulate them about their informative website
- their attractive photos
- their many activities and festas
- the interactive nature of the website
- a link with migrants abroad
- an update of all events.

Nearly 60% of the students included three reasons as requested. The others wrote down one or two reasons.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Part A

Question 6

Most students did well in this area. A small number of students gave correct responses to all three questions and obtained full marks for this section. The others left out a few important details.

6a.

The observation of the stars, moon and sun.

Almost all students answered this question correctly.

6b.

Difficulties

- the stars, sun and moon were not always visible because of clouds
- the compass/sextant was not always precise
- it required many calculations.

Dangers

- being lost at sea
- charts were not accurate and did not show small islands or shipwrecks.

This question required more details. Only 25% of the students included all five statements. The others included three or four.

6c.

Farmers with large properties use them to locate watering holes, herds of animals and pasture areas. Surveyors can mark places, such as where gold mines are located. Departments of the environment can mark where wildlife is found. It can also be used in modern cars to plan a trip beforehand.

About 75% of the students obtained full marks for this question.

Question 7

None of the students replied correctly to all parts of this question, with part c. proving to be the most difficult.



7a.

The handheld GPS, as this helped her locate her position, and the mobile phone, as she was able to communicate with her rescuers.

All students replied correctly to this question.

7b.

The ground was rough. It had been raining continuously. The ground was extremely slippery. She had not slept well and was very tired. All her gear was wet and heavy. She tripped on a branch and slipped on an embankment, breaking a leg.

The scores for this question ranged from zero to four, although not very many students obtained full marks. The others had difficulty in including all answers correctly.

7c.

All of:

- may not always get a signal
- without the mobile phone it is not as useful in some cases
- too expensive
- maybe one would take unnecessary risks if one had a GPS.

No students scored full marks for this question. Some could only identify three items, while the others identified even less.

Part B

Question 8

In this question students had to write a formal letter to the Elizabeth Attard Foundation to apply for a scholarship. It was rather disappointing to see that so few students knew the conventions of writing a formal letter; that is, they gave no address for the receiver, no date, and no proper greeting or formal ending. The top-scoring students demonstrated good knowledge of how to write a formal letter and correctly used tenses and language structures. The average-scoring students included these skills but to a lesser degree. Teachers should teach students how to set out a formal letter, as many students lost marks because they omitted the correct conventions.

Section 3 – Writing in Maltese

Question 9

Students had to write an imaginary story for a literary competition illustrating the interpretation of the proverb 'On the downhill, all saints come to your help'. The scores for this writing ranged from average to slightly higher, but no students gained full marks. The higher-scoring students demonstrated an extensive knowledge of vocabulary and syntax but failed to persuade the assessors that they understood the real meaning of the proverb. None of the arguments presented by the students were very persuasive.

Question 10

Students had to write an informal letter to the manager of a Maltese pop group requesting another concert as the writer was unable to attend the group's previous concert. This was the most popular question, with 50% of students choosing it. The assessors were concerned to see that quite a number of students did not gain marks because they did not know how to write an informal letter. This is obviously a weakness that needs to be followed up by teachers. Students need to understand and use the conventions of letter writing when writing in this genre. In most cases, the writing itself demonstrated sequence in ideas and correct language structures. The scores for this question ranged from average to high.

Question 11

Students were required to write a newspaper article taking the positive or the negative side of the argument 'Fame can only bring good things to the person who is famous'. Very few students chose this question. Some demonstrated a good knowledge of the requirements of the task, while others misunderstood it and debated both sides of the argument. The responses were generally quite cohesive, but some demonstrated a limited ability to organise information and ideas. The score ranged from low to high.

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Question 12

Students had to write an informative report about a recent marathon to be published in a sporting club's newsletter. Again, very few students attempted this question. The scores ranged from above average to very high.