

ITALIAN

Paper 1346/01
Speaking

Key Message

A well researched topic and the ability to take part in a spontaneous discussion can compensate for any language weaknesses.

General Comments

Candidates were well prepared for this speaking test and performed well. All candidates showed genuine interest in their chosen topic and pleasure in discussing it.

Factual knowledge and opinion (14 marks)

Most candidates chose their topics wisely, making sure that there was scope for analysis, evaluation and opinion and were able to demonstrate their full potential.

The choice of topics ranged from a literary text or a film to historical events, traditions and current affairs. Some preparation appeared to have concentrated on detailed factual knowledge and therefore offered only moderate scope for evaluation and opinions.

Presentations were generally well timed and well articulated, leading naturally to discussion. In most instances the Examiner adopted the position of the “interested layman” acknowledging that the candidate was the “expert”. This ensured spontaneity of discussion and elicited from candidates the ability to adapt their prepared material to respond to the Examiner’s questions. Most candidates were able to present a good range of pertinent facts, had the ability to analyse them in an interesting way and to express their opinions in a naturally flowing conversation with the Examiner.

Language (range and accuracy) (10 marks)

There was a good range of performance. Some candidates displayed a satisfactory range of vocabulary and structures, others were able to use complex structures and a good range of vocabulary. Most candidates were generally able to control their accuracy and they were ready to correct themselves when they realised they had made a mistake. The most common mistakes concerned the use of prepositions, sometimes influenced by English and other times by their dominant foreign language, which may have also influenced vocabulary and structures at times. There were occasional instances of lack of control over agreements, gender and sometimes over verb endings.

Pronunciation and Intonation (6 marks)

There were generally good or very good levels of pronunciation and intonation. The most common mistakes were misplaced stress, some end vowel sounds and the pronunciation of double consonants

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Paper 1346/02

Reading, Listening and Writing

Key messages

- In order to perform well in the Listening section of this paper, candidates were required to follow information sequentially, and be selective in using the material they had heard to answer the questions. Strong candidates gave succinct answers; candidates must be wary of transcribing long chunks of material 'around' the answer.
- To succeed in the Reading section, again candidates needed to be able to target pieces of information as they arose in order in the text. Strong candidates were able to use a degree of inference where necessary. Careful reading is crucial and candidates must take care not to seize on one piece of information with such conviction that they overlook the appropriate answer, or try and force an earlier piece of information in the text to answer a question that targets a later paragraph.
- The Writing element of the paper presents candidates with guidelines in the form of five bullet points, all of which were addressed more or less equally by strong candidates. The successful candidates showcased a wide variety of both vocabulary and phrasing; candidates must ensure that their style is not *too* chatty or anecdotal if they are to be convincing in this task.

Comments on specific questions

Part I

Brano d'ascolto 1

The overwhelming majority of candidates performed excellently on both **sections 1** and **2**, with the very occasional exception of **Question 6**, probably due to uncertainty over the meanings of *comprensivo* and *imparziale*.

Brano d'ascolto 2

- Q7** Some difficulty with the recognition of dates, and not always by the weakest candidates overall.
- Q9** Some candidates latched on to the *pagare* element of *ripagare* and inferred that Federica was now able to pay for anything she desired following her success; stronger candidates were able to use the prefix *ri-* to guide them to the correct answer.
- Q12** Strong candidates supplied the two pieces of information required to gain both marks. Some candidates included further material; care must be taken not to contradict an earlier answer however.
- Q13** Identifying the correct time frame was important here – she wishes to have a child at some point in the near future (she does not already have one).

Brano d'ascolto 3

- Q14** The question asks for two categories of people helped; candidates needed to do more than just mention earthquakes or rubble to gain the mark. However, the majority of candidates answered this question well.

Part 2

Testo di lettura 1

On the whole, this question was very well answered by candidates.

Testo di lettura 2

Candidates occasionally experienced difficulty in targeting the correct piece of information here; there was some possible confusion of 'e-book' with the devices used to read them, and consequentially parts of the text were misused / transferred inaccurately to answers.

Q31 It was necessary to understand the element of contrast or tension in the opening sentence of the text in order to answer this question fully: it is worrying that although they are going to be compulsory in next year (i.e. soon), very few schools are using them now / they are not nearly as popular as books are now.

Q37 The candidate is required to answer positively OR negatively and give justification of their choice here; some candidates gave a descriptive answer only.

Testo di lettura 3

Q40 Candidates were occasionally too vague in their answer to gain both marks – e.g. monitoring people living in Follonica (rather than monitoring specifically the health, of specifically older people - over 75 - living alone etc.).

Part 3

Q50(a) Strong candidates picked up on something specific to react to in the letter and answer of the stimulus: e.g. *Trovo molto interessante X... però non sono convinto da Y...*; or sided with one of the two positions, reinforcing it by the strength of their reaction to the alternative view. Most candidates explored reasons behind underage drinking / drinking among young people persuasively, and were able to write convincingly about differences in the way in which alcohol may be perceived in England and Italy. Strong candidates went beyond the brief and anecdotal, to give a well-rounded answer to bullet point 4, often including some kind of moral or lesson learnt. The last bullet point was perhaps the most overlooked and required a degree of independent thought, eg the candidate who wrote of the need to educate young people as to the dangers of alcohol, in particular how to handle peers when under the influence of too much alcohol. Blanket accusations of parents failing to set a good example or governments needing to do something were less convincing.

Q50(b) This question elicited some strong answers on either side of the debate. Strong candidates were able to link their points together and demonstrate an understanding of possible reasons for not studying classical languages, whilst also illustrating their utility in certain arenas. This ability to balance the tension in the debate was well rewarded. Good answers to the fourth bullet point included the need for greater comprehension between countries in today's sometimes fractious environment, or to promote movement of labour and create more flexible and productive economies. Obviously there was a wide range of possible answers but successful ones tended to justify themselves and give some weight to their argument. Justification was also key to a successful answer to point 5: candidates are entitled to their own opinion of course, what matters is the ability to express it coherently and convincingly. Strong candidates were able to do this, and perhaps also to consider that whilst it may be *tempo sprecato* for some, the study of Latin and / or Greek is certainly *attività utile* for others.