



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2**

Italian

46303

(Specification 4630)

Unit 3: Speaking

Report on the Examination

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Introduction

In this second year of the specification, most students were given suitable tasks for which they had been appropriately prepared and the tests were well conducted and appropriately timed.

Generally the assessment by schools/colleges was broadly in line with the AQA Criteria for Assessment but a few helpful reminders to teachers are contained in this report.

Tasks

The quality of the tasks devised by schools was generally high and allowed students of all abilities to perform at their best.

Bullet points

The tasks should be presented to the students in English but unprepared questions may be submitted to the moderator in either English or Italian as they are not seen by the student.

All main bullet points must be covered in order for the student to access the highest marks for communication but this is not the case for 'sub-bullets' if included in the task. 'Sub-bullets' are useful for students who need some ideas about what to prepare but if time is short or the student wants to concentrate on other aspects of the main bullet, a teacher may decide not to refer to them all during the test.

The number of bullet points is not prescribed but too few bullets encouraged some students to become repetitive and too many did not allow more able students to develop answers in any depth. About 5 or 6 is a reasonable number but it will depend on individual students.

The choice of topic was sometimes important as some, such as 'My Family', encouraged simple and more pedestrian answers which may be appropriate for some students. Other topics allowed for a wider range of structures and vocabulary. However, this was not always the case and some students did very well with seemingly 'simple' tasks and vice versa.

It is possible to have differentiated tasks. For example, the whole group could have a task on the same topic but the task would have some more accessible points for some students or some more challenging ones for others.

Ideally tasks should include the possibility for using different tenses, to give accounts and descriptions and express opinions.

It is helpful, though not essential, if the teacher approaches the task in the order of the bullets. It is, however, acceptable for students to answer in any order.

It is useful for teachers if the final prescribed bullet point is 'flexible', so that it can be answered simply if time is short or in more depth if time is available.

The unprepared question should be just that and students must not have prior knowledge of what they could be asked. It should not be one selected from a list which the students see in advance. Teachers should have a number of possible questions available in case the student covers the material before reaching the unprepared question.

Teachers are encouraged to contact their controlled assessment advisor who is available to help or advise when teachers are devising tasks.

The Task Planning Form

Teachers are reminded that if a Task Planning Form (TPF) is used it should be indicated on the Candidate Record Form and included in the paperwork sent to the moderator.

Up to 40 words may be included on the form in either Italian or English. This must not include conjugated verbs. Infinitives, gerunds or past participles are acceptable. Teachers are reminded that they should check the TPF carefully before conducting the test to make sure that any conjugated verbs are totally obliterated and are not legible. In some cases where this was not the case, utterances containing these verbs were not assessed.

Recordings

Most tests were well conducted. Schools/colleges are reminded that 2013 is the last year that cassettes will be accepted.

Summary of Advice to Schools

It is important to conduct tests somewhere as quiet as possible. The recording should not be stopped at any time during the test unless there is an emergency.

It is important to check recording equipment in order to achieve the best recording possible and it is advisable to place the microphone nearer to the student than the teacher.

A variety of question types generally gave the best outcome. Whilst closed questions (with yes/no answers) were good for introducing a question or for guiding a student back on track, asking too many questions of this type did not allow the student to develop answers.

Some native or near-native speakers did not prepare the task fully or include a variety of structures and vocabulary. Teachers are encouraged to take particular care when preparing these students. It is helpful if they, and indeed all students, are familiar with the demands of the assessment criteria.

Teachers should interject as little as possible and should not interrupt students unless they are digressing from the question or time is short and the conversation needs to move on or end.

The unprepared question should be the final one asked. When devising unprepared questions it is important to note that in order to score it should contain an attempt at a verb which could be the same verb as in the question. The question does not have to be complicated.

Teachers should pay close attention to the timing of the tests. A recording shorter than 4 minutes, however good, cannot access the highest mark for communication. Similarly, any responses after 6 minutes are not assessed.

Assessment

Most schools were able to assess the tests very accurately by carefully adhering to the criteria for assessment. Most teachers assessed consistently which is very important.

Reminders

Where there was a difference between the mark given by the teacher and the mark given by the moderator, it was mostly in the **Communication** category. Teachers are reminded that in order to access the top band for 9-10 marks, students must be able to talk 'with confidence'.

Teachers should also note the requirement for development even at the 1-2 band and opinions (at least two) from the 3-4 category.

In **Range and Accuracy** sometimes students did not produce sufficient 'complex structures' to warrant marks awarded by teachers.

It is also important to remember that in order to access the 7-8 band, students must produce at least two different tenses. These could be any tense, for example perfect and imperfect.

Pronunciation and Accuracy and **Intonation and Fluency** were all well assessed by teachers.

Administration

Schools with fewer than 20 students should send all recordings to the moderator without waiting for a request.

It is important to complete and include all of the documentation as requested, particularly the Centre Declaration Form and a list of the unprepared questions. For larger schools a checklist is sent by the moderator but for smaller schools it is available in the Teacher Resource Bank on the AQA website. Teachers are reminded that they are not required to send documentation for the unrecorded task.

Teachers are to be thanked for a prompt response when something was missing or additional information required.

Please note that recordings should be MP3 files on a memory stick or CD and digitally labelled. As well as this each student must be introduced on the recording and it is helpful for the moderator to have a paper copy of the candidate order of the recording.

There will be teacher online standardisation, which will be available on e-AQA from September 2012. Teacher online standardisation is a web-based system available at any time. It will have a selection of speaking tasks from the June series and teachers will be able to mark them and check their marks against the correct marks awarded and to read the accompanying commentaries and other supporting documentation. This means that all teachers of Italian within a department will be able to mark the tasks, either together or independently, and to discuss those marks without having to take time out of school. To use the system teachers log on to e-AQA (Examinations Officers have access to e-AQA) and select 'teacher online standardisation' from the list of teacher services and choose 'Italian'. For more information please see

<http://web.aqa.org.uk/support/teacher-online-standardisation/index/php>.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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

Convert raw or scaled marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below.

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion