

**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
June 2012**

**Italian**

**46304**

**(Specification 4630)**

**Unit 4: Writing**

***Report on the Examination***

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## General Comments

In the second year of the specification students responded well to the demands of the controlled assessments.

Most teachers used their own assignment titles rather than those from the AQA bank of tasks thus exploiting fully the individual knowledge and skills of their pupils allowing them to write confidently on content areas which interested them and that they had thoroughly prepared.

Popular titles were: 'Holidays', 'My Life as a Celebrity', 'Am I Fit and Healthy', 'Advertising My Area' and 'Advertising My School'.

Teachers are reminded that the title on the pupils' work is more important than the scene setting or bullet points. Examiners only consider the title on the pupils work when deciding on the relevancy of the piece, so it is important that there is no discrepancy between the title, the scene setting and the bullet points.

Some students were unable to gain marks for Content because they did not respond fully to the title of their task. If a title is 'Past and Present Holidays' the student is required to write about both past and present activities in order to be able to score maximum marks for Content. It is better to opt for a more open title, such as 'Holidays' so that a student is free to interpret the task as he/she wishes.

Bullet points are suggestions only and students were not penalised for failing to refer to them as long as their response was relevant to the title. However teachers are advised to give bullet points that encourage candidates to use a range of tenses, structures and vocabulary in order to score highly on Range of Language. It is important that the bullet points are relevant to the title: if the title is 'An Ideal Holiday' but the bullet points invite pupils to write about past holidays and next year's holiday in detail, then the piece inevitably will not be fully relevant to the title.

Students do not need to write more than a minimum of 200 words and a maximum of 300 words in order to access the highest marks. Some students wrote a lot more than this and failed to gain marks because, although the first part of the piece was very accurate and contained complex sentences successfully used, the latter part of the piece was inaccurate and complex sentences were not mostly successful. The whole piece of writing has to be taken into account when awarding marks. It can be self penalising if candidates write a very lengthy piece.

The Task Planning Forms (TPF) were mostly suitable and helpful to candidates, however, on occasion, they contained conjugated verbs which cannot be taken into consideration in the actual assignment. At times this led to a breakdown in communication. Also, where more than 40 words are written in any language on the TPF, the additional words cannot be taken into consideration when they appear in the assignment. Any language in the assignment produced from the use of 'codes' on the TPF are also rejected. It is important that teachers ensure their pupils know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable when writing their Task Planning Form.

On the whole the work was of a very high standard, students having been well prepared, and aware of the assessment criteria they needed to meet to gain the highest marks. Students responded fully to the tasks set and justified ideas and points of view. A minority of often very linguistically able students, although responding fully to the task set, did not justify points of view or ideas and thus were unable to gain full marks on Content despite the quality of their written response. Students should be encouraged to give lots of opinions and to justify them. It is helpful if the bullet points set require them to give and justify opinions.

Most students used a minimum of two tenses giving them access to the higher mark bands, and many used more than two tenses. Students should always be encouraged to use as wide a variety of structures and vocabulary as possible, including tenses, to score well on 'Range of Language'.

There were generally a lot of complex sentences and a variety of linking words, however, less able students would be better advised to concentrate on correct tense formation, before attempting much more complex sentences eg using 'if' clauses can be more problematic.

Accuracy was good with errors generally being of a minor nature, that is, not preventing communication taking place.

Although it is acceptable for students to word process their pieces under controlled conditions, some candidates who did this lost marks for accuracy and communication due to typographical errors.

A number of instances of lack of clarity were caused by poor use of dictionaries. Where students are encouraged to use dictionaries, it is advisable to ensure that they have good dictionary skills.

Administration by centres was generally good. Schools adhered to AQA requirements providing the assignment with the Task Planning Form, if used, the Candidate Record Form and the task. Schools should ensure all the relevant documentation is sent together with the work. If the examiner does not see a title for a piece of work they are unable to mark the piece and the student will not receive a mark. It is also important that all forms are signed where appropriate.

Teachers are to be congratulated on their professionalism and hard work in both preparing their students for the controlled assessments and in writing tasks reflecting the interests and ability of their pupils.

### Preparing your students

- **Task Planning Forms (TPF)** – Students may write up to 40 words on their TPF and refer to this while writing up their task. The TPF presented this year were mostly suitable and helpful. However, sometimes conjugated verbs were used. Students should be advised that examples of conjugated verbs on the TPF which are subsequently used in the actual assignment cannot be credited in the assessment process and this can lead to a breakdown in communication. Also, if more than 40 words are written on the TPF (in any language), the additional words cannot be taken into consideration when they appear in the assignment. Any language in the assignment deriving from 'codes' on the TPF will always be rejected by Examiners. Codes are not permitted. It is important that teachers ensure their students know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable when writing their TPF. Please check your students' TPFs and ensure any unacceptable material has been thoroughly crossed out, before they begin Stage Three.
- **Criteria for Assessment** – Students should be made aware of the assessment criteria so that they know how marks are awarded. It would be helpful if they were aware that they need to convey as much **relevant** information as they can as **clearly** as they can; that it is important to give opinions / express ideas and points of view and to develop these – usually by providing reasons for their views; that they will be rewarded for a variety of vocabulary and structure and for attempting more complex

structures; that the use of more than one verb tense will be required to reach the top band under Range and Accuracy of Language.

- **How much to write** – Guidance is provided in the specification: 200-350 words across both tasks if aiming at grades G-D; 400-600 words across both tasks if aiming at grades C-A\*. Students should be aware that a very short response can make it difficult to achieve the upper bands of the assessment criteria for Content, and, therefore, for Range and Accuracy of Language.

### **Sending materials to the examiner**

Teachers are to be congratulated on their professionalism and hard work in preparing their students for the controlled assessments in writing tasks. Administration by schools was generally good. Most schools sent all the relevant documentation with the students' work, providing for each student:

- a Candidate Record Form (this should be signed appropriately and you should indicate whether or not the student has used a TPF),
- a Task Planning Form for each task (if used),
- a copy of the task sheet for each task, making the title clear and providing the bullet points (if used),
- two pieces of work (if for some reason you are only able to submit one piece of work for a student, please make this clear).

### **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](http://www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion)