



# GCSE ITALIAN SPECIFICATION

## CONDUCT OF SPEAKING TEST MATERIAL

### *COMMENTARY TO ACCOMPANY TAPE*

## BOOKLET 1

SPRING 2005 ONWARDS

## General Comments

In the Speaking test, the performance of the examiner is crucial to the outcome for the candidate. An examiner who has prepared carefully should have no difficulty in the conduct of the test and will hopefully elicit the best possible performance from the candidate.

This preparation is in two parts. Firstly, the examiner must be aware of all the general instructions regarding format, timing, and assessment criteria etc. Secondly the examiner must be aware of the demands of the individual test which means being familiar with the set materials for that year.

- **Recording equipment** must be in good order and the microphone positioned so that the candidate's voice is recorded clearly.
- The equipment should be tested before starting the test and after each candidate, the examiner should check that each test has been successfully recorded.
- **Role plays** should be prepared very carefully by the examiner.
- There are no time limits, however, it is not expected that the role plays should be a lengthy exchange of information.
- At Foundation Tier the examiner should stick to the script provided.
- At Higher Tier the examiner must prepare for all eventualities as the test is much less structured.
- The examiner should make sure that the candidate has the opportunity to give the appropriate number of details and should elicit all the required information.
- **The Presentation** should never be longer than 90 seconds. If a candidate is allowed to continue with a Presentation of more than 90 seconds then the mark awarded for the discussion could be jeopardised. [see below]
- Examiners should stop a candidate who runs over 90 seconds but not interrupt those who are speaking well and are within the time allowed.
- During the Presentation, [and/or Discussion] candidates aiming at grade C or above should include a variety of references to past, present and future time scales.
- Candidates should also include a justified opinion in order to gain access to the highest marks.

- **The Discussion** is also allowed 90 seconds and no more.
- The Examiner will stop marking the combined Presentation/Discussion after three minutes. Candidates who have overrun on their Presentation will therefore reduce the amount of time available for the Discussion element.
- Spontaneity and Fluency marks [4] are awarded for the Discussion and if it is cut short by an overlong Presentation, this mark may be reduced or not awarded.
- Candidates aiming for grade C or above should be offered the opportunity to reply in a variety of times frames, this is of particular importance if the candidate has not successfully included them in the Presentation.
- **The General Conversation** is the part of the test where the skill of the examiner is most crucial.
- It is the part of the Speaking test which attracts the most marks.
- Examiners should ensure that at Foundation Tier the conversation lasts between 4 and 6 minutes.
- At Higher Tier the Conversation must last between 6 and 8 minutes.
- In both cases, the lower limit may be sufficient.
- Examiners must ensure that the subject matter of the Conversation stays within the topics listed on the Conversation card and that at least 2 of the 3 set topics are covered. Failure to do so will result in a loss of marks.
- The questions given on the Conversation card are only suggestions and should not be used as a script. Teachers are encouraged to produce their own bank of questions.
- The questions asked should follow on from each other in a natural way.
- Questions must be sufficiently open-ended for a candidate to give as full an answer as possible and to give the candidate the opportunity to perform to the best of their ability.
- Candidates aiming for grade C or above should be offered the opportunity to reply in a variety of time frames and to express personal opinions.
- It is important to try to ensure that the candidate does the majority of the talking.

## **CANDIDATE 1 (9 marks)**

### **Foundation Tier**

The test was recorded rather faintly and would have been easier to assess if it had been louder. It is important to remember that examiners can only mark what they are able to hear.

### **Role-play 1 (from the 2003 examination series)**

The delivery of the stimulus by the examiner was sympathetic to the level of ability of the candidate. The examiner did not seem quite ready to reply appropriately to the candidate's first response, however, it did not appear to discourage this candidate.

The candidate's responses were quite indistinct and the sound levels should have been checked before the test.

### **Presentation and Discussion - A holiday in Mexico/ holidays in general.**

**Presentation: 1 minute and 45 seconds. Discussion: 1 minute and 20 seconds.**

The Presentation is slightly long but the overall timing of the Presentation/Discussion is appropriate. The examiner quite correctly allowed the candidate to speak uninterrupted even when there was some hesitation. If a candidate does completely lose the thread of the Presentation, the examiner is permitted to ask a simple question in order to put the candidate back on the right track.

The candidate had been well prepared and included some past tenses, a pronoun and was able to express an opinion. The problems encountered mainly occurred in the delivery and the general structure of the language.

In the Discussion, the examiner asked questions which were appropriate to the topic and mostly to the candidate's level of ability. Although the questions in the conditional tense did appear to be difficult, they could have produced fairly simple replies. When the candidate could not answer *Dove andresti?* the examiner, quite rightly, offered the candidate a few suggestions. However, despite the teachers best efforts the candidate did not perform well in this part of the test.

## General Conversation

### Conversation Card A (from the 2003 examination series)

#### 5 minutes and 50 seconds

The duration of the conversation is within the requirements. However, it is important to remember, especially with less able candidates, that the maximum time limit does not have to be adhered to.

Two topics were adequately covered.

The examiner started with a good simple question, *come si chiama la tua scuola?*, the candidate was able to respond readily and it gives a positive start to this section of the test. The examiner then follows up with a more open request, *parlami della tua scuola*, which the candidate found more difficult. The examiner recognised this and returned to more specific questions which suited the candidate better. This was exemplified when the examiner asked her the open question *parlami della tua giornata scolastica* and the candidate could not reply. In the subsequent questions, when the candidate could not answer eg: why she preferred maths, again she gave her a suggestion, *è noioso?* It is important to note however, that any vocabulary provided by the teacher cannot then be credited in the candidates' performance.

In the second topic, Home Life, the examiner continued with the same questioning technique but the candidate was less successful in answering even simple questions.

This style of questioning was entirely appropriate to the candidate and the examiner is to be congratulated. She used a variety of question types and gave the candidate appropriate opportunities to perform.

The examiner could possibly given more signs of encouragement for example, the occasional *Sì* or *bene* when the candidate did give a good answer.

## **CANDIDATE 2 (21 marks)**

### **Foundation Tier**

The test was clearly recorded throughout.

### **Role-play 1 (from the 2003 examination series)**

In this Role play, the examiner kept to the script and managed to make it sound like a natural exchange of information. Quite rightly, she did not correct the candidate's major error in the second utterance. There were no problems with the conduct of this role play.

### **Presentation and Discussion - Family**

**Presentation: 1 minute and 35 seconds. Discussion: 54 seconds.**

The timings of the Presentation and Discussion were appropriate. The Discussion could possibly have been slightly longer.

The Presentation was good and the candidate covered a lot of material about himself and his family. He was clearly well prepared and much of the language was accurate and well pronounced. Unfortunately the Presentation is completely in the present tense. The language is quite simple and the candidate should have been encouraged to include some more adventurous structures and different time frames. The examiner allowed him to deliver the Presentation without interruption.

The Discussion was well conducted. The questions posed by the examiner were very straightforward but the candidate did manage to give extra information in response to every question, eg: when asked about how far he lived from school, he also added how he got to school and how long it took.

This candidate scored lower marks in Range and Complexity as both the Presentation and the Discussion were largely in the present tense. There was one vague reference to the future. He did use a *da* construction to express the past but did not show an ability to form a past tense verb. The examiner should have included more opportunity in the Discussion for the candidate to use different times frames, particularly as the Presentation was all in the present tense.

## **General Conversation**

### **Conversation Card A (from the 2003 examination series)**

#### **5 minutes and 10 seconds**

The timing of this part of the test was appropriate and two topics were adequately covered.

The examiner started the Conversation with simple questions about school and very soon gave the candidate the first of several opportunities to express an opinion, *È buona come scuola? Ti piace?* She continued to ask him accessible questions with some warmth and in a natural way, for example, using his name during the course of the conversation.

The examiner did ask several questions which referred to the future but with no clear unambiguous future verb leads and as a consequence, the candidate did not successfully use a future timescale. There were no attempts to elicit a verb in any past tense. Due to these limitations the candidate's mark for Range and Complexity was lower. This candidate might have been able to respond in the past had he been given the opportunity.

### **CANDIDATE 3 (19 marks)**

#### **Higher Tier**

This test was recorded very audibly.

#### **Role Play 11 (from the 2003 examination series)**

The specification includes the topic areas of School and Future Plans (1F), Education (4C) and Career and Future Plans (4D) and it is therefore appropriate to set a question on this subject matter. Although AQA recognises that not all candidates are of school age, they must be prepared to answer questions on all aspects of the specification.

The examiner, however, quite correctly made no concessions to the student as an adult. Furthermore, she did not make any comment or correction when he misunderstood part of the second utterance. She continued exactly as is required.

#### **Presentation and Discussion – Family**

**Presentation: 2 minutes. Discussion: 2 minutes.**

The first minute only of the Discussion was marked. The Presentation lasted 2 of the 3 minutes available for the Presentation and Discussion.

The examiner gave the candidate the opportunity to introduce his Presentation topic and throughout she gave signs of encouragement. Within the Presentation, the candidate included two accurate future tense verbs, an imperfect tense and if *sposo* was *sposò*, then also a past historic! Covering all three time frames successfully within the presentation meant that no particular pressing reason to ensure that the candidate used these timescales in the Discussion.

In the Discussion, the candidate was probably put off by being asked about the expected date of arrival of his sister's baby when he had mentioned the information in the course of the Presentation. It is a very easy mistake for an examiner to make but it does leave candidates perplexed. The choice of the question about how long he had lived alone was a little strange, and the candidate appeared unsure what he was answering. Perhaps overall the candidate might have scored a little better with a more sympathetic choice of questions in the Discussion.

## **General Conversation**

### **Conversation Card E (from the 2003 examination series)**

#### **5 minutes and 51 seconds**

The timing of the General Conversation was appropriate and the two topics were adequately covered.

The teacher opened the conversation with a general question about hobbies and went on to elicit more details. She continued to give signs of encouragement, and when the candidate struggled with, *che fai quando torni a casa?*, she gave him a few suggestions. This is perfectly acceptable. However, the candidate would not have been credited if he had merely repeated her suggestion.

Again the examiner was quite correct not to repeat the question or correct the candidate when he misunderstood.

The candidate was not given many straightforward opportunities to use different time frames. He did not manage the future tense but did attempt the perfect tense, albeit inaccurately with *ho andato*. This will obviously have a negative effect on the mark achieved for Quality of Language.

## **CANDIDATE 4 (26 marks)**

### **Higher Tier**

The test was recorded very audibly.

### **Role Play 10 (from the 2003 examination series)**

The examiner kept to the task and the role play flowed quite naturally. The candidate gave the required number of details, if he had not done so, the examiner should have elicited them as far as possible.

The candidate gave rather fuller answers than required. Candidates are penalised for errors in this part of the test and so candidates should be encouraged to give full and appropriate answers but not to treat it as the General Conversation. Clearly this role play was one which, by chance, suited this candidate very well as his Presentation was also about his house.

### **Presentation and Discussion - House/Home**

#### **Presentation: 2 minutes and 20 seconds.**

The candidate was allowed to introduce his Presentation topic and was encouraged throughout by the teacher's non-verbal comments. Unfortunately, the presentation was allowed to run for too long and there was no Discussion. This means that the 4 marks available for Spontaneity and Fluency were not awarded as they are available for the Discussion only.

The Presentation about the house was quite well prepared but once again did not cover all three time frames in this section (there was no future tense). Inclusion of all three time frames is essential in the Presentation and Discussion if candidates are to score the highest marks. Failure to do so will result in a reduction in marks for Quality of Language.

## **General Conversation**

### **Conversation Card A (from the 2003 examination series)**

#### **5 minutes and 58 seconds**

The timing of the General Conversation was appropriate but could have been slightly longer.

Two topics were covered.

The examiner started with quite a difficult question about celebrating birthdays, when a gentler start would perhaps have been kinder. Furthermore, the second question about helping at home required quite specific vocabulary.

The examiner seemed to be 'searching' for suitable questions and did not appear to have prepared questions for this particular candidate. As a result, the test does not progress from simple to more demanding questions. Furthermore she did not appear to be familiar with the criteria for assessment failing to give the candidate clear opportunities to talk in varied time frames and to give justified opinions.

The candidate did, however, rise to the challenge and did his best. He managed to include a past tense and a conditional reference.

GCSE Modern Languages Speaking Tests



Examiner's Detailed Mark Sheet

Language ITALIAN

Full/Short Course  
delete as appropriate

Centre No 12345

Tape No \_\_\_\_\_ (one tape per Detailed Mark Sheet)

Cand No.	Candidate's Name	Tier	R-P No.	Conv Card.	Role Play Marks	T	T + 2*	Presentation/ Discussion						General Conversation				Total
								C	SF	RC	RC+PA +3	PA	Q*	C+SF +Q	T	C	SF	
1	CANDIDATE 1	F	1	A	1 2 2 2 7	4		1	0	1/1	1	2	1	0	1	1	3	9
2	CANDIDATE 2	F	1	A	2 0 2 1 5	3		3	3	3/4	2	8	3	2	2	3	10	21
3	CANDIDATE 3	H	11	E	2 1 2 3 8	4		3	1	3/3	2	6	3	1	2	3	9	19
4	CANDIDATE 4	H	10	A	4 3 4 3 14	7		3	0	2/4	2	5	3	3	4	4	14	26

Name.....(Examiner)  
(Please Print)

\* Round up or down to the nearest whole number (ie. 1/2 rounded up, 1/3 rounded down, 2/3 rounded up)

No more than 3 candidates should be recorded on each side of each tape

Top copy to be sent to AQA together with tapes

Bottom copy to be retained by Examiner until 31 August then can be destroyed

Sheet No	
Total sheets / tapes for this centre	