

Examiners' Report Summer 2007

GCSE

GCSE Italian (1237)



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1237 Paper 1F Listening and Responding

Questions 1 - 10, 'In Città' were very generally well answered. Most questions were answered correctly by 95% of the candidates. The performance dropped dramatically on question 6, where over 40% of the candidates failed to recognise "occhiali da sole" and went for the sun cream instead. A few candidates thought that the heart-shaped chocolate box could be the borsa that the girl wanted to buy her mother. No major issue elsewhere.

Question 11, 'Il trasporto' was also well answered. The language was very accessible and the task clear and well over 90% of the candidates scored all available marks.

Question 12, 'Al ristorante' was a little challenging for the weaker candidates, and rightly so, as it was one of the "cross-over" questions. The language did not seem particularly complex, but some candidates found it difficult to identify the 6 correct answers from the 12-strong list.

Question 13, 'Descrizioni' Again, the language did not seem to be particularly complex but possibly time and exam pressure could be responsible for some wrong choices.

Question 14, 'Cerco casa' was not answered as well as it could have been expected. Candidates found it particularly difficult to associate "ha solo una camera da letto" with "piccola".

Question 15, 'Compleanni' was well tackled, with well over half of the candidates scoring at least 3 of the 4 marks available.

Question 16,'All'albergo'. The text seems to have been reasonably well understood. Surprisingly, "colazione" was perhaps the single item that created the most problems in term of recognition. However, the answers revealed extremely poor spelling. Apart from that, the performance was rather good with this question.

Question 17 to 19, 'School'. . The questions in English on the last section of the Foundation paper are targeted at grade E and the language is kept as simple as possible. However, once again, performance on these questions fell below expectations. Most candidates managed "Geography", albeit in a variety of creative spellings, but only about half managed to give the reason fro the preference. Questions 18 b and c were answered well by most candidates, not so for 18 a or d. Often candidates were too eager to move away from geography (in spite of the fact that it is repeated in the tape for question 18) and introduced "maths" a little too soon, thus losing marks for using the targeted material to answer the wrong question. In section 19 it was question (b) which created the most problem and many failed to recognise that Riccardo was not sure yet. There were some very imaginative answers on the part of candidates who tried to guess: Nicoletta, for instance, was allegedly going to visit the town after her exams, but Riccardo did not want to go because the sun was shining!

1237 Paper 1H Listening and Responding

Question 1, 'Al ristorante'. This question was very well answered at higher level, with most candidates scoring at least 5 of the 6 available marks

Question 2, 'Cerco casa' was also very well answered at higher level, with over 80% of candidates scoring top marks. The same can be said of Question 3, 'Compleanni'.

Question 4, 'Il barista onesto'

This question was well answered. Most candidates were able to provide correct answers to at least 5 of the 6 questions. Question 4 (e) lost almost half of the cohort, through a combination of lack of attention to detail ("senza fare domande" on the tape and "ha fatto molte domande" in the multiple choice) and lack of recognition of "ha ridato l'oggetto perso".

Question 5, 'Il leopardo delle nevi'. This question really did separate good candidates from average ones. The wrong answer "Il leopardo ha sei anni" became a trap in which many weaker candidates fell. An almost equal number of candidates (often the same ones) overlooked the difference between "mille" and "milloni"!

Question 6, 'All'albergo' was not particularly demanding in terms of comprehension but, even at Higher level, the candidate's spelling proved to be quite poor. Allowances could be made for Donado instead of Donato, but Higher Tier candidates could be expected to spell agosto, bagno, and colazione correctly! Some right answers were written on the wrong line. These answers were accepted when they made any sense at all. For instance:"

(v) prezzo colazione" was rejected whereas "(vi) incluso nel prezzo un garage privato" was accepted.

Question 7, 'ACTIONAID' was a more challenging question, but here too spelling proved to be the biggest problem and we would have allocated very few marks had we not accepted a variety of renditions for cibo, acqua, internazionale and mese. "Mezze" was not accepted for "mese" because of ambiguity, and quite rightly so, seen that some candidates actually wrote ½.

Question 8, 'Un invito al cinema' (i), (iii) and (iv) were well answered. Over half the candidates answered (ii) wrongly, possibly having been taken aback by the fact that "Stefania" was a little over-represented in the answers

Questions 9-11, 'Il Bullismo' were aimed at A* candidates. Both text and questions were challenging and, expectedly, only the top ability candidates were able to score all marks available. Questions 9c, 10a and 10b were accessible to most candidates. 9b was often misunderstood and a sizeable number of candidates thought that the problem was less serious in Italy than in the rest of Europe. Some misunderstood "rispetto a" and wrote that in Italy there is more respect than in the rest of Europe.

Most candidates were able to answer the first part of 10c, but "merenda" really proved to be a problem for the majority. Some settled for "take his things", which was not good enough for the mark. Other resorted to informed (?) guesses and produced an array of answers ranging from pencil case to musical instrument. Most candidates got the mark in question 11 for "non mi parlano più". The second, easy mark, could have been for "mi guardano ridendo", but a large number opted for "cambiano discorso", often getting it wrong ("Change direction", "change course" and even "had to change school")

1237 Paper 2F/H Speaking

General points

Most candidates performed very well again this year, having been appropriately entered at Higher or Foundation Tier. Is is always pleasing to hear so many competent Italian speakers.

Examiners commented on the good conduct of the tests in a great majority of centres. It was obvious that most teacher-examiners had taken the time to familiarise themselves with the examination procedures detailed in the handbook; thus they were able to give their candidates undivided attention, encouraging them to display their skills in both parts of the conversation, and ensuring a smooth conduct of the role-plays. Many students had been well prepared for the test, both in terms of their linguistic ability, and of their awareness of the format of the exam.

Although fewer problems were reported with role-plays than in previous years, it is worth reminding students that they must bear in mind the English rubric at the top of the card, and ensure that they cover the points shown, even if they do not represent their own opinion. For example, in role-play B1[1], the answer: *'Preferisco geografia.'* could not be credited, as it was not one of the options.

To gain full marks in the role plays, the candidate has to cover all the utterances. This means that, even if a student anticipated a question, the teacher-examiner must ask it to ensure the reply will be credited. For example, in role-play B6, if the student said [1]: 'Ho perso la borsa sull'autobus', the unpredictable question [3] should still have been asked. This also meant that the candidate did not wander why a question was missing and become confused.

More students than before, entering for the Higher Tier, understood that expanding their replies in role-plays C would enhance their marks. For example, to obtain the highest score in role-play C3, the candidate had to do more than communicate all the points minimally, saying: [1] 'Ho un problema.' [2] 'Sono Viale Roma.' [3] 'È rossa.' [4] 'Quando arriva?' [5] 'Sono in vacanza.'

Examiners are instructed not to credit answers to reworded questions, in order to maintain consistency. For example, in role play C6, it would not have been fair to accept the reply to a rephrased version of [3]: 'Mi può dare il suo nome e indirizzo qui in Italia?' Repeating a question verbatim is allowed, as long as the candidate has not already offered a wrong answer. For example, in role play C1, the candidate's reply [5]: 'Due mesi' was rewarded, even if: 'Ma quanto tempo pensa di stare qui in Italia?' was asked a second time. However, it was not credited if the repeated question came after the candidate had said: 'Fa bel tempo.'

In the conversations, the candidates who achieved the best results were those who had a genuine dialogue with their teacher-examiner - with an equal share of the time on each topic - allowing them to discuss their experiences and opinions, using a wide range of language and tenses. Many students had interesting things to say.

An improvement was noted in the administration of the tests. However, Examiners reported a few instances of unclear recordings, incorrect paperwork, unlabelled cassettes or cassette boxes. This seemed more likely to happen for candidates who were not tested in the centre where they were entered.

Role-play A

Very few problems were reported.

A1 - sapone was not a popular choice.

A2 - some candidates were able to use *due etti*, although *duecento grammi* was obviously correct too.

A3 - cartolina was not always known.

A4 - sciarpa sometimes became scarpa.

Role-play B

Few problems were reported.

B1 - some candidates chose a subject not shown.

B2 - some candidates had difficulties asking for a single or return ticket, and many did not know *binario*.

B5 - a few candidates had problems with *Di dov'è?*, and surprisingly, not all remembered *prima colazione*.

B6 - *valigia* was not a popular choice; some could not ask if they could leave their phone number, although a variety of wording conveying this was acceptable.

Role-play C

Although more candidates than last year expanded their answers very well, some did not achieve the top marks as they offered minimal sentences. Not all had read the instructions in English at the top of the card.

C1 - many gave extended replies to the unpredictable questions.

C2 - many students made good use of the stimulus material to develop their replies; a few thought the last question was to do with what they wanted to eat.

C3 - some did not seem to recognise the name *Perugia*.

C4 - most gave correct utterance or replies, but generally less expansion.

C5 - quite a lot of candidates missed either *visite guidate?* or *prenotazione?*

C6 - some gave an address in the UK.

Conversation

A great majority of teacher-examiners asked a wide range of questions, allowing their students to use different tenses and structures, and to express and justify their opinions. Examiners reported many excellent and interesting conversations, both at Foundation and Higher levels.

In a few cases, the first topic was more a monologue than a conversation. Whilst an initial pre-learnt introduction (up to one minute) allows candidates to build-up their confidence, questions encouraging a spontaneous development of responses are then needed.

Teacher-examiners who confined their questions to those suggested in the handbook, tended to discourage students from demonstrating their full ability. Open questions and questions encouraging clarification are more helpful. A few students (some who were native speakers) did not obtain the highest marks because they only volunteered answers in the present tense; they should have been asked questions specifically calling for the use of a range of tenses.

1237 Paper 3F Reading and Responding

Examiner's Report

The number of candidates entered at this level remains a lot lower than those for Paper 3H. Most candidates seemed to have been entered at the correct level but there were a few who performed extremely well at this level and should have been entered for the Higher Tier. The paper was accessible to the vast majority so that almost all candidates were able to attempt every question. There were still a few instances of candidates failing to read the rubric carefully and answering in the wrong language (q.9 and 10), which resulted in the loss of some marks or else candidates ticking more than the required answers and thus losing marks.

Question 1

This question was not answered as well as expected. Candidates at this level appeared to have a fairly limited knowledge of common vocabulary related to clothes: *pantaloni* was recognised by the vast majority but the other items scored a lot less, especially (and surprisingly) *scarpe*, which was not known by a third of the candidates.

Question 2

Virtually all candidates were familiar with school subjects and scored practically full marks.

Question 3

This question proved quite demanding for Foundation candidates. Most were able to associate *leggere* and *libri* in (i) but less than half of them were able to link *fare una passeggiata* and *camminare* in (ii) and many also failed to spot the link between *lingua straniera* and *francese* in (iii) and between *fare spese* and *centro commerciale* in (iv). The majority however coped well with (v) thus demonstrating that they were familiar with the key word *palestra*.

Question 4

This question produced overall satisfying results, especially in (ii), based on numbers recognition, and (iv), where candidates had to associate *cellulare* and *telefonino*. However *cantanti* in (i) and *cantare* in (iii) were often not known despite *popstar* in the text, and the majority struggled with (v), possibly not understanding the word *raccontare* in the question or else use of the past tense in the text.

Question 5

Many candidates were not familiar with *traghetto* in the text and *alloggio* in the table, thus giving irrelevant answers such as "*un'ora*" in (i) or "130 euro" in (v). Most however coped well with the typical products and the typical dish although some lost marks by saying simply "salad" instead of the more specific "tomato and mozzarella salad".

Question 6

Most candidates coped quite well with this question although some ended up writing elements in the wrong column whilst the weaker ones wrote irrelevant words omitting key words (for ex. simply "splendida"). A few answered with a fact rather than an opinion (for ex. "Sono andata in Sardegna/con la famiglia").

Question 7

Most candidates were familiar with sports but there was some confusion with *pallacanestro*, often omitted. *Judo* was often wrongly ticked. Many candidates ticked more than the required 5 answers thus losing marks.

Question 8

Most candidates coped well with basic every-day actions except for faccio la doccia in (i).

Question 9

The vast majority of candidates didn't recognise the word *attore* in (a). Most answered (b) correctly although some lost marked by being too brief and writing only "one/a sister" without a verb ("has"), which was rejected in the mark scheme as being a bit too vague. The remaining items were generally answered well.

Question 10

The date in (a) was recognised by most candidates, which makes a pleasing change. In (b) many lost marks by writing only "Villa Borghese" and omitting the key word "park". (c) and (d) were generally answered correctly. A few candidates lost marks by answering some of these questions in Italian instead of English.

1237 Paper 3H Reading and Responding

Examiner's Report

On the whole the paper was quite accessible and many candidates were able to cope well with it and even achieve very high marks. There were very few instances of candidates being entered at an inappropriate level for this paper. Again, only a small number answered q.9 in the wrong language, thus losing some marks.

Question 1

This overlap question was answered a lot better at this level, with only a few candidates failing to link *fare una passeggiata* and *camminare* in (ii) and *fare spese* and *centro commerciale* in (iv).

Question 2

This was also answered a lot better at this level, with some candidates struggling only with (v), obviously not familiar with *raccontare*.

Question 3

This question was answered quite well although some candidates failed to link *regalo* and *compleanno* in (iii) and *vestiti* and *abbigliamento* in (v).

Question 4

Most candidates scored quite well in this multiple choice question thus making the right connections between key words in the text and in the grid.

Question 5

This question proved fairly demanding producing some fairly low scores compared to the other questions. Many failed to cope with the rephrasing of the original text, especially in (b), (c) and (d). As usual this format is quite testing, as it requires good grammar knowledge to pick the correct words. Many candidates clearly did not consider grammar when completing the gaps thus combining for ex. il valigia/una turistil/l'giorno etc.

Question 6

This was another demanding question, again based on synonyms. Most coped well with *lezioni/studenti* in (iii) but many failed to spot the environmental vocabulary to associate with *ambiente* in (i), and many also failed to associate *vecchi* and *anziani* in (ii), *animali* and *cani* in (iv) and *persone senza casa* with *persone che dormono per strada* in (v).

Question 7

Most candidates coped quite well with this question although some ended up writing elements in the wrong column whilst the weaker ones wrote irrelevant words omitting key words (for ex. simply "splendida"). A few answered with a fact rather than an opinion (for ex. "Sono andata in Sardegna/con Ia famiglia").

Question 8

Many candidates were not familiar with *traghetto* in the text and *alloggio* in the table, thus giving irrelevant answers such as "*un'ora*" in (i) or "130 euro" in (v). Most however coped well with the typical products and the typical dish although some lost marks by saying simply "salad" instead of the more specific "tomato and mozzarella salad".

Question 9

Most candidates coped well with (a) and (f). In (b) however many weren't familiar with stare attento, wrongly translated as "be attentive", or dare fastidio, although most mentioned "scandal", which is easily recognisable. In (c) some lost marks by saying that Valentino Rossi now receives many letters but not mentioning that previously he wasn't very lucky with girls. In (d) many candidates resorted to guessing, wrongly interpreting ti ignorano as "they are ignorant" or else being too vague. In (e) there were many wrong guesses as well, like "you must do what you want", "you have to work hard", "you must follow your dream" and similar general advice.

1237 Paper 4F Writing

Question 4b was slightly more popular at this level as it drew on a well-rehearsed topic (school life) (144 candidate opted for q.4b versus 102 for q.4a). Surprisingly however standards were slightly higher for q.4a with a mean mark of 11.60/20 versus 10.70 in q.4b. Overall candidates coped quite well with these two questions, with less incomprehensible answers compared to the past and a better knowledge of different tenses.

In q.4a most were able to say at least one thing that they do to stay healthy, either a sport or healthy eating, to express a basic opinion on sport (whether they like it or not), although many omitted the reason why they like it or dislike it. Most were also able to write something in the past tense to say what they ate the day before. Many, however, struggled with the last bullet point which required them to use either a future tense/structure or a conditional (vorrei/mi piacerebbe...).

Q.4b produced some rather unexciting answers about their typical timetable, but often struggling with the verb finire. Some also included irrelevant materia drawn from daily life writing about when they get up and get dressed and have breakfast. Most coped well with opinions about their subjects, with many writing about both a subject they like and one they don't like. Common reasons for their likes/dislikes were "nice/horrible teacher" or else rather basic answers such as "it's interesting/boring/easy/difficult".

Most were able to mention at least one thing they did at school the day before. The weakest struggled with their plans for next year as they weren't able to use strategies to deal with future plans.

1237 Paper 4H Writing

Surprisingly q.1a was much more popular at this tier than q.1b (794 for q.1a versus 465 for q.1b) and again it produced slightly higher scores.

Most candidates at this level were well able to deal with the four tasks. The best answers in q.1a linked their eating habits (day before) to their concern (or lack of!) for a healthy life style and also gave an opinion on whether their previous meals had been healthy or not. At this level they were also able to cope with the bullet point about future plans. Opinions, whether on sport or on school subjects, were a bit more complex and varied. Question 2a was vastly more popular than question 2b, as it is generally the case. This is because q.2a was more structured and also because it drew on a fairly familiar topic, daily life, although candidates should have given it a "twist" writing about the daily life of a famous person. Unfortunately many failed to do so writing more about their own daily life rather than from the perspective of a famous person. Common choices of celebrities included singers, actors, sport personalities, especially footballers or tennis players (this probably due to the fact that the exam took place when Wimbledon was on!).

Most produced good answers on the advantages/disadvantages of being famous but many struggled with the last bullet point asking them to give advice, as this required more complex structures such as the conditional/imperative/bisogna...

Question 2b was often the choice of native speakers or adult candidates who produced coherent stories about them meeting their husband/wife or their best friend and using a variety of tenses to cope with the narrative register, such as pronouns and the imperfect tense.

1237 Paper 4C Coursework

Again the flexibility of the coursework option provided candidates of all levels of ability with the opportunity to communicate effectively in written Italian on a variety of topics.

Work was generally of a high standard, well presented and substantial in content. Tasks chosen by teachers and candidates were generally appropriate and the range of tasks undertaken was excellent. There were some varied and very interesting topics and pieces, including profiles of famous people and film reviews. It is recommended that teachers continue the good practice of using the task banks provided, which they can adapt to suit their own individual topic preferences and their students' needs.

However, the problem of topic overlap was at times encountered, for example between daily routine "At Home and Abroad" and daily routine at "Work Experience and School" or between accounts of activities during holidays ("At Home and Abroad") and at the weekend ("Social Activities and Free Time"). This was particularly in evidence where teachers had set very vague and open "titles" such as "House, Home and Family", which cover many sub-topics and are very likely to cause overlap. The tasks set and therefore the piece titles should be more focused: this would avoid the inclusion of the same material in more than one piece of work. Overlap also occurred when a centre submitted two or even three pieces taken from the same topic area, for example a piece with a description of the family, a piece with a description of the house and a piece about daily life: all three are part of "House, Home and Family" and marks can only be awarded for one of the three pieces.

Centres also need to remember that the title of the candidate's piece of coursework should be indicated both on the CF1 form and on the candidate's script. The topic title, although helpful, is too generic for the moderator to evaluate the relevance of the piece to be marked if the title is missing.

With regard to the length of each unit, centres should submit only one piece per topic and not two or three. When candidates produce more than one piece per topic it is up to the teacher, and not the moderator, to select the best one for each topic.

Candidates can achieve full marks whilst keeping within the recommended word limits. This year some candidates submitted work containing over 1000 or even 1500 words, which is excessive and unnecessary, although not penalising for them.

The range of language displayed in the coursework was again impressive. Many tasks had been specifically designed to include a range of tenses and complex structures (including the conditional and the subjunctive), descriptions and opinions, for which many candidates were rewarded. On the other hand, candidates should be reminded not to be overambitious and try to use very complex structures, such as the conditional or the imperfect subjunctive, if they have not really mastered them.

Also, with regard to centres with a large number of candidates of different abilities covering the same tasks, candidates of higher ability should be encouraged to produce a wider variety of language so as to demonstrate manipulation of tenses and achieve their full potential. This has been an issue at times, where very able candidates lost marks by carrying out tasks such as House, Home and Family or a holiday brochure entirely in the present tense. The nature of such tasks is self-penalising.

Teachers are reminded that the marks awarded for Communication and Content are not merely related to the number of words in the task or the relevance to the title but closely depend on the quality of the language, as described in the mark scheme. Therefore, if the language causes ambiguity or if is too simple (for example no variety of tenses), full marks cannot be awarded even if the task is completed.

Teachers are also reminded that candidates cannot achieve high marks for simply adding a few words or phrases to the stimulus material. Little or no credit can be given for simply copying from texts or changing a few words and teachers need to be aware of this when assessing candidates' work at this level. There were many instances of candidates changing just a few details in a pre-written letter (mostly about holidays or job applications) which made their candidates' work extremely repetitive. Candidates (especially the more able ones) should be encouraged to produce more individual work.

This links up with the issue of the stimulus, which is often not provided. Many centres are still not enclosing stimulus material along with candidates' work. This is a coursework requirement: for a fair and equitable moderation process to take place it is essential that centres send one copy of all stimulus material used, as it is at times difficult for moderators to identify the language produced independently by candidates and distinguish it from structures and vocabulary provided by the stimulus. It is also necessary to assess the relevance of the piece. Whatever resources are used to assist candidates in their coursework, be it a model answer, or a writing frame, or simply a list of questions to answer, teachers must enclose photocopies of the materials. Where a group of students has used the same stimulus material it is only necessary to include one copy.

Centres are also reminded that at least one third of the coursework should be produced under controlled conditions, and that controlled and uncontrolled pieces should be marked by the same criteria.

From an administrative point of view, centres need to ensure that all CF1 are correctly filled in, including topic titles and an indication of controlled/uncontrolled conditions, and that all candidates sign the CF1 cover sheet. Some centres are still using outdates CF1 sheets, which do not require the candidate's signature. In fact all CF1s must now be signed by the candidates. Updated forms are available online.

Each individual piece should be labelled with the candidate's name and number and preferably the centre's name and/or number, so as to be identifiable by the moderator even without the CF1 form, and when it is returned to the centre. Samples should also be submitted in candidate number order as on the OPTEM form.

Coursework drafts and final version should be clearly labelled and drafts should not be annotated to inform candidates of specific errors. At times it was quite difficult for the moderators to distinguish between the draft and the final copy.

OPTEMs, filled in with the candidates' marks, must also be forwarded to the moderator.

It is essential that all centres adhere to the coursework receipt deadline. Unfortunately, again this year there were a few instances of centres that sent their coursework well after the deadline.

Statistics

Paper 1F - Listening and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	С	D	Е	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	34	27	21	15	9	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10	0

Paper 1H - Listening and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	Α	В	С	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	35	29	23	17	14	12	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	0

Paper 2F - Speaking

Grade	Max. Mark	С	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	27	22	18	14	10	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10	0

Paper 2H - Speaking

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	А	В	С	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	140	134	128	123	117	114	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	0

Paper 3F - Reading and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	С	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	34	28	22	17	12	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10	0

Paper 3H - Reading and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	Α	В	С	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	35	30	25	21	15	12	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	0

Paper 4F - Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	С	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	37	31	25	19	13	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10	0

Paper 4H - Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	А	В	С	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	35	31	27	23	18	15	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	0

Paper 4C - Written Coursework

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	А	В	С	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	60	51	45	39	33	27	21	15	9	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10	0

Overall Subject Boundaries

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	А	В	С	D	E	F	G	U
Total Uniform Mark	360	320	280	240	200	160	120	80	40	0

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