Examiners' Report Summer 2008

GCSE Italian (1237)

Contents

1237 Paper 1F Listening and Responding Examiner's Report

Questions 1 – 10, 'In Città' were generally very well answered. Most questions were answered correctly by around 90% of the candidates, with a minimum of 87.1% for question 1 (*città!*) and question 7 (*cappello*) and a maximum of 98% who correctly identified '*autobus*'.

Question 11, 'Oggetti rubati', Question 12 'Una Festa' and **Question 13 'Alberghi'** Grade F candidates answered q11 poorly, and **'Alberghi',** was answered poorly by the majority of candidates.

Question 14, 'Le vacanze' was answered better than expected, with a range of 75.8% correct answers for (ii) to 85% for (iii). Weaker candidates failed to make the connection between *"va in campeggio"* and *"dormire in tenda"* and between *"camminate"* and *"passeggiate"*.

Question 15, 'Gita al Lago' was a good grade discriminator. Whereas most candidates managed to provide some rendition of *"pullman"* and the correct return time, weaker candidates were in difficulty with *"giro del lago in barca"* (marks were awarded for at least one of *"giro"* or *"barca"*) and *"parco divertimenti"* (understandable attempts at transcribing *Gardaland* were also accepted). Question (iii) caused a problem to a number of candidates across the board as, even when they understood the targeted information, they were not able to provide an acceptable spelling of *"pesce"*. Unfortunately, the most popular spelling *'pesche'* could not be accepted as it means something else.

Question 16 - 17, 'Kim Rossi Stuart'. 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. Q 16 was supposed to offer 2 easy marks but some candidates answered 15 instead of 5, probably assuming that 5 was too young for anybody to start acting, and the mother's profession was often offered instead of the father's. The marks for q 17 could have been gained from recognising 2 out of 4 leisure activities, but some managed to identify one (generally 'music' although *'musica classica'* was sometimes taken to mean 'music classes', which was rewarded nevertheless)and made wild guesses for the second. Interestingly *'lettura'* was not widely understood.

Question 18-19, Giraffes, was received a little better. Q18(a) was normally answered correctly. In Q18(b) marks were lost by candidates trying to offer an implausible number of inches, but again there was a fair amount of correct answers. For Q18(c) there was some guess work, but, having accepted mother and son instead of daughter allowed a good proportion of candidates to score the mark.
For Q19 most candidates were able to score at least one mark, generally for (a) or for 'Children' in (b), but the full answers to (b) were fewer than expected.

On the whole this proved to be a good paper, with the right level of difficulty allowing to differentiate between different abilities. However the concern remains that the nature of the task and the candidates' familiarity with it may influence the results more than the relative degree of complexity of the text.

1237 Paper 1H Listening and Responding Examiner's Report

Question 1, 'Gita al lago' was answered better at higher level, with most candidates scoring at least 4 of the 5 available marks. The larger number of wrong answers was recorded for "pesce", mainly for reasons of spelling.

Question 2, 'Le Vacanze' was very well answered at higher level, with over 90% of candidates scoring all the marks available. Unlike for paper 1F, there was no significant difference in the answers to individual questions.

Question 3, 'Alberghi' was obviously answered better but some Higher Tier candidates found this more difficult than anticipated.

Question 4, was answered better than Q3: all four items were chosen correctly by at least 70% of the candidates. The most difficult were (c) where candidates failed to connect *"non vuole ingrassare"* with being on a diet, and (d) where candidates were expected to link the idea of being allergic with '*gli fa male*'.

Question 5, 'Gli studi' targeted grade A candidates and the question which really separated them was the connection between *"accontentare"* and *"far piacere"*. The remaining items were correctly identified by at least 80% of the candidates.

Question 6, 'Fumare in discoteca' was well answered.

Question 7, 'Assenze' provided many examples of bad spelling, with '*mal di gola*' topping the list, but even '*domani*' and '*martedì*' were not always spelt correctly. The highest number of wrong answers concerned tem (iii), where many candidates gave as the reason for Nora's absence the fact that she went to restaurant the night before rather than her being sick afterwards.
Also, in (ii) a number of candidates mentioned "seeing the doctor" rather than another symptom.

Question 8, 'Una festa' was reasonably well answered.

Questions 9-11 were targeted at A* candidates. Both text and questions were challenging and, expectedly, only the top ability candidates were able to score all marks available.

Q9(a) offered a comparatively easy mark to score as, along with the targeted answer 'birthday present', 'a present from her parents' was also accepted. Q9(b)elicited some guess work such as "he is not allowed one/he's too young" but quite a few candidates answered it correctly. Q9(c) proved to be a good discriminating question: only stronger candidates answered it correctly.

Q10(a)allowed most candidates to score one mark for the idea of contacting her family but there was not always enough detail for the second mark. Again, Q10(b) was a good discriminator and was answered correctly only by the top ability candidates.
Q11(a) allowed most candidates to score 1 mark for 'talking loudly' but many missed the mark for 'nothing much to say'. For Q11(b)many understood the idea of banning phones on trains but there was not always enough detail for the second mark.

The higher level too proved to be a good paper, having yielded the expected discrimination among candidates. Candidates seemed well prepared and proved to be familiar with most topic areas covered as well as with the types of questions asked. Entry levels have been wisely chosen. The best foundation candidates appeared to be comfortable with the tasks without having wasted opportunity for a higher grade and very few of the candidates entered at Higher Level really struggled with the difficulty of the paper. It is pleasing to note that the 'choose the correct statements' type of question was answered well this year.

1237 paper 2FH Speaking Examiner's Report

General points

I am pleased to report the high standards achieved once more this session by the majority of candidates. Quoting one Examiner on the team: "Many centres were an absolute joy to listen to; well prepared, and with students who clearly felt comfortable with the teacher/examiner and what was being asked of them."

Most candidates had been well trained and displayed a high level of competence when speaking Italian. There is no doubt, though, that to be given the chance of performing optimally, candidates must be entered for the appropriate tier, and examined according to the instructions in the handbook.

There were fewer problems this year regarding the administration of the tests, showing that most Teacher-Examiners noted comments made in previous reports. However, Examiners still reported instances of poor quality or partially deleted recordings, students sitting too far from the microphone or allowed to chew gum as they spoke, missing or incomplete paperwork, inadequately labelled cassettes or cassette boxes. Teacher-Examiners have an important part to play, ensuring that the recording equipment is in good working order, and that all involved in the conduct of the tests are fully aware of the procedure to follow. This is essential in the case of candidates who are not tested in the centre entering them, or are examined by a native speaker who is not a teacher at their centre.

On the whole, the role-plays were well conducted. Most Teacher-Examiners were aware that omitting or rephrasing utterances would adversely affect their students' results. This is particularly relevant with the unpredictable questions in role-plays B and C. A few able candidates gave correct answers in role-play C but offered very little expansion, which meant that they could not obtain the highest marks.

Although a marked improvement over previous years was observed in the conduct of the conversations, a few Teacher-Examiners were spending too long on one topic at the expense of the other; some were asking closed questions only, or limiting themselves to the suggested questions in the handbook; some were turning what is intended to be a dialogue into a rehearsed questions and answers session; where this was the case, it inevitably resulted in the students not achieving their full potential. Whilst mature candidates tended to offer a range of tenses and extended answers spontaneously, others - even native speakers - would only do so if their Teacher-Examiner encouraged them with appropriate questions.

Role-play A
Very few problems were reported.
A2- surprisingly, a small number of students had difficulties asking whether the waiter/waitress spoke English. It was thought that students are taught how to answer questions rather than ask them.
A4 – *piantina* and *cartolina* were not always known; all sensible interpretations of the pictures were accepted.
A5– directions were not always known.
A6- not all knew *lontano* but some managed to work round it.

Role-play B
Few problems were reported.
B1– most candidates could ask *avete piatti regionali?* or produce acceptable substitutes: *cibo* (although not always pronounced recognisably), *cucina, menù;* most could answer the unpredictable question.
B2– a small number of candidates had difficulties asking whether there was a free space; most could answer the unpredictable question.
B3– surprisingly few candidates knew *provare* or could offer a suitable paraphrase; most could answer the unpredictable question.
B4– many acceptable phrases were offered to convey loving Italian food; a substantial number did not know *aiutare;* most understood the unpredictable question but some answered it giving an evening time.
B5– a few candidates had problems with *troppo tardi;* most could answer the unpredictable question.
B6– usually well done, although a few could not answer the unpredictable question.

Role-play C
Although this has improved over the years, not all candidates expanded their answers, offering minimal sentences.
C1– mostly well done, although some students did not understand the first unpredictable question.
C2– many students expanded their replies, but some forgot the context and placed their friend outside Italy.
C3– many candidates used the stimulus material well to expand their replies, but some had problems with the second unpredictable question.
C4– the cue *Pagamento?* was not always understood; marks were awarded for asking how you could pay, or suggesting a method of payment.
C5– some candidates forgot to look at the stimulus material; a surprisingly large number thought *Tempo domenica?* was a question on time rather than weather.
C6– a few students offered either a number of nights only, or an arriving date only, when asked to indicate date<u>s</u>; most gave good expansion when answering the unpredictable questions.

Conversation
Examiners reported many excellent conversations, both at Foundation and Higher levels, with students who had very interesting things to say.
All but a few Teacher-Examiners asked a good range of questions, rather than restricting themselves to the suggested questions from the handbook.
Most gave their students an opportunity to use different tenses and structures, and to express and justify their opinions. As indicated in the marking criteria, the highest language marks cannot be awarded to candidates using the present tense only, however fluent they might be.
Whilst students are of course expected to have prepared for their oral tests, in rare cases the first topic, and sometimes the whole conversation, had been rehearsed parrot-like; obviously this is to the detriment of the candidates. The intention of the conversation is to produce a genuine dialogue on familiar topics between the student and the Teacher-Examiner.

1237 Paper 3F Reading and Responding Examiner's Report

Examiner's Report

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.

Question 1

This was reasonably well done, but many candidates were not familiar with *succo di arancia* and ticked "croissant" instead.

Question 2

The vast majority of candidates were familiar with vocabulary relating to transport and scored practically full marks, with just a few candidates failing to recognise *macchina*.

Question 3

This was a fairly challenging question for the Foundation tier but most candidates coped extremely well with it and demonstrated a very good knowledge of vocabulary relating to train travel and station. The only parts that appeared slightly more demanding were (ii), where most candidates were not familiar with edicola, and (iv), where many failed to match Deposito bagagli in the text with valigie in the question.

Question 4

This question was also answered reasonably well on the whole but many candidates failed to make the connection between Spettacoli in the text and concerti in (iii) and Salute in the text and dentista in (v). Some also struggled with Turismo required for città da scoprire in (iv).

Question 5

Foundation candidates appeared to have an extremely limited knowledge of vocabulary related to food. The vast majority failed to connect *pesce* with *trota* or *frutta* with *fragole* or *verdure* with *zucchine/pomodori/piselli* or even *carne* with *pollo*. These items of vocabulary are all contained in the Minimum core vocabulary for Foundation.

Question 6

This was a challenging question, as this type of question tests not only the candidates' understanding of the text but also their knowledge of grammar. Many candidates at this level did not realise that an awareness of grammar rules and structures might have helped them in their choices and so resorted to guessing.

Question 7

This question was answered reasonably well, as most candidates were familiar with very common items of furniture such as *letto* and *tavolo,* however many struggled with *divano, armadio* and *sedia*. Again, these are all part of the Minimum core vocabulary.

Question 8
Unfortunately this was another question that demonstrated a rather weak knowledge of basic vocabulary, this time related to the weather. The vast majority recognised *c'è il sole* but only about half of the candidates were able to identify *piove* and only a third coped with the distinction between *nebbia* and *neve*.

Question 9
Most candidates managed to score at least a couple of points in this question.
The date in (a) was recognised by most candidates, which makes a pleasing change.
In (b) many surprisingly didn't recognise *albergo* and resorted to guessing.
(c) required two details and many failed to recognise even the "English" word *skipass*! (d) was generally answered correctly.
A few candidates lost marks by answering some of these questions in Italian instead of English.

Question 10
Most candidates managed to score a couple of points in this question as well.
Most candidates were not familiar with *commesso/commessa* in (i).
Disappointingly, months, days of the week and basic numbers are still frequently not known at Foundation level, therefore (c) *tre mesi* was often mistranslated as "three hours" or "three weeks" and in (d) the starting date, *giugno*, was often mistaken for another month or even a number (although "9 o'clock" was also accepted by the mark scheme),
The last question was generally answered correctly, although some candidates lost mark by writing only "computer" without explaining the idea of being able to use the computer.

1237 Paper 3H Reading and Responding Examiner's Report

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 an extremely small number answered q.9 in the wrong language, thus losing some marks.

Question 1
This was generally answered well by candidates but even at this level a few failed to recognise *Edicola* and *Deposito bagagli*.

Question 2
This question was generally answered well but again, even at this tier, a small proportion of candidates struggled with *Salute* and *Spettacoli*.

Question 3
This was done reasonably well by the majority of candidates, with most scoring almost four out of five marks. Some candidates wrongly linked *vacanza-studio* in (iii) with *spagnolo/corso intensivo* or *voli*, probably swayed by the mention of a language course.

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.
The weakest candidates simply resorted to guessing.

Question 5
This was a fairly challenging question but most candidates demonstrated a very good knowledge of vocabulary related to the environment. The most demanding part appeared to be (v), often answered incorrectly with *Luisa*, as some candidates wrongly linked the word *(carta) riciclata* with *rifiuti*.

Question 6
This was another challenging question, as it is a grammar test as well as a comprehension exercise. Most candidates coped well with it with an average score of four out of five. Weaker candidates clearly did not consider grammar when completing the sentences, thus resorting to guessing.

Question 7
This question was generally well done at this level, as Higher candidates normally have a better awareness of grammar to help them in their gap filling.

Question 8
This question was answered much better than at Foundation level but still a surprising number of Higher candidates did not have a sound knowledge of basic vocabulary related to food.

Question 9

This question, was again answered successfully by many, who were able to achieve quite high marks. As usual, weaker candidates were clearly simply guessing in parts, drawing from their general knowledge of this topic.

(a) was generally answered well although a few candidates lost marks by omitting to mention an "Internet connection".

In (b) many candidates failed to mention "**degree** courses" and thus lost a mark. Many also mistranslated *iscritti* as "writers".

(c) was generally answered correctly.

The same applies to (d) where most candidates managed to score one mark, as they only had to mention one out of three possible details. Candidates often mentioned more than one detail and thus were awarded a mark even when one detail was wrong, in this instance *testi* which was generally mistranslated as "tests". Only the best candidates translated it correctly as "texts/textbooks".

In (e) many resorted to guessing, as they failed to fully understand *manca il contatto interpersonale*. Many interpreted it as "it's impersonal", which was a bit too vague.

In (f) most candidates managed to score at least one point (for "discuss") but a few interpreted *fanno amicizia* as simply "meet friends" and not many understood *scambiano consigli* for the second point, thus resorting to guessing.

(g) appeared to be the most demanding sub-question. Many mistranslated *controlla il lavoro* as "controls the work/workload", while *risponde alle domande degli studenti* was often interpreted as "responds to the demands of the students", which didn't gain any marks. Many were also not familiar with *corregge gli esercizi*.

Generally speaking, however, the overall standard was quite high, with many candidates scoring well over half marks in both Tiers, but full marks in the Higher paper were not so common due to mistakes or omissions in Question 9.

1237 Paper 4F Writing Examiner's Report

On the whole standards were quite varied but the majority of Foundation candidates managed to score reasonably well. Especially in the first three questions, which are marked essentially for communication rather than for quality of language. The overlap question as usual proved quite demanding for some grade F candidates. On the other hand there were quite a few candidates who obtained a very high score in this paper, demonstrating a range of vocabulary and tenses together with a high level of accuracy, and who should have been entered at the Higher tier.

Question 1
Most candidates managed to achieve a high score in this question as they were able to name 5 items that they would like to receive and 5 items they would like to buy as presents and spell them in a recognisable way, although spelling was often quite inaccurate. Many items of clothing and food were mentioned. The best answers were from candidates who had tailored their answers to the question rather than writing a random list of vocabulary, producing for example *una bottiglia di vino, fiori, una cena al ristorante*.

Question 2
The majority of candidates responded reasonably well, as in terms of communication they were able to complete most sentences. However, many failed to achieve full marks for communication because not all sentences were completed, particularly (b) where many candidates produced "burger", which was rejected as it is not used in Italian (however *hamburger/sandwich* were accepted together with *tramezzino/panino*).
Some candidates had troubles with verb forms but less so than in the past. The most difficult verb was obviously the irregular *faccio* but some also produced past participles such as *telefonato* instead of the present tense or slightly incorrect forms such as *retourno*. There were also a few instances of wrong verb endings, with some candidates using the first person singular for some parts of the question and lapsing into the third person singular in others.
As for the vocabulary, most coped well with (a) (*tè*/caffè although often misspelt with just one "f"), (d) (*telefono*) and (e) *(casa)* but, as mentioned above, many produced the English "burger" for (d) and in (c) *lettera* (or *cartolina*) was often not known (*carta/carta postale/posta/lettura* were at times incorrectly used). There were a few instances of candidates using French vocabulary or even English.

Question 3
This question was completed satisfactorily, with little ambiguity.
Most candidates were able to write simple sentences stating where they go to school, what subjects they study, which subject they prefer (and why) and what they like doing during their lunch break.
There were some very good answers where candidates managed to give well structured examples of which subject they prefer at school and the reason why, such as *è interessante, il professore è simpatico* etc.
Some very weak candidates resorted to English to carry out most of the task and were able to produce only the odd word in Italian. This has not occurred very often in the past but it has been noticed more frequently by examiners this year. Perhaps, if the option is available to them, such candidates would perform better in written coursework, as they would be able to choose their tasks and to access more resources and would have more time to devote to the tasks.

On the other hand some candidate made good use of verbs, including the past tense to answer about their activities. These candidates should have been entered at the Higher tier.

Question 4
At Foundation level answers to question 4 were almost equally distributed over the two options, although question 4a was marginally more popular. Standards were also very similar, although slightly higher for q.4a, with a mean mark of 9/20 versus 8/20 in q.4b.
Overall candidates were able to cope with these two questions, especially the easier descriptive tasks that only required the present tense, while the tasks requiring the use of the past tense or the future/conditional proved more demanding at this level.

In **question 4a** most were able to provide a simple description of their local area/town and a basic reason why they like or don't like living there.
Most were also able to write something about the past to say what they did the last time they went to town and something about their future plans. Candidates mostly described a shopping trip or a visit to a restaurant and similar information for their plans for the following weekend.
Many, however, struggled with the past tense, producing ambiguous sentences, and with the future/conditional, producing a mixture of the two (*vorrei andrò* or similar) or even just *mi piace andare*, which did not really fulfil the task. There were also some instances of the French construction *andare* + infinitive.

Question 4b was almost as popular as q.4a at Foundation level, as it drew on a topic which is particularly suitable for Foundation candidates (description of people). Most candidates were able to produce a physical description of their best friend, although agreements and syntax were often wrong. Some also managed to provide a simple description of their personality (e.g. *è simpatico*). Occasionally candidates forgot to explain what they like doing with their friend and moved on too quickly to what they did last weekend and their future plans.
As with q.4a the quality of language tended to deteriorate once they moved on to the more complex tasks requiring the past tense and the future/conditional.

1237 Paper 4H Writing Examiner's Report

Question 1
This is the overlap question, which is also set at Foundation level, so it has to be accessible to weaker candidates and is less demanding in terms of language required. At the Higher tier q.1a was much more popular than q.1b, as more than two thirds of the Higher candidates opted for this one. Standards achieved in the two questions were comparable.
Most candidates at this level were able to deal fully with the four tasks.

In **question 1a** the best responses made the most of the first bullet point and gave full ideas of where they lived and what it was like, linking that to why they did or did not like their town. The weaker answers simply gave a list of the different shops and then a basic reason why they liked it or not. Responses ranged from the pedestrian shopping/cinema/ restaurant to much more interesting trips, for example sightseeing in London.
Most candidates used the *passato prossimo* with some confidence and there were instances of the imperfect as well as the pre-learnt *penso che ci sia,* duly rewarded. There were some good answers using *mi piacerebbe* for the last part, but a lot of incorrect usage of the future even at this level. Candidates either conjugated it correctly but added *avere* or *essere* in front of it or they used a mixture of conditional and future.
Overall, however, the vast majority produced pleasing pieces.

Although **question 1b** was chosen by only one third of the Higher candidates this question was often done better than the q.1a, with many good descriptions of their best friend. Some of the most interesting were descriptions of their characters and not just simple physical features. Many candidates went back to the usual shopping/cinema/ restaurant for this question too, but when this was chosen by more mature candidates there were some more varied activities, including holidays or day trips together.
In general there was good use of a variety of tenses such as *passato prossimo, imperfetto,* conditional and future and even some impressive (possibly pre-learnt) *periodo ipotetico* with the subjunctive imperfect +c onditional, for example *Se avessi più soldi andrei…*

Question 2
Question 2a was vastly more popular than question 2b, with again about two third of candidates choosing this one, possibly because it drew on the familiar topic of holidays. Standards achieved were again comparable.
However, in **question 2a** many candidates, even extremely able ones, lost content marks because they did not cover all the tasks. The question was articulated into two main parts: an account of the best holiday of your life **and** advice on how to organise a perfect holiday. Unfortunately many failed to include both aspects and wrote only about their best holiday. Others touched on the second part of the question but interpreted it more in the sense of what their perfect holiday would be rather than providing advice.
Most candidates were able to write at length (sometimes even too much) on the best holiday of their life, using *passato prossimo* and *imperfetto,* generally accurately.
As previously explained there was often very little advice, and consequently those who did give some advice scored highly. Advice ranged from booking early to choosing friends and location carefully. The best responses expanded on those ideas.
There was very little use of the conditional in the final part as many candidates managed to cover this task by using other structures, such as *è importante/bisogna/è*

necessario, which was also acceptable. The best candidates managed to use very complex structures such as the imperative.
A few candidates talked about why they should win an i-Pod, which was irrelevant, although not in itself penalising.

Question 2b was often the choice of native speakers or adult candidates who imagined coherent stories about them meeting a famous person and using a variety of tenses to cope with the narrative register, such as pronouns and the imperfect tense. However, it also appealed to other candidates as it offered them a chance to write about a dream encounter with their favourite celebrity.
The choice of famous people was great and candidates came up with various reasons for meeting them. The conversations between them and their famous person were interesting, although the weaker responses just said hello and how nervous they were. Some candidates made their famous person not very nice, which needed a greater variety of vocabulary and structures.
The weakness in this question was the final bullet point where candidates had to write about the future. Most said that they wanted to be actors/singers/sport people after meeting their famous person.
Overall these responses were quite imaginative and pleasing to read.

General Comments on 4F and 4H

Again, a range of tenses had been well prepared, including the future and the conditional and at times even the subjunctive, although candidates appeared much more secure when writing in the first person singular rather than other persons.

Candidates should avoid using complex structures (conditional/subjunctive/*dopo aver…*) if they are unable to handle them. It would be better for them to reinforce and use correctly simpler tenses such as the present and the past: they are more likely to score higher marks by using the correct present or past tense without mistakes rather than by using an incorrect subjunctive.

Bene, buono and *bello* are often confused and used incorrectly. *Divertente*/*noioso* are often the only opinion that are offered about anything.

Most candidates did not seem confident in the use of pronouns.

The discriminating factor in terms of language remains the level of accuracy, especially genders and agreements.

The standard of spelling was very high, despite some interference from other languages, mainly French or Spanish.

As a final point, candidates are again reminded of the importance of "clear and orderly presentation": they really need to consider that work which is illegible cannot gain marks. If they run out of space on one page they should ask for extra paper rather than continue on the page allocated to another question.

1237/4C Coursework Examiner's Report

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, health brochures and film reviews. On the whole, however, the most popular pieces appeared to be more straightforward tasks such as a piece on personal information, one about school and one about holidays.
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 rather vague and open tasks (such as "Write a letter to your pen pal to introduce yourself"), which end up covering many sub-topics and are very likely to cause overlap. When candidates wrote general pieces about themselves (generally under "House, Family and) they often included material not only about themselves, their family and their house but also about their free time and even their school, thus touching on three different topic areas and risking 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 local area and an account of a holiday: both are part of "At Home and Abroad" and marks can only be awarded for one of the two 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. Also, candidates can achieve full marks whilst keeping within the recommended word limits. This year some candidates submitted work containing well over 1000 words, which is excessive and unnecessary, although not penalising for them.

The vast majority of the non-controlled pieces is now submitted in a word-processed form so that presentation is much neater, however candidates should check their work thoroughly as marks are sometimes lost due to spelling errors or typing errors. On the other hand, when coursework is written by hand, candidates are reminded of the importance of "clear and orderly presentation": some pieces were hardly legible.

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. For this reason some topics, such as the environment, may at times be beyond their language skills and are best avoided, as it may lead to over-reliance on the stimulus material.

Also, as there are no tiers for this paper, centres should set differentiated tasks for candidates of different abilities. 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 brochure on the local area 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.

Equally, moderators noticed a tendency to rely too heavily on materials downloaded from the Internet, especially for tasks such as the profile of a famous person or a holiday brochure. Candidates should be encouraged to produce more individual and original work. A heavy reliance on downloaded material may result in plagiarism.

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 in order 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. Labelling all stimulus material with the centre name and/or number would also be useful for the moderators.

Centres should ensure that the stimulus is error-free in order to avoid candidates repeating mistakes in their coursework.

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. Centres must ensure that this detail is written on the CF1 sheet.

Where candidates have been taught by more than one teacher centres should ensure that internal moderation has taken place before submitting their sample.

From an administrative point of view, centres need to ensure that all CF1 are correctly filled in, including topic titles, total marks awarded and an indication of controlled/uncontrolled conditions, and that all candidates sign the CF1 cover sheet. Some centres are still using outdated CF1 sheets, which do not require the candidate's signature. In fact all CF1s must 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.

OPTEMs, filled in with the candidates' marks and signed by the centre's assessor, must also be forwarded to the moderator. The top copy should be sent to the address written on the left-hand side of the form, the yellow copy to the moderator and the green copy must be retained by the centre.

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. Errors should not be underlined in the final version either.

Candidates with the lowest and highest marks should be included in the sample submitted for moderation, even when they are not marked with an asterisk on the OPTEM form. When a candidate who should have been included in the sample has been withdrawn, the work of a candidate of comparable abilities should be sent in its place.

In addition to this, it is essential that all centres adhere to the coursework receipt deadline, so that the moderation process can run effectively. 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	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	32	25	18	12	6	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10	0

Paper 1H – Listening and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	32	27	22	17	12	9	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	0

Paper 2F - Speaking

Grade	Max. Mark	C	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*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	150	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	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	30	25	20	15	10	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10	0

Paper 3H – Reading and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	32	29	26	23	14	9	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	0

Paper 4F - Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	C	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 4H - Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	35	31	27	23	16	12	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	0

Paper 4C – Written Coursework

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