

Examiners' Report Summer 2009

GCE

GCSE Italian (1237)

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Summer 2009

Publications Code UG021488

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Paper 1F Listening and Responding Foundation Tier

Questions 1 - 10, 'La Spesa'. The traditional format of multiple choice with pictures generally offers a gentle lead-in to the paper and is normally well answered. This year, though, candidates seemed to have found this set of questions more difficult than it was intended. The "zainetto" in question 8 was identified correctly only by 40.7% of the candidates, but also for question 4 (pomodori), 5 (fragole), 6 (mezz'ora), 9 (i soldi), 10 (lettera) correct answers ranged between 50 and 60 percent.

Question 11, 'Professioni' was aimed at F graders, who scored about half of the marks available. Question 12 'La Festa di fine anno' and Question 13 'La mia casa' were cross-over questions and rightly proved to be a challenge for this level. There are no indications of variation in candidates' performance on individual questions.

Question 14, 'Attività extrascolastiche' was also a cross-over question. Candidates at this level generally scored for (i) (ii) and (iv) and not for (iii), which was answered correctly only by 25% of 1F candidates.

Question 15, 'Adotta un cane' was the last of the cross-over questions. It was perhaps less of a discriminator than it was intended to be, in that even the weakest candidates managed to score at least a couple of marks: different renditions of "settembre" allowed virtually everybody to score whereas (v) was a hurdle for most. Misunderstanding of one or both numbers or failing to provide acceptable spellings of "libera" caused loss of marks.

Question 16, 'Lavori domestici' was a good test for the lowest end of the candidature, with items like "lavare la macchina" which was very accessible to most, to "passare l'aspirapolvere" which was understood by less than 60%.

Questions 17 - 18, 'Weather forecast' and 19 - 20 'Traffic report'

Although there was a problem on the taped recording sequence announcement, it was pleasing to note that there was no evidence of any impact on the candidates' ability to answer these questions. Questions and answers in English on the last section of the Foundation paper are targeted at grade E and the language is kept as simple as possible. Nevertheless, performance on these questions has always been below expectations and this year it was no worse than in previous years.

Q 17(a) was supposed to offer 2 easy marks. Some candidates did score them, but by no means all of them. 17(b) proved to be more of a challenge and a lot of guess work was noted. Q18(a) attracted a significant percentage of correct answers and 18(b) again showed a lot of guess work.

Questions 19-20, Traffic report, were better received. Q19 was generally well answered. On Q20(a) marks were lost from candidates failing to specify that traffic was blocked rather than just heavy and 20(b) was generally well answered.

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

Paper 1H Listening and Responding Higher Tier

Question 1, 'Adotta un cane' was answered better at higher level, with most candidates scoring at least 4 of the 5 available marks, with perhaps (v) attracting the highest number of wrong questions.

Question 2, 'Attività extrascolastiche' 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, 'La mia casa' was obviously answered better in 1H but even Higher Tier candidates found this more difficult than anticipated.

Question 4, 'Il regalo' appeared to be at the correct level for B grade candidates, as it was intended to be.

Question 5, 'Turismo scolastico' was also designed with B graders in mind, but in actual fact it proved to be more difficult than Question 6, 'Fondazione Cannavaro Ferrara' which was intended for grade A. The text for question 5 was definitely simpler, but the nature of the tasks made all the difference. Even though it was marked as leniently as possible, the spelling of "po' più caro" was at times totally unrecognisable. Some candidates also found it difficult to identify what the disadvantage of the coach was. Marks were also lost for putting the correct information in the wrong box. Conversely, choosing the correct statements proved to be a simpler task throughout the exam series, even at GCE level, even though, as in the case of Q6, the text was somewhat complex. As a result, Q5 was the one that creamed off the more able candidates.

Question 7, 'Il pregetto di geografia' and question 8 'La festa di fine anno' produced the expected results.

Questions 9-10 'Learning Italian in Florence' were aimed at separating A* candidates. Both text and questions were rightly challenging. Although there was a problem on the taped recording sequence announcement, there was no evidence that the transition from question 9 to question 10 affected top grade candidates. Q9a was accessible to most higher-tier candidates (although some indicated that July and August are "too cold"!), so were 10a and 10c, whereas 9c and 10b required more elaborate answers, which were not in everybody's reach.

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. It is interesting to note that the tasks in question 1-3 were identical in format to those of last year and produced similar results even though the texts were totally different. Students appear to have become increasingly good with the 'choose the correct statements' type of question, to the point of not allowing sufficient discrimination with a reasonably challenging test. This was compensated in this paper by the unexpected difficulty posed to candidates by the format of question 5.

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.

Italian Paper 2: Speaking

General points

This year again, the majority of candidates performed very well. It is always pleasing to hear so many competent Italian speakers, who have been well prepared both in terms of their linguistic ability and of their awareness of the format of the exam.

Examiners reported that most teacher examiners had entered their candidates for the appropriate Higher or Foundation tier. The administration of the tests was generally carried out correctly: instances of poor recording quality, incorrect labelling or incomplete paperwork were fewer than in the past. As in previous sessions, errors were more likely to happen in international centres, or when candidates were not tested in their own centre.

Whilst role-plays were usually well conducted, there were unfortunately instances of teacher examiners omitting utterances, prompting answers, or rephrasing rubrics, thereby negatively affecting their students' results. For example in role-play B5, if the student, having said: *'Vorrei andare a una lezione di geografia'*, could not understand the unpredictable question, it was fine repeating it verbatim (provided the candidate had not already offered a wrong answer); however if the unpredictable question was rephrased: *'Perché ti piace la lezione di geografia?'*, the student's reply could not be rewarded.

Most candidates entered at the Higher tier gave, as required, extended replies in role-plays C; however, some still seemed unaware that minimal answers - even if correct - were not sufficient to achieve full marks. For example, in role-play C6, a candidate was expected to say more than: [1] *'Sono in vacanza.'* [2] *'Sono inglese.'* [3] *'Ho visitato il museo.'* [4] *'A che ora?'* [5] *'È un paese molto bello.'*

Last year's report mentioned: *'It was thought that students are taught how to answer questions rather than ask them.'* Examiners noted that, with all role-plays, students still tended to be more at ease with utterances answering than asking questions.

Regarding the conversations, Examiners were pleased to hear many students who had interesting things to say, in a genuine dialogue with their teacher examiner. The best results were achieved when appropriate questions encouraged students to develop their responses, and elicited the use of a wide range of structures and tenses. Sadly, in a few centres, students had memorised a presentation parrot-fashion and had little idea of what they were saying. In some cases, the whole conversation had been pre-learnt and was little more than a question and answer game, showing no real communication skills.

Role-play A

Very few problems were reported.

A1 - mostly well done, but some candidates could not pronounce *chilo*, and some did not know *la spiaggia*.

A2 - many said *a che ora?* to ask what time it is.

A3 - mostly well done, but *la stazione* was not always known.

A4 - a few candidates could not ask the price; some struggled with *chiude*.

A5 - a few candidates could not ask the price; most preferred chocolate ice cream.

A6 - mostly well done.

Role-play B

Few problems were reported.

B1 - mostly well done, although a few candidates requested the wrong number of tickets;

some had problems asking if they had to change, and some could not understand *Per dove?*

B2 - generally well done; occasional mispronunciation of *passaporto*.

B3 - a few candidates had problems with *Cosa posso fare?*; some used *campagna* for *campeggio*.

B4 - mostly well done; occasional mispronunciation of *sciare*; a few candidates had problems asking *Che fai per Natale?*

B5 - mostly well done; a few candidates did not know *nuotare*.

B6 - generally well done, although some had problems asking *È lontano?*

Role-play C

Candidates who performed best had carefully read the instructions in English at the top of the card, and used the stimuli to expand their answers.

C1 - some asked for a gift for the wrong person; a few thought *Rinascence* was a type of gift.

C2 - generally well done, although some did not develop their replies for *Mangiare fuori?* and *Piatti tipici?*

C3 - some students did not take the situation into account; they had trouble explaining where they were and where to meet.

C4 - most gave correct answers, but not all offered expansion.

C5 - generally well done; many students made good use of the stimuli to produce extended answers.

C6 - generally well done, although surprisingly some did not understand *Da dove viene?*; surprisingly too, a number of teacher examiners missed out this question.

Conversation

Examiners commented on the good conduct of many conversations, both at Foundation and Higher levels.

In a few cases however, the first topic was more a pre-learnt monologue than a conversation, with few or no questions from teacher examiners.

Whilst a short initial presentation can help candidates to build-up their confidence, most of the conversation time must be given to questions eliciting a spontaneous development of responses.

Generally, more teacher examiners than previous years asked a wide range of questions adapted to their students' linguistic ability, encouraging them to use different tenses and structures, and to express and justify their opinions.

Those who confined their questions to the suggestions in the handbook tended to discourage students from demonstrating their full ability. Similarly, those asking all their students exactly the same questions restricted the scope for meaningful extended answers.

Whilst students should of course be encouraged to learn and practise for their tests, rehearsed conversations do not show ability to communicate. As clearly shown in the marking criteria, the highest marks can only be awarded when a relevant interchange and the ability to deal with more than familiar questions are demonstrated.

Paper 3F - Foundation Reading And Responding

The number of candidates entered at this level remains much 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 (Q9 and 10), which resulted in the loss of some marks.

Question 1

This was reasonably well done, but many candidates were not familiar with *leggere* and *nuotare*.

Question 2

The vast majority of candidates were familiar with vocabulary relating to hotel facilities but some incorrectly ticked D (*piscina*), probably assuming that a hotel would have a pool.

Question 3

This was a challenging question for the Foundation tier but most candidates managed to score at least a couple of points. The most accessible parts of the question were (i) (*pullman*) and (iii) [the mark scheme was quite generous here and accepted *Museo (dell'Accademia)/(statua di) David/cattedrale (di Santa Maria/del Fiore)*]. (ii) and (iii) were often answered correctly, although in (iii) many answered incorrectly with the finishing time (19.30) rather than the start time. Very few Foundation candidates were able to answer (v) correctly and most simply copied chunks from the text, *with potete vedere/negozi locali/prodotti tipici* being common incorrect answers, demonstrating little understanding of the text.

Question 4

This was another fairly challenging question but it was answered reasonably well on the whole. Most candidates were able to associate *cane* and *animale* in (i) and also *lettura* and *libri* in (v). About half of them were able to connect *abiti* and *abbigliamento* in (ii), *torta* and *dolce* in (iii) and *compleanno/regalo* in (iv).

Question 5

This was another demanding question for Foundation candidates but again most managed to score a few points, especially in (i), where however some candidates lost the mark by not mentioning the year, and (v). Many candidates were not familiar with *Luogo di nascita* in (ii). *Scuola* in (iii) was often answered incorrectly with chunks from the text. In (iv) some may have understood *Nazionalità* but not *marito* and thus answered incorrectly *italiano, francese e inglese*.

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. However, there was a pleasing number of candidates who were able to match correctly *famiglia* with *sposarmi e avere bambini*. (ii) and (v) were rarely answered correctly at Foundation level.

Question 7

This question was answered quite well, as most candidates were familiar with vocabulary relating to types of films and also many words are cognates, but *un film storico* in (iv) was often not recognised.

Question 8

This question was answered correctly by almost all candidates, who managed to score full marks here. The only part with a slightly higher percentage of error was strangely (C), where a few were swayed by *Mi riposo* (possibly not known).

Question 9

Most candidates managed to score at least a couple of points in this question. Many find it difficult to render the idea of cars with pictures of animals required in (a), as they were possibly not familiar with the word *disegni* and mistranslated it as "design".

Most were able to mention the city in (b) (again the mark scheme was generous here as it accepted the Italian *Milano/Roma* without requiring their English translation, although answers in this part of the exam paper should be entirely in Italian).

In (c) some understood "send a text" but for the second point most missed the word *indirizzo* and thought that they had to send an email rather than a text with their email address or the name of the animal seen.

The vast majority, however, was able to answer (d).

Question 10

Most candidates managed to score a couple of points in this question as well but many simply tried to guess the answers.

Many candidates struggled with *trenta giorni* in (a).

Disappointingly, months, days of the week and basic numbers are still frequently not known at Foundation level, therefore (b) *martedì* was very often mistaken for another day of the week.

Many answered correctly (c), possibly simply by guessing. Their guesses were however not so successful with (d) and (e).

Paper 3H - Higher Reading And Responding

On the whole the paper was quite accessible and many candidates were able to cope well with it and even achieve very high marks. Some weaker candidates were entered at an inappropriate level for this paper and would have performed better at Foundation level. 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 Higher candidates but even at this level a few failed to mention a *Prodotto locale*.

Question 2

This question was generally answered well at this level, with only approximately 10% incorrect answers.

Question 3

This was done quite well by the majority of candidates, with most scoring at least four out of five marks. Some candidates incorrectly ticked (c), missing the fact that only sixteen churches were free to visit with the VENICEcard, or (f), perhaps drawing on their own knowledge of Venice as a city without cars and therefore no parking, and (g), missing the fact that only the restaurants showing the VENICEcard offered discounts.

Question 4

Most candidates again scored very well in this question, but some candidates missed the imperfect tense in (a) and thus answered incorrectly *commentatore per Sky Sport*. This was at times also used to answer (b). Some demonstrated very good linguistic abilities in (b) by changing the "I" verb form of the text into the "he" form for the answer or by trying to rephrase the original text, which is a skill required at AS level but not at GCSE level.

Question 5

This was a fairly challenging question, as it required candidates to extract the gist from the text and also to assess whether the various points counted as advantages or disadvantages but most coped well. Weaker candidates confused and swapped *vantaggi* and *svantaggi* or simply copied random chunks from the text without really showing understanding of the text, especially in the *Svantaggi* section.

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 overall percentage of 83% of correct answers (slightly lower in (v) in particular). Weaker candidates clearly did not consider grammar when completing the sentences, thus resorting to guessing, with no discernible pattern in their incorrect answers.

Question 7

This question was generally well done at this level, with errors being more common in *Scuola* and *Nazionalità del marito*.

Question 8

This question was answered much better than at Foundation level as Higher candidates normally have a better awareness of grammar to help them in their gap filling. Even at this level the most demanding parts were (ii) and (v), with around 30%

of Higher candidates failing to connect the idea of *mondo più pulito* with *ambiente migliore* and *impiego* with *lavoro*.

Question 9

This year this question, which is targeted at the very best candidates, 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.

In (b) many candidates failed to mention the distinction between boys and girls and just answered "not allowed to watch sport/soaps", thus losing one mark.

(b) was generally answered correctly.

In (d) (i) some did not understand *fare a meno della paghetta* but most understood *consegnare il cellulare ai genitori* in (ii), possibly guessing from their own experiences at home or at school.

(e) was generally well answered.

In (f) only the best candidates were able to score both points by mentioning the fact that youngsters start socialising very early. *Prestissimo* was often wrongly translated as "very quickly". Weaker candidates resorted to guessing, trying to build on the key words they understood. *Compagni* was at times confused with *campagna* and thus some candidates thought that thanks to technology young people living in the countryside can stay in contact!

Italian 1237 Paper 4F: Writing

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. Some Foundation candidates found the overlap questions quite challenging whereas a few others responded fully to the stimulus demonstrating a variety of tenses and vocabulary to suit purpose. There were also 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 score at least a few points in each section of this question although full marks were not very frequent. Candidates were disappointingly not too familiar with basic vocabulary relating to parts of the house, although it is in the core vocabulary and it is one of the topics best suited to Foundation candidates.

Question 1(b)

(5 things you can find in your bedroom) proved to be even more demanding as many candidates did not realise that this could be answered with a variety of vocabulary relating to many other topics (not just furniture, but also clothes, accessories, food etc.). Marks were lost mainly through inclusion of non-Italian items of vocabulary, such as mirror/miroir, and false friends, for example the word "camera" in 1(b) instead of *macchina fotografica*, was often found (and obviously rejected).

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 did not know the word *torta* ("gatto(!)/gateau" or even just "cake" were common incorrect answers). *Ristorante* (often spelt as "restaurante") was the most commonly misspelt word, albeit easily recognisable.

In terms of verb conjugation, many candidates were not capable of forming correctly the first person singular of the verb in the present tense and used instead the past participle or ended up writing some kind of future tense forms. The irregular verb *andare* was often conjugated with "ando", by which candidates showed that they had learnt how to conjugate regular verbs, but were unable to relate the infinitive "andare" to the first person singular *vado*.

Question 3

Most candidates were successful in answering all four bullet points in this question, stating where and with whom they were going to Rome, how they were going to travel, what they wanted to see and eat there.

Verbs again caused the most problems as many candidates were unable to produce the present (or future tense) of *andare* or *partire*. However, they were at ease with *vorrei* and *mi piacerebbe*, even if not necessarily followed by an infinitive.

Many candidates recognised the monument in the picture and attempted to spell the word *Colosseo*, which was generally easy to recognise.

The majority of candidates were well acquainted with the dishes of Italian cuisine and listed many specialities.

Many candidates obtained a very high score in this question. Some candidates made good use of verbs, including the past tense to answer about their activities. These candidates should have been entered at the Higher tier.

Compared to last year there were fewer instances of very weak candidates who produced only the odd word in Italian and who would perform better in written coursework, where they would be able to choose their tasks and to access more resources and would have more time to devote to the tasks.

Question 4

At Foundation level both question 4a and 4b elicited some responses but approximately 70% opted for Q4a, possibly as it drew on the more rehearsed topic of shopping, thus enabling them to use familiar vocabulary and structures. Standards were also very similar, although slightly higher for Q4a, with a mean mark of 9/20 versus 8/20 in Q4b.

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.

Question 4(a)

Most were able to provide a simple description of the shops in their local area/town and to say whether they liked shopping or not and why. In the first bullet point ("which shops there are in your area"), however, the weakest candidates simply compiled a list of shop names e.g.: Top Shop, Zara, etc.

Many were also able to write something about the past to say what they bought the last time they went to town and something about their future plans when next in town, which could relate to more shopping or else different activities.

As usual with Foundation candidates, many struggled with the past tense, producing ambiguous sentences, and with the future/conditional, producing a mixture of the two "*vorrei andrò*" or similar).

Most candidates adhered to the stimulus bullet points quite closely to produce coherent answers and replied correctly, using the "*io*" form of the verb, while some of the weaker candidates copied the "*tu*" verb forms from the letter in Italian.

There were only a few instances of very weak candidates who managed to produce just a list of words in Italian that made no sense, often randomly copied from the stimulus letter. Overall many candidates produced coherent, longer than required responses and could supply ample explanations to justify their love of shopping, albeit with mistakes.

Question 4(b)

This was also answered reasonably well by the candidates who attempted it. This question dealt with a slightly more unusual topic (Christmas), which, however, was also linked to the well-rehearsed topic of holidays, self and family, Christmas generally being a family event. Although candidates were required to use tenses, they could draw on familiar and pre-learned vocabulary and structures, especially holiday plans for the summer, and managed to produce coherent responses, most times longer than required.

As with Q4a the quality of language tended to deteriorate once they moved on to the more complex tasks requiring the past tense and the future/conditional.

General Comments

- 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.
- 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. Candidates should be reminded to read their work before submitting it and check its accuracy: quite a few errors of agreement with adjectives, nouns and verbs caused unnecessary loss of marks.
- 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 illegible work 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.

Italian 1237/4H: Writing

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 Q1a was much more popular than Q1b, 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.

Question 1(a)

The more popular choice of the two questions at Higher Level. The majority of candidates answered well all the four points and produced coherent responses, often longer than required, displaying a range of tenses, which included the perfect tense but also the imperfect, the conditional and the future, generally used appropriately. The bullet points helped candidates to respond fully to the question and with no misunderstandings.

For the first bullet point (“which shops there are in your area”) even at this tier the weakest candidates simply compiled a list of shop names e.g.: Top Shop, Zara, etc but most were able to give full descriptions of their local areas.

For the second bullet point some candidates omitted to mention the reason why they liked or did not like shopping but many were indeed extremely keen to explain their opinions, which proved that they had been well trained to do so during lesson time.

Most of the candidates were able to give an account of what they bought by using a sound past tense.

For the last bullet point (“what you would like to do next time you go into town”) the majority was at ease with the future or the conditional although the quality of language was quite variable.

Question 1(b)

This was a minority choice but again most candidates produced longer than required responses, which were pleasant to read and conveyed their love of this festivity and of family life.

Quality of language was sometimes lower than in Q1a, possibly because the topics of shopping and future plans required in Q1a are more commonly taught and rehearsed in lesson. However, candidates who were able to manipulate the language were able to answer Q1b more creatively than those answering Q1a, giving full accounts and narrating events.

Question 2

Question 2a was by far the majority choice for the Higher task. Standards were comparable but with a slightly higher mean mark for Q2a as it was based on a typical exam topic (description of local area), it was more structured than Q2b and did not require as much complexity in the manipulation of language.

Question 2(a)

Vastly more popular, with four fifths of the candidates opting for this. There was a real variety of standards. Most candidates replied fully to the stimulus and showed a sound ability to narrate, give full descriptions and justify opinions.

The third bullet point (“che cosa si potrebbe fare per migliorare la tua zona”) was often misinterpreted by the weakest candidates, who did not understand the stimulus in Italian and described what they liked doing, or what they will do in the future, instead of what could be done to improve the local area. Other weaker ones simply omitted this point as they may have felt unable to handle the conditional. In

fact, most words in the question could have been simply lifted and re-used in the answer: "Per migliorare la mia zona, si potrebbe + infinitive", as some candidates did. Others personalised their answers by resorting to "Vorrei" and "Mi piacerebbe", and provided quite convincing replies. The most talented linguists demonstrated full mastery of the use of the conditional. Most candidates showed great awareness of environmental issues, others were more concerned with having fun, still the question was, on the whole, answered well. Unfortunately a few candidates tried to regurgitate pre-learnt material on the environment that was sometimes slightly irrelevant as it did not really fit the question set.

Some weaker candidates also misunderstood the final bullet point ("what you did last weekend") and wrote about what they normally do, thus failing to demonstrate their knowledge of the past tense. There were also some stronger candidates who tried to display their knowledge of the imperfect tense in this last section but ended up using it incorrectly instead of the *passato prossimo*.

Question 2(b)

By far the less popular choice, attracted many native or near native speakers. Q2(b) was a challenging task in which candidates had to recount an argument with a family member. Most candidates replied coherently and showed the ability to narrate, expand and report their feelings. They were thus able to give full accounts of family arguments, which were very pleasant to read. They displayed a wide range of tenses and the ability to use direct and indirect speech effectively to suit purpose. In the middle of family disputes parental authority seems to have survived so far, at least according to the evidence in Q2(b)!

The few weaker candidates who chose this question struggled with it as they often misunderstood parts of the task. Some, for example, thought that they simply had to write about a family problem rather than an argument and therefore produced very little relevant material.

General Comments

- 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.
- 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. Candidates should be reminded to read their work before submitting it and check its accuracy: quite a few errors of agreement with adjectives, nouns and verbs caused unnecessary loss of marks.
- 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 illegible work 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.

Paper 4C - Coursework

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 school and 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.

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 must set tasks from different topic areas.

Centres also need to remember that the title of the candidate's piece of coursework should be clearly 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 particularly applies to the more able candidates. This year some work submitted contained well over 1000 words, with the longest piece reaching 900 words on its own! This is excessive and unnecessary, although not penalising, and for some candidates it may lead to more slips in the quality of language.

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 duly 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. This year some tasks were clearly too difficult for some candidates and this resulted in rather poor pieces which did not fully address the questions set.

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 more individual work and use 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, or else a diary all in the *passato prossimo*. The nature of such tasks is self-penalising. Each coursework piece must display a range of tenses: candidates who do not employ a variety of tenses will not score full marks.

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, film reviews 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. This year an increasing number of centres did not enclose 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 sheets are correctly filled in, including topic areas, piece titles, total marks awarded and an indication of controlled/uncontrolled conditions. The candidate as well as the teacher must sign the CF1 sheet. Authentication forms are only necessary when the candidate's signature does not appear on the CF1 sheets (it was not required on older forms, the current ones do require the candidate's signature and they are available online). The CF1 sheet is an essential document that must be sent with the coursework sample as it contains all the required information about the coursework.

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.

Centres should bear in mind that the sample size requested consists of the coursework of 10 candidates (as indicated with an asterisk on the OPTEM form) if the cohort size is from 11 to 99 candidates. 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.

On the whole, this year many centres presented the coursework with all requested features and so enabled the marking process to be comfortably completed within the due date. It is strongly recommended that centres which decide to opt for the coursework option should familiarise themselves with the coursework guidance and the examination report, which is published every year.

Statistics

Paper 1F - Listening and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	36	28	20	13	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	37	30	23	17	11	8	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	34	29	24	19	14	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	36	32	28	25	15	10	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	36	30	24	18	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	38	34	30	26	22	20	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

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