



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Italian (5IN02_01)
Paper 2 Speaking in Italian

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GCSE Italian 2018
Unit 2: Speaking
Examiner's report

For the last year of this qualification, it is pleasing to be able to report a very high overall standard.

Most candidates were well prepared and able to communicate interesting information relevant to their chosen topic, using a wide range of tenses, vocabulary and structures. The best results came from those encouraged by their Teacher-Examiners to speak spontaneously and produce extended answers to genuinely unpredictable questions.

Unfortunately, in some centres, the candidates regurgitated material that they had pre-learnt, showing little understanding of what they had memorised. Inevitably, this limited the scores they could achieve.

In the words of one Moderator:

'The majority of students in the sample moderated performed very well. Students had prepared carefully and spoke confidently and with excellent fluency and spontaneity on their chosen task topic. The best students responded in depth to questions that arose naturally in the discussions, and were able to employ a wide range of vocabulary and linguistic structures in their answers. In a few cases, native speakers were not aware of the assessment criteria of the test and thus did not demonstrate fully their command of the language, giving answers that were too short and often repetitive with undeveloped ideas.

Some of the weakest students had attempted to pre-learn some sentences for their chosen task topic but then struggled with the pronunciation and accuracy or reproducing content that was too demanding for them.'

Whilst the administration of the tests showed some improvement this session, it remained a cause for concern. All too often, Moderators had to deal with missing items that delayed and complicated their work. Furthermore, errors and omissions frequently had a negative impact on the candidates' marks.

It is hoped that Teacher-Examiners will closely refer to the instructions on the Edexcel website in order to conduct tests correctly for the new qualification starting next year.

Topics and tasks

The preferred topics remained the same as previous years: *Media & culture, Sport & leisure* and *Travel & tourism* and for centres devising their own option: *School*.

The least popular was: *Business, work & employment*.

The task type most candidates opted for was still *Presentation and Discussion*, closely followed by *Picture-based Discussion*. A slight increase was noted for *Open Interaction*.

In spite of the specification requiring centres to include a mix of task types in their samples, a substantial number sent only one for moderation.

Presentation and Discussion

Most initial presentations were timed correctly (one to three minutes), allowing enough time for questions from the Teacher-Examiner. Many pleasing spontaneous conversations, including unpredictable elements, could then take place.

Where the timings were ignored, candidates could not access the highest scores. This mostly occurred in centres where the same topic was used for all and the questions were identical for every student.

Picture-based Discussion

The majority of Teacher-Examiners included either a picture or a picture description, as per the instructions.

Many *Picture-based Discussions* produced interesting and natural exchanges.

Some were unfortunately conducted as near monologues, with little opportunity for discussion or spontaneity, inevitably to the detriment of the candidates' results.

Open Interaction

The *Open Interaction* is intended to be a dialogue based on a realistic transaction, with questions and answers from both the Teacher-Examiner and the student.

Moderators commented on the many excellent *Open Interactions* that gave rise to genuine exchanges, but also reported centres where the candidates omitted to ask any questions, or where the whole test consisted of little more than a series of pre-prepared Q & A, resulting in a reduction of the Content & Response marks.

The three task types are designed to enable students to display different skills and should be conducted accordingly. Sadly, there was an increase in the number of "hybrid" tasks offered for moderation: irrespective of the stated task type, they started with a short presentation sometimes based on a picture, followed by some general conversation and ending with the Teacher-Examiner prompting the candidate to ask questions.

'Sometimes centres seem to be confused about how to conduct each of the specific tasks, confusing the different criteria needed for each. For example in a picture-based task they would ask the student to present the picture as if it were a presentation task or, encouraging students to ask two questions in a presentation and discussion task.'

General conduct of the tests

Most Teacher-Examiners are to be praised for the way they ran their tests, in accordance with the specification and recommendations, thus helping their students to show off their skills. It was pleasing to hear candidates who were obviously involved in their choice of topic and spoke about it with enthusiasm.

'Most assessments were well conducted; the candidates were well prepared with the TE being very encouraging and reassuring. In most cases, the tasks set were suitable for all candidates. The majority of TEs challenged the candidates with a range of appropriate questions using different tenses and structures. The overall timings of nearly all orals were accurate.'

Application of mark grids and marking principles

Moderators reported that, on the whole, Teacher-Examiners applied the marking criteria appropriately, as per the standards set by the examination board. The points most likely to cause discrepancies were:

- in the absence of a genuine dialogue, or when some of the discussion points are not covered in the first 6 minutes of a too-long test, the top *Content & Response* mark bands are out of reach;
- tests lacking good structures, varied lexis and competent use of tenses cannot access the upper *Range of Language* marks;
- marks are deducted when the student fails to ask questions in an *Open Interaction*, or when either a whole test or a presentation are too short.

Administration

The most common errors were due to not complying with the following points:

Sample

This must include the candidates indicated with a * on the 2A OPTEMs. To these must be added those who obtained the highest mark and the lowest mark in their 2A test.

For each candidate in the sample, the 2A recording and all accompanying paperwork must be sent to the Moderator.

CM2 forms

A CM2 mark sheet must be completed for each candidate.

It has to be dated and signed by both candidate and Teacher-Examiner.

CA2 forms

These can be used for student notes, in the form of words rather than full sentences.

If used, they must be included with the paperwork. If not, this must be indicated by ticking the appropriate box on the CM2.

Stimuli

The Teacher-Examiner should provide a task outline for the *Presentation and Discussion* and the *Picture-based Discussion*; and for the *Open Interaction*, the scenario explaining the transaction and reminding the candidate to ask questions.

Recordings

All 2A tasks for candidates included in the sample need to be sent, duly labelled and each starting with the recommended introduction. The recording quality must be checked.

'Quality is generally good although there are still a couple of centres where the microphone favours the teacher. Things have greatly improved since the days of tape recordings!'

Conclusion

It is always a joy for Moderators to hear so many enthusiastic students, well-prepared and encouraged by their teachers, expressing themselves in Italian on topics they are clearly interested in.

'The Performance of MOST students was very high. I had the pleasure to listen to great spontaneity in most cases and the students who scored the highest grades were able to initiate the conversation and the performances didn't sound rehearsed. There were few cases where the candidates were penalised by the teacher/examiner's questioning techniques, because the teacher would merely ask closed questions and the students were not given the opportunity to expand and justify their ideas further.'