



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Italian (5IN04/01)
Paper 4 Writing in Italian

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

Summer 2018

Publications Code 5IN04_01_1806_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2018

GCSE Italian 2018

Unit 4: Writing Examiner's report

The flexibility of the controlled assessment 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 very high standard, well presented and substantial in content. The majority of candidates fulfilled the requirements of this paper and produced at least 200 words as an answer to a given stimulus. All candidates, even the less able, tried to cover all the given bullet points. Many were able to successfully write more than this and scored at least in the 10-12 band for communication and content. Some candidates gave very detailed responses and scored very highly as a result. A few struggled to get to 200 words (in some cases even able candidates) thus preventing them from achieving higher marks.

This year most centres used the Edexcel tasks (which can be downloaded from the Edexcel website at <http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse09/mfl/italian/Pages/default.aspx>). Some of these seemed to be very popular and perhaps for this reason centre devised tasks were used only by less than half of the centres.

Popular tasks included accounts of holidays, school and healthy living but also local area, film review and work experience, some of which were Edexcel tasks while others were centre-devised.

This year the overall level of the pieces was quite high, covering a variety of topics and generally including a good range of structures and tenses.

The holiday task allowed candidates to expand according to their ability and draw on personal experience with some students performing very well and using a variety of tenses and very refined expressions. Others were more pedestrian and rather formulaic. Some centres varied the holiday topic slightly by setting tasks where candidates needed to write a review of a hotel they have stayed in, or write a letter of complaint for a place they have visited, or write about issues during the holidays, or tasks where pupils had to take part in a competition to win the holiday of their dreams.

There were also many pieces about healthy living. In most cases, responses included details on people's diet and their opinions on health-related issues such as smoking, drinking alcohol and the use of drugs. These candidates generally accessed a wider range of vocabulary and tenses than those writing about their last holiday though the weaker ones often tended to simply produce a list of things they eat or drink.

The job application task or an account of work experience were also quite popular. Many candidates used the letter format to write a job application in a variety of fields, including advertising and marketing.

A good percentage of centres engaged in exploring more challenging forms of description as well as analysis of the motivations behind the choice of a particular job from the point of view of young people. Some of the details required by these tasks, however, were at times beyond the grasp of weaker candidates who were not able to deal with more complex structures and tenses.

A lot of centres chose to write about the local area, at times linking it to environment issues. For the more able candidates this was a good topic as it enabled them to show their ability to clearly manipulate vocabulary and structures, however they did not always use the full range of tenses. For the weaker candidates this topic resulted in a series of statements about what they do – i.e. recycle in the house, switch off lights and take public transport. This limited them in terms of variety of tense. Other candidates wrote a full and detailed account of their home town. Again the more able candidates were able to write varied and interesting accounts of places and what made them special or boring and to include historical information about the local area, making their writing comprehensive and well informed. Weaker candidates tended to produce just a list of facilities and places of interest, mostly using *c'è* or *ci sono*. There was consequently a lack of variety of structures and tenses.

There were some interesting pieces of work related to the use of technology, interviews to celebrities or film reviews. Although in some cases pupils described the film watched in so much detail that it made the language used a little ambiguous, most candidates succeeded in providing details of the plot but also opinions on their favourite character and a general review. These were done really well by the more able candidates but this type of task is often too challenging for weaker candidates who would achieve higher marks with simpler tasks.

The “school” task was also very popular but unfortunately these responses can be quite repetitive and pedestrian as many candidates end up just listing school facilities, describing their timetable and their uniforms and expressing their likes and dislikes regarding school subjects. Better tasks stretched the candidates more by asking them to discuss problems at school or differences between schools in the UK and Italy etc.

The range of language displayed in the controlled assessment 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. Most candidates were able to write successfully using at least 2 tenses, with many displaying a good use of past and future tenses and conditional. The most common errors in terms of language were cases of misspelling (including omission of accents) and incorrect use of auxiliary verbs in the perfect tense (e.g. *ho andato*). There were also many inaccuracies with articles, adjectives and gender agreement. There were frequent instances of candidates attempting to use more complex structures. More able candidates generally handled these well but weaker candidates did not – they appeared to have pre-learnt these as set phrases and as a result they did not know how to manipulate them correctly in their piece of work. This was most evident when

candidates were attempting to use the se + imperfect subjunctive + conditional tense sequence.

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. Some candidates had been drilled to incorporate pronouns, tenses and opinions to such a degree that their writing was very unnatural, repetitive and at times almost incoherent.

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 or very basic, repetitive vocabulary), full marks cannot be awarded even if the task is completed.

This year most tasks chosen by teachers were appropriate; however, on some occasions centre devised tasks did not give able candidates scope to develop their writing while some other tasks were clearly beyond the ability of weaker candidates.

Some of the tasks were more challenging than others and some weaker candidates were disadvantaged by being set these tasks as they were unable to meet the demands of the task and did not score well as a result. This was particularly noticeable when weaker candidates wrote a review of a film or a piece about the environment or healthy living, which require more complex structures and topic specific vocabulary. On the other hand, some simple and straightforward tasks (for example family or school) did not lend themselves to achieving high grades.

Some centres designed or used more than two task titles to accommodate the different abilities/levels amongst the students and to get the best result for both less and most able students.

Centres should bear in mind that candidates generally perform better when they are given a clear and detailed stimulus, with bullet points rather than just a generic title. This year again some centres provided just a simple title: this often makes it more difficult for the candidate and it also makes it more difficult for the examiner to evaluate the relevance of the piece. A list of bullet points will help candidates to focus on the task and will also provide some guidance as to what should be included in the piece to maximise marks (for example include opinions and a variety of tenses).

When setting their own tasks centres should also be aware of the fact that the use of phrases like "You must/should include..." will penalise candidates who do not cover all the bullet points. This can be easily avoided by using phrase such as "You may include...". Luckily most centres this year avoided using the phrase "You must...".

It is important that centres submit the correct number of task (two for each candidate) and when only one piece is sent it would be helpful if the centre put in a note explaining why some candidates only submitted one piece. If

candidates write more than two pieces the teacher should just send the best two.

Candidates can achieve full marks whilst keeping within the recommended word limit. This particularly applies to more able candidates and native or near native speaker candidates. On the other hand overly short pieces are self-penalising. Centres must remember that in order to obtain A* to C grades candidates must submit a minimum of 200 words for each of the two tasks.

The two tasks must be written in controlled conditions, i.e. candidates should only have access to their CA4 note form with a maximum of 30 words and a dictionary. Drafts are not allowed nor the retaking of the same assessment. Teachers are allowed to provide some guidance when the task is set but they cannot provide any help or specific feedback.

The controlled assessment pieces should be the candidate's own work. This year again there were quite a few instances of pieces where all candidates had written pretty much the same things or had used the same phrases, which indicated that a fair amount of pre-learnt material had been used by the majority of them, resulting in very repetitive pieces totally lacking individuality. In other instances pieces appeared to have been pre-learnt (with different degrees of success), with some candidates clearly forgetting words or chunks from memorised sentences. This does give rise to the suspicion that perhaps too much "scaffolding" has at times been provided by teachers. Teachers are reminded that they are required to sign a form declaring that the piece is the candidate's own work. Candidates should be encouraged to produce more individual pieces.

Centres also need to remember that each candidate's work should be accompanied by the Candidate Mark Sheet for Unit 4 (the more recent one available from the Edexcel website), which now includes the authentication signatures from both the teacher and the candidate, and when applicable the CA4 note form. If no CA4 form has been used centres should send a note stating so. Candidates should write no more than 30 words on the CA4 form.

Centres should also send a copy of the stimuli used for the controlled assessments. As mentioned above, a simple title, for ex. My holidays, is not ideal. If a centre is not using the Edexcel tasks a task made up of a list of bullet points is preferable. A word count at the end of each piece would also be appreciated.

From an administrative point of view, 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 examiner. Each candidate's work should be clearly separated from the others, ideally using plastic envelopes or even just staplers/paper clips. They should be arranged in the same order as on the OPTEM form/register.

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

In addition to this, it is essential that all centres adhere to the controlled assessment receipt deadline. Many controlled assessments this year were sent well after the deadline.

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. This year there were again many instances of poorly presented pieces, with handwriting that was very messy and at times barely legible and written on paper that looked like scrap paper. This does make the assessment process much more difficult. Word processed pieces would be preferable in these instances.

For more information about this unit please refer to the specification or the ‘Controlled Assessment Support Book – Writing’, both of which can be found on the Edexcel web site
<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse09/mfl/italian/Pages/default.aspx>