

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ITALIAN

Paper 0535/02

Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

This paper aims to test candidates' ability to understand written Italian and to communicate in writing. Candidates are required to read material in Italian and to convey information by responding to a range of questions either by ticking the appropriate box or by expressing answers in their own words. They are also required to write a letter of about 80-100 words talking about their activities at school. The standard of work was generally good, as in previous years, with few exceptions.

Comments on specific questions

Prima parte

Esercizio 1

Domande 1 - 6

This was a multiple choice exercise. The majority of candidates answered most of the questions correctly, without exceptions. There were no questions which were consistently answered incorrectly, but in **Question 4** candidates sometimes ticked the answer *Spinaci al prosciutto*, possibly not realising that *prosciutto* is actually meat and therefore not the ideal dish for a vegetarian!

The correct answers were: **Question 1:** A; **Question 2:** C; **Question 3:** D; **Question 4:** B; **Question 5:** B; **Question 6:** D.

Esercizio 2

Domande 7 - 13

In this exercise, candidates had to answer seven True or False questions. This, again, did not seem to present any particular difficulty, but when errors were found they were often in reply to **Questions 10** and **13**.

The correct answers were: **Question 7:** Vero; **Question 8:** Falso; **Question 9:** Vero; **Question 10:** Falso; **Question 11:** Falso; **Question 12:** Falso; **Question 13:** Vero.

Esercizio 3

Domande 14 - 20

In this exercise, candidates had to indicate to which lake (Lake Varese, Maggiore or Lugano) certain statements referred by ticking the appropriate box. This, again, was well answered by most candidates, but occasionally there were difficulties with **Question 19:** *Riceve le acque degli altri laghi*. In fact the answer to the question had to be found in the statements relating to the other two lakes and not in the statement referring to Lake Maggiore, which was the correct answer – only by careful reading were candidates able to gain the mark.

The answers were: **Question 14:** V; **Question 15:** V; **Question 16:** L; **Question 17:** V; **Question 18:** M; **Question 19:** M; **Question 20:** L.

Esercizio 4

Domanda 21

In this exercise, based on three written specifications and three visual stimuli, candidates had to write a message to their Italian friend talking about their holidays. They had to include:

- where they are;
- in whose house they are staying;
- how long they are staying there;
- what the weather is like;
- their activities.

Candidates were required to cover all five elements, and linguistic accuracy was not considered unless it interfered with communication.

The question was tackled well and marks were lost only by very weak candidates who did not write a clear message, or did not include some of the points. Most candidates scored around eight marks out of a maximum of ten.

Seconda parte

Esercizio 1

Domande 22 - 32

In this exercise, candidates had to answer questions relating to a passage about an Albanian girl who left her country with nothing except her violin in order to find a job in Italy and ended up with a full time post in an Italian orchestra, thanks to her musical talent.

This year the majority of candidates handled this task very well indeed. Hardly any mistakes were made and on the whole the performance in this exercise was much higher than in previous years.

The correct answers were:

Question 22: albanese

Question 23: era povera

Question 24: con un'altra ragazza

Question 25: il violino

Question 26: (i) non ha soldi; (ii) non riesce a trovare lavoro

Question 27: (i) chiede l'elemosina; (ii) comincia a suonare il violino

Question 28: si vergogna/ha paura

Question 29: (i) studenti; (ii) impiegati/mamme con i loro bambini

Question 30: (i) applaude; (ii) dà soldi

Question 31: perchè la ragazza è molto brava

Question 32: (i) suona per una radio privata; (ii) trova un lavoro fisso con un'orchestra.

Esercizio 2

Domanda 33

In this exercise candidates had to write a letter, talking about their activities at school and including the following points:

- where their school is and what type it is;
- what sort of people they like to be with;
- what type of activities they like to do with these people.

Letters were generally quite well written and a high proportion of candidates scored good marks for communication. There were a number of well developed letters with a confident use of structures and a good range of vocabulary.

Terza parte

Esercizio 1

Domande 34 - 39

This reading comprehension exercise required candidates to answer multiple choice questions based on a passage about two Italian ice skaters. As intended, candidates found this exercise more difficult than the previous ones. The questions which most frequently caused difficulties were **Questions 34, 37 and 38**.

The correct answers were: **Question 34: A; Question 35: D; Question 36: C; Question 37: C; Question 38: B; Question 39: C.**

Esercizio 2

Domande 40 - 46

This exercise was based on an article called "tutti x 1 1 x tutti" about voluntary work amongst young people in Italy. **Question 44** was answered wrongly by a large number of candidates who probably did not understand the meaning of the word *doposcuola*. Also **Question 42** presented some difficulties, since many candidates were unable to pinpoint the fears of Anna's parents in relation to her involvement with voluntary work.

The correct answers were:

Question 40: il desiderio di aiutare persone in situazioni difficili/per migliorare la vita di qualcuno

Question 41: perchè non hanno nessuno vicino

Question 42: (i) che non studi; (ii) che non si diverta

Question 43: (i) si fa amicizia/si aiutano persone sole; (ii) si ascoltano storie interessanti/si sta allegri

Question 44: (i) far fare i compiti ai ragazzi; (ii) far socializzare i ragazzi

Question 45: (i) paziente; (ii) responsabile

Question 46: perchè sono chiusi/perchè non hanno fiducia

Esercizio 3

Domande 47 - 66

This test aims at assessing grammatical competence and linguistic knowledge. Candidates are required to fill in the missing word in a passage and, generally speaking, only one word is the correct answer. Each correct answer is awarded half a mark for a total of ten marks. As in previous years, few candidates received maximum credit, but there was, nevertheless, a good number of correct answers.

These were: **Question 47:** tutto; **Question 48:** nome; **Question 49:** nel; **Question 50:** suoi; **Question 51:** oggi/adesso/ora; **Question 52:** quei; **Question 53:** piu'; **Question 54:** certo/dato; **Question 55:** di; **Question 56:** senza; **Question 57:** sa; **Question 58:** per; **Question 59:** del; **Question 60:** con; **Question 61:** sul/nel; **Question 62:** alla; **Question 63:** che; **Question 64:** vuol; **Question 65:** da; **Question 66:** italiana.

General comments

Once again, this test gave good results. In the Role Play section most candidates performed their tasks realistically and with confidence. Most candidates presented effectively a topic of their choice and then engaged in conversations on a variety of everyday topics with ease. Occasionally, however, communication became difficult and was achieved only partially. All Examiners displayed a friendly manner and most of them tried to extend the candidates as far as possible and lead them to use a variety of grammatical structures (including past and future tenses).

Comments on specific questions

Role Plays A and B

This section of the examination aims to test how well a candidate can deal with two guided conversations in Italian, for which s/he has 15 minutes to prepare. Each reply receives a mark ranging from 0 (for an unintelligible utterance) to 3 (for an accurate utterance, expressed in the appropriate register). The situations in **Role Plays A**, drawn from a well-defined range of topics, required familiarity with the minimum core vocabulary only. The situations in **Role Plays B**, on the other hand, were slightly more complex and required a wider range of vocabulary. A large number of candidates gave relevant and correct answers, achieving the highest marks in both Role Plays, but lower marks were also awarded, often when double answers were required, and only one was given. This was particularly noticeable in the second role play on cards 3, 6, 9 (looking for a holiday job). The importance of thorough preparation can never be stressed enough. This applies to Examiners too. In a few cases, Examiners asked questions in the wrong sequence or anticipated the reply that the candidate was supposed to give and, obviously, this did not help their candidates. All this was of course taken into account in the moderation of marks. On the question of procedure, it was pleasing to note that most Examiners identified, as they should, which Role Play card was being used.

Topic (prepared) Conversation

This test is allocated up to 15 marks for 'comprehension and responsiveness' (scale A, which also takes into account how well a topic has been prepared), and up to 15 marks again for 'linguistic complexity and range' (scale B). In general, marks for comprehension and fluency of response were higher than marks for vocabulary and accuracy, but only slightly. Most candidates prepared well for this test and presented a variety of subjects in which they had a personal interest. The subject chosen most often was holiday/travel, followed by various sports, such as swimming, rowing, basketball and wind surfing (not just football!). One candidate chose to talk about Ferrari cars, another about new research into biological vaccines and both did so with great knowledge and genuine enthusiasm. It is important to remember that candidates should be allowed to speak for one minute uninterrupted before questions are asked, as in a few cases the immediate firing of questions by the Examiner prevented the presentation from taking place at all. In the ensuing conversation most candidates showed a good level of comprehension and were able to respond fluently. Most Examiners managed to lead their candidates into using a variety of tenses and asked for explanations, enlargements, descriptions, thus helping their candidates to show their full linguistic ability.

General (unprepared) Conversation

This test is assessed in the same way as the **Topic Conversation**, with up to 15 marks for 'comprehension and responsiveness' and up to 15 marks for 'linguistic complexity and range'. Questions usually focused on familiar subjects, such as family, school, free time, recent or future holidays, plans for the future, etc. Most candidates answered without difficulty, both in terms of grammatical structures and of fluency. The occasional mistakes did not substantially affect marks, which were usually in line with, or just slightly below, those awarded for the previous test.

Impression

A mark out of 10 is also awarded for the overall impression created by the candidate's pronunciation and intonation, as well as fluency of delivery. In a few cases, delivery was slow and laboured and pronunciation/intonation showed a certain amount of interference from the candidate's mother-tongue, but the majority of candidates displayed good control of the Italian sounds and accurate intonation and were awarded marks of 8-10.

<p>Paper 0535/04 Continuous Writing</p>

General comments

The aim of this paper is to test candidates' ability to write a piece of prose relevantly and correctly. Each of the two questions is assessed under 'Communication' (5 marks), 'Accuracy in the use of structures' (15 marks) and 'Impression' (5 marks). Under 'Communication', the mark awarded reflects how well the candidate has completed the task (whether s/he has followed the instructions given and how fully the various points have been developed). Accuracy is assessed on the basis of an evaluation of correct grammatical structures and quality of language, following the criteria set out below.

1-3	Very poor	Very limited language. Little evidence of grammatical awareness. Gender and spelling extremely weak. Incoherence, irrelevance. Language hardly comprehensible.
4-6	Poor	Language barely adequate. Some understanding of language structures, formation and use of tenses, though frequent lapses. Short, very basic sentences, with high incidence of serious errors. Limited range of vocabulary and structures.
7-9	Adequate	Language generally speaking adequate, but quite basic or alternatively coherently expressed but flawed by frequent mistakes. Grammar at times weak, but at least half of the task should be free of major errors.
10-12	Good	Coherent piece of writing with occasional lapses. Vocabulary and structures generally good with some errors in more complex sentences. General impression is of a developed, sequenced and coherent piece of writing despite some grammatical inaccuracies.
13-15	Very good	Confident piece of writing with good variety of vocabulary and structures. Sentences generally correct (with minor lapses) and description, opinion and logical argument well structured and clear. Confident use of personal pronouns, tenses and other linguistic structures. Very good flow maintained. Often original and pleasant to read.

The mark for 'Impression' is awarded for fluency, degree of judgement or opinion and variety of expression.

As in previous years, the standard of work was generally high and most candidates were able to compose the letters correctly and respond fully to the tasks set. A number of candidates were awarded full marks in both parts of the paper (50 out of 50) as their letters were fully developed and clearly written with excellent use of language. In general, candidates followed the guidelines accurately and answered all the points required.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

There was a choice between:

(a) Writing a letter to an Italian friend to tell him/her that you had just moved house. Candidates had to include the following points:

- What the new house was like
- What were the advantages of living there
- What were the disadvantages
- What they thought of the move.

or

(b) Writing a letter to the mother of an Italian friend, with whom you had just spent two weeks on holiday, to thank her for her hospitality. Candidates had to include:

- Details of return journey
- Description of the best episodes of the holiday
- What they thought of these episodes
- Thanking their friend's mother.

More candidates chose the first option. The results in general were good and there were a significant number of excellent scripts which conveyed a great deal of information and showed a wide knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. Many candidates followed all the instructions given, but in **Question 1 (b)**, some of them did not consider that the letter had to be addressed to the friend's mother and therefore the *Lei* form should have been used instead of *tu*. Also, the points were not always fully covered, particularly the last two, and a number of candidates lost marks for communication as a result. As usual, the more able candidates made good use of the stimulus given to produce a thoughtful account, including opinion and reason as well as descriptions.

As regards accuracy, it is difficult to generalise about different candidates' achievements, but a good number were certainly adequate and only very few showed considerable weaknesses over grammar and vocabulary or wrote repetitively and without a plan.

One thing to flag up again this year is that candidates should make their answers as legible and as clear as possible. It is very frustrating for Examiners to have to decipher very poor, messy handwriting and this inevitably results in a loss of marks for communication. Many scripts were interspersed with a good number of 'invented' words, which perhaps make perfect sense in other languages, but none at all in Italian.

Question 2

In this question, candidates had to talk about a performance they had attended. They had to include:

- What the *spettacolo* consisted of
- What happened during the *spettacolo*
- Their reactions to the *spettacolo*.

Quite a number of candidates made the mistake of thinking that the words **assistere a uno spettacolo** meant to 'assist' and therefore completely misunderstood the rubric and talked about their personal involvement in helping set up or run a show. The best responses came from candidates who had read the question carefully and produced some imaginative, well-structured pieces of writing, sometimes full of surprises and unusual circumstances to recount. In tasks such as this it is important to develop the plot and the characters clearly, to engage the reader and to develop the story with elements of interest, so as to make it a pleasure to read, whether the events narrated are true or not.