

# CONTENTS

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<b>FOREIGN LANGUAGE ITALIAN.....</b>	<b>2</b>
Paper 0535/02 Reading and Directed Writing .....	2
Paper 0535/03 Speaking .....	5
Paper 0535/04 Continuous Writing .....	6

# FOREIGN LANGUAGE ITALIAN

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Paper 0535/02

Reading and Directed Writing

## General comments

This paper is aimed at testing 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 introducing themselves to a new Italian friend. The standard of work was generally good, as in previous years, with few exceptions.

## Comments on specific questions

### *Prima parte*

#### **Esercizio 1 Domande 1-5**

This was a multiple choice exercise. The majority of candidates answered at least four out of five questions correctly. The most common mistake was in **Question 3** – some candidates were clearly not familiar with the word 'gallo' and had answered 'gatto' (A) or 'maiale' (D). Occasionally mistakes were also made in **Question 2**, where weaker candidates may not have been familiar with the word 'pattinare'.

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

#### **Esercizio 2 Domande 6-10**

In this exercise candidates had to answer five true or false questions based on a short text.

This, again, did not seem to present any particular difficulty to candidates, but when errors were found they were mostly in reply to **Questions 9** and **10**, probably as the answers to these questions were implied rather than directly written in the text.

The correct answers were: **Question 6: Falso; Question 7: Falso; Question 8: Vero; Question 9: Vero; Question 10: Vero.**

#### **Esercizio 3 Domande 11-15**

In this exercise candidates had to say to which dog (Bruno, Kuki or Zaf) certain statements applied by ticking the appropriate box. This again was well answered by most candidates, although **Question 12** was frequently answered incorrectly, probably due to candidates not understanding the word "viziato".

The correct answers were: **Question 11: Z; Question 12: K; Question 13: B; Question 14: K; Question 15: Z.**

#### **Esercizio 4 Domanda 16**

In this exercise based on three written specifications and one visual stimulus candidates had to write a postcard to an Italian friend talking about their holidays. They had to include: **(a)** where they are; **(b)** what the weather is like (sunny); **(c)** how long they will be staying there.

Candidates were required to cover all three elements (1 mark for each), and full linguistic accuracy was not essential, although 2 marks were awarded for verb usage in the appropriate tenses.

The question was tackled consistently well and many candidates gained full marks in this exercise. When marks were lost it was typically for incorrect use of verbs, although some candidates did not follow the guidelines.

**Seconda parte****Esercizio 1 Domande 17-24**

In this exercise candidates had to answer questions relating to a passage about a girl, Cristina, who was locked inside her school all night due to returning to collect her violin when all the other students had left.

Most candidates handled this task well, although some questions were consistently wrongly answered. **Question 17** was answered incorrectly by all but the best candidates – many were obviously not familiar with this use of the word *'provare'* and had answered either *'ha provato ad aprire la scuola'* or *'ha trovato Cristina'*. Mistakes were also made in **Question 20**, where some candidates wrote things that Cristina had done while locked in the school, but that were not associated with her trying to resolve the situation e.g. *'ha girato correndo per le aule'* (without making the connection that she was searching for somebody or for a telephone) or *'ha mangiato caramelle'*. Other candidates did not seem to realise that Cristina had not actually managed to find a telephone and wrote *'ha provato a chiamare i genitori'*. Many candidates who answered the question correctly picked up on the fact that she was searching for a person and a telephone, but few made the point that she was looking for a way out of the windows. The only other question to pose problems was **Question 23**, in which many candidates simply answered *'non sapevano dov'era Cristina'* which, while true, did not show careful interpretation of the text, since the required answer was that they did not know that she had returned to school (to collect her violin). A reasonable number of candidates however still scored full marks on this exercise.

The correct answers were:

**Question 17:** *sorpresa*;

**Question 18:** Any 2: *andare a casa/lavarsi/mangiare (fare colazione)*;

**Question 19:** *dentro la scuola*;

**Question 20:** Any 2: *ha cercato qualcuno/ha cercato un telefono/ha cercato altre uscite*;

**Question 21:** *paura*;

**Question 22:** *si è messa a scrivere la sua avventura/ha mangiato caramelle*;

**Question 23:** *che lei fosse ritornata a scuola (a prendere il violino)*;

**Question 24:** *I genitori le hanno regalato un telefonino.*

**Esercizio 2 Domanda 25**

In this exercise candidates had to write a letter, talking about themselves and including the following points:

- (a) Introduce themselves and describe their appearance and personality.
- (b) What they like doing in their free time.
- (c) What they detest.
- (d) Asking their new friend two questions.

The letter was generally quite well written by most candidates. A few candidates lost marks through the omission of one element of the task, mainly describing either their appearance or personality, probably as they did not understand the Italian words *'aspetto'* or *'carattere'*. A good proportion of candidates were able to set out the letter correctly and 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, though the question required information to be given only in the present tense.

**Terza parte****Esercizio 1 Domande 26-31**

This reading comprehension exercise required candidates to answer multiple choice questions based on a passage about Ferrara. The final question (for 2 marks) required an answer in the candidate's own words. This exercise was more difficult than any other for most candidates and errors were present in almost all the answers ticked. Only the most able candidates completed this exercise successfully, and even among the best candidates **Question 27** was often answered with A rather than B – '*ampiezza limitata*' was not completely incompatible with answer A. The passage generally was more demanding than those in previous sections and therefore many mistakes were made.

The correct answers were: **Question 26:** D; **Question 27:** B; **Question 28:** C; **Question 29:** A; **Question 30:** B; **Question 31:** (i) *C'è poco rumore/il silenzio/ci sono molte bici*, (ii) *Molti parchi/zone verdi*.

**Esercizio 2 Domande 32-38**

This exercise was based on an article called "*I giovani Italiani e la politica*" about young people in Italy and their interest and participation in political activities. This text proved in general less difficult than the previous reading comprehension on Ferrara. **Question 32**, however, did pose some problems, often for more able candidates who tried to find two pieces of information directly relevant to statistics in politics. A mark was awarded for the fact that young people participate more in sport activities and when a good candidate made two statements relating to politics but not to sport (i.e. (i) *non sono interessati alla politica* and (ii) *le associazioni a minore partecipazione sono i movimenti politici*) both marks were awarded. Also **Question 37** was sometimes answered ambiguously, with candidates not specifying to which group of young people they were referring, and confusing interest in politics with participation in voluntary work. Once again, only the weaker candidates failed to answer most of the questions correctly, and sometimes copied irrelevant information from the text, whereas many of the stronger candidates scored full marks.

The correct answers were:

**Question 32** (i) *Che le associazioni sportive sono quelle più frequentate dai giovani;*

(ii) *Che le associazioni politiche sono quelle meno frequentate dai giovani;*

**Question 33** (i) *I giovani partecipano alle manifestazioni;*

(ii) *Un buon numero di giovani è iscritto ad associazioni di volontariato;*

**Question 34** *Perché non riescono a immaginare neanche il proprio futuro;*

**Question 35** (i) *L'ambiente;*

(ii) *La pace nel mondo;*

**Question 36** Any 2 of: *i politici fanno molti discorsi/e pochi fatti positivi/la politica non porta a nessun risultato/la politica non sembra avere niente a che fare con la loro vita;*

**Question 37** (i) *i giovani che non si interessano di politica non si informano;*

(ii) *i giovani che non si interessano non si impegnano per gli altri;*

(iii) *i giovani che si interessano discutono e partecipano/si impegnano;*

**Question 38** *Perché ci sono dei giovani che pensano al futuro della società / che sono interessati alla politica.*

<p><b>Paper 0535/03</b></p>
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<p><b>Speaking</b></p>
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### **General comments**

Once again this test has given good results. In the Role Plays most candidates performed their tasks realistically and with confidence and then presented effectively a topic of their choice, which was the subject of the conversation that followed. The last part of the test was a general conversation on a variety of everyday topics in which most candidates engaged 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 – 15 marks each***

This section of the examination aims at assessing how well a candidate can deal with two guided conversations in Italian, for which he/she has 15 minutes to prepare. Each reply receives a mark ranging from 0 (from an unintelligible utterance) to 3 (for an accurate utterance, expressed in the appropriate register). The situations in the A Role Plays, drawn from a well-defined range of topics, required familiarity with the minimum core vocabulary only. The situations in the B Role Plays, on the other hand, were slightly more complex and required a wider range of vocabulary. Most 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. It is clear that most Examiners took very seriously – as they should – their preparation of the role plays, thus enabling their candidates to perform well. This year there were no instances of questions asked in the wrong sequence, nor of replies that anticipated what the candidate was supposed to say. Obviously, this has been to the advantage of the candidates. This year the candidates generally coped better with double answers too. On the question of procedure, it was pleasing to note that virtually all Examiners introduced each cassette and each candidate with the necessary announcements, and identified which role play card was being used.

#### ***Topic (prepared) Conversation – 30 marks***

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. Countries and cities around the world, either their native ones or some they had visited, together with various sports and hobbies were the subjects of many presentations, but there were also a number of other topics, from opera to Japanese forms of writing, from Barcelona's street artists, to the history of the Ferrari. It was pleasing to hear the genuine interest and passion of the candidates for the topics chosen. This year the timing of the presentation and the ensuing conversation (5 minutes in all) was definitely much closer than last year to the stated standard, however it is important to remember that candidates should be allowed to present their topic for one full minute without interruptions. Only then should the Examiner start asking questions. In a few cases the immediate firing of questions by the Examiner prevented any real presentation taking place at all. In the conversation, lasting perhaps an additional 4 minutes, most candidates showed a good level of comprehension and a fluent response. Most Examiners managed to lead their candidates into using a variety of tenses and asked for explanations, enlargements, descriptions related to the topic, avoiding questions inviting simply "yes" or "no" answers and thus helping their candidates to show their full linguistic ability. Overall the assessment of candidates was close to the agreed standard, but many Examiners tended to be somewhat harsh, especially in respect of scale B (linguistic complexity and range) and some were rather generous with candidates at the bottom of the range.

**General (unprepared) Conversation – 30 marks**

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 were usually centred on well known 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. Here, again, it is important to adhere to the recommended time (5 minutes) and to vary the questions, covering at least two or three topics and remembering that the purpose of the conversation is to show the candidate’s linguistic abilities. Indeed, it is very important to stress that overuse of closed questions, which produce just one word answers, should be avoided, and a conscious effort should be made to use the ‘Tell me about/Why/How?’ type of questions. The occasional mistakes did not substantially affect marks, which were usually in line with, or just slightly below, those awarded for the previous test.

A mark out of 10 is also awarded for ‘**Overall impression**’ of 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.

<b>Paper 0535/04</b>
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<b>Continuous Writing</b>
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**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 exercises is assessed under “communication” (up to 5 marks), “accuracy in the use of structures” (up to 15 marks) and “impression” (up to 5 marks). Under “communication” the mark awarded reflects how well the candidate has completed the task (whether he/she 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.

<b>13-15</b>	A wide variety of structure, vocabulary and idiom. Longer sequences of language using a wide range of clause types. Verb tenses used with ease. Secure, consistent and very fluent. Overall impression is one of accuracy, with few major errors.
<b>10-12</b>	A good variety of structure, vocabulary and idiom. Longer sequences of language using a range of clause types. Verb tenses used with confidence. Fluent and consistent with a degree of control. Style appropriate to the purpose. Writing is generally accurate. Errors do not significantly affect meanings.
<b>7-9</b>	A range of structure, vocabulary and idiom. Some variety of clause types, e.g. subordinate clauses. Verb tenses used effectively but with limitations. Fairly fluent with some degree of control. Inaccuracy does not impede the expression of a range of meanings.
<b>4-6</b>	Limited range of vocabulary, idiom and structure. Appropriate register used. The style of writing is basic but reasonably coherent. Past, present and future tenses used at a basic level. The writing is sufficiently accurate to enable a clear message to be conveyed.
<b>1-3</b>	A basic range of vocabulary, idiom and structure. Sentences may be repetitive but are often successful. Some limited attempt at the use of more than one tense. The degree of inaccuracy frequently obscures the meaning.
<b>0</b>	The language conveys little or no message. Insufficient accurate language to convey the meanings.

The mark for “impression” is awarded for fluency, degree of judgement or opinion and variety of expression.

As in previous years, linguistic standards varied but generally speaking the level of work was good and most candidates fulfilled the criteria indicated by the mark scheme. 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 the second exercise, however, a number of candidates did not fully understand the stimulus and, for example, identified themselves with the boy shouting for help, rather than saying they had encountered a boy who was running towards them shouting for help.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Question 1**

There was a choice between:

(a) Writing a letter to an Italian friend to tell him/her that last year you kept a secret for a long time. The points to include were:

- What the secret was.
- Why you had to keep it for a long time.
- When you revealed it and what the consequences were.
- What this experience taught you.

or

(b) Writing a letter to an Italian friend, telling him/her that six months ago you took up a new activity. Candidates had to include:

- Details of the new activity.
- What difficulties they had to overcome.
- How they overcame them and if they overcame them all.
- What their feelings were.

The greater majority of candidates chose the second option.

Accuracy tended to be variable. Many scripts were good and some were excellent with an impressive level of accuracy including complex structures such as the conditional or the subjunctive.

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. Many produced convincing responses, ranging from secrets about boyfriend/girlfriend situations or secrets being kept from parents in the first letter and taking up the study of a new language or sport or hobby in the second.

As regards accuracy, it is difficult to generalise about different candidates' achievements. Wrong verb endings and agreement were the most common errors but a good number of scripts were certainly adequate and some, as already said, were excellent.

As a final point, candidates should again be reminded by Centres of the importance of a clear and orderly presentation: handwriting which is illegible or extremely small and difficult to read makes the marking of the paper a very frustrating and time-consuming task for Examiners.

## Question 2

In this exercise candidates had to write a story based on this preamble “You were in the woods with friends when a boy came running towards you. He was shouting ‘Help! Help!’” They had to include the following points:

- What happened next.
- Their reactions to this experience.

The vast majority talked about a boy being chased by a wolf or a large dog or a monster. Sometimes it was only a hoax which caused a lot of frustration or laughter in the people involved. In other cases, candidates mentioned a younger brother or a member of their group being lost in the wood, or being hurt in an accident, or having fallen into a river. The stories were at times interesting to read and full of details but in general less imaginative than one might have expected. A few were totally irrelevant as candidates had misinterpreted the requirements of this exercise.

As already pointed out, a few candidates did not fulfil the set task because they identified themselves with the boy shouting for help.