



GCSE **Italian**

8633/SF

Report on the examination

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General comments

Students approached this paper with notable confidence and the majority engaged with its demands successfully.

The vast majority of students were appropriately entered for this tier. However, a small proportion may have benefited from being entered for the Higher tier, given their level of ability. Most students demonstrated confident use of the present and past tenses and were able to express opinions clearly – some even offered well-developed justifications. That said, a noticeable number struggled with using the future and conditional tenses.

There was a marked improvement this year in students' confidence when discussing topics such as charity, homelessness and how they contribute to helping those affected.

By contrast, they displayed greater hesitation when it came to discussing topics such as work-related matters, future career goals and environmental concerns such as recycling.

Role plays

In general, students performed well, although a few role plays appeared more challenging. However, there are several aspects that proved more demanding and should be considered for future examinations.

Students engaged fully with the tasks and rarely left any unanswered. Role plays involving everyday topics, such as food, shopping, or school, were generally well-handled. Compared to previous years, students demonstrated greater fluency in using a range of tenses and expressing opinions naturally. Despite occasional linguistic inaccuracies, they were often able to convey their thoughts effectively.

In questions requiring two details or responses, some teachers did not prompt students for the second part or failed to elicit the second detail.

Once a student has answered a question, the teacher may not repeat it, even if the response is inaccurate. Unlike in the photo card task, teachers are not permitted to rephrase questions in the role play. A few teachers asked supplementary questions that were not included in the booklet.

In many cases, the unpredictable question (!) proved problematic. Students often struggled to understand it, likely due to difficulty identifying the key question word or its grammatical structure.

Frequently in the role play, students lifted the verb from the question and reused it in their answers, which sometimes led to ambiguity in communication. Nonetheless,

most students made genuine attempts to respond to the tasks, even when faced with more abstract or challenging questions.

The question task

This task often proved difficult. A number of students found it demanding. Most attempted it, but the correct form of address – *tu* or *Lei*, as specified in the Teacher Booklet – is essential and must be used. Some students constructed grammatically incorrect questions or asked something entirely unrelated to the stimulus. A few appeared unaware that the question mark symbol (?) indicated they were required to ask a question.

Role Play 1

Students handled multiple tasks with clarity, particularly demonstrating good use of verbs related to daily routines.

A significant number described what they typically drink instead of food.

Task 3: The question "*Chi prepara la cena a casa?*" was frequently misunderstood, with many students struggling to formulate an appropriate response.

Role Play 2

Task 3: when asked about age, some students stated they were two or six years old, misinterpreting the question.

Task 4: this task proved challenging for many. While most students appeared to understand the question, their responses were frequently given in English rather than in the target language.

Task 6: students consistently misinterpreted the requirements, resulting in more incorrect questions than correct ones.

Role Play 3

Several students were unable to provide two examples of healthy food, with some citing items such as *gelato* or *patatine*, which are not considered healthy choices. While others responded appropriately, a common issue was offering only one detail instead of the two required.

Role Play 4

This role play was generally well answered, with the exception of **Task 4**. Students found it challenging to discuss shops in their town. Few were able to name specific shops. Others mentioned supermarkets but struggled to describe particular types of shops.

Role Play 5

Most students handled this role play with confidence, though a couple of tasks presented difficulties.

Task 3: The question "Where do you do your homework?" caused some issues, as several students struggled to provide an appropriate or specific response.

Task 5: Students found it challenging to formulate a suitable question related to "*materie*" with a few not recognising the word.

Role Play 6

Task 1: Some students identified themselves as part-time lawyers or doctors indicating that students may have misunderstood the task.

Task 2: The unpredictable question posed a challenge for many.

The Photo Card

In general, students demonstrated competence with the Photo Card task and showed progress in tackling unfamiliar questions, with some demonstrating a strong command of vocabulary.

The Photo Card task is timed, and most students were able to keep within the two-minute limit. Only a few exceeded it. In these relatively rare instances, teachers did not seem to be aware of the timing and allowed students to continue. In such cases, the final question was asked well after the two-minute mark and, for that reason, the answer could not be considered during marking.

On a few occasions, teachers paraphrased questions when necessary but maintained the intended meaning. However, some invalidated questions by altering both the wording and the meaning, and only a few provided vocabulary for students to use in their answers.

Many students were aware that achieving the highest marks required at least three verb clauses across a minimum of three responses. As the first three questions were prepared in advance, several students successfully extended their answers and incorporated justified opinions. However, some high-achieving students appeared unaware of these mark scheme requirements and, as a result, did not attain full marks. Additionally, a small number of students were asked only the three prepared questions, omitting the two unprepared ones. This teacher-examiner error led to a loss of marks.

Most students were able to give a good response to the first question, *“Che cosa vedi nella foto?”*. Some had prepared phrases such as *“in the foreground...”* and *“in the background...”* and were able to formulate several sentences, each with a fully conjugated verb.

Some questions involved a *“Perché?”* and, on the whole, students were prompted to answer this part of the task.

Students tended to perform well on the unseen questions overall. However, the question *“Con chi vai d'accordo?”* posed a particular challenge. Many appeared confused by the word *“chi,”* which led to hesitation or inaccurate responses, suggesting a gap in familiarity with this kind of question structure.

Photo Card A

Task 4: A few students struggled to understand the phrase *“Con chi...?”*

Photo Card B

Task 2: *Dove e con chi fai sport ?*

Many students found the phrase “*Con chi*” somewhat demanding. Responses were occasionally hesitant or lacked detail, though students made commendable efforts to engage with the question.

Task 5: While many were able to answer part of the question, they frequently requested it be repeated. In some cases, students did not address the “*dove*” element—where they could go to do sport, resulting in lost marks.

Photo Card C:

In general, this Photo Card seemed to cause issues with vocabulary related to describing rooms in the house. Many students also appeared to confuse the word for “rooms” with the word for “bedrooms,” responding to the question about how many rooms were in their house by saying two or three, and were unable to name them.

Task 4: Many students found the word “*stanze*” challenging to understand, which affected the accuracy of their responses.

Task 5: Several students misinterpreted the question and described what they liked about their homes rather than what they disliked, resulting in incomplete or inaccurate answers.

Photo Card D

Some students found this photo card more demanding. While some were able to describe the people and occasionally the background, many struggled with the vocabulary required to discuss recycling. The question “*Cos’hai fatto... l’ambiente?*” proved particularly difficult and often led to incomplete or confused responses.

A large number of students did not understand the vocabulary “*macchine elettriche*”.

Photo Card E

Task 5: Some students appeared to misunderstand the question, leading to confused responses about family in general rather than addressing the specific information required.

Photo Card F

Task 5: Many students did not incorporate the word “*ideale*” in their responses. They tended to describe their favourite teacher, suggesting a possible misunderstanding of the task. A few asked what “*ideale*” meant.

The General Conversation

The majority of students produced engaging and well-structured dialogues. Notably, fewer students appeared to rely on pre-learned questions compared to previous years, indicating a positive shift toward spontaneous language use.

A good number of students successfully incorporated opinions and justifications, demonstrating control over a variety of tenses. A small number even used the subjunctive to express personal points of view.

There was an increase in the use of linking words, contributing to greater fluency. Students also showed confidence in using verbs to express preferences – *mi piace, detest, odio, adoro* - and there was a noticeable rise in the use of reflexive verbs, reflecting broader grammatical competence.

Students generally performed well in the general conversation, with most teachers demonstrating good awareness of timing, keeping the conversation to approximately 2.5 minutes per theme. While a few general conversations ran over time, the majority were well-managed. In some cases, penalties were incurred where teachers omitted the requirement for students to ask a question during the general conversation, or if one or both themes of the conversation were too short.

Where students did not score marks, this was often due to very brief answers lacking verbs, with responses limited to basic “*sì*” or “*no*.”

The questions asked by teachers gave students plenty of opportunity to demonstrate a range of tenses, with teachers also asking follow-up questions to elicit responses in specific tenses.

Persistent linguistic inaccuracies were observed across several student responses, directly impacting the Communication mark in some cases.

Polluzione,

Prendere foto

Additivo

Stritto/stretto

Annoiante, annoioso

Sana, sante

Lavorare fortemente

Salvare soldi

Use of several English words: *gym, cool, basketball, city, lunch ...*

Wrong auxiliary in the perfect tense: *ho stato, abbiamo andato*

Question types

Teachers generally asked questions that were suitably matched to students' ability levels. In some cases, however, using exemplar questions from the Teacher Booklet resulted in language that was too advanced for some students, which hindered their ability to provide complete responses. The use of closed questions occasionally restricted students' opportunities to showcase a broader range of vocabulary and tenses. In a few instances, where both the Photo Card and general conversation focused on the same theme, this resulted in reduced marks in line with the assessment criteria. Nonetheless, many students gave extended answers, justified their opinions, and even made comparisons, indicating good progress in spoken language skills.

Themes and topics

All themes and topics were covered during the general conversation and students generally seemed more confident.

However, questions relating to jobs and environmental issues, proved more challenging for some, revealing gaps in vocabulary, grammatical accuracy and fluency in this particular area.

Asking a question

It was observed that students generally asked their question during the first theme of the general conversation and frequently followed up with a second question in the subsequent theme. Notably, the commonly used prompt *“E tu?”* appeared far less often this year compared to previous years, although some students did manage to formulate well-structured questions. A small number of students asked questions that were not relevant to either of the two themes. In a few cases, students used statements such as *“Descrivi la tua famiglia”* or *“Descrivi la tua casa,”* which, although thematically appropriate, were not phrased as proper questions.

Timing

In some instances, the assessment exceeded the five-minute limit. In accordance with the marking criteria, any responses given after this time could not be considered. Additionally, uneven timing between the two conversation themes occasionally resulted in penalties.

Tips for Teachers and Students

Role Play

- Focus on including all the specific details required on the role play card.
- If you're asked *“perché”*, make sure to give an opinion.
- Use the correct form of address (formal/informal) when asking questions, as indicated in the role play.

Photo Card

- Aim to use three verbs for each task and include at least one opinion with a justification across the whole task.
- Listen carefully to the questions and check whether they ask for more than one detail.
- Pay close attention to the tense used in the questions and respond accordingly.

General Conversation

- Try to include several opinions and justify them clearly.
- Use a variety of tenses: present, past and future.
- If you don't understand a question, ask for it to be repeated in Italian.
- Always aim to ask at least one question during the conversation.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.