



GCSE

Italian

8633/WH Writing (Higher)

Report on the examination

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General Comments

As in the previous series, the vast majority of students had been entered appropriately for this tier. The quality of work seen in the overlap questions was of a considerable higher standard than at the Foundation tier. The ability to use a range of tenses, idiomatic expressions and more complex language was impressive and students were also able to express and justify opinions well. Marks were lost when inaccuracies led to breakdowns in communication, or when students misunderstood the bullet points in Questions 1 and 2. The suggested word count for these questions was on the whole adhered to - a continued improvement since the beginning of the specification.

Higher Question 1

For this question, there are 10 marks for Content and 6 marks for Quality of Language. Students are required to write approximately 90 words in total, covering four different bullet points. While all points must be covered, equal coverage of the bullet points is not required. The quality of work varied considerably, with many students able to provide extended responses which demonstrated their ability to develop ideas, express opinions and refer to different time frames. Where students were less successful, this was mainly due to misinterpretation, omission of bullet points and grammatical errors which changed the intended meaning. At times, and similar to last series, the wording of the bullet point was copied directly from the rubric and not changed into the first person singular, creating a lack of clarity and breakdowns in the intended meaning.

The criteria for assessment focus on four elements: coverage of the bullet points, development of ideas, clarity of communication and expression of opinions. Students need to be reminded that coverage of bullet points is key, as misinterpreting or omitting even one bullet point means that the award of a mark above 6 is impossible, given that for the award of marks in the range 7 – 10, all aspects of the task must be covered. In addition, although students had no difficulty in developing ideas and expressing opinions, there were occasions when inaccuracy led to a lack of clarity of communication (referred to as 'lapses' and 'breakdown of messages') and this impacted on marks awarded. Each of the bullet points gave students scope to answer using three time frames and invited opportunity for an opinion. If information was given in relation to all four bullet points, but there were lapses in clarity and a lack of **two** opinions, students could not necessarily score a mark of 8 or 9.

The key features of the criteria for assessment in the Quality of Language are: use of a variety of language, attempts at complexity, time frames and accuracy.

There were many examples of attempts at complexity with attempts at using longer sentences, accurate and a varied use of connectives such as *e*, *ma*, *comunque*, *poi* and *però* and it was refreshing to see regular use of accurately spelt *però*, *sarà* and *è* although there were still some instances where the lack of an accent on these words impacted on the intended meaning.

Most students were able to make an attempt at all three time frames and the bullet points were designed to encourage this.

Question 1.1

Content

Question 1.1 was the more popular of the two options. A minority of students attempted to use complex sentences, but often in a disjointed or random manner—for example, using "*se potessi scegliere*" as a standalone phrase. This suggests they remembered a subjunctive construction but were unsure how to complete it appropriately. Where past and future verb tenses were missing, bullet points were awarded when students successfully referenced past and future time frames, as required by the mark scheme. Examples include phrases like "*un compleanno recente*" and "*un regalo ideale*". Below are some observations related to the bullet points:

- **una festa importante per la tua famiglia** – some neglected to mention which feast day they were talking about so it was difficult to award the bullet point. Occasionally, the lack of changing the possessive adjective *tua famiglia* to *mia famiglia*, meant that students could not be awarded the bullet point since the question was not answered; eg. *una festa importante per la tua famiglia è il Natale*.
- **una celebrazione italiana** – the majority of students mentioned celebrations such as *La Befana*, the Carnival of Venice, Easter or Christmas. Marks were lost when students did not explain what the feast day was, or when they used the English word, for example, *Mi piace Easter*.
- **un compleanno l'anno scorso** – most students were able to answer this question mentioning their own birthday, and that of various family members or friends.
- **un regalo ideale** – the majority answered this question by mentioning a specific item or occasion that they would like as an ideal present. The bullet point was awarded even when the item wasn't specified, as long as students explained that an ideal gift should be meaningful and suited to the recipient. Marks were lost when students wrote only about a general present or described what they received for Christmas or their last birthday, rather than what their ideal gift would be.

Quality of language

- *Mi piace* and *preferisco* were very often used to indicate likes or preferences.
- *Secondo me*, *nella mia opinione* were also frequently used to introduce opinions.
- Connectives such as *e*, *ma*, *comunque*, *poi*, *tuttavia*, *visto che*, *d'altronde* and *però* were commonly used. However, the accent on *però* was often omitted, which altered the intended meaning.
- Incorrect use of *e/è* changed the meaning of the message conveyed.
- The lack of accent in the simple future of *farò* and *sarà* was a recurring error, often resulting in breakdowns in communication.

- Common spelling mistakes included *quando, puoi, poi, può, mangiare, delicioso, guagnare soldi, lo stresso*.
- The pluperfect was often used incorrectly in place of the perfect tense: *ero andato* instead of *sono andato*, *avevo fatto* instead of *ho fatto*.

Question 1.2

Content

Most students responded to the question successfully. Where students underperformed, it was because they misinterpreted the bullet point(s) such as bullet points 3 and 4, and neglected to recognise the time markers elicited by the bullet points.

- **un vantaggio della tua zona** – students gave a variety of responses, including activities available in town, proximity to a park or a big town or the presence of surrounding countryside.
- **l'importanza di riciclare** – most students answered this bullet point successfully, often noting that recycling helps save the planet.
- **cosa hai fatto recentemente per aiutare l'ambiente** – marks were lost when students described recent activities that did not clearly relate to helping the environment.
- **cosa ti piacerebbe cambiare nella tua città** – most students were able to say what they would like to change in their town. Some were also able to use the subjunctive, *se fossi il sindaco*, followed by the conditional tense, *cambierei*...Only a few misinterpreted the bullet point.

Quality of language

Most students were able to write accurately in all three tenses, using both first and third person singular and, occasionally, the second person plural. However, several common errors were observed:

- Difficulty in changing singular nouns to plural forms.
- Omission of the accent on 'e', which altered the meaning of sentences.
- Frequent confusion was noted in the use of: *a /ha o/ho ai/hai*.
- Spelling mistakes including *sonno* instead of *sono*, *chi* for *ci*, and *che* for *c'è*.
- Incorrect verb forms, such as *a fatto* instead of *ha fatto*, and *o andato* for *sono andato*.
- Incorrect use of the definite article *i*, eg. *i studenti* instead of *gli studenti*.
- Attempts at the perfect tense were often inaccurate, with errors including omission of the auxiliary verb, use of an auxiliary verb with an infinitive, incorrect choice of auxiliary or misspelling of the various forms of *avere* and/or *essere*, which affected the intended meaning.
- the word *inquinamento* was unfamiliar to some students who, instead, used incorrect alternatives such as *polluzione* or *enviromento*.

Advice to students

- Mention **all** of the bullet points. Attempt to write *something* about each of them rather than omitting them. Tick off the bullet points once they have been addressed.
- Identify which bullet points target the different time frames and check that verb formations are accurate. Use the time markers in the bullet points and include them in your response: *in passato, in futuro, recentemente, l'anno prossimo, mi piacerebbe*.
- Make sure you include at least **TWO** opinions as required by the task.
- Make sure your handwriting is legible.

Question 2

For this question, there are 15 marks for Content, 12 marks for Range of Language and 5 marks for Accuracy. Students write approximately 150 words in total, about two different bullet points. Both bullet points must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage of the bullets. The quality of responses was generally high, with most students able to complete both bullet points in each question, showing good ability to express and justify opinions. Many students were able to produce fluent pieces of extended writing with few lapses and a variety of language. Where students were less successful, it was because they misinterpreted the bullet points.

Content

The criteria for assessment focus on four elements: relevance and detail (implicit in this is coverage of both bullet points), amount of information conveyed, clarity of communication and expression and justification of opinions. Students were successful in developing ideas and expressing and justifying opinions. As in previous series, there were occasions when inaccuracy led to a lack of clarity of communication (referred to as 'ambiguities') and, again, this impacted on marks awarded. Spelling of *è, farò, sarà, però* without an accent prevented some opinions and justifications from being acknowledged, since the omission of the accent changes the meaning of a sentence. As in Question 1, some students used taught sentence starters such as *dal mio punto di vista personale...* and *penso che sia...*, but were unsure how to complete the sentence. This often led to ambiguity, which affected the marks awarded for both Content and Accuracy.

Question 2.1

This was the more popular of the two options and was generally answered well. Some students had difficulty using articulated prepositions – a common issue throughout this series and across the paper. More students than in recent years used the subjunctive, and a good number combined the subjunctive with the conditional.

- **un'attività che fai nel tempo libero** – Many students mentioned more than one activity they enjoy during their free time, often adding reasons why these activities are a good way to pass the time.
- **uno sport che vorresti fare l'anno prossimo** – This was generally answered well.

However, some students wrote about a sport they currently practice, which meant the bullet point could not be credited.

There were some accuracy issues, as listed below:

- Wrong auxiliary verb used for the perfect tense such as: *ho andato, sono fatto*.
- Use of the pluperfect instead of the perfect tense.
- A few common spelling mistakes: *cuatro, cuando, piache, mangiare*.
- *Spendere tempo* was once again often largely used.
- Opinions were usually provided, though a few students did not follow them up with justifications.

Question 2.2

Although this was the less popular question, there were several successful, high-quality responses. Many students addressed both bullet points, offering reasons why living near or far from home could be a good or bad idea. However, students tended to write more extensively about the first bullet point than the second.

- **un vantaggio di andare all'università vicino o lontano da casa** – Most students answered this well, either expressing a preference for attending university nearby or far away, while others referenced both options. For the bullet point to be considered covered, only one option was required.
- **una carriera futura** - Some students stated they were unsure about their future career but described what they might pursue instead. Others discussed future career plans more generally. These were accepted as valid responses. Marks were lost when students wrote about a current job rather than a future one.

Range of language

The key features of the criteria for assessment are variety of language and a confident ability to produce complex sentences. Some students were able to use idiomatic expressions accurately and in context. The more successful pieces included a variety of tenses and, occasionally, the use of the subjunctive. Other examples of variety of language included negative constructions, intensifiers, conjunctions such as: *quindi, perciò, tuttavia, per di più*, the use of interchange of the perfect and imperfect tenses in the same sentence, the use of direct object pronouns and a variety of adjectives.

The use (or lack) of prepositions and articulated prepositions was, once again, notably sparse in this series.

Accuracy

The criteria for assessment focus mainly on verbs and tense formations and the type of errors that students make. It is to be noted that a 'major' error is one that interferes with communication, and a 'minor error,' albeit still an inaccuracy, does not. The majority of

students were able to produce work worthy of an accuracy mark of 3 and above. Common major errors included: the lack of accent on the 'e' for the third person singular *essere*; inappropriate use of infinitives; incorrect formation of the perfect tense, including the incorrect auxiliary: *ho andato, sono fatto*; confusion of simple future and conditional endings eg. *andremmo/andremo, saremmo/saremo*; accents missing on the first and third person singular simple future verbs at times changed the meaning of the sentence since the lack of an accent resulted in the word changing meaning; a time frame followed by the wrong tense & vice versa, eg. *l'anno prossimo sono andato, di solito farei*; the use of reflexive pronouns instead of indirect pronouns or possessive adjectives; prepositions in place of the verb: *a/ha; o /ho*. Common minor errors included incorrect gender agreements, inaccurate adjectival agreements and incorrect possessive adjectives.

Advice to students

- Read the bullet points carefully ensuring you know exactly what they require in terms of response.
- Ensure that what you write relates to the bullet points in some way.
- When including complex language, ensure you know how to complete the sentence.
- Refer to the list of linguistic errors towards the end of this report.
- Give **TWO** opinions, each followed by a justification.

Question 3

For this question, there are 6 marks for *Conveying key messages* and 6 marks for *Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures*. Given that the level of demand of the key messages was aimed at covering grades 4 to 9, the question differentiated well, with all students able to score well.

The passage was divided into 13 key messages, as in the table below.

Conveying key messages

	Key Message	Comments
1	There are a lot of poor people	Generally well answered – errors included <i>i poverini/ i senza tetto/ persone senza soldi</i>
2	in my town	Not many issues here apart from the misspelling of <i>città</i> , sometimes written as <i>citta</i> or <i>cita</i>
3	and there is nothing to do.	A few issues with the use of the double negative: <i>non c'è niente da fare</i> . Other attempts included: <i>nessuno da fare/ c'è niente da fare</i> .
4	Yesterday, however,	Very good answers especially for the translation of "however" - a few spelling mistakes for 'ieri', <i>yeri</i> , and some instances of <i>pero</i> (without an accent).

5	I went to my friend's house	This was generally good, even though <i>I went</i> was sometimes translated as: <i>ero andato</i> instead of <i>sono andato</i> .
6	and we played videogames	No major issues here apart from the spelling of <i>giochi</i> in <i>videogiochi</i> : <i>giocci, giochi</i> .
7	on the computer.	Wrong preposition used for 'on the computer', often translated as <i>nel, in, nello</i> or <i>on</i> .
8	Tomorrow at school,	Well translated.
9	after lunch,	Wrong translation of 'lunch' included <i>la colazione, mensa, cena</i>
10	I will have	Generally well translate, although most students spelt <i>avro</i> instead of <i>avrò</i>
11	a History exam,	This section proved challenging for many students, particularly in terms of spelling and vocabulary. Common confusions included words such as <i>historia, istoria, history, exam, examine, test, testo, testa</i> and <i>esame storico</i> .
12	therefore I must study	Generally well translated.
13	for two hours this evening.	<i>This evening</i> caused issues: <i>questo pomeriggio, questa notte, questa mattina</i> . Additionally, the word <i>ore</i> appeared in a variety of incorrect spellings, including <i>hore, horas, and oras</i> .

Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures

As in previous series, there were a considerable number of responses – o parts of responses – in Spanish, French, or English. Minor errors did not prevent marks from being awarded for conveying key messages, provided they were communicated clearly. Most students were not secure in their use of prepositions. Generally, the second person plural forms of auxiliary verbs were well constructed. At times, the past participle was used without an auxiliary verb, or the incorrect auxiliary was used. Incorrect adjectival agreements and the use – or lack – of definite articles were evident once again this series. On rare occasions, there was evidence of paraphrasing in the translation. Teachers need to ensure that students are properly briefed on the exam requirements, especially if the students have not been formally taught the specification.

Advice to students

- Translate the words that are in front of you. DON'T ADD any words or paraphrase!
- Translate the verb tenses given. For example, the use of the pluperfect or the imperfect is not accurate if the verb given in the original is in the perfect tense.
- Learn the difference between *e* and *è*.
- Pay attention to singular or plural nouns. Do not translate a singular noun as a plural or viceversa, as this will not be credited.
- Know the difference between indefinite and definite articles: *un/una* etc., and *il/la/lo* etc.

- Practise high frequency words and phrases, especially prepositions eg. *in, a, da* and how they change when linked with the definite article, eg. *al, nel*.
- Proofread your work and check carefully that all aspects of the translation have been addressed, particularly the little words (prepositions/articles/nouns in the singular or plural form).
- If you are not sure how to translate something, make an educated guess, as it may score marks. Leaving it blank will not.

Across all questions, there were persistent linguistic errors, listed below, which had an impact on all elements of the paper. These are almost identical to errors produced in the last series:

- *e/è*
- *ce/c'è*
- *che/ce/c'è'*
- *chi/ci*
- *cio/co/c'ho*
- *pero/però*
- *a/ha/ah*
- *o/ho/oh*
- *ai /hai*
- *annoiante/annoioso*
- incorrect, or lack of, auxiliary verb to form the present perfect tense': *ho andato, sono fatto*
- the use of English/Spanish/French words
- *poi* instead of *puoi*
- *cuando/cuatro*
- *spendere tempo*
- *mangare* instead of *mangiare*

Most of the work seen was legible however there were even more occasions this series where handwriting was very difficult to read.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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