Questions matter

GCSE

Italian

8633/WF Paper 1 Writing Foundation Tier

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

The paper differentiated very well in that students were able to score marks over a variety of questions. Most students were entered appropriately for this tier. The quality of work produced for this examination varied depending on the question, however it was generally of a lower standard than seen in previous years. There was a sense that students lacked the training and vocabulary on how to answer some of the questions. It is advisable that students are creative in their responses even if they do not have personal experience of something mentioned in the bullet points, such as in question 4.1 – BP4: - *progetti futuri per migliorare il tuo stile di vita* 4.2 – BP4: - *come sarebbe la tua divisa scolastica ideale*. There were instances where students performed well and were able to use different time frames and tenses and express opinions, especially in question 4. This year also saw an increased number of scripts where handwriting was either illegible or very difficult to read.

Question 1

The best responses included successful use of phrases such as '*c'è', 'ci sono'* or '*vedo'.* There were examples of good techniques particularly in the use of the present continuous: eg *stanno mangiando, non stanno parlando*. There were less instances where students did not write in full sentences or nothing at all. Some students gave their opinion of the photo. Teachers are reminded that students need to write four sentences about what is **in** the photo. Again, this year, the vocabulary for woman/women was not known by many resulting in some varying responses, as was the misuse of the vocabulary for mobile phone: *mobile*. Where students failed to score marks, it was mainly for the following reasons, some of which are similar to previous series:

- the accent on the '*e*' on *'c'è'* was omitted – to avoid this recurrent error a suggestion could be for students to use the phrase: (*nella foto) vedo….*
- occasional use of the verb '*vado'* was used instead of '*vedo*'.
- the use of '*che'* and '*ce*' instead of '*c'è*'
- the use of *c'è sono*
- a statement about the photo being in black and white.
- inaccuracy causing a delay in communication – use of English, French or Spanish words that do not exist in Italian or incomprehensible key vocabulary.

Advice to students

1) Keep the sentences simple to ensure that a clear message is being communicated.
2) If you don't know how to conjugate the verb but know the infinitive, use the infinitive.

eg *una ragazza guardare il cellulare* = 1 mark

3) Forget connectives and longer sentences for this question.
4) Don't leave blanks – write at least one word.
5) Avoid mentioning the weather when the photo is indoors.
6) Don't give your opinion about the photo.

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Question 2

Teachers are reminded that there are 10 marks for Content and 6 marks for Quality of Language. Students are required to write approximately 40 words in total about four different bullet points. All bullet points are compulsory and must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage of the bullets.

Content

The criteria for assessment address both coverage of the bullet points and clarity of communication. The most successful responses were concise and addressed all four bullet points. Students could write anything in relation to each bullet point.

Many were able to write something for this question with a majority scoring some marks for Content. Where students failed to score highly was due to the misunderstanding of the rubric.

- **la tua personalità** – a persistent error was the inability to change *tua* to *mia* so the bullet point couldn't be awarded as it changes the idea conveyed. Misuse of *ho* for *sono* was seen many times.
- **un membro della famiglia** – misunderstanding of rubric – students wrote about family in general and a vast majority were unable to write in the third person singular – *mio fratello sono piccolo*.
- **gli amici** – the rubric was understood but there was inconsistency in the use of singular and plural within the same phrase, eg: *mi amici è il mio migliore amici perche loro è molto divertente ma noiosa.*
- **i passatempi** – the rubric was understood. It was the quality of language which caused an issue here - *me amo giocare calcio / mi prefersico / mi piache*.

Quality of language

Although this question only requires the present tense, there were many who used the perfect tense accurately. The vast majority of students were able to include a good variety of appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures. There were good attempts at variety, for example using different ways of expressing opinions, although not required. Where students failed to score marks, it was the inability to form verbs in the third person singular, mixing up the singular and plural forms and the use of vocabulary in other languages other than Italian.

The misspelling of *però* and *è* without accents, once again, created a change in the meaning of the phrase, hence not conveying messages well.

Advice to students

- Mention **all** of the bullet points. Attempt to write **something**, such as an opinion for each bullet point. Tick off the bullet points in the rubric once they have been addressed.
- Stick to the word limit. Aim to write roughly the number of words required.
- Learn the possessive adjectives and how to change the rubric from the second person singular to the first person singular eg *tua* changes to *mia* when writing the answer.
- Only write in the present tense and use simple connectives.

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Question 3

For this question, there are 5 marks for *Conveying key messages* and 5 marks for *Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures*. Given that the level of demand of the messages was aimed at covering grades 1 to 5, the question differentiated well, with all students able to score some marks.

The sentences were divided into 12 key messages, as in the table below.

Conveying key messages

	Message	Comments
1	**I love**	Generally translated well with the odd exception of *mi adoro/mi amo*.
2	**Easter.**	Very few knew the vocabulary for *Pasqua*.
3	**I don't like**	Many knew *non mi piace*, however a majority of students wrote, *no mi piace* – changes the meaning – *no, I don't like*…
4	**milk and potatoes.**	Many struggled with the food vocabulary – lots of Spanish *leche* and *patatine*.
5	**My bedroom is**	The missing accent on the *è* didn't allow many to be awarded the chunk.
6	**very big and blue.**	Generally translated well.
7	**My uncle is a mechanic**	Errors included: *mia zia macchina, mio zio maccina* and mi for *mio*– some English spealling of *mechanic*.
8	**and works**	Third person singular of *lavorare* was not known by many – *lavo/lavoro* was used.
9	**in town.**	Incorrect prepositions used. *In cita/in paese/in piazza* – for *in town.*
10	**Last month**	The use of *l'ultimo* for *last* in a time frequency was an issue with some.
11	**I went to a concert**	Missing auxiliary or incorrect auxiliary – *ho andato* caused a few issues as did the preposition *a* following the verb *andare.*
12	**with my sister.**	Generally translated well.

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Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures

As a general rule for the translation, if a word is spelt incorrectly but does not mean anything else, the chunk is accepted. However, if the misspelling changes the meaning of the word, then the chunk is not awarded. Minor errors did not prevent marks being awarded for conveying key messages provided they were communicated. The most common errors included the omission of the accent on the '*e*' and this year, prepositions were not well known. Inaccurate adjectival, noun, verb agreements, incorrect tenses, incorrect use of singular nouns, continue to be a concern. The vocabulary used in translations is taken from the vocabulary lists in the specification, cognates and KS3 vocabulary, therefore students do need to have a sound knowledge of the words in the vocabulary lists.

Advice to students

- Practise prepositions and time expressions in the past: *in, a, da, il mese scorso, la settimana scorsa, ieri.*
- Check carefully that *all* aspects of the translation have been addressed accurately. Even if you do not know all the vocabulary in the sentence, make an educated guess. It could mean the difference of a mark or two.
- Learn the difference in meaning of *e* and *è.*

Question 4

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 which must **all** be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage of the bullets. 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 foundation level, many students struggled with the understanding of the vocabulary in the rubrics and occasionally some wrote general ramblings. 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 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 'break down 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.

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There were many examples of attempts at complexity with attempts at use of 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* and *è* this series.

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

Question 4.1

Content

This was the most popular task chosen for this series. Some students were confused by the introductory rubric: *'Scrivi a un tuo amico/una tua amica*.' Instead of focusing on the main bullet points, they focused on the rubric and tried to answer the bullet points on behalf of their friend or described what their friend did. Here are some bullet point specific points.

- **l'importanza di mangiare sano** – some just gave the reason on why it's important to eat not why it's important to eat *healthily.* There was a lot of misuse of vocabulary between *salute* and *sano* eg. *una dieta salute è importante*.

- **la tua opinione sul fumo:** issues with the vocabulary word: *fumo* – at times misunderstood for pollution. Unfortunately, many also included 'sul' in their response, eg 'non mi piace sul fumo', 'secondo me sul fumo e male.'

- **cosa hai fatto recentemente per mantenerti in forma –** some ignored to change *mantener**ti*** to *mantener**mi*** or the time marker *recentemente* was not used accurately: '*io recentemente sto andando in palestra*.'

- **progetti futuri per migliorare il tuo stile di vita -** *'il tuo stile di vita'* was not always understood. At times students described their future plans in terms of school, university and future family plans such as getting married not how they would improve their lifestyle.

Quality of language

- Mi **piace** and **preferisco** were used very often used to indicate liking or preference.
- Connectives such as **e, ma, comunque, poi** and **però** were used often. However, the accent on **però** was often missed out, changing the intended meaning.
- The omission of the accent on '**e**' changing the meaning of the sentence.
- Wrong use of : **a /ha - o/ho** - **ai/hai**
- The lack of accent in the simple future of **farò, sarò, sarà** were regular errors, changing the meaning of the sentence resulting in message break downs.
- **Cuando, puoi, poi, puo, mangare** were common spelling mistakes as was the mis-spelling of **delizioso (deliciozo/delisiozo/delizioco)**.

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Question 4.2

Content

In both the foundation and higher tiers, most students were able to answer this question successfully. Where students underperformed it was due to misinterpreting the bullet point(s) such as bullet points 2 and 4 and not recognising the time markers elicited by the bullet points. At foundation level, some omitted to say why they had a bad school day, and they just described a school day.

- **un insegnante preferito** – many misunderstood this as *la materia preferita* and wrote about their favourite subject without any mention of the teacher. Others read the introductory rubric and referred to something about school in general without paying attention to the specific bullet points.

- **la pausa pranzo** – most answered this well with quite a variety of responses. When talking about spending lunchtime talking with friends, many used the verb *chattare* instead of *parlare* con gli amici.

- **una giornata scolastica che è andata male** – many misunderstood this rubric to mean a school trip that went wrong, or some just copied the rubric of the bullet point without answering it: – *non ho una giornata scolastica male…*

- **come sarebbe la tua divisa scolastica ideale** – some spoke about their current school uniform without any reference on how they would like their ideal school uniform, others understood the rubric as to what they would like to do differently at school in the future, and some didn't change *'la tua'* to '*la mia*.' The vocabulary *divisa* caused a few issues as some were unaware of its meaning and this was a key piece of vocabulary to help students answer the question.

Quality of language

Some students were able to write in all three tenses using the first and third person singular and at times also the second person plural. There were however common errors:

- the basic lack of ability to change singular nouns to plural nouns: *la materia sono interessanti, mangio un panini* – the latter most likely due to the misuse of the word in the English language.
- Spanish spelling influence of *cuatro, cuando..*
- The omission of the accent on '**e**' changing the meaning of the sentence
- Wrong use of: **a /ha o/ho ai/hai**
- The spelling of **sono** as **sonno, chi** for **ci, che** for **c'è, ano** for **anno**
- **a fatto, o andato**
- Mis-use of articles: **i/gli studenti**
- Once again the use of **spendere tempo** appeared often
- **Mi adoro** and **mi preferisco** appeared quite often, changing the meaning of what was trying to be communicated.

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- Attempts at the perfect tense were the most inaccurate, often with either no auxiliary verb, an auxiliary verb with an infinitive, the incorrect auxiliary verb or misspelling of the various parts of the conjugation *avere* and/or *essere*, changing the meaning of what is trying to be communicated.

Advice to students

- Aim to write roughly the suggested number of words. The emphasis needs to be on **quality** and not **quantity**.
- Mention **all** the bullet points. Attempt to write *something* about them rather than omitting them. Tick off the bullet points in the rubric once they have been addressed.
- Identify which bullet points target the different time frames and check that your verb formation is accurate. Use the time markers in the bullet points and include them in your response: *in passato, in futuro, recentemente, mi piacerebbe*.
- Make sure you include at least **two** opinions as required by the task.
- Make sure your handwriting is legible.

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Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website.

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