
GCSE ITALIAN

8633/RF: Reading (Foundation)
Report on the Examination

8633
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General comments

The Foundation paper proved to be fairly accessible to students in this first year, despite a few difficulties, although these were to be expected with the more demanding requirements of the new specification. The majority of students were able to gain some marks for each question, though the questions based on the literary texts proved challenging for some students. Apart from the translation, there were very few questions which were not attempted by almost all the students who sat the examination. Students' handwriting was mainly clear, although at times, answers written in English failed to communicate meaning clearly; this was certainly the case with the translation. Therefore, we advise future students to pay closer attention to this exercise and to re-read what they have written to ensure the message communicated is meaningful.

Section A

Question 1

'Free Time activities' is usually an accessible and popular topic and indeed this question, which was one of the most accessible on the paper, was well answered with just over 80% of students obtaining all 3 marks.

Question 2

'School Subjects' also proved to be a well-known topic and students did very well in the first 3 parts of this question. Part 2.4 presented more of a challenge with around 63% of students gaining the mark: a few were imprecise, stating that 'her mother is English' rather than speaks English; this was therefore inaccurate and gained no credit. In this new specification, teachers should stress that even students entered for Foundation Tier will need to focus more on accuracy and precision, especially in this type of question which requires a written answer.

Question 3

This question was a good discriminator as it required students to focus on specific information within a text with many distractors. Although the vocabulary itself within the topic of 'Town' was not particularly difficult and included many common words and cognates such as *castello*, *chiesa*, *mercato*, *negozi* etc., the question was of higher demand and fewer than 40% of students gained full marks on this question.

Question 4

The topic on 'School' was clearly a very popular one across all four papers. In this question, which is traditionally a difficult one for students (particularly when distinguishing between false/not present in the text), it is very pleasing that around 70% of students scored all 4 marks.

Question 5

This question on 'Career Choices' was well answered for the most part, except for 5.2 where only about 13% of students knew what *all'aria aperta* meant. The majority answered that Marco wanted to work at the airport.

Question 6

This abridged extract from Verga's *Mastro Don Gesualdo* was aimed at the top end of the Foundation Level. However, despite this there was some success in this question, and around 57% attained the mark for 6.1. Although it is possible that some students did not know the precise meaning of *campana*, the word *Chiesa* helped them to identify the correct answer. Similarly, around 57% of students recognised the cause of the panic as a fire, showing *fuoco* to be reasonably well known.

The true/false/not in the text section of this question proved far more challenging, particularly the first question where only around 27% answered correctly with 'not in the text'. The majority of students answered that the statement was true, perhaps due to the distractors in the text which mentioned both open windows and men running. The rest of the question presented slightly better scores, with just over half of the students scoring the mark for 5.7.

Question 7

The 'Family' topic is traditionally a popular one and this question had a good success rate; although only around 34% of students gained full marks, about 85% gained at least 2 out of the 3. This is very pleasing considering that although the text was not in itself too difficult, the style of question (select the 3 true statements out of the 7 given) can sometimes prove challenging at Foundation Tier.

Question 8

This question on environmental issues was also aimed at the top grades in this tier and it had a very positive success rate overall, particularly for 8.3 where almost 90% of students were able to identify Filippo as the one concerned about traffic pollution. The only part which was not well answered was 8.1, as only around 29% could recognise that Beatrice recycles more than Sara. This mistake is probably due to the fact that in Sara's paragraph, more recyclable materials are mentioned than in Beatrice's text; however, at the end of her statement she exclaims *E a che serve?* which was likely ignored by the students who focused on the first part of the text.

Section B**Question 9**

This question on 'Holidays' was perhaps the most successful on the paper with the lowest success rate being around 86% for 9.2.

Question 10

This text on relationships proved challenging for Foundation level students, particularly for the first 2 questions where only around 43% scored the mark.

For 10.1, most students answered that Giovanni *vuole avere un figlio* which, in the text, was a reference to his girlfriend; similarly, a significant proportion of students thought that Stefano wanted to have children *fra qualche anno*, which actually referred to his sister. Although the vocabulary was straightforward, the sentences and questions required attentive reading. 10.3 had a slightly higher success rate, with just over half the students able to score the mark successfully.

Question 11

This question on healthy living scored very well overall, with 11.2 being the most successful element with around 89% of the students gaining the mark. 11.4 was the answer where more mistakes occurred, although the majority of students did manage to identify the correct answer. The error is probably due to the fact that both texts mention *il mio ragazzo*, so again it was a case of scanning the information too quickly rather than paying attention to detail.

Question 12

This literary question, adapted from Grazia Deledda, was better approached by students, with 90% gaining at least half the available marks, although only just over a quarter of them scored all 4.

Question 13

This text on Technology, which was in both the Foundation and Higher Tier papers, was challenging and at Foundation Tier, less than a quarter of students were able to understand that Gray was the first one to present the project. Overall across all questions, just over half managed to score marks.

Longer texts with distractors need to be practised regularly throughout the year to ensure students are well equipped to deal with this type of exercise as it is something that this new examination will continue to test.

Section C: Translation**Question 14**

The translation was not particularly successful at Foundation Tier. It is one of the tasks that was often not attempted at all or, when attempted, it produced some very creative and at times surreal interpretations. The mean mark was 3 out of 9, so again it is advisable that teachers include translation practice tasks regularly both in class and for homework so students grow accustomed to translating different grammatical structures which is of paramount importance in translation exercises where students need to score a mark for a particular section. Even when the general gist is understood, students can fail to gain marks if they are inaccurate in their translation of tenses and prepositions. See examples below.

Section 1

Most students were able to translate the day of the week accurately as well as the evening/night element but if students omitted translating 'usually' and wrote 'on Saturday night/evenings' instead, the point was awarded as that still implies it being a regular occurrence.

Section 2

Again, this was mostly successful. Examiners accepted 'I'm going' instead of I go. 'With my friends' in the plural form was also accepted as the main message is still conveyed.

Section 3

Surprisingly, this short element caused quite a few problems with most students translating it as ‘a fantasy film’ or ‘a scientific film’ which were both rejected. Less than half of the students seemed to know the meaning of *fantascienza*, despite it being a semi-cognate.

Section 4

This generally was translated correctly, with only a minority of students mistaking Sunday for Saturday.

Section 5

There were no problems with this sentence, which was one of the most successful in the whole translation even though it included a past tense.

Section 6

This was the most accurately translated section in the whole translation, with nearly all of the students gaining a mark. The jazz element was needed for the mark and paraphrasing such as ‘I love jazz music’ was accepted, as it conveyed the same key idea.

Section 7

This section proved the most challenging in the whole text due to the presence of *almeno* which was needed in order to gain the mark. The vast majority of students did not know this and so omitted it in the translation. Very few students attained the mark here despite translating ‘three times a week’ correctly.

Section 8

Most students gained the mark here, although some failed to as they misunderstood the verb *suono*. This was surprising as the instrument chosen was a cognate - *chitarra* - which should have made the meaning of the word easier to infer. A number of students translated the sentence as ‘I’m passionate about jazz and I chat about it with my cousin’.

Section 9

This proved trickier than expected, due to the presence of the word *diventare* that many students misunderstood for *divertente*, leading to translations such as ‘I would like to be a fun professional musician’. This translation was accepted as a stretch and the word ‘fun’ ignored, especially as the rest of the sentence still allows the whole message to be conveyed. However, more ‘creative’ versions such as ‘I would like to have fun being a professional musician’ were rejected as the message was distorted.

Use of statistics

Statistics used in this report may be taken from incomplete processing data. However, this data still gives a true account on how students have performed for each question.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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