
GCSE ITALIAN

8633/RH: Reading (Higher)
Report on the Examination

8633
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General comments

Performance on the paper in this first year of the new specification was generally very good, in spite of the demands of some of the new requirements of the paper. For example, students coped well with the literary question students and nearly always attempted an answer, whereas in last year's paper (of the previous specification) some of the more challenging questions were often left blank. In contrast with last year's paper, some students managed to gain full marks or nearly full marks and the translation was dealt with well, with an average score of 6/9 marks.

Section A

Question 1

The literary question was an adaptation from Verga's *Mastro Don Gesualdo* and answers were often successful in the first three parts of the question with over 79% of students gaining marks here. On the other hand, the second part of the question was more difficult with more students losing marks, particularly in 1.4 and 1.5 which required students to discern between false/not present in the text. Only approximately 35% and 48% of students respectively gained marks here. Students should be trained throughout the academic year to be able to distinguish between something false and something not mentioned.

Question 2

This question on 'Free Time' was clearly a popular topic, but it also tested the students' knowledge of the three time frames. It was successful in testing knowledge of both topic and tenses at the same time.

Question 3

Students performed reasonably well in all parts of this question, despite this being one of the more challenging GCSE topics, 'Social Issues and Volunteering'.

The first question was sometimes misunderstood, so around 59% of students gained the mark; occasionally *esercizio* was mistaken for 'exercise' and students wrote that volunteering 'is a good exercise'. Some students failed to gain the mark as they simply reported that there are more than 6 million volunteers; although that is correct, it is not enough to gain the mark as the elements of any age/any social condition were necessary to score the mark.

3.2 and 3.3 were successful with over three quarters of students answering correctly.

The trickier part of this question was 3.4, as a vast number of students misunderstood the sentence and wrote that it was Matteo who was happy, rather than the young people he works with. When this happened the mark was not awarded.

Question 4

This question was reasonably challenging and aimed at the highest grades. Yet there were some pleasingly high scores; for example around 89% of students gained the mark for 4.1. The most difficult part here was 4.2, where only around 53% answered correctly and a lot of students thought the statement to be true; as although it is stated that Italy's unemployment rate is *uno dei più elevati tra i paesi europei*, later on in the text it is revealed that Greece and Spain have a worse

rate. Students were required to continue reading in order to gain the mark; they should never assume that the first thing they read is the correct answer, especially in the Higher Tier.

Question 5

This question was well answered overall, with around 78% of students gaining 3 out of the 4 available marks, impressive as this question was aimed at the higher grades. However, only around 42% scored full marks, perhaps due to some potentially challenging words within the topic of social issues such as *affitto*, *riscaldare* and *vita dignitosa*.

Question 6

This question proved more difficult for students: as often is the case with the Higher Tier, a number of students failed to gain the mark due to being too vague/imprecise. Again, it was a question aimed at the very highest grades.

Question 6.2 in particular presented answers such as ‘there is no correlation with the use of the platform’ which is more or less a literal translation of the text and conveys little meaning in English. On the other hand, quite a few students were close to attaining the mark but could not gain it for not being precise enough, writing instead ‘there is no link between social media and relationships face to face’, omitting ‘the decline of face to face relationships’ which was needed to score the mark.

Question 6.2 was also challenging for some students, with some writing ‘stop worrying about the future of young people’ as perhaps this made more sense to them; however, the opposite was correct. Many students also failed to gain the mark for writing ‘worrying about the future of their kids’, which is incorrect as this implies their own children while in the text it is clear that this is not what is meant, as it is about future generation in general.

Question 7

This question on environmental issues was successful, with most students able to score 3 out of the 4 marks (only 7.3 proved more difficult, with nearly half the students not achieving the mark). 7.1 was answered correctly by around 80% of students, showing the word *inondazioni* to be fairly well known; 7.2 was even more successful, with around 90% of students able to indicate that the situation had worsened. On the other hand, 7.3 had a lower success rate, perhaps due to the negative terminology in the text such as *sommersa*, *peggiorato* and *pericolo*. Quite a few students indicated that the future looks depressing. 7.4 did not pose many problems, with around 77% of students answering correctly.

Question 8

This adaptation from Grazia Deledda’s ‘*Il dono di Natale*’ proved quite accessible to Higher tier students, particularly in the second part of the question. Around 80% of students were able to score both marks.

Question 9

Question 9.1 required careful reading: *Bell presenta il suo progetto due ore dopo Gray, ma è il suo ad essere esaminato per primo*. It is very pleasing that the majority of students were able to score the mark here, although some did miss the subtlety of the response required and failed to gain the

mark. The remaining three parts of this question were dealt with extremely well, with approximately 90% of students gaining the mark.

Question 10

This text about Venice was detailed but students dealt with it very well overall. The only part of this question which caused problems was 10.2, where only less than half of the students scored a mark. Perhaps due to the fact that a significant part of the text is about the Venice Carnival, nearly half the students indicated that this is the reason why tourists come to Venice, although this is not stated anywhere in the text.

Question 11

The headlines style question is perhaps one that teachers should practice more in class to prepare their students for this format. The most successful part of the question was 11.3, which saw around 73% of students scoring the mark. The least successful was 11.5 where less than half of the students managed to do so.

Section C: Translation

Question 12

The translation overall was quite a successful element of this paper, with around a fifth of students gaining full marks.

Section 1

It is quite surprising that this is one of the sections of the translation where quite a few students failed to gain marks, due to the inaccurate translation of the structure *abito da + anni*, which was translated literally as a present tense with 'since': 'I live since 5 years in a small town.' It seems that a vast proportion of students were unfamiliar with this structure, so only a minority gave the exact translation of 'I've been living for 5 years in a small town'. Slightly different versions such as 'I have lived in a small town for 5 years' were also accepted, however when 'from 5 years' was used instead of 'for', that was rejected as it could lead to the misinterpretation of 'from 5 years of age'.

Section 2

This part was well translated, with only a small number of students unable to infer the meaning of *una decina* and translating it as 'a dozen'.

Section 3

The word *affitto* in this part was quite well known so most students gained the mark, although a few did not if they inferred a similar but inaccurate meaning such as 'I live in a flat' or 'I have a flat'.

Section 4

Again most students gained the mark here. Only a very small minority failed to do so when they translated it as 'my husband'; 'my future husband' was accepted.

Section 5

This section was highly successful. The majority of students were quite accurate in their translation, despite it being quite a complex structure.

Section 6

In this part, many students wrote very elaborated and interpretations of the phrase, ranging from 'we did everything to become doctors' to 'we did all and two medicines' which does not convey meaning. Students should be reminded by their teachers that an educated guess is always better than leaving a gap; however, they should check that their English translation conveys meaning. Overall, this part was more unsuccessful than successful.

Section 7

The majority of the students scored well here. However, a few clearly thought *all'estero* meant 'in the east'.

Section 8

It seems strange that students would lose marks in this section as the meaning of the phrase can be deduced; most students did translate this correctly, but there were a number of very interesting guesses such as 'in the third planet' or 'on the third earth' which meant students failed to gain the mark.

Section 9

This was the most challenging section of the translation, intended to test the highest level of demand. Pleasingly, nearly everyone translated this phrase accurately, making this the most successful part of the translation. Both past tenses were needed here to score the mark, so an answer such as 'but he wouldn't come with me' would gain no credit whereas 'but he said that he would not come' would ('unfortunately' could be omitted).

Overall, there were a few students who did not perform well in the translation section of this paper and only gained a couple of marks, which often included at least one in the section 9.

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.