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# GCSE ITALIAN

8633/WF: Writing (Foundation)  
Report on the Examination

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8633  
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## General Comments

The quality of work produced for this new examination was encouraging. The paper differentiated very well in that students were able to score marks over a variety of questions. The vast majority of students were entered appropriately for this tier. However, there were a number of students who would have benefitted from being entered for the higher tier. It is important that centres carefully assess students before deciding the entry, particularly if a student has recently arrived from Italy. The ability to use a range of tenses was evident for the most part and students were also able to express opinions well. Where students failed to score marks was when inaccuracy caused a delay in communicating messages. This was mainly due to inaccurate verb formation or students writing extended responses, far longer than the suggested word count, which created more scope for error. Another barrier to achievement was omission or misinterpretation of the bullet points in questions 2 and 4.

## Question 1

Teachers are reminded that students are required to write four sentences about what is in the photo. Each sentence is marked separately and is worth a maximum of two marks. The most effective responses included successful use of phrases such as *c'è*, *ci sono* or *vedo*. There were very few instances of students not attempting to write full sentences. Where students failed to score marks, it was mainly for the following reasons:

- the accent on the 'e' of *c'è* was omitted
- the verb *vado* was used instead of *vedo*, which despite being a conjugated verb made little sense to the sentence
- a common error was the lack of knowledge of the English word 'camera'. Students incorrectly translated this as *camera* in Italian, completely changing the meaning of the word. Reasonable alternatives were accepted such as *fotocamera*. Another common error was the use of *che* instead of *c'è*;
- information being repeated, for example; *ci sono due persone, ridono, ci sono due persone che ridono*; the latter sentence was not credited
- a statement about the photo: *la foto è in bianco e nero* as the rubric requires students to refer to what is **in** the photo
- inaccuracy causing a delay in communication. The main issue here was when students wrote longer sentences than they needed to and often created errors as a result
- the use of negative statements such as: *non c'è* or *non vedo*; *non c'è un cane, non vedo bambini, non vedo macchine*. It is clearly stated in the specification that negative statements are not acceptable in this question.

## Advice to students

- Keep the sentences **simple** to ensure that a clear message is being communicated.
- If you don't know how to conjugate the verb but know the infinitive, use the infinitive.
  - *g una donna essere contenta* = 1 mark
- Forget connectives and longer sentences for this question.
- Don't leave blanks – write at least ONE word.

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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 bullet points. Students could write anything in relation to each bullet point.

*Lo sport, il cinema* and *l'internet* were the most accessible bullet points and students addressed these well. *La musica* was omitted in some cases. Many students were able to provide opinions therefore were given credit for coverage of the required information. Where bullet points were omitted, this obviously limited the marks that could be awarded. In addition, inaccurate language that led to a delay in communication, and hence 'lapses', had an impact on marks awarded for Content.

### Quality of language

The vast majority of students were able to score three marks and above. There were good attempts at variety, for example using different ways of expressing opinions and different persons of the verb. Where students failed to score marks, it was when verb formations were not accurate, such as just writing the infinitive and when they had attempted to write much more than the 40 words required. This created more scope for error. It is not a requirement for this question that students write in three time frames. The present tense is more than sufficient.

### Advice to students

- Stick to the word limit. Aim to write roughly the number of words required. Doing otherwise may result in self-penalising.
- Mention **ALL** of the bullet points. Attempt to write something, at least one sentence about them rather than omitting them. Tick off bullet points once you have addressed them.
- Only write in the present tense and use simple connectives. Leave the complex sentences for question 4.

## Question 3 - Translation

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	Main Issues
1	<b>I have a mobile phone.</b>	Use of <i>tengo</i> for <i>ho</i> / <i>il</i> for <i>un</i> / literal translations using the Italian word <i>mobile</i> for a mobile phone.
2	<b>My friend is</b>	Missing accent on <i>è</i> which changes the meaning of the word/ <i>my friend</i> written in the plural.
3	<b>very friendly and nice.</b>	Omission of <i>molto</i> , different adjectives used for <i>friendly</i> and <i>nice</i> , such as <i>saporito</i> for nice and <i>amicano</i> for <i>amichevole</i> / friendly was generally not known.
4	<b>On Mondays</b>	The translation for <i>on</i> with a day of the week was generally not known: translated as: <i>on/ a/ e</i> or omitted
5	<b>I work in an office.</b>	Office translated as <i>officina/ ufficio</i> or <i>office</i> . <i>I work</i> translated as <i>lavo, lavato, lava</i> or in the wrong tense: <i>ho lavorato, lavoravo</i> .
6	<b>My town is small</b>	The omission of the accent on the <i>e</i> . <i>Town</i> was not widely known.
7	<b>but there is</b>	Omission of <i>ma/ c'è</i> translated as <i>ci sono</i> .
8	<b>a shopping centre</b>	<i>Centro commerciale</i> not widely known
9	<b>Last week</b>	<i>Last week</i> translated as <i>l'anno scorso/ ieri / semana</i> instead of <i>settimana / prossima</i> instead of <i>scorsa</i> .
10	<b>I washed</b>	<i>ho lavorato</i> , use of the third person, <i>ha lavato</i> was a common error/ <i>pulito</i> instead of <i>lavato</i> / present tense instead of past
11	<b>my dad's car.</b>	The structure of <i>my dad's car</i> , was not widely known: <i>mi padre's macchina/ mia macchina padre</i> .
12	<b>It was boring.</b>	<i>Annoiato</i> instead of <i>noioso</i> ; use of wrong tense, <i>ero/ è</i> instead of <i>era</i> .

### Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures

Minor errors did not prevent marks being awarded for conveying key messages provided they were communicated. However, when awarding marks for application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures, inaccurate language was considered. Language such as '**in** an office, **on** Mondays, my town **is** small, last week,' were often either incorrect or wrongly spelt. The most common error was the omission of the accent on the '*e*' and this influenced the marks awarded for application of grammatical knowledge and structures. Inaccurate persons of the verbs and incorrect tenses were also a concern. Although not exclusive, the vocabulary used in translations is largely taken from the vocabulary lists in the specification, therefore students do need to have a sound knowledge of these words.

## Advice to students

- Practise high frequency words and phrases.
- Check carefully that *all* aspects of the translation have been addressed accurately, particularly the little words such as *but, a, very* as mentioned above.
- Learn the difference in meaning of *e* and *è*.
- If you are not sure how to translate something, have a go as it may score you a mark. Leaving it blank will not.
- Check verb tenses and endings.

## 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, about four different bullet points. All bullet points must 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 or omission of bullet points.

## Content

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 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 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.

## Question 4.1

This was the more popular choice with students. It was a topic with which students are familiar, but it is important to remind students that this new specification requires them to use their knowledge to respond to the exact requirements of the task rather than just reproduce pre-learned language, which often was not relevant. The aspect of the task that was often not covered was bullet point 1 which required students to talk about the **type** of school they frequent. Some students responded well, however there were occasions when students omitted stating the type of school attended or misunderstood the meaning of *frequenti* to mean how **often** they went to school. Bullet point 3, *com’era la tua scuola primaria*, was not evident to some students that a reference to a past time frame was required. Students need to recognise that bullet points written in a particular time frame, require a response in the same time frame. Where students omitted the task or did not relate the information required such as in bullet point 1 and 3, impacted on marks awarded for Content. As would be expected, bullet points 2 and 4 were well covered, with many very effective responses.

## Question 4.2

Students were familiar with the topic in this question and produced extended responses, especially relating to bullet point 2. Bullet point 1 required students to state ‘**dove** si trova la tua città,’ with

most students giving the name of their town rather than say where it was. Bullet point 3 caused uncertainty and some omitted it completely. Students who were able to manipulate the rubric for bullet point 4 addressed it successfully, although many students misinterpreted the bullet point to state where their ideal city would be not **how** they envisage it to be.

As with question 4.1, students need to recognise different tenses in the bullet points requiring responses in the same tense or time frame.

### Quality of language

The key features of the criteria for assessment here are variety of language, attempts at complexity, time frames and accuracy.

- Variety of language – the range of vocabulary used in response to both questions was appropriate and reasonably extensive. *Mi piace* and *preferisco* were quite often used to indicate liking or preference, but a fairly common error was the omission of the second verb in the infinitive eg *preferisco vado*.
- Attempts at complexity – there were some well worked longer sentences using a variety of connectives such as *e*, *ma*, *comunque*, *poi* and *però*. Negatives were also well handled but *no* crept in at times when *non* was needed.
- Time frames – most students were able to make an attempt at all three time frames and the bullet points were designed to encourage this.
- Accuracy – most students were able to write accurately in the present tense using the first and third person singular. There were however six common errors:
  - attempts at the perfect tense were the most inaccurate, often with either no auxiliary verb or an auxiliary verb with an infinitive
  - the use of a time marker with the wrong tense
  - the use of modal verbs with a conjugated verb
  - the omission of the accent on 'e' when required is a major error as it changes the meaning of the sentence
  - wrong use of : *a /ha o/ho*
  - incorrect conjugation of reflexive verbs: *vorrei rilassarsi*.

### Advice to students

- Do not just copy the rubric – using the word *menziona* at the beginning of your response does not make sense, eg *menziona che tipo di scuola frequenti secondaria*.
- Aim to write roughly the suggested number of words. The emphasis needs to be on **quality** and not **quantity**.
- Mention **all** of 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.
- Make sure you include at least **TWO** opinions as required by the task.
- In some cases, the language of the bullet points can be manipulated to help you write a successful response. For example, in Question 4.1, the second bullet point *le materie che studi* is easily adapted to produce *le materie che studio sono...*

Most of the work seen was legible; however, there were instances where students should have taken greater care in their handwriting.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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