

ITALIAN (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0535/01

Listening

KEY MESSAGES

This was the second series for this paper.

The cohort consisted mainly of top ability candidates, a large part of whom were native Italian speakers or bilingual. Candidates seemed to cope with most tasks types very well, although a few candidates only ticked four boxes instead of six for **Question 16**.

Verbal answers were rewarded for unambiguous communication. Marks were withheld only when inaccuracies caused ambiguity.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The paper presented texts with increasing length and level of density and difficulty. Virtually all candidates could answer correctly all the questions in Part 1, and most of them all the questions of Part 2, whilst Part 3 discriminated well between different levels of performances.

As mentioned in the key messages section, the quality of Italian only affects credit for the listening skills when the answer lacks clarity. The mark scheme specifies some of the main issues when allowances are made, always within the parameter of unambiguous communication.

Questions requiring a written response are generally worded in a way to elicit a short answer. Answering in full sentences is not necessary. Redundant material does not affect credit, unless it highlights lack of comprehension or makes the answer incorrect.

COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-8

This exercise was supposed to offer a gentle lead-in, where candidates of all abilities were expected to recognise 8 items from a short conversation and show comprehension by choosing the correct answer out of four visual options for each item. The few incorrect answers concerned the time (Question 4).

Exercise 2 Questions 9-15

This exercise was based on a longer passage, spoken by a person in charge of a language School. The task was still multiple choice of visual options.

Candidates proved they recognised most of the vocabulary. Only a handful of candidates had problems with understanding *lezioni di gruppo* (Question 11) and *piscina* (Question 14).

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 16

This exercise was based on statements by four young people talking about their Schools. Candidates were expected to select six correct statements out of twelve. Some candidates did not read the rubric properly and only selected four, one for each of the participants. The statement that proved to be most challenging was (j).

Exercise 2 Questions 17-25

This exercise was based on interviews with two young people talking about their choice of career.

The first interview (17-21) was with Stella, who wants to become a nurse. Candidates were asked to correct an incorrect detail in each of the answers provided. The incorrect detail was clearly indicated.

Candidates were able to identify the right word with very few instances of wrong answers. Some candidates were not sure about *superiore* and attempted to transcribe it, some successfully, some not. A few candidates wrote *giovani* instead of *bambini*. Occasionally there was some redundant material (e.g. *dei bambini*) or repetition of a word which was not crossed out from the text (e.g. *scuola superiore*) but neither of these caused loss of marks.

The second interview (22-25) was with a young man embarking on a military career. Candidates were expected to demonstrate comprehension by providing short answers to questions in Italian. For **Question 22** the text introduced a subjunctive *sia*, which candidates were expected to understand. The use of the indicative in the answer was credited. Strong candidates used the subjunctive correctly in the answer.

Question 25 could have been answered just as *il permesso* (for which there was a variety of approximations; the understandable ones were accepted). Candidates who felt that perhaps a little context was needed and produced something like “*chiedere il permesso*” still scored the mark but attempts such as “*chiudere*” were not awarded.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26-31

This exercise was based on an interview with Giangiacomo, who went on a rather unusual holiday. The format of the questions was multiple choice, with four written options.

In spite of the relative density of the text, most questions were answered well. Some random answers were produced for **Question 28** and even more for **Question 30**.

Exercise 2 Questions 33-42

This final exercise was based on an interview with Serena, a singer with an interest in the environment. This was the most challenging set of questions of the paper as candidates are expected to write their own answers in Italian and the listening text was the hardest in terms of density and complexity. Almost all candidates attempted to answer all questions, most of them successfully.

Some marks were lost because candidates found it difficult to word their answers clearly. This was the case with **Question 32**. The other hurdle in this question was the conjugation of the verb *rimanere*. Recognisable attempts were credited, but those who produced *rimare/rimerà* lost the mark.

Question 33, which could have been answered very simply (*i suoi genitori*), caused loss of marks to those candidates who produced redundant material. Sometimes this was just harmless addition, but other times it made the answer unclear, not providing evidence of comprehension.

Question 34 proved to be rather challenging. Almost a third of the candidates resorted to wild guesses or unacceptable transcriptions.

In **Question 35** too, many candidates did not come up with the simple answer “*il buon esempio*”.

In **Question 36**, candidates did not always pay attention to the fact that the targeted information concerned behaviour at home and wrote that Serena did not use her car when not necessary. *Spegnere* caused a little problem and those who wrote *spende* lost the mark.

In **Question 37** *rifiuti* was very seldom spelt correctly.

Question 38 was frequently answered with insufficient detail.

Questions 39 and **40** were often answered wrongly either because of lack of comprehension or difficulty with conveying the information adequately.

FINAL REMARK

Candidates should be encouraged to read the questions properly and when a question requires a simple answer (like 33 or 35) to refrain from adding redundant material which could invalidate it.

ITALIAN (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0535/02

Reading

Key Messages

Answers are marked on the basis of the ability of the candidate to demonstrate genuine comprehension.

Candidates should keep answers brief and focused. Indiscriminate lifting from the text is discouraged and candidates should seek to demonstrate that they have understood the question and are able to locate and communicate the correct answer. Where candidates introduce extra, irrelevant material, this may invalidate an otherwise correct answer as the Examiner cannot be sure what the candidate has understood.

The requirement for answers to be given in Italian should encourage rather than intimidate future candidates of all abilities. Less able candidates appeared to locate answers readily in instances where it may be a challenge to give an acceptable English translation.

Candidates are advised to familiarise themselves with the style of the paper and its various sections and exercises (through practice of specimen and, where possible, past papers).

All sections should be attempted and candidates should, where possible, ensure that they leave themselves time to check that they have both completed all questions and checked their answers for accuracy.

General Comments

Given that this was the first year of examination for this Reading paper, candidates seemed mostly well-prepared and appeared to approach the questions with confidence.

The level of ability of the candidates who were entered for this paper was mixed but generally high. It is hoped that candidates of an increasingly wide range of abilities will opt for this IGCSE in future sessions.

The requirement for answers to be given in Italian has the potential to aid candidates, as mentioned in the key messages section. Therefore, answering in Italian should encourage candidates of all abilities to enter this IGCSE.

The accessibility of the paper and its texts was evident both by the high marks scored by many candidates and also by the fact that almost all candidates attempted the full set of questions.

Levels of grammatical accuracy were variable, with verbs, genders, possessives and pronouns all providing difficulties for many candidates.

Comments on Specific Questions

Prima parte

Esercizio 1 Domande 1-5

Most candidates scored very well in this section, demonstrating familiarity with the items of vocabulary tested. **Question 5**, *scarpe*, appeared to challenge a noticeable proportion of candidates, with several opting for B (hat) or D (socks).

Esercizio 2 Domande 6-10

Questions 6 to 10 were answered almost universally correctly. **Questions 7 and 9** (*Gabriele suona la chitarra* and *Roberto nuota*, respectively) were the only two that caused problems for a small number of candidates.

Esercizio 3 Domande 11-15

Most candidates performed well in this exercise, locating the correct answers from the multiple choice options. For some candidates, the difference between *sua casa* and *dove vive* appeared problematic (**Question 11**) and for a slighter greater number, the meaning of *ai giardini pubblici* was mistakenly defined as *fuori città* instead of *al parco* (**Question 15**).

Seconda parte

Esercizio 1 Domande 16-20

In this exercise, candidates were asked to read an advert for a holiday house, in which details are given about the area as well as the accommodation itself. Five statements with gaps that are based on the text then follow and candidates are asked to choose the correct word from the ten options provided. For every statement there are at least two words that could fit grammatically in each gap, so candidates have to understand the actual content of the text and then transfer their understanding to the gap-fill statements by choosing the word that gives the correct meaning.

The majority of candidates performed well in this exercise in which the ability to locate the correct meaning in the text and transfer this to the statements was being tested. *Molte* (instead of the correct answer, *poche*) was frequently given in **Question 18**, probably due to candidates' greater familiarity with the feminine plural agreement with *persone* of *molto* (*molte*) rather than that of *poco* (*poche*). **Question 19** produced a few strange responses (*bagno, ristoranti...*) and where the incorrect answer was given in **Question 20**, it was often *ristoranti*.

Esercizio 2 Domande 21-29

Exercise 2 was based on an email from Mario to his friend, Pino, in which he discusses how he earns money and talks about what he plans to do with it. This was followed by questions that tested the candidates' comprehension of the email/text.

Generally, **Questions 21** through to **26** were done well, with most candidates demonstrating understanding of the details of Mario's work. However, for **Question 22** several candidates wrote *lavorare le macchine* instead of *lavare le macchine*, and some others gave *ha deciso di crearsi lui stesso un lavoro*, both of which responses lost the candidate the respective mark.

Questions 27 proved more problematic for candidates, with many stating *è malato*, and sometimes combining this with *è in vacanza* (or some variation on this), instead of *perché non può lavorare / non guadagna niente*. A good number lost a mark in **Question 28(ii)** by giving *per comprare una macchina* instead of *per comprare una **macchina fotografica***. Most candidates were able to identify *giornalista / scrivere per riviste/giornali* as the correct answer to **Question 29**.

Terza parte

In **Section 3**, candidates are asked to demonstrate a more precise understanding of Italian, and as such, responses should be focused. Additional material copied from the text may obscure understanding and consequently invalidate an otherwise correct answer.

Esercizio 1 Domande 30-34

In **Questions 30** to **34**, candidates were asked to read an interview and indicate whether each of the statements that followed were true or false and, where false, correct the statement according to the text.

A good number of candidates correctly chose the 3 false and the 2 true statements. Whereas **Question 31** was mostly corrected successfully to *non le piaceva quando era piccola / da piccola non leggeva per niente*, **Questions 33** and **34** proved more problematic. By far the most common incorrect answer for **Question 33** was *Esmeralda sogna di diventare pirata come il padre*, and marks were lost in **Question 34** where candidates failed to communicate that Livia is currently writing (even though she has to study); *sta scrivendo il secondo romanzo / scrive e studia*.

There were very few instances where candidates attempted to correct a statement by merely rendering it in the negative, but where this did happen, no credit was given.

Esercizio 2 Domande 35-41

In Exercise 2, candidates were asked to read a text and then respond in Italian to the questions that followed all based around Francesco and his attempt to create a *gelateria* in an airplane in his garden.

Most candidates were able to give a correct response to **Question 35**, with a few giving the incorrect response of *il gelato e gli aerei* (which had been given as his two passions).

Questions 36 to **38** were done well, with candidates providing acceptable responses in each instance.

Question 39 proved challenging for a significant proportion of the weaker candidates, perhaps due to the conditional perfect nature of the question, section of the text and/or required response. **Question 40** was fairly well answered although, again, candidates of lower ability were appearing to struggle by this stage.

Question 41 really tested candidates' ability to locate the precise answer in the text. Common incorrect responses given ranged from *ha speso tanto* and *non ha abbastanza soldi* to *il futuro dell'aereo è incerto* and *le uniche certezze sono che non volerà più e che non diventerà una gelateria*.

Final Remarks

The accessibility of this paper was shown by the fact that most candidates attempted all of the questions with a majority of high marks. It is hoped that candidates of all ability will recognise the advantages of questioning and answering in Italian and will develop a familiarity with the style of the exercises.

ITALIAN (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0535/03

Speaking

Key Messages

- It is essential that Examiners prepare the examination carefully and are familiar with the format and the requirements of the mark schemes.
- The role play cues, as written in the Teacher's Notes booklet, should be followed carefully.
- Examiners should ensure that they consistently ask questions to elicit the past, present and future tenses in both the conversation sections.
- It is not necessary for a candidate to be a native speaker to achieve full marks.
- The timings of each section of the exam should be followed as stipulated in the Teacher's Notes booklet.

General Comments

Overall, the candidates performed well and the Examiners had prepared well to understand the format and the requirements of the exam and to allow candidates to achieve their best. In the role-plays, the majority of Examiners had familiarised themselves with the scenarios prior to the exam and followed the printed cues. In some cases Examiners improvised and modified the cues, adding difficulty and missing out tasks. In the conversation tests the majority of Examiners gave the candidates the opportunity to show their best and questions were pitched at the right level.

The Teacher's Notes booklet sets out the full requirements of the exam and it is essential for Examiners to read it carefully prior to the exam. Each section of the exam should be covered as omission of any part can seriously impact a candidate's mark. Examiners should study the mark scheme carefully and ask questions that allow candidates to maximise their marks. **To allow candidates to achieve a mark of above 6 on scale (b), linguistic content, Examiners must ask questions that elicit past and future tenses in both conversation sections.**

Clerical checks

The addition of marks and the transfer to the MS1 mark sheet/computer printout was done well and there were only isolated errors.

Cover sheet for moderation sample

The cover sheet for the moderation sample, which can be found at the back of the teachers' notes, provides a checklist to ensure that all required examination materials and documentation are correctly completed and submitted. Whilst the majority of Centres included it, a few Centres did not and are reminded of its importance.

Sample size

Nearly all Centres submitted a correct sample and Centres with more than one Examiner included recordings from each. The requirements for selecting the sample are set out in the Teacher's Notes booklet.

Recording quality and presentation of samples

The recording quality was generally good and both the Examiner and the candidate were clear and audible. The microphone should be positioned in such a way as to favour the candidate and a test of recording quality should be carried out prior to the exam. CD and cassette are the only formats accepted: USB sticks are not allowed.

Internal moderation in Centre

The Centres with large numbers of candidates, which had been given permission to use more than one Examiner, followed the procedures well. Measures had been put in place to ensure consistency across the Centre and a representative sample of both the Examiners and the range of the Centre was sent. To assist Centres in their internal moderation procedures Cambridge has produced guidelines, which are sent once permission has been granted.

Duration of tests/missing elements

Most Centres followed the timings stipulated in the Teacher's Notes booklet. In some instances conversation sections were either too long or too short: they should each last approximately five minutes.

Application of the mark scheme

The majority of Examiners applied the mark scheme consistently and fairly and no adjustment was required. Significant adjustment was required in the following cases:

- marks were awarded for role play tasks that were omitted or not completed
- the general conversation was not conducted
- candidates were not given the opportunity to use both past and future tenses in both conversation sections.

In the role-play section, if the candidate uses a verb it must be correctly conjugated to achieve the three marks for a task, otherwise a maximum mark of two should be awarded. Some Centres with native speaker candidates applied the mark scheme too severely on both scales.

Comments on Specific Questions

Role plays

Candidates should be given 15 minutes to prepare the role-play cards prior to the start of the examination. This gives them the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the tasks and think about what the unexpected questions might be. Examiners should announce each role-play carefully and follow the cues as printed in the Teacher's Notes booklet. The order of the tasks should not be changed and additional tasks should not be added. Where a task is made up of two parts, both must be completed, otherwise a maximum of one mark can be awarded. This includes greeting, giving thanks and reacting. It is often possible to complete the tasks without using a verb, but if a verb is used it must be correctly conjugated, otherwise a maximum of two marks can be awarded. In role play A the candidate is required to respond to a question by selecting one of two options and they should be trained to listen carefully to the cues.

In role play B there is an unexpected question and candidates must demonstrate understanding and give an appropriate response. Candidates should read their instructions carefully to ensure that they give the required number of details and ask a question if required. If a candidate does not understand a cue, it is appropriate for the Examiner to repeat it. If a candidate misses out a task, the Examiner should guide the candidate to completing it.

A role plays

Most candidates had been well prepared for the A role plays and used the cues well to complete the tasks. The A role-play is designed to be easier than the B role play.

B role plays

The B role plays include both unexpected questions and the requirement to use a different tense. Most Centres followed the cues carefully and gave the candidates the opportunity to gain marks for each task.

Topic presentation and discussion

Candidates have the opportunity to present their chosen topic for up to two minutes. If the candidate talks beyond the two minutes, the Examiner should interrupt with a suitable question to initiate a conversation.

Some Centres did not ask follow-up questions which risked severely limiting the marks awarded for this section.

Topics chosen included school, travel and pastimes. 'Myself' or 'my life' is not a suitable topic as it limits options for the general conversation. Candidates should instead focus on one aspect of their life. Some stronger candidates, particularly native speakers, chose more demanding topics and were able to answer more abstract questions.

Although candidates will have had the opportunity to practise this section of the exam, they should not pre-learn a set of questions and answers. The conversation should be spontaneous and develop naturally in response to the candidate's answers.

It is essential that Examiners ask questions to elicit both past and future use, otherwise a candidate's mark would be limited to 6 on scale (b), linguistic content.

The topic presentation and discussion combined should last approximately five minutes. If the section is too short, candidates may not be able to demonstrate the full range of language to maximise their mark. At the end of the topic presentation and discussion Examiners should indicate the transition to the general conversation with a phrase such as 'ora passiamo alla conversazione generale'.

General conversation

The general conversation requires the Examiner to cover a minimum of two or three topics different to the presentation topic. It is not appropriate for all candidates to cover the same topics and, generally, a good range of topics was covered and Examiners graded questions carefully and allowed candidates to feel comfortable whilst also showing the full range of language that they could use. In a few cases the Examiner excessively dominated the conversation rather than prompting the candidates. Centres are reminded of the need for a candidate to use both past and future tenses to access a mark of six or above on scale (b) and Examiners should ensure that they ask a number of questions to elicit each tense.

As stated in the Teacher's Notes, this section of the exam should last for up to five minutes. Most Centres adhered to this requirement, although a few were either too long or too short. If the conversation is too short, candidates may not be able to show the full range of structures and vocabulary to score highly.

The best candidates responded to the Examiner in a natural and spontaneous way, demonstrating excellent comprehension skills, a range of vocabulary and the ability to use a range of tenses and to manipulate language. Candidates did not need to be native speakers to achieve this.

ITALIAN (FOREIGN LANGUAGE)

Paper 0535/04

Writing

Key Messages

- Candidates should read the questions carefully.
- On **Question 2** and **Question 3** candidates should address each bullet point clearly and explicitly.
- Candidates should be discouraged from introducing extraneous or irrelevant material into their answers.
- Candidates should be familiar with the mark schemes used to assess their answers.
- Candidates should check their work carefully.
- Candidates should ensure their hand-writing is legible.

General Comments

Once again this year, the overall standard of the responses on this paper was very high. Many candidates showed a very encouraging command of the language, expressing themselves fluently and using a variety of more sophisticated vocabulary and structures. There were some good performances too from candidates whose command of Italian was perhaps not as good as that of this first group but who made the most of their ability by sticking to language items with which they were familiar, identifying the correct tense to use in each part of their response, and addressing each part of the question explicitly. Indeed, it was noticeable that candidates who had been well prepared for the exam often outperformed candidates of apparently similar ability who were not so familiar with the requirements of this paper, for example by ensuring they addressed each part of the question and by using a variety of verbs and other more sophisticated structures on **Question 3**. At the lower end of the range of performances on this paper, there were some candidates whose uncertain grasp of basic grammar meant that there was relatively little accurate language that could be ticked; some of these candidates scored well for content, however, with examiners giving the benefit of the doubt where there was some ambiguity about what the candidate was trying to say.

One further noticeable feature of the candidature was the relatively significant minority of candidates who clearly had some Italian background but whose spelling and command of the written register of the language were not really sufficient to meet the challenges of this paper.

Centres are encouraged to take note of the 'key messages' above in preparing candidates for future examination series. In particular, it should be noted that variety of language – both verbs and other grammatical structures – is rewarded on **Question 3**.

Comments on Specific Questions

QUESTION 1: list of things the candidate might see in a clothes shop

The majority of candidates were able to list five words which were recognisable as things that might be seen in a clothes shop; a certain amount of leeway was granted here in terms of accuracy of spelling and gender.

QUESTION 2: description of candidate's home town / local area

There were many detailed answers here which garnered full marks for communication. Candidates seemed at ease writing about where they live and the other areas targeted by the bullet points. Not all candidates successfully tackled the bullet point about what there is to do for young people, with a number of answers not mentioning young people at all. The mark scheme for language allowed most candidates to score well here, even when they had made a number of quite basic errors.

QUESTION 3 (a): a new house

This was a popular choice for candidates in this section of the paper. Most responses were fluent and detailed, and most candidates followed the bullet points closely. There was a range of interesting responses to the first bullet point, ranging from 'going to see my new bedroom' to 'going to the shop to buy furniture'. More able candidates expressed their opinion about the new house in terms of a comparison with the old house. The new mark scheme seemed to work well on this question (and on the other **Question 3** options), with candidates rewarded for their use of a range of accurately formed verbs as well as for their ambition in attempting more complex structures.

QUESTION 3 (b): holidays

This was the most commonly chosen option in this section of the paper, perhaps unsurprisingly given the historic popularity of this topic area. Candidates dealt very well on the whole with the first bullet point, with most candidates saying they preferred beach holidays. Not all candidates had the fluency or grammatical accuracy to deal convincingly with the second bullet point, however. Almost all managed to say where they had been on their last holiday, but a number of candidates overlooked the follow-up question 'Com'era' and did not offer an opinion about this. The final bullet point also proved a useful 'differentiator', with more able candidates offering credible opinions about why holidays are important for young people – almost all taking the view that it was necessary to wind down after a hard year's study – and some weaker candidates lacking the language to offer an appropriate response.

QUESTION 3 (c): a problem at work

This was the least popular choice in this section, but the majority of those who chose it seemed to have an extremely confident grasp of the language and so were able to write interesting, detailed and quite original responses to this more open-ended narrative task. A very few candidates dropped communication marks because they did not get around to tackling the second or third bullet point.