



GCSE
Italian

8633/WH Paper 1 Writing Higher Tier

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

The vast majority of students have been entered appropriately for this tier. The quality of work seen in the overlap questions was of a considerable higher standard than at the Foundation tier. The ability to use a range of tenses, idiomatic expressions and more complex language was impressive and students were also able to express and justify opinions well. Where students failed to score marks, this was where inaccuracy caused a delay in communicating messages or not fully understanding the bullet point(s) in questions 1 & 2. The suggested word count for these questions was on the whole adhered to - a continued improvement since the beginning of the specification.

Higher Question 1

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 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.

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 1.1

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*.
- **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 *mantenerti* to *mantenermi* 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 sometimes 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, mangiare** were common spelling mistakes as was the misspelling of **delizioso (deliciozo/delisiozo/delizioco)**.

Question 1.2

Content

A majority of 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.

- **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.
- **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.'

Quality of language

Most students were able to write accurately 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**
- Misuse 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.
- 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.

Question 2

For this question, there are 15 marks for Content, 12 marks for Range of Language and 5 marks for Accuracy. Students write approximately 150 words in total, about two different bullet points. Both bullet points must be covered, but there is no need for equal coverage of the bullets. The quality of responses was generally high, with most students able to complete both bullet points in each question, showing good ability to express and justify opinions. Many students were able to produce fluent pieces of extended writing with few lapses and a variety of language. Where students were less successful, it was because they had misinterpreted the bullet points.

As in previous years, it was evident that some near native students did not receive formal teaching of the specification. It was at times detrimental to how they answered the question as many did not justify opinions, putting them at a disadvantage in accessing the top marks. It is important that these students are clearly taught how to answer the type of questions that appear in this paper.

The criteria for assessment focus on four elements: relevance and detail (implicit in this is coverage of both bullet points), amount of information conveyed, clarity of communication and expression and justification of opinions. Students were successful in developing ideas and expressing and justifying opinions. As in previous series, there were occasions when inaccuracy led to a lack of clarity of communication (referred to as ‘ambiguities’) and, again, this impacted on marks awarded. The incorrect use of **è, però, farò, sarà** very often written without an accent prevented some opinions and justifications from being acknowledged since as the omission of an accent on the appropriate vowels changes the meaning of a sentence. In both tasks, and as happened last series, a majority of students used taught sentence starters such as: *dal mio punto di vista personale... penso che sia...* and were not sure how to conclude the sentence, thus creating ambiguity, impacting the marks awarded for Content. Examples include: *spero che sia James Bond è emozionante*, and *penso che sia* followed by a full stop.

Content

Question 2.1

The majority of students coped well with the question, answering both bullet points.

- **se preferisci guardare i film a casa o al cinema**
- **una visita recente al cinema**

The few issues that were encountered included an inability to describe the screen as being big at the cinema, referring to it as a ‘televisione’ or various misspellings of ‘schermo’ as ‘**il** schermo’, ‘il scermo.’ A majority of students found describing film genres challenging eg: *il film alle commedie* instead of *le commedie* or *i film comici* etc.

The majority were able to describe a past visit to the cinema well including a variety of expressions and structures. Expressing opinions and justifications in a variety of tenses did cause a few issues for some students.

Question 2.2

The more popular choice for students this series.

- **una vacanza passata**
- **l'alloggio ideale per una vacanza**

Successful, high-quality answers included referring to both bullet points. For Bullet point 1, there was an inability with some to give opinions in various tenses and to describe past events in general. For example:- *ho piaciuto la spiaggia , era caldo, era fa mal tempo, ho prenduto il sole, sono nuotato, abbiamo restato.*

Where there were issues in Bullet point 2, it was the inability to understand the word *alloggio*, mistaking the bullet point to mean writing about an ideal holiday or a country/city that they would like to visit in the future, with no reference to accommodation. Students **must** read the bullet points carefully and answer accordingly.

Range of language

The key features of the criteria for assessment here are variety of language and a confident ability to produce complex sentences. Some students were able to use idiomatic expressions accurately and in context. With the more successful pieces, students included a variety of tenses including at times the use of the subjunctive. Other examples of variety of language included phrases such as negative constructions, intensifiers, conjunctions such as: *quindi, perciò, tuttavia, per di più*, the use of interchange of the perfect and imperfect tenses in the same sentence, the use of direct object pronouns, a variety of adjectives.

The use or lack of prepositions and articulated prepositions seemed to be quite stark this series as was the attempt at direct object pronouns in the perfect tense: *lo trovato* instead of *l'ho trovato*.

Accuracy

The criteria for assessment focus mainly on verbs and tense formations and the type of errors that students make. It is to be noted that a 'major' error is one that interferes with communication, and a 'minor error', albeit still an inaccuracy, does not. The majority of students were able to produce work worthy of an accuracy mark of 3 and above. Common major errors included the lack of accent on the *e* for the third person singular *essere*, inappropriate use of infinitives, poor formation of the perfect tense, including the incorrect auxiliary: *ho andato, sono fatto*, confusion of simple future and conditional endings eg. *andremmo/andremo, saremmo/saremo*, accents missing on the first and third person singular simple future verbs at times changing the meaning of the sentence since the lack of an accent resulted in the word changing meaning, a time frame followed by the wrong tense & vice versa, eg *l'anno scorso vado, recentemente andrei, in passato farei*, the use of reflexive pronouns instead of indirect pronouns or possessive adjectives, prepositions in place of the verb: *a/ha; o /ho*. Common minor errors included incorrect gender agreements, inaccurate adjectival agreements and incorrect possessive adjectives.

Advice to students

- Read the bullet points and the scene setting carefully, ensuring you know exactly what they require in terms of response.
- Ensure that what you write relates to the bullet points in some way.
- When including complex language, check that your verbs and spellings are accurate and make sure you know how to finish the sentence.
- Refer to the list of linguistic errors towards the end of this report.
- Give **two** opinions followed by justifications.

Question 3

For this question, there are 6 marks for *Conveying key messages* and 6 marks for *Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures*. Given that the level of demand of the key messages was aimed at covering grades 4 to 9, the question differentiated well, with all students able to score well.

The passage was divided into 13 key messages, as in the table below.

Conveying key messages

	Key Message	Comments
1	For my birthday,	Generally well translated.
2	I went to the cinema in town	The use of the pluperfect was sometimes used instead of the required perfect tense. Vocabulary such as <i>paese</i> and <i>villaggio</i> were used to translate <i>town</i> . The misspelling of <i>città</i> – <i>in cita</i> – often caused problems. Often <i>in town</i> was missed out completely.
3	with my cousin	Often this was translated in the plural – <i>con i miei cugini</i> .
4	and we watched a comedy.	The first-person plural of perfect tense of <i>guardare</i> was often translated well, however there were a variety of translations for <i>una commedia</i> , sometimes translated as <i>un comico</i> – changing the intended meaning in the original text. Some just used the English word.
5	It was fun.	On the whole done well, however some part French translations used: <i>'c'etait divertente.'</i>
6	I bought an expensive mobile phone	Similarly, <i>io achete</i> was sometimes translated – no problems with <i>mobile phone</i> .
7	which is very useful	Often this was translated as <i>che aiuta</i> . When translated as: <i>che è molto utile</i> , very often the <i>e</i> did not have an accent, changing the meaning of what needed to be conveyed.
8	because I can do research.	Various translations were given: <i>posso ricercare</i> , <i>posso navigare</i> , <i>vado sull'internet</i> and very often <i>ricerche</i> was spelt in French in the singular – <i>recherche</i> .

9	In two years' time,	<i>In due anni</i> was often used to translate this chunk. Students need more practice in using prepositions accurately.
10	I would like to go	Generally translated well.
11	to university.	Generally translated well although the preposition <i>all'</i> was often missed out.
12	After my degree,	A lot of students described this phrase instead of translating it: <i>dopo che finisco la scuola/dopo la mia qualificazione</i> . A majority translated degree as <i>diploma</i> .
13	I would like to become a teacher.	Generally translated well.

Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures

Once again, this series, some responses or part responses were written in Spanish, French or in English with an added vowel at the end of a word in English with the intention of making the word sound Italian. Minor errors did not prevent marks being awarded for conveying key messages provided they were communicated. The majority of the students were not secure in the use of the perfect tense or prepositions. Auxiliary verbs were either missed out or incorrectly used. Incorrect adjectival agreements and the use or lack of definitive articles were evident.

The more able students occasionally paraphrased, added words or gave a summary of the translation, not always keeping true to the original text. Teachers need to ensure that students are briefed properly as to the exam requirements especially if the students have not been officially taught.

Advice to students

- Translate what you see, don't give a summary or add words in the Italian translation that are not in the original English text.
- Translate the verb tenses given. For example, the use of the pluperfect is not accurate if the verb given in the original is in the perfect tense.
- Learn the difference between *e* and *è*.
- Pay attention to singular or plural nouns. Do not translate a singular noun as a plural as this will not be credited.
- Practise high frequency words and phrases, especially prepositions eg. *in, a, da, tra, tra*.
- Proofread your work and check that all aspects of the translation have been addressed accurately, particularly the little words (prepositions/articles/ nouns in singular or plural).
- If you are not sure how to translate something, make an educated guess as it may score marks. Leaving it blank will not.

Across all questions, there were persistent linguistic errors, listed below, which had an impact on all elements of the paper.

- *e/è*
- *ce/c'è*
- *che/ce/c'è'*
- *chi/ci*
- *cio/co/c'ho*
- *pero/però*
- *a/ha/ah*
- *o/ho/oh*
- *ai /hai*
- incorrect auxiliary in the passato prossimo : ho andato,sono fatto ... or no auxiliary at all
- the use of English /Spanish/French words
- *Poi* instead of *puoi*
- *Cuando/cuatro*
- *Salvare soldi*
- *Spendere tempo*
- *Verb piacere in the past tense caused a few problems*
- *Mangare instead of mangiare*
- *Delizioso instead of delizioso*
- *scermo instead of schermo*

Most of the work seen was legible however there were more occasions this series where students' handwriting was illegible.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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