



GCSE **Italian**

8633/RH

Report on the examination

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General comments

Performance on this paper was comparable to last year, and students are showing improvement in tackling certain question types that have traditionally been challenging. These include the True/False/Not in the Text format, literary extracts, and translation, particularly where the present perfect form is involved, which most students now translate correctly.

One question type that continues to pose difficulties at both tiers is the news headlines. This is an area that teachers should continue to emphasise when training students in exam skills.

Section A

Question 1

The paper began with a challenging reading task: a literary extract presented in the T/F/NT format, which is always tricky for students. However, the topic of the text – family – was one of the most familiar and accessible, and its level of difficulty was targeted at lower-grade students. All parts of this question were well answered, indicating that students are becoming more comfortable with literary adaptations. Notably, the NT responses, which typically have the lowest success rates, were among the most accurately answered this time.

Question 2

Holidays are usually a popular topic, and students did fairly well across all parts of this question, except for 2.2, where the vast majority of students surprisingly lost the mark. In part 2.1, a small number of students phrased their answer the other way around: instead of “there are direct trains from Rome,” they wrote “there are direct trains to Rome.” This lost the mark, as it did not answer the question of why it is easy to get to Grosseto.

Part 2.3 was also well answered by most students, although a small percentage lost the mark by writing “clean beach” instead of “clean water/sea,” combining the two elements that could have scored the mark (either clean sea or beautiful beaches).

Part 2.4 was fairly successful, although some students were not precise enough and lost the mark due to lack of detail. The correct answer should have stated “250 species of rare birds,” and those who wrote “250 rare birds” rather than “species” or “types” lost the mark, even though they were close to the correct answer.

Part 2.5 was well answered, with the majority choosing “homemade pasta” and some opting for “genuine olive oil,” while a very small minority scored the mark with “seasonal fruit and vegetables.” Because this question allowed three possible correct answers, examiners accepted any of these. However, vague responses such as “it’s all homemade/fresh/locally produced” did not receive the mark. A significant number of students answered “it is homemade” without

referencing pasta, or “it’s grown by local farmers” without specifying olive oil – these answers all lost the mark.

The part of this question that proved especially problematic was 2.2, where nearly 70% of students lost the mark by answering “a museum of natural science” instead of either “a Roman amphitheatre” or “a cathedral square.” Why students associated a museum of natural science with a history lover remains unclear – perhaps they linked it to the Natural History Museum in London, or assumed museums in general are of interest to historians. Still, it is surprising how many missed this, considering the answer was relatively easy to identify as a cognate (“anfiteatro” – amphitheatre).

Question 3

The news headline question always proves challenging for students. Although the texts are very short, they often contain distractors and key words that could potentially refer to multiple headlines. This question type is aimed at higher-grade students and requires careful reading and attention to detail, rather than scanning for gist. As in previous years, students performed better than in the past, with a solid 75% scoring 4 out of the 5 available marks.

The part of the question where almost half the students didn’t score was 3.3—the headline referring to “environmental improvement.” Nearly 59% chose option C, likely due to the presence of phrases in the text such as “l’erba è sempre più verde” and “una vita migliore.” That headline was intentionally included as a distractor, as it did not correspond to any of the stories.

A smaller percentage of students chose option A for question 3.3, probably influenced by the phrases “aria aperta” and “parco.” This was also a tricky choice, as A was not the correct answer for any of the headlines.

Question 4

This question on relationships scored fairly well overall, except for part 4.1, which was not part of Theme 1 but rather aligned more closely with Theme 3. To answer correctly, students needed a solid understanding of the differences between the Italian and English school systems, and familiarity with the Italian terms used for various stages of education. Only those who knew that “scuola media” refers to secondary school would have answered correctly, while quite a few students chose “primary school” instead. This may have been due to the phrase “quindi da 7 anni” in the text, which some students might have interpreted as “since I was 7 years old” (leading them to select primary school) rather than “for the last 7 years.”

Question 5

This was a fairly challenging question on the topic of school, with the text aimed at top-performing students in the Higher Tier. The format also made the success rate slightly less accessible, particularly since the correct answer was A+B. Nonetheless, students performed quite well overall, with over 80% scoring at least half of the 4 available marks. The most difficult

part of the question was 5.3, where only 58% answered correctly. This was indeed an A+B answer, but a significant number of students selected only A: “Carlo is not sure how well he has done overall.”

Question 6

Social issues are always a difficult topic for students. Some help was provided via the glossary, which translated “frigoriferi solidali” for them, but the question still proved challenging, particularly 6.1, where many students lost the mark due to lack of detail (e.g. “hunger” on its own did not score a mark), or imprecise phrasing (e.g. “they allow to give food without paying,” which was misleading, as it missed the key point that it is people in need who are allowed to take food from the fridges without paying, rather than those donating the food).

6.2 was also a difficult question. Many students referred to the high poverty levels in Bari, which did not actually answer the question of what happened, but rather stated a general fact. Those who did attempt to refer to what happened often misinterpreted “sono nati” as referring to babies or people being born, a natural enough mistake, but one that made little sense in context. Only a minority of students who understood the pronoun “ne” (the Italian text stated “ne sono nati sette”) scored the mark by specifically referring to “seven fridges were installed in Bari” – the correct number was required for the mark.

Similarly to the previous part, 6.3 also saw many students lose the mark for stating a fact – namely, that schools waste $\frac{3}{4}$ of their canteen food. However, this did not constitute an idea. The expected response was that “a fridge should be placed near/next to every school.” A minority of students suggested placing a community fridge inside the school, which also lost the mark, as that would make it inaccessible to people in need and was therefore incorrect.

Question 7

In this question about the advantages and disadvantages of Latin, students had to identify four distinct points corresponding to the four individuals expressing their opinions. Some students listed four points, but had simply rephrased one idea in different ways – for example, “it takes time away from other activities” and “it takes a long time to learn” are essentially the same disadvantage and would only score one mark.

Similarly, some students did not score full marks for listing as two separate advantages “it can improve your CV” and “some companies value it as a skill to organize your thoughts.” Although these may have seemed like two different points, they were both made by the same person, Federico, and missed the advantage mentioned by the other student, Antonella. Therefore, they did not count as two separate points.

A significant number of students also lost the mark for stating “Latin is easier than maths” as one of the advantages. However, the point Antonella was making – and the one that scored the mark – appeared later in the paragraph: “you will encounter many new words.” Similar concepts such as “it will enrich your vocabulary” were also accepted.

Section B

Question 8

This question was based on a literary extract, but it was aimed at the lower grades and had a high success rate overall, with part 8.3 being the best answered. The part where around a third of students responded incorrectly was 8.4, where many selected “molti Babbi Natale” instead of the correct answer, A (un Babbo Natale).

Question 9

Question 9 was one of the easiest on the paper, as it was also shared with the Foundation Tier. Although students were required to recognise the different time frames, there were helpful cues in both texts to guide them toward the correct answers – such as “cinque anni fa” in the first text and “fino a poco tempo fa” in the second for the past tense, “oggi” for the present tense, and “in futuro” for the future tense.

The majority of students (89%) achieved full marks in part 9.1, whereas in 9.2 the percentage dropped to 68%. A few students lost the mark in 9.2 by answering “inquinati e contaminati dalle fabbriche”, missing the key element “mari”.

A small number of students also lost the mark by attempting to rephrase the answer in their own words and making mistakes in the process. Although this was not a significant number, it should be noted that rephrasing is not required at GCSE level (unlike A Level), and students do not gain extra marks or score higher for attempting to rephrase answers in Section B of the paper.

Question 10

This question on the Epiphany was well answered, with a good number of students achieving all four marks. It is always helpful when students are knowledgeable about cultural topics, as this can help them eliminate incorrect options even without reading the text – such as “la Befana porta patatine fritte.” Students have generally performed well on this type of question.

Question 11

This question was aimed at the top students of the Higher Tier (grades 7 and above), and the outcomes were mixed depending on the part of the question. Part 11.1 was particularly difficult, with fewer than half of the students answering correctly with option C. The remaining students were split evenly between options B and A, unable to make the connection between “una vita sana per gli studenti” and “la salute degli alunni.”

Section C

Question 12

Section 1

This part was quite successful; two different translations were accepted as correct due to the valid interpretations of the Italian phrase “dal dentista”, so both “I arrived at the dentist” and “from the dentist” scored the mark.

Section 2

This part was more problematic and saw fewer students succeed. Quite a few did not know the meaning of “purtroppo” and lost the mark by guessing a different connective – often “however,” which was rejected. Strangely, many students also translated “preso” incorrectly; a significant number guessed and wrote “I lost your keys,” which resulted in losing the mark.

Section 3

This was a challenging chunk due to the phrase “visto che”, which was often translated as a past tense rather than a causative conjunction. Although “visto” is the past participle of “vedere”, there was no past tense intended here. Translations such as “I saw that it was raining” were rejected, whereas “seen that,” “because,” or “since” scored the mark.

Section 4

This was not a particularly difficult section, though a small number of students lost the mark for translating “tedesca” as “Dutch.” An even smaller number mistook “tedesca” for the name of the friend.

Section 5

The phrase that was sometimes translated incorrectly here was “qualche anno.” While a few different versions were accepted – such as “a few years” or “some years” – “many years” was rejected, as was the omission of any qualifier (e.g. “for years”). “Qualche” is an indefinite adjective that Higher Tier students are expected to know, and omissions almost always result in losing the mark for this specific section.

Section 6

This was well translated by most students. As with a similar phrase in last year’s translation, we also accepted the present tense version (“we know each other from university” rather than “we met at university”), as it is a commonly used expression in English to convey the same idea. Although the tense was not the same, it seemed overly harsh to deduct a mark in this case – an

exception to the usual rule, since accurate tense translation is typically required in the reading translation. However, this is an example where English allows for a bit more flexibility.

Section 7

This was a very successful section despite being a fairly long chunk, and only a very small number of students lost the mark by omitting “she had to” – translating it simply as “she returned to her city” but forgetting the modal verb.

Section 8

This chunk was correctly translated by most students in the future tense. Strangely, when a mark was lost, it was frequently due to the omission of either “molto” or the “ri” in “rivederla”, which should have been rendered as “see her again.” As mentioned previously, students completing the reading translation should carefully check their work to ensure they haven’t accidentally omitted small but important words. It’s unlikely that Higher Tier students wouldn’t know the meaning of “molto”, so this was probably a careless mistake.

Section 9

Similarly to the first chunk of this translation, the final phrase was slightly ambiguous, so two different versions were accepted: either “surely you would like her a lot as well” or “surely you would like it a lot as well.” We encountered many examples of both, and they were accepted. However, some students did lose the mark by forgetting “a lot” for “moltissimo” or “as well” for “anche.” As in the previous section, this was likely due to not paying close attention to the text – which is unfortunate, given that the majority of the section was well translated, including the correct use of the conditional tense.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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