

ITALIAN (Foreign Language)

Paper 0535/02
Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

This paper is aimed at testing candidates' ability to understand written Italian and to communicate in writing. Candidates are required to read material in Italian and to convey information by responding to a range of questions either by ticking the appropriate box or by expressing answers in their own words. They are also required to write a letter of about 80–100 words which is assessed out of 10 marks for communication of the required information and out of 5 marks for accuracy according to a set scheme. The standard of work was varied, but the majority of candidates managed to score reasonably well, especially in the first and second part. Not all candidates attempted the third, more difficult, part of the paper.

Comments on specific questions

Prima parte

Esercizio 1 Domande 1–5

This was a multiple choice exercise. The majority of candidates answered most of the questions correctly, but mistakes were present in **Questions 3, 4 and 5**. **Question 3** was sometimes answered incorrectly, because candidates did not know the meaning of the word "ginocchio". In **Question 4**, D was often given as the answer possibly because the boxed word monumento was considered to be the first road on the right and therefore answer D would be seen as the second road on the right. Occasionally mistakes were made in **Question 5**, as some candidates obviously did not know the word "infermiere" and chose "bagnino" instead.

The correct answers were:

Question 1: A; Question 2: D; Question 3: B; Question 4: C; Question 5: D

Esercizio 2 Domande 6–10

In this exercise, candidates had to answer 5 true or false questions based on a short text.

This, again, was tackled well by most candidates, but when errors were found they were mostly in reply to **Questions 6, 7 and 8**. **Question 6** particularly was often misunderstood, perhaps due to careless reading.

The correct answers were:

Question 6: Falso, Question 7: Vero, Question 8: Vero, Question 9: Falso, Question 10: Vero.

Esercizio 3 Domande 11–15

In this exercise, candidates had to say to which one of Piero's friends (Carlo, Giorgio or Marco) certain statements referred to, by ticking the appropriate box. This exercise was well answered by most candidates and very few mistakes were made.

The answers were:

Question 11: G; Question 12: M; Question 13: C; Question 14: G; Question 15: C.

Esercizio 4 Domanda 16

In this exercise based on three visual stimuli, candidates had to leave a message to an Italian girl called Fulvia before going out.

They had to include: a) their destination; b) what they were intending to buy; c) the time of their return.

Candidates were required to cover all three elements, and 3 marks for communication were awarded, provided candidates covered all the points. Linguistic accuracy was rewarded with up to 2 marks.

Some candidates misunderstood this task and some did not know the word "rivista" and used "magazzino" instead, losing the mark. Some license was allowed, for example the word "libro" instead of "rivista", or "negozio" instead of "edicola".

Mostly the mistakes were of a grammatical nature which prevented some candidates from scoring 2 marks for accuracy.

Seconda parte

Esercizio 1 Domande 17–23

In this exercise, candidates had to answer questions relating to a passage about an initiative taken in the year 2000 by the Ministry for the Environment in Italy to close the historic centre of large cities to traffic on Sundays. In some instances, good candidates transposed the answers to **Questions 19** and **20** and did not always give enough information in responses to **Question 21**.

The correct answers were:

Question 17: (any one of) per far respirare un po' di aria pulita ai cittadini/per avere un giorno senza l'inquinamento del traffico/per avere un po' di aria pulita in città.

Question 18: (any two of) a piedi/in bicicletta/con i pattini/a cavallo.

Question 19: (any one of) la gente fa un po' di esercizio fisico/le domeniche a piedi fanno bene alla salute/la gente può finalmente muoversi come vuole.

Question 20: (i) girare in una città senza rumori; (ii) fermarsi quando e dove si vuole.

Question 21: che sono una buona idea (perchè loro fanno affari d'oro)/sono contenti perchè vendono molto.

Question 22: (i) non risolvono i problemi dell'inquinamento e/o del traffico; (ii) l'inquinamento delle città è dovuto soprattutto agli impianti di riscaldamento e non tanto al traffico.

Question 23: (any one of) perchè alla gente piacciono queste domeniche/(perchè lo Stato non paga più le spese.

Esercizio 2 Domanda 24

In this exercise candidates had to write a letter of about 80 to 100 words, talking about people who are important in their lives. They were asked to say:

- a) which are the most important people in their lives;
- b) what they like doing together;
- c) what they like about them and why;
- d) what they don't like about them and would prefer to be different.

The letter was generally quite well written by most candidates. A good number of candidates were able to set out the letter correctly and scored good marks for communication. Weaker candidates, however, often misunderstood the word “volentieri” of “che cosa fate volentieri insieme” and consequently wrote about voluntary work. Many also just wrote about what they like doing and what they don't like, obviously not understanding the meaning of the words “di loro”. On the other hand, there were a number of well developed letters with a confident use of structures and a good range of vocabulary.

Terza parte

Esercizio 1 Domande 25–31

This reading comprehension exercise required candidates to answer multiple choice questions based on a passage about a literature festival held in the city of Mantova. The final question (for two marks) required an answer in the candidate's own words expressing why the festival had been positive for Chiara, one of the participants. As in previous years, this type of exercise proved to be more difficult than the others, as the passage is longer and the language more complex. As a result, only the more able candidates scored good marks and generally speaking, errors were present in many of the answers. **Question 25** was answered with C by many candidates, even the more able ones, and **Questions 27** and **30** were also answered incorrectly by many.

The correct answers were:

Question 25: D; **Question 26:** D; **Question 27:** B; **Question 28:** A; **Question 29:** C;
Question 30: C;
Question 31: (i) si è sentita partecipe, coinvolta (le è piaciuto lo spirito di collaborazione);
(ii) ha sentito più vicino il mondo della letteratura.

Esercizio 2 Domande 32–38

This exercise was based on an article about summer in the city and the difficulties that this presents to people who don't have the option of going away to the sea or to the mountains. In **Question 33**, which had two parts, the answer “si vive più a lungo” was missed by most candidates. In **Question 35** very few candidates realized that many people in France had lost their lives in the summer of 2003 and simply talked about “una tragedia nazionale” leaving doubts about their real understanding of the implications of those words. Also, in answer to **Question 36** many candidates did not mention the change that had occurred in the “festa nazionale dei vigili del fuoco”, they simply mentioned the opening of their premises to the “anziani autosufficienti”, adding, perhaps rather irrelevantly, details of the opening and closing times! **Question 37** was answered correctly by most candidates but again **Question 38** was often answered incorrectly as most wrote that summer was easier or more bearable, i.e. reiterating the practical advantages. Once more many candidates, and not only the weaker ones, insisted on copying large chunks from the text, which inevitably leads to a loss of marks..

The correct answers were:

Question 32: (i) la chiusura delle scuole.
(ii) il caldo.

Question 33: (i) si vive più a lungo.
(ii) molti parenti non possono/vogliono più occuparsi degli anziani.

Question 34: Any two of
I furti, le aggressioni, la solitudine.

Question 35: molti anziani erano morti.

Question 36: invece di una giornata per il pubblico i pompieri hanno aperto le loro sedi agli anziani per più settimane nei mesi più caldi.

Question 37: Any two of
leggere i giornali/parlare con altre persone/assistere a incontri/assistere a concerti/vedere film/giocare a bocce/giocare a carte/seguire corsi/fare gite/fare ginnastica.

Question 38: *something that conveys the idea of*
La generosità/l'altruismo/il calore umano/l'amicizia dei pompieri

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ITALIAN

Paper 0535/03

Speaking

General comments

This test continues to give good results. Most candidates performed their tasks realistically in the Role plays section and then gave an effective presentation of a topic of their choice, which was the subject of the conversation that followed. The last part of the test consists of a general conversation on a variety of everyday topics in which most candidates engaged with ease. Occasionally, however, communication became difficult and was achieved only partially. All Examiners displayed a friendly manner and most of them tried to extend the candidates as far as possible and lead them to use a variety of grammatical structures (including past and future tenses).

Comments on specific questions

Role plays A and B - 15 marks each

This section of the examination aims at testing how well a candidate can deal with two guided conversations in Italian, for which he/she has 15 minutes to prepare. Each reply receives a mark ranging from 0 (for an unintelligible utterance) to 3 (for an accurate utterance, expressed in the appropriate register). The situations in the **A Role plays**, drawn from a well-defined range of topics, required familiarity with the minimum core vocabulary only. The situations in the **B Role plays**, on the other hand, were slightly more complex and required a wider range of vocabulary. Most candidates gave relevant and correct answers, achieving the highest marks in both Role plays, but candidates sometimes scored only partially when there was more than one element required for the task, and only one was given. It is clear that most Examiners had prepared, thus enabling their candidates to perform well. Examiners need to prepare well in order to avoid asking questions in the wrong sequence, or giving replies that anticipate what the candidate is supposed to say. On the question of procedure, it was pleasing to note that virtually all Examiners introduced each cassette and each candidate with the necessary announcements, and identified which Role play card was being used. In most cases the recordings were of good quality: an aspect that should never be neglected is checking that every candidate is clearly audible before despatching the cassettes.

Topic (prepared) Conversation - 30 marks

This test carries up to 15 marks for 'comprehension and responsiveness' (scale A, which also takes into account how well a topic has been prepared), and up to 15 marks again for 'linguistic complexity and range' (scale B). In general, marks for comprehension and fluency of response were higher than marks for vocabulary and accuracy, but only slightly. Most candidates prepared well for this test and presented a variety of subjects in which they had a personal interest. Countries and cities around the world, either their native ones or some they had visited, together with various sports and hobbies were the subjects of many presentations, but there were also a number of other topics, from ancient Rome to the history of Nutella, from the sinking of the Titanic to the comparison of education systems in different countries. It was pleasing to hear the genuine interest and passion of the candidates for the topics chosen. This year the timing of the presentation and the ensuing conversation (5 minutes in all) was definitely much closer than last year to the standard set out in the syllabus booklet and Teachers' Notes, however it is important to remember that candidates should be allowed to present their topic for one full minute without interruptions. Only then should examiners begin asking questions. In a few cases questions began so early that there was scarcely any presentation at all. In the topic conversation section, which should last about 4 minutes, most candidates showed a good level of comprehension and a fluent response. Most Examiners managed to lead their candidates into using a variety of tenses and asked for explanations, enlargements, and descriptions related to the topic. They generally avoided questions inviting simply "yes" or "no" answers and thus helped their candidates to show their full linguistic ability. Overall the assessment of candidates was close to the agreed standard, but many Examiners tended to be somewhat harsh, especially in respect of scale B

(linguistic complexity and range) and only a few were rather generous with candidates, these most often at the top of the range.

General (unprepared) Conversation - 30 marks

This test is assessed in the same way as the Topic Conversation, with up to 15 marks for 'comprehension and responsiveness' and up to 15 marks for 'linguistic complexity and range'. Questions were usually centred on well-known subjects, such as family, school, free time, recent or future holidays, plans for the future, etc. Most candidates answered without difficulty both in terms of grammatical structures and of fluency. Here again it is important to adhere to the recommended time (5 minutes) and to vary the questions, covering at least two or three topics and remembering that the purpose of the conversation is to show the candidate's linguistic abilities. Indeed it is very important to stress that overuse of closed questions, which produce just one word answers, should be avoided, and a conscious effort should be made to use the 'Tell me about.../Why?/How?' type of questions. The occasional mistakes did not substantially affect marks, which were usually in line with, or just slightly below, those awarded for the previous test.

A mark out of 10 is also awarded for '*Overall impression*' of the candidate's pronunciation and intonation, as well as fluency of delivery. In a few cases delivery was slow and laboured and pronunciation/intonation showed a certain amount of interference from the candidate's mother tongue, but the majority of candidates displayed good control of the Italian sounds and accurate intonation and were awarded marks of 8-10.

ITALIAN (Foreign Language)

Paper 0535/04
Continuous Writing

General comments

The aim of this paper is to test candidates' ability to write a piece of prose relevantly and correctly. Each of the two exercises is assessed under "communication" (5 marks), "accuracy in the use of structures" (15 marks) and "impression" (5 marks). Under "communication" the mark awarded reflects how well the candidate has completed the task (whether he/she has followed the instructions given and how fully the various points have been developed). Accuracy is assessed on the basis of an evaluation of correct grammatical structures and quality of language following the criteria set out below.

1–3	Very poor	Very limited language. Little evidence of grammatical awareness. Gender and spelling extremely weak. Incoherence, irrelevance. Language hardly comprehensible.
4–6	Poor	Language barely adequate. Some understanding of language structures, formation and use of tenses, though frequent lapses. Short, very basic sentences, with high incidence of serious errors. Limited range of vocabulary and structures.
7–9	Adequate	Language generally speaking adequate, but quite basic or alternatively coherently expressed but flawed by frequent mistakes. Grammar at times weak, but at least half of the task should be free of major errors.
10–12	Good	Coherent piece of writing with occasional lapses. Vocabulary and structure generally good with some errors in more complex sentences. General impression is of a developed, sequenced and coherent piece of writing despite some grammatical inaccuracies.
13–15	Very good	Confident piece of writing with good variety of vocabulary and structures. Sentences generally correct (with minor lapses) and description, opinion and logical argument well structured and clear. Confident use of personal pronouns, tenses and other linguistic structures. Very good flow maintained. Often original and pleasant to read.

The mark for "impression" is awarded for fluency, degree of judgement or opinion and variety of expression.

On the whole standards varied but generally speaking the level of work was not as high as in previous years and fewer candidates obtained a very high score in this paper. A very small number of candidates were awarded full marks in both parts of the paper (50 out of 50) as their letters were fully developed and written with excellent use of language. Most candidates followed the guidelines accurately and answered all the points required, gaining good marks for communication; however some candidates lost points for communication as they did not cover all the bullets points in **(a)** and at times misunderstood the meaning of "una buona azione" (=a good deed) in **(b)**.

In terms of general impression it was perhaps harder for candidates to achieve higher than 2 or a 3 – according to the mark scheme 5 was excellent, 4 was very good but distinction between those two was very difficult to estimate; 3 was good, 2 fairly good and 0–1 "does not rise above the requirements for the Directed Writing task in paper 2. Most candidates were awarded 2 rather than in 3 as may have been the case in previous years.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

There was a choice between:

(a) Writing a letter to the organizer of a school trip in Italy where you have experienced some problems. The points to include were:

- When the trip was and where to
- What the problems were
- What the consequences were
- Ask for a refund

or

(b) Writing a letter to an Italian friend, telling him/her that last year you performed a good deed

Candidates had to include:

- What the good deed was
- Why you did it
- Describe your feelings
- Describe the reactions of others

About two thirds of the candidates chose option **(a)**.

The questions were answered with a few omissions (in **(a)** many candidates forgot to ask for a refund or did not specify when or where the trip was) or ambiguity (in **(b)**, as already stated, some candidates did not understand the meaning of “una buona azione” and simply talked about some success that they had had at school or some sporting achievement. The results in general were not as good as in previous years and marks were often lost through inclusion of non Italian words (particularly Spanish). There were, however, as in the past, a significant number of excellent scripts with an impressive level of accuracy including more complex structures such as the conditional or the subjunctive.

As usual the more able candidates made good use of the stimulus given to produce a thoughtful account, particularly in **(a)** where detailed descriptions of problems with the hotels or transport or cancelled trips made pleasant and interesting reading.

The second letter describing the good deed covered – when appropriately tackled – helping underprivileged children, or visiting an old people’s home, offering friendship and companionship to elderly people. This question was possibly more demanding as many lacked the appropriate vocabulary to describe their feelings and other people’s feelings about their good deed.

As regards accuracy it is difficult to generalise about different candidates’ achievements. Wrong verb endings and agreement as always were the most common errors but a good number of scripts were certainly adequate and many candidates managed to display a range of tenses, including the past and the conditional.

Question 2

In this exercise candidates had to write a story based on this preamble “You are at a foreign airport with your brother. You hear an announcement that your flight has been cancelled and that you have to wait till the following day”. Candidates had to cover the following points:

- Describe their reactions
- Say what happened next

Many candidates performed well and all obtained high scores for communication.

The vast majority talked about their feelings of dismay and anxiety, particularly since most of them seemed to have some urgent matter to attend to on their return home (their mother's birthday, a wedding, an activity they had planned beforehand). Some mentioned their little brothers needing reassurance and comforting since their parents were not with them. A few candidates took the news of the cancellation in their stride and welcomed the event since it gave them the opportunity to visit the area better or spend an extra day in their holiday destination. Some talked about booking a hotel in the airport area and viewing that as a great adventure at the end of their holiday. All in all, most candidates used their imagination to produce varied and interesting accounts and managed to convey the idea of unsettlement and tension.

Accuracy again was variable, although on the whole appropriate for the task.