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 sections. All candidates attempted the third, more difficult, section 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 2** and **3**. **Question 4** was sometimes answered incorrectly, because candidates did not know the meaning of the word *frullato di frutta*. Mistakes were also made in **Question 5**, as some candidates obviously did not know the word *giallo* in the sense of "thriller" and chose mostly "western" instead.

The correct answers were:

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

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. When errors were found they were mostly in reply to **Question 1** which was misunderstood perhaps due to careless reading. The correct answers were: **Question 6**: *Falso*, **Question 7**: *Falso*, **Question 8**: *Falso*, **Question 9**: *Vero*, **Question 10**: *Vero*.

Esercizio 3 Domande 11–15

In this exercise, candidates had to say to which one of three restaurants (*Beatrice*, *Castello*, or *Oca d'Oro*) 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: *Castello*; **Question 12**: *Beatrice*; **Question 13**: *Oca d'Oro*; **Question 14**: *Oca d'Oro*; **Question 15**: *Castello*.

Esercizio 4 Domanda 16

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

They had to include: a) where they were going; b) what they were intending to do; c) by which means of transport they would be coming back.

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.

Very few candidates misunderstood this task. They had to state "*Vado al mare/in spiaggia, nuoterò*; *Torno in bicicletta*". The mistakes were mostly of a grammatical nature, which prevented some candidates from scoring 2 marks for accuracy.

Seconda parte

Esercizio 1 Domande 17–22

In this exercise, candidates had to answer questions relating to a passage about school trips. In some instances candidates did not give enough information, in answer to questions where two marks were available, for example. Most candidates gave the correct answers to **Questions 18, 19, 20** and **21.** Some mistakes were made in **Question 22** due to careless reading, and the wrong answers, lifted from the text, were *indisciplinati* and *immaturi*.

The correct answers were:

Question 17: (any one of) *per visitare luoghi con culture e usi diversi/per approfondire argomenti trattati in classe/per imparare cose nuove/per avere più tempo per imparare meglio alcuni argomenti (già trattati e/o nuovi).*

Question 18: *Una parte importante dell'insegnamento.*

Question 19: **(i)** *perché pensano di divertirsi*; **(ii)** (any one of) *perché pensano che potranno restare alzati fino a tardi/perché pensano che potranno fare confusione in albergo e/o per le strade.*

Question 20: **(i)** *possono diventare più forti*; **(ii)** *possono nascerne di nuove.*

Question 21: *che non sono antipatici come credevano/che sono simpatici.*

Question 22: **(i)** *di essere disciplinati/di non essere indisciplinati / di avere una buona condotta; **(ii)** di essere maturi (o responsabili) / di non essere immaturi (o irresponsabili).*

Esercizio 2 Domanda 23

In this exercise candidates had to write a letter of about 80 to 100 words, talking about school friends. They were asked to say:

(a) who their school friends are;

(b) what they most like about them and why;

(c) what they do not like about them;

(d) what they like to do together in school and in their free time.

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. Some weaker candidates, however, misunderstood the word *volentieri* in the phrase *che cosa fate volentieri insieme* and consequently wrote about voluntary work. Some candidates also just wrote about what they like doing and what they do not like, obviously not understanding the meaning of the words *di loro*. On the other hand, there were a number of well written letters with a confident use of structures and a good range of vocabulary.

Terza parte

Esercizio 1 Domande 24–29

This reading comprehension exercise was based on a passage about the National archives in the town of Pieve Santo Stefano. It required candidates to answer 6 true or false questions and also to give a justification for the false statements. One mark per question was awarded for identification of True or False, and 1 mark was awarded for providing the justification for the false statements. In many cases the True or False questions were identified correctly and the justifications were appropriate, but several mistakes were made, particularly in **Questions 24, 25** and **29**.

The correct answers were:

Question 24*: Falso. Tutti possono leggere i diari / i diari sono a disposizione di studiosi, giornalisti, cittadini e artisti.* **Question 25***: Falso. Stava andando al lavoro / ad Arezzo.* **Question 26**: *Falso. L'incidente è successo in curva.* **Question 27***: Vero.* **Question 28**: *Vero.* **Question 29**: *Falso. Andrea scriveva il diario per ricordare / per ricostruire la propria persona / Andrea ha deciso di mandare a Pieve il diario dopo averlo scritto.*

Esercizio 2 Domande 30–36

This exercise was based on an article about a dog-training programme which is held in an Italian prison. In some instances good candidates transposed the answers to **Questions 30** and **31**, but although the language in this type of exercise is more complex, many candidates scored good marks. However, once more many candidates, and not only the weaker ones, insisted on copying large chunks from the text, which can result in marks being lost.

The correct answers were:

Question 30: *lo ha creato / iniziato.*

Question 31: *ha addestrato dei cani per il cinema e la TV.*

Question 32: **(i**) *saranno cani da compagnia / che vivono in famiglia.*

   (ii)   *aiuteranno i disabili.*

Question 33: *campo erboso / struttura speciale per il lavoro con la sedia a rotelle.*

Question 34: Any two of: *si annoiavano / amavano gli animali / volevano avere un contatto con persone che vivono fuori dal carcere.*

Question 35: Any two of:

vivono in uno spazio molto piccolo / sono prigionieri o non hanno la libertà / sentono la mancanza di affetto or sono lontani dalle persone che amano.

Question 36: *lavorerà come addestratrice di cani.*

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 Play 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. Most Examiners had prepared well for the examination, thus enabling their candidates to perform well. This preparation on the part of the Examiners is paramount 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.

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 Julius Caesar to Carl Marx, from catwalks in Milan to the effects of globalisation and world issues such as poverty and AIDS. 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, in most cases, close to the stated standard in the syllabus booklet and Teachers' Notes. With only a few exceptions, candidates were allowed to present their topic for one full minute without interruptions. In the topic conversation, 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, hence avoiding closed questions and helping their candidates to show their full linguistic ability. Overall the assessment of candidates was close to the agreed standard.

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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 of 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 types of questions such as "Tell me about…/Why?/How?". 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 for "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 through a banded mark scheme based on the 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 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 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 the level of work was generally higher than in previous years and many candidates obtained a high mark in this paper. A number of candidates achieved a very high standard in both parts of the paper, producing letters that 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 particular in **Question A** and at times misunderstood the meaning of "*cosa è successo mentre eri via*" and wrote what happened during their trip instead.

Some candidates found it difficult to achieve a mark of higher than 3 for General Impression. The different bands in this part of the mark scheme equate to the following marks: 5 = excellent, 4 = very good, 3 = good, 2 = fairly good. Very few candidates scored 0–1, defined as "failing to rise above the requirements for the Directed Writing task". Most candidates gained 3 for Impression in **Question 1**.

Candidates had a choice on **Question 1** between:

(a)   Writing a letter to their host family after returning home from a holiday in Italy. The points to include were:

- How the trip back was and who was there to meet you
- What had happened while you were away
- What feelings you had on your return
- Your memories of your Italian holiday

Or

(b)   Write a letter to an Italian friend, telling him/her that last week you had an argument with your sister. Candidates had to include:

- What it was all about
- Which were her/your reasons
- Describe your feelings
- Describe how it ended

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

The questions were answered with a few omissions in **(a)**, where several candidates omitted to say who was there to meet them. Some candidates, as already stated, did not understand the meaning of "*cosa è successo mentre eri via*" and talked about what they did during their trip. The results in general were good, but marks were often lost through inclusion of non-Italian words (particularly Spanish). There were, however, 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, both in **(a)** and **(b)**, where detailed descriptions of an argument with their sisters made interesting reading.

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 the preamble "You were on an outing in the country with your friends. Suddenly a huge dog appeared in front of you." Candidates had to cover the following points:

- Describe your reactions
- Say what happened next

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

The vast majority talked about their feelings of fear and sheer panic while they stood still, not knowing what to do for the best, in contrast in some instances to the reactions of their friends to the situation. Some mentioned their little brothers or younger friends needing reassurance and protection. Many candidates took the situation in their stride and solved the problem either by offering some of their food to the beast and making instant friends, or being 'saved' by the whistle of the dog's owner. Others took refuge in nearby huts or up a tree, and waited for the police (called on their mobiles) to come to the rescue. All in all, most candidates used their imagination to produce varied and interesting accounts and managed to convey the idea of fear and tension.

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