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Examiner's Report Principal Examiner Feedback

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In Italian (6IN04) Paper 01

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This paper is made up of three sections.

Section A is the translation. Candidates are required to translate a text of approximately 80 words from English into Italian. 10 marks are awarded for this section. For marking purposes, the text is divided into 30 assessable items and points are awarded for each item that is 100% correct in terms of grammar and spelling. Therefore, candidates will be rewarded for their accurate handling of grammar and structures and their lexical knowledge.

Section B is Creative or Discursive Essay: candidates are required to write one piece of 240-270 words in Italian choosing from three creative titles and four discursive essays. They will be rewarded for their ability to organise arguments and ideas and to make relevant points in response to a general issue. They will also be rewarded for their knowledge and understanding of their chosen topic and for the ability to organise their ideas. Almost three quarters of the available marks (30 out of 45) are awarded for content (up to 15 for Understanding and Response and up to 15 for Organisation and Development) whilst up to 15 are awarded for Language (up to 10 for Range and Application of Language, i.e. lexis and structures, and up to 5 for Accuracy).

Section C is the Research Based Essay: candidates are required to write 240-270 words on a topic that relates to one of the four main areas of research (Geographical Area, Historical Study, Aspects of Modern Society, Literature and the Arts). Their chosen topic must also relate to Italian culture and society; essays referring to non-Italian topics will score no marks. Candidates will be rewarded for their knowledge and understanding of their chosen topic and their ability to organise ideas. Up to 30 marks are awarded for Reading, Research and Understanding (i.e. their knowledge but more importantly their analysis and evaluation of the chosen topic), up to 9 for Organisation and Development and up to 6 for Quality of Language.

This year this unit produced some pleasing results, with the mean mark being similar to last year.

The translation appeared to be accessible to most candidates who had been entered at the appropriate level.

All of the Creative and Discursive essays appealed to a number of candidates, with a great variety of answers and a good spread across the various questions. Most candidates opted for the Discursive essays this year, with the majority choosing q.2g, though there was a good spread across all questions.

The Research Based Essay displayed some good analytical responses which showed extensive research. Overall, candidates appeared to be well-prepared for the demands of these questions, especially q.3d, and there have been many instances of candidates producing good essays and displaying good knowledge and research on their chosen topic. Unfortunately, some issues still arose in this section, due to an unsuitable choice of topics with no relevance to Italy or pre-learnt essays which did not address the questions set. Candidates and centres are reminded that they need to choose a topic which belongs to one of the four main areas of research or must refer to Italian culture and society.

In terms of language, standards have been quite varied, with some very pleasing results at times. Overall, the lexis was sound and fairly accurately spelt. There were generally some attempts at using more complex structures, like the subjunctive (at times misused) and periodo ipotetico. Accuracy is always variable, with verb

conjugation, prepositions, articles and agreements being the most common mistakes, but on the whole language appeared pleasingly accurate.

Question 1

Translation is a discriminatory section which focuses on lexical and grammatical accuracy.

Candidates generally showed a fair to good knowledge of grammatical principles and vocabulary but there were many instances of inconsistency. Most candidates answered some sections of the translation correctly but some candidates found certain sections more difficult than others.

Common errors included missed accents and spelling mistakes, especially with double letters in relatively straightforward words such as *repubblica* ("repubblica") and *comunità* ("comunità"). Some lexical items were not known, especially *stabilire*, *secolo*, *monte*, *commercio*, *moneta/valuta* and surprisingly even *ceramica* and *francobolli*. Other lexical items were often misspelt ("*finanzia*", "*tourismo*", "*ufficiale*").

A significant number of candidates missed points by omitting the accent on *è*.

The ability to use the *passato prossimo* or the *passato remoto* – both of which were accepted – was varied and many candidates were successful even with the passive construction but in the past this was often mistranslated with the imperfect ("*era fondata*"). Adjectival agreement was generally sound although some candidates used *basato* instead of *basata* when talking about *l'economia*.

Most rendered *quelli che visitano/chi visita* correctly and followed this with correct subject-verb agreement with *possono/può* (though some omitted the accent on *può* and thus lost one point). There were many correct instances of *nonostante/malgrado* followed by the subjunctive though some candidates mixed up the various constructions.

A significant number of candidates seemed to lack the grammatical knowledge and the attention to detail that could be reasonably expected at this level of study though all in all the standard of the translation was satisfactory.

Question 2a

This was the most popular of the creative options and the third most popular question in Section B.

Most candidates showed a good understanding of the requirements of this question and managed to write a continuation of the story in the first person. However, many responses were not very creative as they related to personal experience such as which university to go to or whether to come to live in England and were therefore rather unimaginative and banal. Some candidates spent too much time setting the scene and did not sufficiently develop the story as a result. A few candidates seemingly found it hard to think of a sufficiently difficult choice to write about. There were quite a few instances of rambling responses which vastly exceeded the word limit.

On the other hand, there were also instances of some gripping stories with more imaginative settings (ending an abusive relationship, decisions about a life support machine) which created some suspense and were very pleasant to read.

Question 2b

The picture based stimulus was more popular than in previous years and produces some varied responses.

Most candidates perceived it to be a woman in crisis but many stories only tenuously related to the computer. Many spent a long time setting the scene and mentioned the computer only at the very end.

Candidates are reminded of the importance of planning their stories carefully just as they would when writing an essay.

Question 2c

This question produced only a handful of responses which generally showed a satisfactory understanding of the stimulus. Some candidates provided interesting accounts of how the young man managed to travel without money, while others wrote more convoluted or implausible stories which did not explain it very clearly. Some were also not written in a journalistic style.

Question 2d

This question was very popular, possibly as it draws on a well-rehearsed exam topic, and produced some very good responses, which clearly defined the traditional family and examined to what extent it has changed or is under threat.

Many candidates felt that the traditional family is in crisis due to changes in the composition of the family because of the increased divorce rate or the lesser importance of marriage, the increase in same sex marriage, couples choosing to have children later, the decline in the importance of the extended family, in particular grandparents, the decreasing influence of the Church etc.

Others felt that the traditional family is simply changing and that it is not necessarily in crisis.

Better candidates substantiated their points well but weaker candidates at times went off the point and discussed the changes in the family and society without reaching a clear conclusion. Overall, the vast majority of the candidates showed a good understanding of the question.

Question 2e

Most candidates showed a good understanding of the question and most felt that introducing reading the newspaper in class is a good idea. They mentioned benefits such as increasing students' understanding of local and international events, making them more politically aware and the potential for students to expand their vocabulary as a result of reading the paper. Some also said that reading the paper would enable students to be more open minded and tolerant of other immigrants and other cultures. Others felt that it was perhaps not the best use of time as there is so much curriculum content to get through and some subjects may suffer as a result.

While most candidates were able to provide some good points, some misunderstood the word quotidiano and talked about the benefits of reading on a daily basis with no reference to newspapers.

Question 2f

This was a reasonably popular question. Candidates generally felt that the Olympic Games promote sport to a certain extent as they provide inspiration for people and they create facilities and infrastructures that can be used after the games to promote sport.

They also promote international solidarity and help to highlight the importance of team sports and discipline. On the other hand, some felt that the games are too commercialised and that they cost a lot of money to stage. Another negative aspect is that they are often spoilt by doping incidents, which does not contribute to promoting sport. Some felt that as this is an elite sporting the event and it does not make a lasting impression on the general public.

Candidates generally showed good understanding of this question and were able to provide relevant points. Weaker answers simply discussed the advantages and disadvantages of sport and thereby misunderstood the question.

Question 2g

This was the most popular of the discursive titles and overall the most popular question in section B, perhaps because it was a topic that produced some intense personal responses.

Many candidates felt that friends are an essential element in life but not necessarily the most important. They discussed the positive aspects of friendships such as being able to confide in friends and the support they provide. Many candidates expressed the view that the family is the most important element in our life as they are more reliable and are always there for you. Others felt that health or qualifications/career were equally or more important than friends and/or family.

Some candidates lost focus in their discussion and some simply gave the positives and negatives of friendships without answering the question. It was important here to take a clear stance and better candidates did this and substantiated their points in relation to their chosen stance.

Question 3a

This question did not elicit as many responses as in previous years. Candidates had to identify recent political and/or social changes and analyse the impact they had on the city or region they had studied.

Milano, Bologna, Veneto, Venezia, Trieste, Sicilia, Puglia were popular choices.

Candidates generally showed some knowledge of the region/city but many struggled to answer the question. Some simply wrote down what they knew about the region and at times this was irrelevant to the question. Changes were sometimes not clearly defined. If they did identify changes these were often related to the environment or immigration, at times linked to emigration and *la fuga dei cervelli*.

Many candidates spoke about immigration and its effect on the chosen region/city. They discussed increased racist attitudes and tensions as a result of mass immigration. Some suggested that this had led to a shift in Italian politics towards the right and cited recent political events as evidence.

Answers to this question were generally not well-developed and candidates often attempted only a superficial analysis of immigration applied to the area they had studied.

Occasionally the essays were written from personal experience and did not demonstrate research or analysis.

Some essays did not score any marks as they related to non-Italian countries as England, Nigeria, Bangladesh etc.

Question 3b

The history question is always a minority choice and as usual responses varied in quality.

Candidates were generally able to identify a key figure from the period they had chosen. Mussolini was the most popular choice and candidates generally showed knowledge about his actions. They mentioned his rise to power, the alliance with Hitler and the racial laws. Candidates were generally able to discuss the impact of these actions to some extent. There were a few very good essays which discussed the impact of Mussolini's actions on daily life during the fascist era on different sections of society, e.g. on young people, the working class, Jewish people, etc.

Some candidates studied the *Risorgimento* and Cavour and Garibaldi were the chosen figures. While candidates attempted to discuss their impact, some of these essays turned into a general summary of the key events in the struggle for unification and they were not as focused as they ought to have been. However, stronger candidates were able to identify Cavour's impact on the unification process mentioning the implications of his participation in the Crimean War and his alliance with France, together with modernisation of Piedmont.

There were a few instances of candidates who failed to score any points by writing essays which contained no reference to Italy: some, for example, chose Hitler and analysed his actions and politics without ever referring to his impact on Italy.

Question 3c

These essays were generally not well-answered. They are often chosen by candidates who think they can get away with general knowledge and hearsay.

Many candidates did not make it clear what the aspect of the society studied and they wrote about society in general. Changes in education, technology, environment, immigration, *emigration/fuga dei cervelli* were common. Similarly, candidates often chose to discuss the impact of immigration on society. They mentioned points like increased racism and growing tensions as a result as well as the perceived pressure on local jobs.

As in previous series, unfortunately, almost all the responses were very general and almost like a discursive essay. Candidates did not show much evidence of reading and research and responses often became personal rants with no real conclusions being drawn.

Questions 3d

As in previous series, this was by far the most popular question and *Io non ho paura* was the most popular text/film. *Cinema Paradiso*, *La Vita è Bella*, *Volevo I Pantaloni*, *Il Gattopardo*, *Io e Te*, *Mine vaganti* also featured.

Candidates were required to analyse the impact of one of the characters on the protagonist of the film/text. Weaker candidates either failed to clearly identify the main character or else misunderstood the question and wrote about the impact the protagonist had on other characters. Other candidates did not take account of the fact that they were being asked to write about *uno degli altri personaggi* and wrote about the impact that various characters had on the protagonist.

On the whole, however, candidates were reasonably well-prepared for the demands of the question. Better candidates maintained good focus on the question and made relevant, well-developed points.

Many essays were well-structured, contained facts, with justification, evidence and analysis, and they never lost sight of the title throughout. Some candidates lost focus and/or did not follow points through to a logical conclusion, thereby not developing their answers sufficiently. A few answers were wholly descriptive and/or narrative and did not show adequate understanding of the question.

The most popular text was *Io non ho paura* although it also featured as a film. Most candidates felt that Filippo and Pino are the characters that have the greatest influence on Michele. In discussing Filippo, candidates mentioned how the relationship that develops forces Michele to grow up, to be responsible and it also helps him to realise that the world is not as it seems.

As for Pino, candidates mentioned how he initially is a source of inspiration for Michele but that his influence becomes more negative as the novel develops.

The most popular film was *La vita è bella*. Most candidates identified Giosuè as the main influence on Guido as it is due to him that Guido keeps hope and manages to get through life in the concentration camp. Giosuè influences him in a positive way and is his inspiration as he wants to protect his son. Others felt that Dora is a major influence on Guido as is she who shows him the meaning of love and she also represents hope to Guido.

In *Cinema Paradiso*, Alfredo was considered the character who had the greatest impact on Salvatore by pushing him to pursue his passion for the cinema and leaving his home town.

In *Il gattopardo*, Tancredi was seen as the character with the most influence on Principe di Salina as he persuades him of the necessity to change with the times.

In *I cento passi*, the communist painter Stefano Venuti was often seen as the character who played the most significant role in the life of Peppino Impastato.

In *Mine vaganti*, the grandmother was seen as the most influential character.

Regardless of the chosen film or text, better candidates substantiated their points well and showed a good knowledge of the book or film. Many candidates lost marks as they did not develop their ideas sufficiently with a significant number of candidates wasting words by giving a general outline of the plot in their introduction. Some responses were once again too narrative and candidates did not score highly as a result.

As in previous years, a small number of candidates wrote about a non-Italian book/film, and consequently scored 0.

In terms of language, standards were quite varied, with some very pleasing results at times. Candidates sometimes struggled when there was a lack of topic-specific

vocabulary but overall the lexis was sound and fairly accurately spelt. There were generally some attempts at using more complex structures, like the subjunctive (at times misused) and periodo ipotetico. Accuracy is always variable, with verb conjugation, prepositions, articles and agreements being the most common mistakes, but on the whole language appeared pleasingly accurate.

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

Question 1:

- Candidates are reminded to read the passage carefully – do not rush to start until passage understood as a whole and language analysed.
- Do not leave gaps.
- Pay attention to details and check your work thoroughly for verb forms, endings, agreements, spelling, accents.

Question 2:

- Concentrate on the title.
- Plan work carefully.
- Make sure you have enough knowledge of chosen topic.
- Prepare topic-specific vocabulary.
- Attempt some more complex structures.
- Stick to word count.
- Check work for grammar mistakes (agreements, verb forms, endings, spelling).

Question 3:

- Make sure that your chosen topic refers to Italy.
- Carry out some proper research.
- Address the title.
- Be concise – bear in mind word count.
- Plan work carefully.
- Check language at the end.

