

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

GCE Italian (6IN01)
Paper 1A

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6IN01 Unit 1: Spoken Expression and Response in Italian

In this Unit candidates are required to demonstrate their understanding of a short Italian text (linked to one of the general topic areas of the AS specification) and to engage in general discussion on the same topic area. The candidates' understanding of the text is tested by 4 questions posed by their teacher/examiner (TE), who then develops the conversation into a more general discussion of the topic area chosen by the candidate before the test. The general topic areas are as follows:

Youth culture and concerns

Lifestyle: health and fitness

The world around us: travel, tourism, environmental issues and the Italian-speaking world

Education and employment

Candidates are free to choose any of the four general topic areas, according to their preference and interests. They should be advised to choose a topic area with which they are familiar and which they are prepared to discuss in detail. They will need to research their chosen area and undertake reading from a variety of sources. Candidates are given 15 minutes prior to their examination to prepare their stimulus text. During this time, they should study the text with a view to answering questions about it, offering their opinions about the subject of the text and the related subtopic, and to discussing the subject of the text in more detail. The Oral form (see Appendix 1 in the specification) must be completed with the general topic area chosen by the candidate and the number of the stimulus used.

Assessment Principles

Up to **50** marks are awarded positively using the appropriate grids for **Quality of Language** (**16** marks, **8** for **Accuracy** and **8** for **Range of Lexis**), **Response** (**20** marks) and **Understanding** (**14** marks, **4 Stimulus specific** and **10** related to the **General Topic area**)

Candidates' Responses

The majority of centres that entered candidates for the new AS oral examination in Italian should, in general terms, be congratulated on the thoroughness of their preparation. Many centres kept to the spirit of the examination, in allowing candidates to speak in a natural way within the broad topic area of discussion.

As in previous years, a good number of candidates reached commendable levels of linguistic competence. Many candidates were able to sustain their discussion well and offer interesting slants in their opinion of given topics.

There were still some cases of over rehearsal, although fewer centres appear to have tried this approach than had been the case in the past.

The importance of spontaneity must be stressed in relation to performances that can only be described as:

- stage-managed, in which candidates have learned everything by heart for the whole of Part B and at times spend an agonizing 8 minutes regurgitating information, often leaving out bits so that the conversation becomes largely meaningless.
- monologue, with little or no teacher participation.
- one centre, one topic, when a class had studied the same topic and TE rotates the same unpredictable questions to all candidates (all of whom had learned the answers more or less well).

This is often done in complete good faith but the lack of spontaneity severely limits the marks for Response. The repetition of language, often far above the candidates' real level of competence, can only result in poor levels of accuracy.

PART A

Generally speaking, less able candidates found it difficult to give a report of the content of the text without quoting verbatim from it. Some students, whilst performing reasonably well in the second part of the examination, found the initial text and its associated questions very demanding and had difficulty in expressing themselves simply and succinctly in answer to a question like: *Di quale situazione parla il brano?* Summarising a text requires practice: it would be useful in class to take short paragraphs of newspaper articles and redraft them in a single sentence. In some cases, candidates simply read the relevant chunks of the stimulus, making it difficult to assess their actual understanding. Some more able candidates had been encouraged to give full answers to Q1 and pre-empted Q2. Q3 and 4, being more general, were answered well by more able candidates, who put forward very interesting opinions and ideas and produced well developed answers. Some candidates offered little expansion and did not cover the required time needed to be spent on the first part of the oral exam.

PART B

This was on the whole well done, and candidates seemed less inclined to simply deliver pre-learnt material. The better performances were more markedly dependent on language skills. Still, even candidates with just a modicum of language acquisition beyond GCSE level could adequately express some ideas and opinions about one or two topic areas despite faulty grammar and sometimes a fairly limited vocabulary and even attempted the conditional and the subjunctive.

This year, the three topic areas: Lifestyle, Health and Fitness, Youth culture and concerns and Education and Employment were equally popular, with a marked increase in interest in the latter, compared to last year.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

The layout out into distinctive paragraphs of the stimulus texts seems to have helped candidates in identifying the information required in their answers.

Stimulus 1: generally well done, showing an awareness of the importance of good working conditions as well as the appeal both of a good salary and the above and the difficulty of choosing between them.

Stimulus 2: there was a tendency to answer Q1 and 2 (and even 3) superficially, only responding well to Q4

In some cases, the opportunities to expand the candidates' knowledge of the topic were not exploited and the general conversation remained restricted to personal experiences at school and/or projects for the future.

In better exams, a much wider variety of discussions emerged from this topic, with candidates discussing: how technology improves communication and learning, what social skills school develops, women's developing roles in education, how languages develop opportunities in the work place and their continuous relevance, the development of functional skills and growth of certain subjects and the gradual decline of others, how the curriculum is changing, the variety of expectations in the world of work, the development of new professions, the need for flexibility and willingness to travel when looking for employment

THE WORLD AROUND US

This topic area was evocative and the students' obvious intrinsic interest in the environment clearly acted as a springboard to develop other topics such as climate change and natural disasters, the use and development of sustainable energy, the protection of flora and fauna. Students also discussed the impact of tourism on the environment and its contribution to climate change but were generally supporting the need for travel and the importance of improving transport. A more responsible attitude to local issues concerning pollution in the cities and urban planning was the main focus. This was once again the least popular topic area and was chosen by students with a keen interest in and a detailed knowledge and understanding of environmental threats and concerns.

Candidates who chose this topic area showed good knowledge and understanding of climate change, pollution, recycling and tourism, producing excellent informative discussions.

Stimulus 1: Q1 and Q2 produced answers which were often undeveloped, whereas Q3 and Q4 were handled better, allowing candidates to draw on their own response to environmental protection.

Stimulus 2: this was the least well done of all stimulus questions, producing unimaginative responses to Q1 and Q2 and superficial ones to Q3 and Q4.

YOUTH CULTURE AND CONCERNS

Once again, a very popular topic area.

Stimulus 1A, Q2: this question produced less developed answers, whereas Q1, Q3 and Q4 were generally well answered.

Stimulus 2: Q1 and Q2 were clearly from a topic area which candidates were very comfortable with and well prepared on.

In the general discussion, students explored cultural differences regarding alcohol intake in different countries, and tended to be more concerned about the addictive and destructive nature of alcohol rather than the problem of drugs. Music was a popular topic, exploring how musical taste defines personalities and friendship groups and helps young people to communicate and share ideas. Regarding technology, students celebrated the fact that it is a part of everyday life, embedded in everything we do.

LIFESTYLE, HEALTH AND FITNESS

Another very popular topic area.

Stimulus 1A: Candidates were well prepared on the subtopic of obesity, therefore there were very interesting answers to Q3 and Q4, showing an awareness of the causes of the obesity problem and clear initiatives to reduce it.

Stimulus 1B: produced some clichéd answers – a woman's place is in the home – with a minority of candidates exploring many of the current issues which explain better the lower participation figures.

Stimulus 2: this was generally well answered, with the able candidates fully exploring the work/life balance and the social importance of eating properly, in company and of having a suitable break from work. Several students, however, missed the main points being developed, not appreciating that the text was referring to a proposal by a minister to eliminate the lunch break and not what Italians generally do and eat during their lunch pause. In many cases the questions which followed the stimulus revolved around a very narrow script and gave little opportunity to develop new ideas.

The general discussion for this topic area tended to be quite repetitive, focusing on diet and sport in closed discussions which were very predictable.

Candidates' performance in terms of linguistic criteria did not differ greatly from the previous exam series: the range was wide and well distributed, from very good performances – above specification requirements – to a moderate but nevertheless an extension of the linguistic skills required at GCSE level.

The range of lexis was good or even very good, but structures were very often limited and repetitive, with a large number of candidates not attempting any subordinate clauses. In the few case of scripted material, structures were often too complex for the candidates' ability and resulted in very flawed performances with marked differences between Parts A and B.

Accuracy about agreements, gender and often verbs endings is still a problem even with more able candidates and errors in word stress remain frequent.

Common errors were:

'l'impiegazione' instead of *l'uso / l'impiego*

'l'aumentazione' instead of *l'aumento*

'le figure' instead of *le cifre / i dati*

'i piani' instead of *i progetti*

'la produttiva' instead of *la produttività*

'le tasche domestiche' instead of *le faccende / i lavori di casa*

'i relativi' instead of *i parenti*

'dipendere, dipendente su' instead of *dipendere, dipendente da*

'malo' instead of *dannoso / negativo / nocivo*

'scappare il pranzo' instead of *saltare il pranzo*

'il governo' instead of *il governo*

'fisicale' instead of *fisico*

'il coro' instead of *il cuore*

'i pumoni' instead of *i polmoni*

'ipocritico' instead of *ipocrita*

'sarà aumentare' instead of *aumenterà*

'preventare' instead of *prevenire*

'contribua' instead of *contribuisce*

'potrebbe essere fare' instead of *potrebbe essere fatto/a*

'cominciare di' instead of *cominciare a*

'espressarsi' instead of *esprimersi*

'creatare' instead of *creare*

'sedentarsi' instead of *fare una vita sedentaria*

'avere confidenza a/con' instead of *sentirsi a proprio agio con*

'avvantaggi' instead of *vantaggi ; disavvantaggi'* instead of *svantaggi;*

confusion between the use of *migliore* and *meglio*, *peggiore* and *peggio*, *buono* and *bene*, *cattivo* and *male* (i.e. the use of adjectives instead of adverbs and viceversa);

'la problema' instead of *il problema*;
 pronunciation of *rischi, schermo, freschi* with the English 'ch';
 incorrect use of *piacere*;
 in response to question 1, the phrase '*il brano parla che...*' instead of *parla di* or *dice che*;
 relative pronouns: '*chi*' instead of *che*;
 agreements: noun and adjective, verb and noun, etc.;
 if clauses with wrong tenses;
 '*qualche giovani pensano*' instead of *alcuni giovani pensano*;
 '*molte/molti gente*' instead of *molta gente*; *gente* followed by a plural verb;
 intransitive verbs with *avere*;
 infinitive form of verb instead of conjugated form;
 '*perché*' at the beginning of a sentence, instead of *siccome/dal momento che/dato che*;
 '*suoi/sue*' instead of *loro*;
 '*gli umani*' instead of *gli esseri umani*;
 '*la media*' instead of *i media*;
 '*la maggioranza di*' instead of *la maggioranza di*;
 '*affettare*' instead of *colpire, influenzare*;
 '*i giovani diventano alcolici*' instead of *alcolizzati*;
 '*dopo che sono graduato*' instead of *dopo essermi laureato*;
 '*l'articolo si tratta*' instead of *l'articolo tratta di/nell'articolo si parla di*;
 '*improverare*' instead of *migliorare*;
 '*contribuare/contribuito*' instead of *contribuire/contribuito*;
 '*gagnare*' instead of *guadagnare*;
 '*cose aiutevoli*' instead of *cose utili*;
 '*i chimici*' instead *le sostanze chimiche*;
 '*confianza*' instead of *fiducia*;
 '*la cambia*' instead of *il cambio/il cambiamento*;
 '*la pianeta*' instead of *il pianeta*;
 '*i veicolari*' instead of *i veicoli*;
 '*edibile*' instead of *commestibile*;
 '*espensivo*' instead of *caro/costoso*;
 '*esclusato*' instead of *escluso*;
 '*centrico*' instead of *central*;

Interesting Topics and Questions

Viaggi virtuali o reali?
 Gli italiani nel mondo: l'esperienza italiana di emigrazione, le comunità italiane all'estero?
 Il gap year: è una buona idea e perché?
 La competizione nello sport: aspetti negativi e positivi
 Calcio: violenza e razzismo
 Quale eredità hanno lasciato le Olimpiadi?
 Donazione di organi: pro o contro?
 Aspetti negativi della rivoluzione tecnologica
 Espressioni di ribellione: tatuaggi, piercing, droga
 La vulnerabilità dei ragazzi
 La droga come risultato della crisi sociale.
 Preoccupazioni, sogni, ideali dei giovani d'oggi.

Perché i giovani non sono interessati alla musica classica?
 Perché siamo così affascinati dai personaggi famosi?

Cos'è per te un buon padre / una buona madre?
Oltre il viaggio in sé, in quale altro modo si può conoscere bene un'altra cultura?
È giusto chiudere le scuole quando c'è la neve?
Quali elementi della cultura italiana sono più conosciuti e valorizzati all'estero e perché?
Perché certi sport sono considerati più seri di altri?
Cosa pensi della tendenza moderna di mangiare davanti alla tv?
Molti giovani oggi dicono di essere stressati – perché?
Se una persona è obesa o se fuma, dovrebbe avere diritto alle stesse cure di una persona che si prende cura di se stessa?
Perché gli inglesi non sembrano molto appassionati per le lingue? È giustificabile secondo te disinteressarsi in questo modo?
È giusto includere la religione nel programma obbligatorio delle scuole?
Dovremmo fare qualcosa per rallentare la tendenza delle aziende a spostare le loro fabbriche nei paesi dove la manodopera costa meno?
Quali fattori sono importanti nella scelta della carriera?
Fino a che punto i genitori determinano la scelta della carriera dei loro figli?
Quale funzione sociale può avere la musica ?
Pensi che le campagne di sensibilizzazione influenzino le abitudini alimentari delle persone?
Bastano le azioni individuali per ridurre l'inquinamento?
Gli sport 'estremi' o pericolosi vanno proibiti?
Ritieni che il doping sia veramente 'frode sportiva' oppure un modo legittimo di migliorare le proprie prestazioni?
Per quali motivi si diventa vegetariani? Quali sono gli svantaggi e i vantaggi per l'individuo e per gli altri?
Perché la gente continua a non mangiare sano quando c'è tanta scelta e tutti sanno che frutta e verdura fanno bene?
Bullismo: secondo te, perché una persona diventa bullo?
Che cosa pensi dei 'casalinghi' – i padri che restano a casa per badare ai bambini?
È possibile praticare il bullismo attraverso internet, MSN, sms, la chat?
Pensi che la musica che piace adesso piacerà ancora tra dieci anni? Perché (no)?
Perché certe persone cercano sempre di cambiare il 'look'?
Fra 50 anni, come studieremo, secondo te? Come cambierà il mondo della scuola e degli studi?
Pensi che sostenere un colloquio di lavoro a distanza possa avere dei vantaggi?
Con le recenti proteste contro l'aumento delle tasse universitarie, abbiamo visto una rinascita d'interesse per la politica tra i giovani?
È giusto fare sciopero per proteggere i diritti dei lavoratori? Ci sono delle professioni o dei mestieri che non dovrebbero avere il diritto di scioperare?
Fra 50 anni, come lavoreremo, secondo te? Come cambierà il mondo del lavoro?
Il turismo è sempre positivo? Che significato pensi abbia l'espressione 'turismo responsabile'?
Perché la gente continua a vivere in zone a rischio di attività sismica o vulcanica?
Che cosa pensi del cosiddetto 'commercio equo' – stai attento quando fai la spesa a fare scelte ecologiche e solidali?

Teacher Examiners (TEs)

The exams were generally well conducted: the majority of TEs and their candidates did extremely well. It was evident that a good number of TEs had conscientiously prepared their candidates' topics eliciting very good performances from their students. However, there are some TEs who tend to keep the conversation within the level of factual knowledge rather than encouraging the expression of opinions and discussion and some who limit the number of questions in part B to 4.

Administration

There were some problems with the timing: in some cases the examinations were either too short or too long, but the most recurrent problem was the insufficient time given to Part A. In a minority of cases, it was obvious that the stimulus-related questions had been known to the candidates before they were asked by the TEs, and even this part took the form of a regurgitation of pre-learnt material.

Another recurrent problem was the rephrasing and/or expansion of the stimulus-related questions.

This is regrettable, as it ultimately has an adverse effect on the candidates, and it must be reiterated that, in the interest of fairness and comparability, candidates will be penalised if the examinations do not take place according to the specifications. It is therefore imperative that centres ensure that TEs are familiar with the prescriptions which govern the conduct of the oral examination.

Finally, some centres did not include the oral form or the register and some did not use the correct stimulus.

Quality of recording was generally good but there were still isolated cases where exams were inaudible. Centres must ensure that recording equipment is in good order so that the recordings made are of good quality and can be marked.

Advice and guidance

Detailed advice and guidance can be derived from comments made throughout the report. In particular:

- candidates should choose a general topic area which reflects their personal interest
- the material should not only involve factual knowledge but also include opinion
- candidates should be prepared to give full and extended answers to the stimulus-related questions
- candidates should plan and prepare, not memorise, the discussion in Part B.

Teacher examiners should:

- use the correct stimulus
- ask the 4 stimulus-related questions as they appear on the card, without re-phrasing or expanding them
- elicit opinions and not test for factual knowledge only
- ensure that sufficient time is devoted to Part A
- move away from the topic of Part A to more general discussion of the topic area
- ask genuine unpredictable questions related to the chosen topic
- give a hesitant candidate the chance to respond but don't correct or interrupt

Centres are reminded of the Edexcel Notice to Centres on the website to inform them that **audio cassettes will no longer be accepted for assessment after September 2014.**

Unit 1: Spoken Expression and Response

Marking guidance for oral examiners

Tests that are too short

A test is too short if it is less than 7 minutes 30 seconds. Candidates are allowed a 30 second tolerance.

Drop down one mark band to the corresponding mark across the following assessment grids:

- 'Quality of Language – Accuracy'
- 'Quality of Language - Range of lexis'
- 'Response'

e.g.

4-5	Accuracy variable but errors rarely impede communication; pronunciation and intonation inconsistent but comprehensible.
6-7	Generally accurate but some errors in more complex language; pronunciation and intonation generally good.
8	Highly accurate with perhaps some very minor errors; pronunciation and intonation authentic.

If a candidate would have scored 7, they should be given 5, if they would have scored 6, they should be given 4. This will not affect the other assessment criteria 'Understanding – Stimulus specific' or 'Understanding – General Topic Area'.

Test that are too long

Once the 10 minute mark has passed, the examiner stops listening at the end of the next sentence.

Tests that do not move away from initial stimulus sub topic

Candidates are limited in the amount of marks they can score.

- 'Quality of Language - Range of lexis' – limited to a maximum of 3 marks
- 'Response' – limited to a maximum of 8 marks
- 'Understanding - General topic area' – cannot score more than 0

Tests that are pre-learnt

Candidates are limited in the amount of marks they can score.

- 'Response' - limited to a maximum of 8 marks

Please note:

Understanding – Stimulus specific should only be used to mark **Section A** of the oral test.

Understanding – General topic area should only be used to mark **Section B** of the oral test

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:
<http://www.edexcel.com/iwant to/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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