

Examiners' Report June 2012

GCE Italian 6IN04 01

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Introduction

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 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 one piece of 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.

Section A

Question 1

This question seemed to be tackled well as perhaps candidates are being better prepared for it. Many items were accessible to the vast majority of candidates, for example "*ho 17 anni*", "*ma solo perché*", "*mio padre*", "*in una scuola*", "*e adesso*", while other parts required a knowledge of more advanced structures such as the *periodo ipotetico* with the pluperfect subjunctive and the conditional perfect (in "*se mi avessero ascoltato*", "*avrei preso*") or more complex structures like "*permetterci di scegliere*".

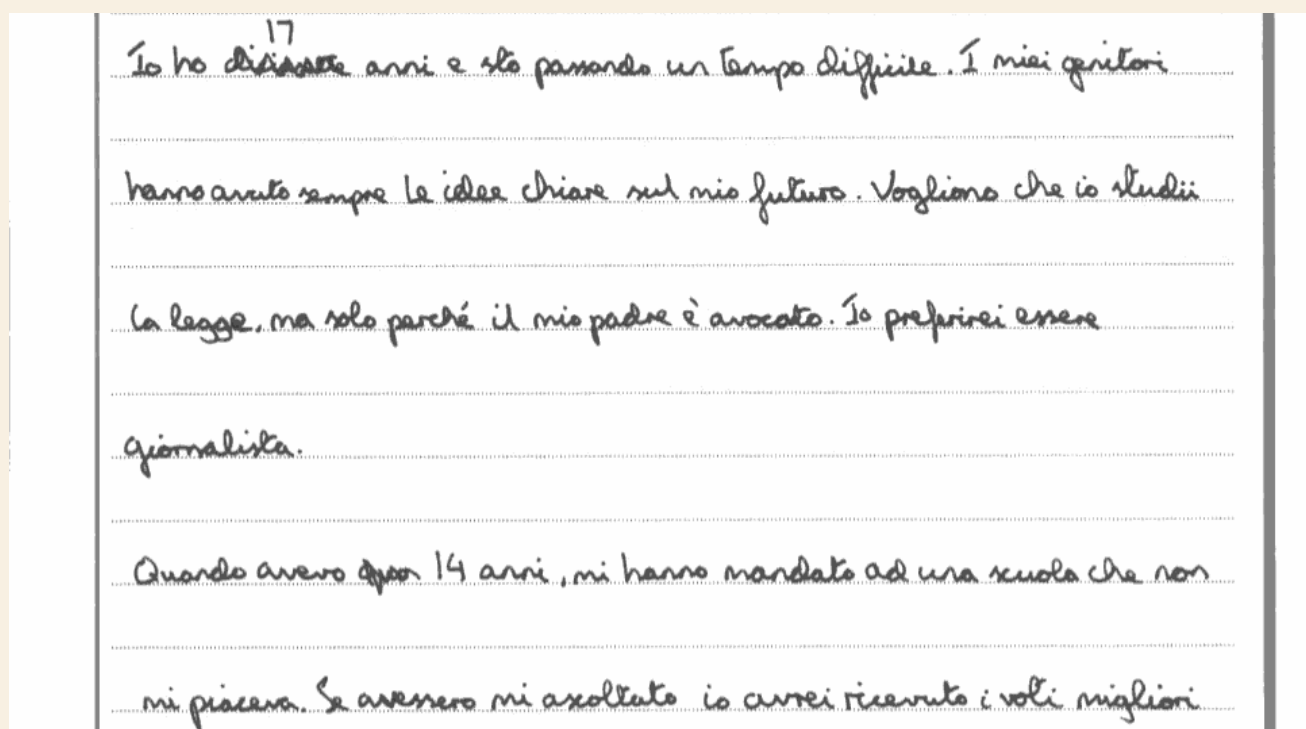
Candidates generally showed a good knowledge of grammatical principles and vocabulary but there were many instances of inconsistency. Common errors included missed accents and spelling mistakes. It was surprising how many candidates spelt "*diciassette*" or "*quattordici*" incorrectly although the vast majority did use "*avere*" correctly here. Many had difficulty with expressing correctly "going through a difficult time" translating 'a difficult time' as "*un tempo difficile*". Many also struggled with the use of the subjunctive after "*vogliono*" (i.e. "*vogliono che studi*"). Many candidates lost marks by translating 'law' as "*la legge*" or by not knowing the correct word for "law" or "lawyer" (often mistranslated as "*contabile/ragioniere*" or misspelling "*avvocato*" as "*avvocato*"). Some more able candidates used "*giurisprudenza*" here, for which they were duly rewarded.

An encouraging number of candidates correctly used the pluperfect subjunctive followed by conditional perfect ("*se mi avessero ascoltato*", "*avrei preso*"). Almost all candidates correctly translated 'I would be' as "*sarei*".

The relative pronoun at the end proved trickier for some candidates with most of those who did render this correctly choosing "*cosa*" or "*che*" (which were accepted in the mark scheme) and not many choosing "*ciò/quello che*".

As usual a lot of marks were lost through carelessness, i.e. leaving out an accent, for example in "happier" with "*piu felice*" instead of "*più*" or even "*perche*" instead of "*perché*" or "*papa*" for "*papà*" so candidates are reminded to pay close attention to details.

This is a good attempt at the transfer of meaning. The candidate identified the tricky parts which required advanced grammar but didn't quite manage to produce the correct phrases all the time.



ed adesso sarei più contento.

I genitori dovrebbero permetterci scegliere quello che vogliamo fare.



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Examiner Comments

This candidate failed to score a higher mark than 7 as he/she translated literally on occasion e.g. "a difficult time" as "un tempo difficile" rather than "un periodo difficile".

He/she identified the need for the subjunctive in "they want me to study" but misspelt "studi" as "studii". In the same sentence, using the definite article "la" in front of "legge", wrongly using "il" in front of "padre" and misspelling "avvocato" with only one "v" further limited the mark. He/she again spotted the requirement for the subjunctive imperfect and the past conditional, which were formed correctly, but unfortunately placed the pronoun "mi" in the wrong position and misused the definite article "i" in front of "voti migliori".

In the final line he/she again demonstrated a good knowledge of more complex verb forms and advanced relative pronouns ("quello che") but missed out the preposition "di" after "permetterci".

Overall however a good translation.



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Examiner Tip

This candidate showed a good awareness of more complex grammar but at the same time disregarded some simpler structures. Candidates have the opportunity to access the highest marks by paying attention to detail and by revising basic grammatical rules.

Section B

Question 2 (a)

This was the most popular of the three creative titles. Candidates were required to write an account of what has happened stemming from a stimulus which related to the writer being patient and waiting for something they wanted and then developing what ensues as a result. The response had to be written in the first person.

Most candidates showed a good understanding of the requirements of this question and managed to write a convincing continuation of the story in the first person. Many candidates' responses referred to finding the partner of their dreams and achieving success in exams. Better candidates developed their response well but many candidates' answers ended somewhat abruptly. Some **simply wrote creative stories without any reference to getting what you want if you are patient** or else 'twisted' stories that they had already prepared and made them fit the title, very tenuously, which did not score well as they showed little understanding of the title and the sense of the proverb. A few candidates provided rambling responses and responses that were rather puerile and not at all well developed.

It must be said that those who opt for this style of essay should be aware that they need to respect the word limit as this was frequently exceeded.

Question 2 (b)

This question produced very few responses. It required candidates to write a dialogue between two firemen in a situation requiring the intervention of the fire brigade. Some candidates produced a lively exchange between the people involved in the action (some with an interesting twist at the end, as in one instance they discovered it was a terrorist's house) but others did not seem to understand the requirements of the task and the responses were mostly narrative with very little dialogue. As a result these candidates did not score highly.

Question 2 (c)

The journalistic option invited candidates to write an article about a week without technology from the perspective of the journalist who went through this experience. The ideal response should have included some reference to the second part of the headline regarding his/her opinion about life being more complicated but having more time to devote to his/her family.

The majority of responses demonstrated adequate to good understanding of the requirements of the task. Many candidates focused on the difficulties of life without technology and some concluded that a better quality of life is possible without technology while others felt exactly the opposite. Responses were generally well developed although a few candidates did not venture beyond a GCSE-style answer here, both in terms of content and language used. A few candidates turned this into a discursive essay about the pros and cons of modern technology in every-day life and lost credit as a result.

Question 2 (d)

This was a popular title from the discursive essays as it gave candidates an opportunity to discuss an environmental issue, concentrating on global warming. They had to take a stance on the question in the title, i.e. whether they think that global warming is a real problem or whether it may be exaggerated by scientists. Although the issue is a well rehearsed one, the

question had a thought provoking slant.

Most of the candidates showed good understanding of this question. Many outlined various perceived manifestations of global warming such as melting of the polar ice caps, changing sea levels, climatic changes and climate-related natural disasters. Most candidates felt that global warming is a real threat and that it is not exaggerated by scientists although some thought that it is exaggerated by the media. Others felt that the government had an ulterior motive in playing down the claims by scientists about global warming. Most concluded that this is a very real problem for all of us and partly natural but predominantly caused by man.

The majority of candidates showed good knowledge of this topic and related vocabulary. A few candidates got carried away, and lost focus which weakened their argument. Some less able candidates produced a GCSE type essay dealing with personal ways of being environmentally friendly.

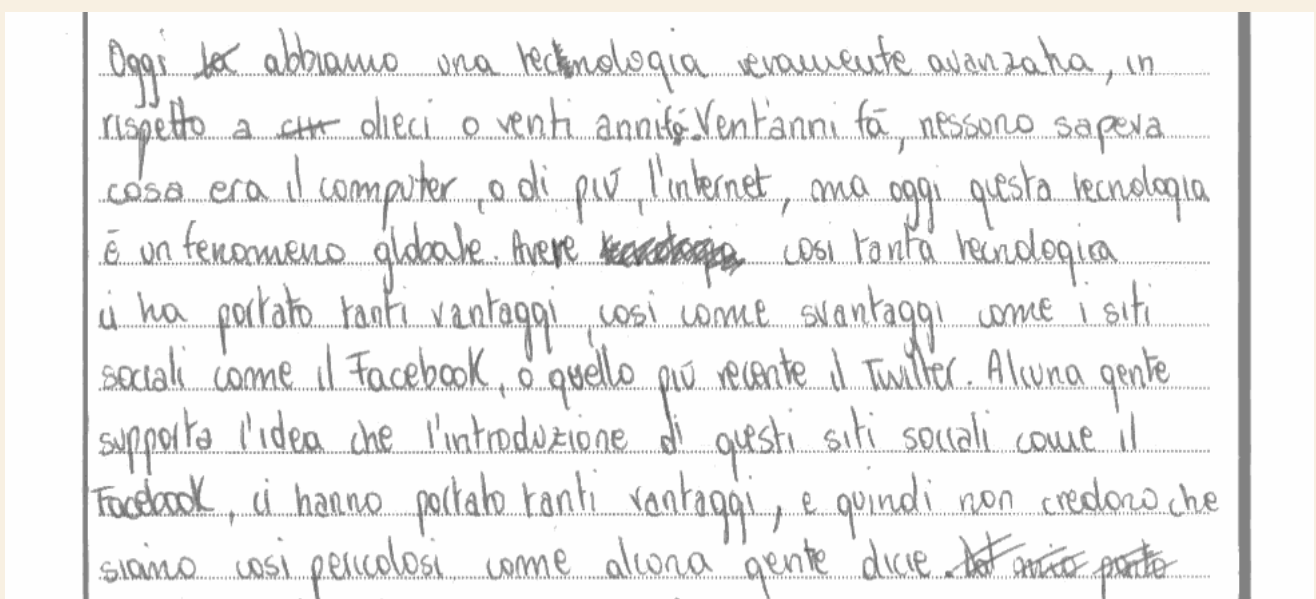
Question 2 (e)

This year, responses were pleasantly spread across all questions set in this section but question 2 (e) was the most popular of the discursive essays. Candidates had to discuss whether social networking sites such as Facebook can be dangerous, presenting a balanced argument.

This produced a huge range of responses. The best answers mentioned the dangers of sharing information and the possibility of people using these details, the dangers of communication with strangers (though often conveying this incorrectly as '*stranieri*'), the threat of paedophiles and the worrying trend of cyber-bullying but concluded that the way in which people use social networking sites is a determining factor in how dangerous they are. Many felt that, as long as people are aware of the dangers and use the sites with caution, they are reasonably safe. Some dwelt on more general negative aspects: students wasting time and achieving badly in exams, a lack of social interaction and the influence of such sedentary activities on the growing obesity crisis as children do not exercise.

Some less able candidates did not explore all the implications of the question, for example concentrating merely on the health risks caused by using computers; others turned the question into a discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of social networking, without focusing on the dangers, which was not really addressing the question.

This a satisfactory response to the question set.



siamo così pericolosi come alcune gente dice. ~~dal mio punto di vista~~ i siti sociali sono ~~sono~~ personalmente, non sopporto nessuno, perché dal mio punto di vista i siti sociali come il Facebook, ci hanno permesso di fare cose che avremmo mai opportunità di fare. Inoltre a questo regalo, hanno portato tanti pericoli sociali.

Gente che è in favore dei siti sociali dice che ~~ci è~~ ci hanno dato tante opportunità. Fra queste è che ci hanno permesso di venire in contatto con i nostri amici o famiglia ~~che abbiamo~~ ~~per~~ con qui abbiamo perso contatto, o non abbiamo avuto l'opportunità di visitare o vedere perché vivono dall'altra parte del mondo. Inoltre, visitare i nostri amici o famiglia può essere

nostra carriera o famiglia. Quindi, non c'è mai tempo di pagare un visito. Però, siti sociali come il Facebook ci ha dato l'opportunità di chattare e scambiare foto con persone che veniamo tanto al cuore.

Però, dall'altro punto di vista, e portandoci così tanti vantaggi, i siti sociali come il Facebook, possono essere pericolosi. Non possiamo essere 100% sicuri che l'altra persona ~~che stiamo~~ con cui ~~stiamo~~ stiamo chattando sia proprio loro, ~~perché~~ o una persona sconosciuta. Inoltre, avendo l'opportunità di scambiare foto ed informazione personale può essere un svantaggio. Questo è perché una volta che l'informazione è sul sito sociale, non abbiamo perso controllo, e sapremo mai il fine che faranno. Questo è specialmente pericoloso per i giovani che passano in contatto con profili della rete non avendo nessuna idea che la persona che vorranno di essere in contatto, era alla fine un pedofilo o 20 anni più grandi di loro. Abbiamo avuto tanti scandali in riguardo di pedofili dei siti sociali come il Facebook, facendoli ogni giorno più pericolosi, particolarmente per i ~~giovani~~ giovani che li usano.

In conclusione, ci sono ~~ce~~ aspetti che rendono i siti sociali come il Facebook un grande investimento per la gente, facendo tanti in favore. ~~Ma~~ Nonostante questo, ci sono altri importanti aspetti da considerare, e che fanno Facebook un sito pericoloso, e responsabile per tanti vittime ~~dell'quadrato~~ dei pedofili che hanno ristretto la loro destra per attirare giovani ~~ce~~ responsabili per la morte di dozzine di persone. Quindi sostengo chi dice che ~~te~~ i siti sociali sono pericolosi, e

~~debbano~~ la gente dovrebbe essere più attenta con le sue attività sullo sito.



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Examiner Comments

Accuracy: 4/4. There are a few errors, especially with articles (e.g. "sullo sito") and prepositions.

Range and application of language: 7/10. There is some good vocabulary and some more complex structures (gerund, subjunctive, use of pronouns) are used, generally correctly. However, the language sometimes lacks sharpness and there is the odd lexical error, generally minor ("supporta" instead of "sostiene", "especialmente", "il fino" instead of "le fine", "con qui" instead of "con cui"). Understanding and response: 9/15. The question is understood and some relevant points are made but not many dangers are actually mentioned as the main one is the danger of not knowing who we are really talking to. Other points could have been mentioned, for example cyber-bullying, fraud risks, addiction.

Organisation and development: 9/15. The introduction is a bit too long, ideas are not always well sequenced, at times it is rambling.



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Examiner Tip

This candidate is clearly able to manipulate language but would have benefited from a plan to help them sequence their ideas more effectively. It would have been better to concentrate more on the question in the title and thus mention more dangers devoting less time/words to the positive sides, as the question to be addressed was "are social network websites really dangerous?"

Question 2 (f)

This “philosophical” title was the second most popular question. Candidates’ responses varied. Many mentioned the fact that happiness lies within and that friends and family are the key to happiness. Others felt that healthy living and job satisfaction are the key to happiness. A significant number of candidates felt that money was not the key to happiness, despite the perception that this may be the case. Many candidates did, however, state that they felt that money is useful in affording people a pleasant and comfortable lifestyle, thereby contributing indirectly to a sense of wellbeing and happiness. Whilst a number of candidates developed their points reasonably well, other responses were too personal and at times rambling.

Question 2 (g)

Candidates were asked to consider whether young people should have a more active role in politics.

The responses generally showed good understanding of the question. Most candidates felt that young people *should* have a more active role in politics as this would enable them to have more say in their own future. Many mentioned the lack of interest in politics on the part of young people as a result of the existing political system in the UK (and/or Italy). Many were in favour of being more involved, as the youth of today will be the politicians of the future and should thus be given a chance. Some candidates also felt that taking a more active role in politics would help change the public perception of today’s youth.

Section C

Question 3 (a)

For the geographical topic candidates were required to describe the tourist attractions of their chosen region/city and analyse whether or not they are fully exploited.

Responses were varied but on the whole a bit disappointing: the best essays were detailed and addressed the question in the appropriate register, with specialised lexis and language and tackling both elements of the question. Others merely described the main tourist sites in a city without any detail or analysis. Often the register in these was inappropriate. Many candidates did show knowledge of some of the tourist attractions in their chosen region or city. However, other candidates only mentioned a small number of these attractions. In terms of the evaluative element of the question, the degree of understanding and analysis was generally limited. Some candidates did mention the economic benefits of these attractions for the region or city but beyond this there was not much else in terms of analysis. Some candidates did not seem to understand the terms *potenzialità turistiche* and *sfruttate*, rendering much of what they said irrelevant.

There were still a handful of candidates who chose a non-Italian city or region (London, New York, Spain, Egypt, South Africa) and as a result the response was completely irrelevant.

Question 3 (b)

Candidates were asked to consider which event in the period that they had studied had most changed the course of history.

Responses were varied, with some showing a good degree of analysis and others being mainly narrative.

The most popular periods were the *Risorgimento* and *Fascismo*. For the *Risorgimento* most candidates talked about the *spedizione dei Mille* and showed knowledge of some of the main happenings of the event. In terms of analysis, most candidates mentioned that this event was important as it led to the unification of Italy and changed the history of the country as a result.

The response on fascism focused on the role of Mussolini and his political activities. Some of the better answers chose the *Marcia su Roma* or the *discorso di Matteotti* as the most significant event but many candidates failed to identify one main event and instead gave a general overview of the period, thereby showing limited understanding of the question.

Candidates are reminded that they need to respond to the title/question set; in this instance they had to write about *one single event* rather than a phase or period.

It was disappointing that some non-Italian contexts cropped up (World War 1, the rise of Hitler, Martin Luther and the Protestant Reform with no reference to Italy at all).

Question 3 (c)

Candidates had to consider what the most serious problem in Italy is in their views and suggest ways in which it could be solved.

Candidates discussed the education system, the political system, the *Mafia/Camorra*, unemployment, the *crisi economica*, immigration, health and obesity. Unfortunately many responses wrote in very general terms and almost in the manner of a discursive essay. Not all candidates showed much evidence of reading and research and responses often became personal rants with no real conclusions being drawn about the seriousness of the problem in

question.

As in question 3 (b) many failed to choose just one problem and wrote about a range of issues, thus showing a limited understanding of the question.

Question 3 (d)

This was by far the most popular topic in section C and the most popular choice of work was *Io non ho paura*, book or film, followed by *La Vita è bella* and *Volevo i Pantaloni*. Unfortunately some candidates chose a non-Italian book/film.

With *Io non ho paura* most candidates discussed the novel and some discussed the film version. The events that candidates chose as the most important were Michele finding Filippo, Michele discovering the truth about the kidnap and his parents' involvement in this, and the ending of the work. In terms of Michele finding Filippo, candidates felt that this was important as it set the scene for the rest of the work and introduced key themes. In relation to the scene where Michele discovers the truth about the kidnap, candidates mentioned the realisation of the realities of the adult world on Michele's part as well as how this event forces Michele to grow up and make the decision to save Filippo as the most important aspects. Candidates who discussed the ending felt that it was important as it brought together the most important themes and that it represented the end of Michele's journey from innocence. There were many good responses to this question with candidates showing good knowledge of the text and an ability to analyse the importance of their chosen event to a good degree. Some candidates who showed an ability to analyse were inconsistent and included irrelevant or unclear material at times. There were only a few responses that were predominantly narrative and / or descriptive.

A number of responses dealt with *La vita è bella*. Unfortunately these were not as successful as most candidates did not develop their points and analysis was lacking at times. Candidates chose events such as the marriage between Roberto and Dora, the sending of the family to the concentration camp and the death of Roberto as the main event. While they could generally *describe* what happened in these events, candidates struggled to analyse their importance; others failed to identify one main event. Also, with this film some candidates ended up writing a kind of recensione or film review rather than addressing the question set in the title.

There were still a few responses about *Volevo i pantaloni*. Most candidates chose the event when Annetta is discovered with Nicola as the most important event. They showed good understanding of the event itself and most were able to discuss its importance, mentioning the implications of this for Annetta, the nature of society and the difference in treatment between the genders. Candidates showed an ability to analyse to a good extent here although a few responses were unclear or rambling.

There were a few very good answers on Dante's *Inferno*. Candidates showed good knowledge of the text and an ability to analyse the importance of their chosen events. A few candidates chose the event in the *selva oscura*. They felt that this was important as it introduces many of the themes that are seen throughout the *cantica* as well as the fact that Dante meets Virgil here, with reference being made to the relationship between Dante *personaggio* and Virgil. Some candidates chose the meeting with the Popes as the most important event, discussing its importance in terms of Dante's criticism of the church and his implicit political message in so doing.

The range of chosen texts has narrowed and there were virtually no responses on texts that were reasonably popular in past, with only a few responses on Ginzburg's *Le voci della sera*, Pirandello's *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore*, Tabucchi's *Sostiene Pereira* or Baricco's *Senza sangue*. The answers that were seen on these texts did tend to be good, with candidates showing both good knowledge and a good degree of understanding of the question.

Overall, some candidates failed to choose just one main event and wrote about more than one, thus showing only a partial understanding of the question. A lot of candidates also appeared not to understand the word *avvenimento* thinking it meant the main *theme* instead and therefore did not really answer the question.

Finally, some candidates wrote about non-Italian films or books (Life of Pi, Romeo and Juliet, It Happened in Naples (USA), The Secret Garden, The Last Samurai, The Help). Candidates are reminded that they should choose works by Italian authors/directors.

This is an excellent response to the question set for the Literature topic. The candidate has chosen to write about a more unusual novel, "A ciascuno il suo" by Leonardo Sciascia, which is centred around a mafia homicide.

L'avvenimento più importante del libro ("A ciascuno il suo" di Leonardo Sciascia) è probabilmente la morte del protagonista, un professore di lettere assassinato per aver indebitamente indagato sulla morte di un suo amico, non sapendo che la vittima, nell'omertosa Sicilia di provincia, era tutto gli occhi di tutti. Paradossalmente, la morte del protagonista non è per nulla importante sotto il profilo narrativo; anzi, appare al lettore come la più naturale conclusione delle azioni

del protagonista, e viene infatti menzionata solo di sfuggita dall'autore. Il professore, che viene semplicemente definito un "cretino", è un uomo che, unicamente per curiosità, decide di infrangere le regole, ma ~~per~~^{per} le regole della Sicilia di provincia: ~~non~~ indaga su un omicidio di cui tutti conoscono, e tacciono, il colpevole; la sua non è una ribellione eroica, ma semplicemente un'incapacità di comprendere la realtà in cui vive. La sua morte, quindi, ~~non~~^è importante perché ristabilisce l'ordine perduto ~~per~~^{per} e riporta tutto alla normalità. È particolarmente significativo il fatto che, l'autore menzioni appena l'omicidio del professore: il lettore ~~a~~^a scossa, ormai lentamente

Paper Summary

This year this unit produced some pleasing results, with the mean mark being comparable 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 spread across the various questions.

The Research Based essay brought some good analytical responses which showed extensive research.

All in all candidates appeared to be better prepared for the demands of question 3 (d) and there have been many instances of candidates producing good essays and displaying good knowledge and sound research on their chosen topic. Unfortunately some issues still remain with this section, due to an unsuitable choice of topics with no relevance to Italy or pre-learned essays which did not address the questions set, although this seems to have been less of a problem this year. Candidates and centres are reminded that they need to choose a topic which belongs to one of the four main areas of research and has to refer to Italian culture and society.

In terms of language, standards have been 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 reasonably spelt. There were generally some attempts at using more complex structures, such as the subjunctive (at times misused) and *periodo ipotetico*. Accuracy is always variable, with verb conjugation and agreements being the most common mistakes, but on the whole language was pleasingly accurate. As for content, questions were sometimes not read or interpreted properly and the word count exceeded, but most candidates were able to write relevant pieces with a reasonable development and organisation of ideas.

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