



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In Italian (6IN03) Paper 1A
Speaking

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GCE - ITALIAN 6IN03 – SUMMER 2019

General Introduction

This unit requires candidates to use the language of **debate** and **argument** to discuss the issue of their choice; to defend their views and sustain discussion as the teacher-examiner **moves the conversation away**

from their chosen issue covering **two unpredictable** areas of discussion.

The topic of debate does not have to relate to the General Topic Area listed in the specification for AS or A2. This unit assess advanced level understanding as well as speaking skills.

Assessment Principles

A maximum of **50** marks will be awarded using the assessment criteria for each of the following categories:

Response (20 marks)

There are three descriptors in this box:

Spontaneity: a genuine, spontaneous conversation will have minimal hesitations, allowing time to think, and then explain.

Range of lexis: a good range of lexis and sentence structures pertinent to the issues discussed.

Abstract language: a discussion about ideas not purely narrative or descriptive.

Quality of Language (7 marks)

Communicating without loss of message. Frequency of basic errors not interfering as to be a distraction.

Reading and Research (7 marks)

What is required is evidence that the candidate has read extensively and in some depth.

Comprehension and Development (16 marks)

There are two descriptors in this box:

Comprehension: understand all the implications of the questions.

Listening skills are tested in the unit and this does have a **significant impact** on the way in which questions are formulated and asked.

Development: respond, demonstrating understanding, taking the initiative and moving the discussion forward.

Assessment information

Format

Candidates are required to choose and **prepare an issue**, on which they must **adopt a stance**. They must complete the oral chosen issue form with a brief statement of the issue to debate, **in Italian**. It is therefore advisable to choose a confrontational issue, to which a stance can be taken.

The first section is a debate and requires candidates to present and take a **clear** stance on any issue of their choice. **The examiner** then plays the role of devil's

advocate, **expressing views contrary** to those of the candidate, being careful to avoid an aggressive or confrontational tone.

There is no requirement to relate the initial issue to the culture and society of the target language and/or any of the general topic areas for this specification.

Candidates may select any viable issue to debate.

Timing is crucial!

It is difficult for candidates to access the highest marks if the correct timing is not adhered to.

The test begins with the candidate outlining their stance for about **1** minute.

The teacher-examiner then challenges it and the candidate must defend it, in discussion, for **3-4** minutes. For the remaining **8** minutes, the teacher-examiner initiates a spontaneous discussion on **two** further issues, **moving away** from the chosen one, onto unpredictable areas.

It is very helpful if the TE clearly indicates a move to the second part of the exam by saying: "**ora passiamo a un altro argomento**". If this is not mentioned, the candidate may lose marks by continuing to elaborate on the initial issue.

Candidates are expected to express and justify opinions, argue a case, discuss problems or current controversies as they arise naturally, in spontaneous conversation.

It is possible for candidates to gain high marks in the first part of the test, because they are on familiar ground. Candidates should be aware that the topic chosen should be one for which there are two possible sides to the argument. **Teacher-examiners should verify in advance that the topic is an appropriate one;** otherwise, marks can be lost unnecessarily.

The following are examples of unsuitable issues with which to develop a debate:

Fitness and Health

Education

The unpredictable areas are more complex; these should be **genuinely unforeseen** topics. **Rehearsed and recited** quantities of material cannot gain high marks. The difference between well prepared material and recited material is easy to detect often from speed, reaction and intonation.

The second part of the test should be a spontaneous discussion, not just a question and answer session, covering too many topics, asking too many factual questions and/or a general chat.

Some examples of inappropriate questions for this Unit:

Quali sono gli hobby più comuni in Inghilterra?

Come vedi il tuo futuro in questo Paese?

Descrivi ...

The two unpredictable areas for the second part of the exam can be chosen from the General Topic Areas for A2 but also from the General Topic Area for AS. **However**, for a candidate to obtain higher marks **the AS topics**, covered at A2, **should clearly indicate progression**.

Candidates' Responses

In this summer examination, most candidates were thoroughly prepared and TEs followed scrupulously the guidelines for conducting the oral tests. **Well done!**

The A2 oral examinations for 2019 showed, in many cases, a good standard of spoken Italian, with a commendable level of spontaneity, allowing candidates to converse convincingly and with ease. There were few problems in the way the examinations were conducted, and most schools were aware of the time limit. Some centres allowed candidates to speak well beyond the allotted 13 minutes, this occurred particularly where the issue for debate was protracted unnecessarily, leaving insufficient time to develop fully the discussion of the additional two topics. Some teacher examiners very sensibly announced the division between the initial issue for debate and the two further topics for discussion, possibly to keep themselves on track. This certainly made the task of the Edexcel examiner a little easier.

General conversation was at times preferred over debating the topics studied, with candidates being asked questions related to their holidays, traditions in their country of origins and future plans after school. Candidates were not always given the opportunity to defend their opinion due to the wrong type of questioning being used. Teachers-examiners should also avoid asking candidates questions such as "can you explain...", "talk to me about...", "describe...", "what is the meaning of..." and need to challenge the candidates' points of view instead. Teachers-examiners should also avoid expressing their points of view or interrupt candidates to talk about themselves. It is also advised that teachers-examiners familiarise themselves with the format of this unit because in many cases the candidate's chosen issue was not debated, and the teacher-examiner did not play "devil's advocate" to elicit the use of argumentative language.

Some topics were, intellectually, simply less demanding. There was clear evidence that well-planned questions led to debates that were interesting and engaging. When questions were far too generic, the debate broke down and did not progress. In a minority of cases this led to reverting to the original stance to attempt to add detail. In a minority of cases teachers tried to explore far too many topics, limiting each one to one or two closed questions and quickly moving on. This strategy did not allow candidates to demonstrate their skills and perform at their best.

Unfortunately, in a small number of cases teacher examiners:

- let the candidates speak for 4/5 minutes to outline the issue instead of 1 m. and the test did not move away from initial issue
- conducted an exam without initial debate
- did not challenge the candidate on his/her stance in the first part of test
- asked factual questions not designed to elicit opinions
- did not initiate a spontaneous discussion in the second part but stated the title of each subtopic area and asked a list of questions mainly factual not designed to elicit opinions

- questions were repetitive or ended up being too personal
- occasionally too much time was spent on the chosen issue and consequently there was no evidence of further unpredictable areas being explored
- the variety of questions was at times limited.
- some teachers talked too much and insisted on voicing opinions.
- native speakers were given mundane questions, which did not allow them to display debating skills.
- sometimes candidates were asked fewer questions bringing the exam to an earlier close, resulting in a loss of marks.
- In a small but significant number of cases, the teacher appeared unprepared and questioning was too generic and restrictive.
- Teachers' linguistic competence was, in a few cases, inadequate.

Teacher-examiners must conduct the test in accordance with the guidelines that are set in the Oral Training Guide. Misinterpretation in conducting the exam, for example, timings of the test, lack of administration of the exam and insufficient questioning can disadvantage candidates even when they are prepared.

Teachers are advised to prepare a wide variety of topics, so that each candidate has something different to debate. If there are only few topics used for the discussion, it can appear as if these have been well prepared in advance and are **not precisely unpredictable**.

In contrast to this, most teacher-examiners were **excellent** in opposing the candidates' views and **eliciting** good debate **throughout** the exam.

Many candidates' responses showed extensive reading of newspaper articles on current affairs within topic areas like politics, environmental issues, emigration, euthanasia, nuclear power.

The most vibrant debates prevailed around:

- *Gender equality*
- *Ethical issues*
- *The role of religion in society*
- *Gay marriage and abortion*
- *Brexit*
- *Immigration*

The issue must be **clear** and written in the **target language**:

- *A favore della vaccinazione obbligatoria dei bambini.*
- *A favore dell'uso della tecnologia nelle scuole.*
- *A favore dell'energia nucleare.*
- *Contro il modo di insegnare la religione nelle scuole italiane.*

Euthanasia, Abortion, the death penalty and legalization of soft drugs were still a popular choice, although only a few candidates could maintain a vibrant and stimulating discussion based on strong convictions and a sound research. In a few discussions on abortion, candidates were not familiar with terms such as: *interruzione di gravidanza, embrione, feto, obiettori di coscienza* or *stupro*, hence showing a limited knowledge of the technical vocabulary generally expected.

Arguments concerning religious issues were not well-researched and at worst led to over simplistic conclusions.

A significant majority of candidates grappled with how environmental changes were shaping their future.

Debates that reflected current issues were performed successfully when students could combine relevant factual knowledge with abstract concepts.

The most popular **unpredictable areas** of discussion for the second part of the exam were topics such as:

- *Legalisation of drugs*
- *Use of technology amongst young people*
- *Brexit*
- *Pollution and global warming*
- *Unemployment*

Quality of language

Pronunciation was, overall, of a commendable standard., Tenses usually did not cause a problem.

Adjectival agreement and the use of direct and indirect object pronouns continue to be a problem with weaker candidates, as does the correct use of the definite article. Certain vocabulary items and verbs are key to discussion, notably *colpire*, often incorrectly rendered as *affettare*. Some errors were made by students with a native or near native knowledge of Italian that reflected a morphing of Italian and English:

Some mistakes:

Abolimento

Ci saranno qualche problema

Si conosce più persone

Lavagne interrogative

È più bene

Confortabile

Dobbiamo sentirsi

Spezzatori di droga

Accidenti stradali

Bibite alcolice

Realità

Reading and Research

Candidates were able to achieve 5 to 6 marks through reference to articles, books, and internet sources, offering detail and convincing opinion. Many candidates' responses showed extensive reading of newspaper articles on current affairs. Candidates should be reminded of the importance of referencing their research and mention data/statistics/articles they have read. For a debate to be successful they will need to have researched their chosen topic carefully. Can we remind candidates and teachers that to show extensive reading and research on the issue, it is not enough to say: **"Ho letto un articolo nel giornale o in Internet..."**.

Comprehension and Development

There were some very interesting and challenging questions, which allowed a natural and logical interaction with the teacher-examiner, taking into consideration the fact that this unit assesses advanced-level understanding as well as speaking skills. Some teacher examiners were able to take their line of questioning to quite demanding levels and equally some candidates could respond appropriately to certain questions in considerable depth.

Teacher-Examiners

Candidates' success in Unit 3 is dependent on the good conduct of the exam, as the quality of debate depends very much on the teacher examiner's counterarguments for the chosen issue and the nature of the questions asked for the further issues. Sometimes Edexcel examiners are faced by the difficulty to determine whether in the discussion there are two further issues or only one. Whilst thanking many examiners who conducted the exam successfully, we would like to encourage others to improve and develop the skills of the teacher examiners.

Some examples of good questions:

- *Credi che l'immigrazione crei benefici per un paese? Perché?*
- *L'immigrazione dovrebbe essere controllata? Come?*
- *I giovani di oggi come affrontano il grave problema della disoccupazione?*
- *L'università è importante per trovare un lavoro?*
- *Che interesse hanno i giovani nella politica oggi?*

To avoid later disappointments, centres must note that if they employ Italian native speakers (and not qualified teachers) to conduct the exam, they **should make sure that all the important information on the conduct of the tests are understood**. On the other hand, any TE conducting the test **should have a good knowledge of the language**. Centres without a teacher could ask information about the possibility to use Centre London Orals for their candidates.

The teacher examiner should study the oral form before undertaking the conduct of the oral and should prepare valid counterarguments to avoid silences. For the debate to be interesting, the counterarguments must be well focused. Both the candidates and their examiners should be well prepared.

The all too frequent "***Dimmi cosa sai di...***" is likely to produce a weak debate.

After about **5** minutes the TE should initiate a spontaneous discussion covering **two** further issues.

Although examiners are not required to take the opposite view in the unpredictable areas, inputs like "***Cambiamo argomento; parlami di...***" will not prompt a high level of debate or be considered a complex and challenging question; complexity can be linguistic (language and structure) and/or conceptual (abstraction).

To recap the most frequent problems were:

- initial issue not always arguable
- stance not challenged enough by the teacher-examiner
- some questions on personal life not appropriate for this unit
- too many factual questions not designed to elicit opinions
- questions at GCSE level
- only one topic discussed after initial issue
- no further topics
- difficulties to establish the two unpredictable areas, as questions were all within the issue chosen by the candidate
- candidates not allowed to demonstrate debating skills.

Administration

Some issues arising from the administration of the test can be summarised as follows:

- during recording some background noise and/or other sounds (the bell, telephone, mobile phones, etc.) which made candidates lose concentration
- no name or number of candidates on the box or CD
- no teacher/examiner name on the box or CD
- stance not clear and/or written in English
- exam either too long or too short
- old Oral Topic Form OR3
- incomplete Oral Topic Form OR3
- no Oral Topic Form OR3
- no attendance registers sent
- badly damaged CDs.
- CDs for the 01 and the 03 examinations in the same parcel.

Sound quality of CDs was excellent. Centres should wrap CDs in an appropriate plastic box or at least in a padded envelope.

Conclusion

Congratulations to teachers and candidates!

This summer exams were well conducted in several centres.

Candidates performed well in this examination and appear to have worked thoroughly to prepare themselves.

We strongly advice teachers and candidates to study with attention the requirements of the new 91N0/03 specification, to prepare themselves for a new and interesting Advanced examination.