



# Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel GCE  
In Italian (6IN04) Paper 01  
Research, Understanding and Written Response  
in Italian

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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 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.

This year, unit 6IN04\_01 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.

As this was the final resit for the old AL qualification, the entry was very small. 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. Q.2a (creative) and q.2g were equally popular this year though there was a good spread across all questions.

The research-based essay displayed some good analytical responses which showed extensive research. All-in-all 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 remain with 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 has to 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

The 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. The majority of 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 *pubblico* ("publico") and *milioni* ("millioni").

Some relatively basic lexical items were not known, especially *livelli*, *visitatori* ('visitori', 'visitanti'), *posti* (for 'seats') and even *muri* (often confused with 'le mura'). Other lexical items were often misspelt ("touristi", "corridoro").

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

In terms of grammar the most difficult elements appeared to be those including the gerund ("allowing visitors to pass through", often translated as "*lasciando i visitatori*") or the passive construction in the past, which was often mistranslated with the imperfect ("era completato").

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 2 Creative Writing

Question 2a was the most popular of the creative options and one of the two most popular questions 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 the wrong choice of course at university or not concentrating enough on their studies at school, 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 serious mistake 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 (drink driving, joining mafia), which created some suspense and were very pleasant to read.

Question 2b and Question 2c produced only a handful of responses which generally showed a satisfactory understanding of the stimulus.

## Question 2 Discursive essay

Q.2g, which invited candidates to imagine what the world will be like in future, was the most popular of the discursive questions. Responses were quite varied, with some optimistic views based on advances in technology, health care and quality of life, but also many pessimistic essays centred on environmental problems, the risk of a third world war or technology replacing humans.

Q.2d invited candidates to discuss whether independent travel is preferable to organised packages but some candidates wrongly interpreted *viaggi indipendenti* as travelling on their own, thus missing the point of the question. There were only a couple of responses for Q.2e but these demonstrated a very good knowledge of European issues and were well structured, reaching informed conclusions.

Q.2f invited candidates to take their stance on whether music should be taught at school: responses were split between those who felt that other subjects are more important than music and those who listed the many advantages of a musical education.

### Question 3

As in previous series, Q.3d was by far the most popular question and *Io non ho paura* was the most popular text/film followed by *Cinema Paradiso* and *La Vita è Bella*. *I cento passi* was also a popular choice.

Candidates were required to analyse to which extent the main character in the novel/film achieves his/her objective.

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 Michele's main objective was to save Filippo. In *La vita è bella* most candidates felt that Guido's main objective was to save his son and to spare him the horrors of the concentration camp.

In *I cento passi* Peppino's main objective was exposing mafia, even if that cost him his life.

Annetta's main aim in *Volevo i pantaloni* was of course wearing trousers, seen as the symbol of her desire to be independent.

Regardless of the chosen film or text, once again, 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.

Q.3a was the second most popular choice in this section of the paper.

Candidates had to evaluate the importance of one of the main traditions of the city or region they had studied. Milano, Venezia, Sicilia were popular choices.

Candidates generally showed some knowledge of the region/city but many struggled to answer the question. The tradition that was mentioned in most responses was *Carnevale* but candidates often attempted only a superficial analysis of this tradition applied to the area they had studied.

Occasionally the essays were written from personal experience and did not demonstrate research or analysis (the tradition of *tombola*, *pranzo della domenica*).

There were very few responses for Q.3b and Q.3c. Q.3b, the historical essay, required candidates to evaluate the impact that their chosen historical period had on the history of Italy. The most common period was fascism, which was generally seen as a negative period for Italy but some candidates even saw it as positive.

Q.2c required candidates to evaluate the extent to which their chosen aspect of Italian society impacted on Italian society as a whole. As usual, these essays were generally not well-answered. They are often chosen by native speakers who think they can get away with general knowledge and hearsay. Many candidates did not make clear what the aspect of society studied was and in fact sometimes they wrote about society in general rather than one particular aspect. Technology, unemployment, immigration, emigration/*fuga dei cervelli* were common aspects chosen by the candidates. As in previous series, unfortunately, almost all of 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.

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 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 through carefully – do not rush to start until passage understood as a whole and language analysed.
- Do not leave gaps.
- They should also pay attention to details and check their work thoroughly for verb forms, endings, agreements, spelling, accents.

Question 2:

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

Question 3:

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