

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

GCSE Italian (5IN02)
Paper 2A Speaking in Italian

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Summer 2013

Publications Code UG036277

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GCSE Italian

Paper 2A Speaking in Italian

Examiner Report

Many centres had used this qualification last year and were at ease with it this session.

The overall standard was excellent and it was a delight to hear so many interesting conversations in Italian; as one moderator put it: *“The level was again very high and it was a pleasure to moderate. Students expressed themselves enthusiastically, were well prepared and gave individual replies”*.

Most teachers asked questions well geared to their students' level, thus encouraging them to use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary and structures and giving them the opportunity to use different tenses. On the whole, students were aware of the fact that their results would be enhanced by having a genuine interaction, rather than reciting a pre-learnt script.

The majority of problems encountered related to incorrect administrative procedures; although a small improvement was reported compared to last year, this remained a major complication for moderators.

Once more, Teacher examiners are urged to refer to the Edexcel website for information regarding administrative procedures, as well as taking note of the online E9 report for their centre, to ensure that they conduct future tests optimally.

Administration

OPTEMs

On each copy of the OPTEMs, there is an indication of what needs to be done with it.

An improvement was noted this year, with more centres sending the correct copy of the 2A OPTEMs with their samples, but there were still instances where none were sent, or more than one set was included.

Students in the sample

The students whose tests must be in the sample are highlighted with an asterisk * on the 2A OPTEMs. The highest and lowest marked students' tests for task 2A must also be included. Moderators had to contact a substantial number of centres because of missing items.

CM2 forms

A large majority of centres used the correct CM2 marksheets. Most, but unfortunately not all, were filled in and duly signed by both student and teacher examiner. Delays occurred whilst the necessary signatures were obtained.

CA2 forms

In many centres, students did not use CA2 forms and this was shown, as required, in the appropriate box on the CM2s. However, if this box is not ticked, moderators expect to find the CA2 forms bearing the students' notes. There were many instances of no CA2 forms and no indication it had not been used.

Stimuli

Moderators need to be aware of exactly what task the students were set. This was not possible when no task description was submitted.

For presentations and picture-based discussions, the task sheet should give an outline of the intended discussion. In addition, for picture-based discussions, a copy of the chosen picture (or a description of it on the CM2) is essential.

For Open Interactions, the stimulus is an absolute requirement, explaining the transaction and reminding the student to ask questions. Moderators reported that, despite last year's comments, a large number of centres had omitted to send task sheets, pictures (or their descriptions) and stimuli.

Recordings

A few centres forwarded both 2A and 2B tasks for moderation, when only 2A tasks should be sent.

Very few recordings were on cassettes this session, which was a great improvement: CDs and USB sticks are generally superior in terms of clarity of sound and travel better. There were rare instances of insufficient volume or poor sound quality, usually due to the student being too far from the microphone.

Several moderators reported centres who had forgotten to include recordings in their parcels.

Labelling

Provided they are well labelled, CDs and USB sticks allow for ease of finding individual students' work. The students' details should be clearly indicated and the relevant track number should be shown in the appropriate box on each CM2 sheet. Moderators complained that they wasted time because this had not always been done. Most, but not all, test recordings were correctly introduced as per the instructions.

Choice of tasks

Similarly to last year, the most popular topics were *Media & culture*, *Sport & leisure* and *Travel & tourism*. Centres who devised their own option often chose *School*.

The *Business, work & employment* topic was rarely adopted, with the exception of a few centres with mature students.

Although, like last year, there were instances where the 2A task consisted of a single task type for all students, a huge improvement was noted this year:

most Teacher examiners ensured that their moderation sample included a mix of either some open interactions and some presentations and discussions, some open interactions and picture-based discussions, some picture-based discussions and presentations and discussions, or all three.

Picture-based discussions and presentations and discussions were again the preferred task types, with only a small proportion choosing open interactions. Teacher examiners should carefully consider which task types will help their students display their skills most effectively.

Presentation and discussion

The majority of Teacher examiners timed the presentation section correctly (one to three minutes). It is important to comply with this.

With this task type, there is often a temptation to over rehearse. Enough time should be left, after the initial presentation, for a genuine dialogue including unpredictable questions.

Moderators felt that, when all the students in a centre did a presentation on the same topic, they tended to lack spontaneity, whereas students who were encouraged to choose their own often performed more successfully.

Picture based discussion

In many cases, picture-based discussions allowed students to speak spontaneously on a topic of interest to them and demonstrate their ability to answer unpredictable questions.

Teacher-Examiners who responded to their students' comments thereby encouraged them to expand their replies and helped them achieve higher scores. Conversely, those who used a bank of set questions made it more difficult for their students to obtain the highest Content & Response marks.

Open Interaction

Few centres opted for open interactions. Whilst some devised their own, the general tendency was to adopt or adapt the Edexcel set tasks and stimuli.

A good stimulus with a transaction type situation encouraged a genuine dialogue with relevant questions and answers from both the teacher examiner and the student. It is expected that students will ask questions during an open Interaction task. Unfortunately, not all centres instructed their students to ask questions, with negative effects on their Content & Response mark.

Conduct of the tests

A majority of teacher examiners are to be commended for ensuring that their students were well prepared. They encouraged their students to choose a topic of interest to them and led the conversations sympathetically and efficiently, respecting the set timings and ensuring a spontaneous exchange could take place.

In addition to the task specific penalties mentioned in the previous section, the following also adversely affected the Content & Response mark, which is 60% of the overall mark on this unit:

- moderators had to deduct marks for tests that were too short;
- for those that were too long, students were penalised if all the necessary discussion points had not been covered in the first 6 minutes;
- tests with a lack of real interaction could not reach the higher band marks.

Application of mark grids and marking principles

When applying the mark grids, it is easier to decide on the correct mark by looking first at the description in the middle band, then move up or down the bands according to the student's performance.

All moderators were pleased to report that, in an overwhelming number of cases, the Assessment criteria had been correctly interpreted and marking was within the examination board standards.

However, they also commented on a frequent lack of awareness of the marking principles that affect the Content & Response mark: marks must be deducted when tests or presentations are too short, when students ask no questions in open interactions, or when conversations lack spontaneity or unpredictable questions.

Conclusion

It is pleasing to be able to report both a continued excellent standard of students' performances and a reduction in the number of administrative issues. I hope this trend continues in the next series.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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