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# **Examiners' Report**

## Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCSE  
In Italian (5IN02)  
Paper 2A: Speaking in Italian

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## **GCSE Italian**

### **Unit 2A: Speaking**

### **Examiners Report**

The overall standard for this qualification was very high this year.

As one Moderator stated: *'It is a pleasure to report that high standards were once again achieved this session. The vast majority of candidates clearly enjoyed the tasks they were asked to execute. Most of them had a good rapport with the TE and talked with a fair degree of confidence on their prepared topic.'*

It was evident that most candidates were well prepared; they had achieved a high level of proficiency, having learnt to use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary and structures and a variety of tenses. Students encouraged by their teachers to speak spontaneously and answer unpredictable questions obtained the best results.

Whilst Moderators reported a continued improvement in the centres' administration of the tests, this remained an area for concern: not only did errors and omissions slow down the moderating process, but they frequently resulted in candidates losing marks through no fault of their own. To ensure that they conduct future tests correctly, Teacher-Examiners are advised to refer to the instructions on the Edexcel website and note the Moderator's comments in the online E9 report for their centre.

### **Choice of tasks**

The most popular topics were similar to last year's: *Media & Culture, Sport & Leisure* and *Travel & Tourism*; few opted for *Work & Employment*. Many centres devised their own tests, often choosing *School* as the topic.

The preferred task types were also similar to last year's: the *Presentation and Discussion* and the *Picture-based Discussion* were favoured; a slight increase was noted in the numbers of those opting for the *Open Interaction*.

Unfortunately, a substantial number of centres ignored the specification requirement that their sample must include a mix of task types.

#### Presentation and Discussion

The presentation must last between one and three minutes, after which there should be enough remaining time for in-depth discussion. On the whole, Teacher-Examiners maintained a good balance between the presentation section and the discussion section of the task.

However, candidates whose tests did not comply with this inevitably lost marks.

Moderators found many instances of over-rehearsed tests, especially in centres where all the students did a presentation on the same topic. Genuine dialogue including unpredictable questions is essential to give candidates access to the highest scores.

### Picture-based Discussion

In many cases, the pictures chosen by the students gave rise to interesting dialogues, providing a good opportunity for expanded answers with a wide range of vocabulary and structures.

Conversely, the use of a pre-prepared bank of questions in some centres did little to encourage natural conversations and was detrimental for the candidates' Content & Response marks.

### Open Interaction

A majority of the centres opting for the *Open Interaction* used the Edexcel-provided scenarios, sometimes with adaptations.

In most cases, the *Open Interaction* offered an opportunity for realistic dialogues, enabling candidates to produce extended answers and ask meaningful questions.

There were unfortunately quite a few instances where candidates omitted to ask questions, which impacted negatively on their Content & Response mark. Teacher-Examiners are urged to train their students to ask questions and remind them to do so with an instruction in the stimulus.

*'The Open-Interaction task was chosen by more candidates this year than in previous years. Some of the tasks devised by the centres were very interesting, but unfortunately some really excellent candidates lost marks due to their failure to ask any questions of their own. This was always a pity for the sort of candidate who would otherwise have achieved top marks.'*

The three task types are designed to enable students to display different skills and should be conducted bearing this in mind. Moderators noted an increase in the occurrence of a hybrid task, starting with a short presentation on a picture, followed by some general conversation and ending with artificial questions asked by the candidate.

*'Sometimes centres seem to be confused on how to conduct each of the specific tasks, confusing the different criteria needed for each. For example, in a picture-based task, they would ask the student to present the picture as if it were presentation task; or encouraging students to ask two questions in a presentation and discussion task.'*

### **Conduct of the tests**

Most tests were well conducted, very few not adhering to the time limit of 4-6 minutes.

*'Some centres consistently go over time with recordings being almost 7 minutes. I did have 1 centre with really good candidates and they only spoke for just over 4 minutes, which was a shame as they could have gone on for another couple of minutes.'*

A huge majority of candidates had chosen a topic that obviously interested them and they were well prepared and competent.

Teacher-Examiners have a vital role to play, ensuring compliance with the examination requirements and enabling their candidates to fully achieve their potential.

*'The majority of centres submitted very good administration where the task descriptions were attached and conformed to the specification, the recordings were of a good quality and timings were accurate.*

*Examples of best practice were when centres tailored questions to candidates' responses which afforded a great deal of interaction and spontaneity. This was often complemented by a supportive and good-natured atmosphere fostered by the Teacher-Examiner. A few centres are still drawing on a list of prepared questions and asking them in a set order, thereby reducing interaction and spontaneity and minimising opportunities for candidates to access the higher boxes on the Content and Response grid.'*

### **Application of mark grids**

Moderators found that, apart from rare exceptions, the Teacher-Examiners' marking was in line with the standards set by the examination board.

When it was not, it was often due to a lack of awareness of the Marking Principles (to consult alongside the Assessment Criteria), stipulating that the Content & Response mark is reduced when a test or a presentation was too short, or when a candidate asked no questions in an *Open Interaction*. Lack of development and over-reliance on pre-learnt material was also detrimental.

*'Some candidates very awarded very high grades, even if they didn't show spontaneity or they didn't expand a lot. The main issue was the content and response band where teachers would award 16-18 marks to students who would hesitate a lot or didn't justify their ideas. At the same time, many centres didn't remember to deduct marks if the presentation was shorter than one minute and above all if the candidate didn't ask at least 2 questions in the open interaction task.'*

### **Administration**

#### OPTEM / candidates register

Very few centres omitted these. There were occasional errors in the transfer of marks from the CM2s.

#### Sample

Candidates highlighted with a \* and the highest and lowest marked candidates' tests must be included in the sample.

Moderators had to contact centres where part of the sample had been omitted.

#### CM2 and CA2 forms

Although most CM2 mark sheets were correctly completed, Moderators had to contact centres when entries were incomplete or when either the Teacher-Examiner, or the candidate, or both, had not signed the declaration section.

In many centres, the CA2 candidate note forms were not used, but some omitted to indicate this in the relevant box on the CM2s.

*'A few centres did not indicate on the CM2 form whether a CA2 form had been used. A very small minority of centres did not ensure that candidates had signed the paperwork.'*

### Stimuli

It is useful for Moderators to have an outline of the task for a *Picture-based Discussion* or a *Presentation and Discussion*.

For a *Picture-based Discussion*, a copy of the picture or a description of it on the CM2 is required.

*'Some centres are still not getting the paperwork right. With the picture-based discussion, around 10% of centres moderated did not submit either a picture or photo or a description of it on the CM2 form.'*

For an *Open Interaction* the scenario is essential for effective moderation; it should detail the transaction and prompt the candidate to ask questions.

### Recordings

The recordings were duly done on CDs and USB sticks, as per the instructions. Regrettably, not all were clearly labelled, making it difficult and time consuming for Moderators to locate the tests they needed to listen to.

Generally the sound quality was good.

In a small number of cases, the recording favoured the Teacher-Examiner rather than the candidate. A few CDs were blank, making moderation impossible.

Centres are urged to check their recordings before sending them.

*'Unfortunately there are still some centres who do not appear to check their recordings at the end of each test with the result that I have received some really bad recordings when it is already too late to request another one. Some of the labelling of CDs and USBs has also been rather poor.'*

### **Conclusion**

It is always pleasing to hear so many students, encouraged by their teachers, keen to express themselves in Italian and performing to the best of their ability.

To quote another of the Moderators: *'The majority of Teacher-Examiners had prepared their candidates really well for the examination. Their discussions were generally well-timed and the TE developed the students' work with open-ended questions which allowed them to expand their answers and resulted in the use of some very varied vocabulary and expressions. Some really natural conversations were produced, which were a pleasure to listen to.'*

