

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback Summer 2010

GCSE

GCSE Italian (5IN04)
Unit 4: Writing in Italian

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The flexibility of the controlled assessment option provided candidates of all levels of ability with the opportunity to communicate effectively in written Italian on a variety of topics.

Work was generally of a high standard, well presented and substantial in content. Tasks chosen by teachers, whether set by themselves or chosen from the live stimuli from Edexcel, were generally appropriate and the range of tasks undertaken was excellent. There were some varied and very interesting topics and pieces, such as an interview with a famous person, an article about a favourite programme, an account of a school trip or a school exchange, an account of a holiday, a film review, an article about a work experience, plus some of the tasks provided by Edexcel.

However, the problem of topic overlap was at times encountered, for example between an account of a holiday and an account of a school exchange in Italy: the phrases and vocabulary used were generally very similar and in some cases the content as well, as some candidates talked about a holiday to Italy!

It is important that centres submit the correct number of task, which must be written in controlled conditions, and that some guidance is provided for candidates. The tasks set should be focused: a list of bullet points (preferably phrased as "You may include...", in order not to penalise candidates if they omit some of the bullet points) is often helpful.

Candidates can achieve full marks whilst keeping within the recommended word limits. This particularly applies to more able candidates and native or near native speaker candidates. On the other hand overly short pieces are self-penalising.

The range of language displayed in the controlled assessment was again impressive. Many tasks had been specifically designed to include a range of tenses and complex structures (including the conditional and the subjunctive), descriptions and opinions, for which many candidates were duly rewarded. On the other hand, candidates should be reminded not to be overambitious and try to use very complex structures, such as the conditional or the imperfect subjunctive, if they have not really mastered them.

Also, as there are no tiers for this paper, centres should set differentiated tasks for candidates of different abilities. Candidates of higher ability should be encouraged to produce more individual work and use a wider variety of language so as to demonstrate manipulation of tenses and achieve their full potential. This has been an issue at times, where very able candidates lost marks by carrying out tasks such as a brochure on the local area entirely in the present tense, or else a diary all in the *passato prossimo*. The nature of such tasks is self-penalising. Each piece must display a range of tenses: candidates do not employ a variety of tenses will not score full marks.

Teachers are reminded that the marks awarded for Communication and Content are not merely related to the number of words in the task or the relevance to the title but closely depend on the quality of the language, as described in the mark scheme. Therefore, if the language causes ambiguity or if is too simple (for example no variety of tenses), full marks cannot be awarded even if the task is completed.

Centres also need to remember that the candidate's work should be sent together with the task and all the relevant forms and that notes should also be sent.

From an administrative point of view, each individual piece should ideally be labelled with the candidate's name and number and preferably the centre's name and/or number, so as to be identifiable by the examiner.

OPTEMs, filled in with the candidates' marks must also be forwarded to the examiner. The top copy should be sent to the address written on the left-hand side of the form, the yellow copy to the examiner and the green copy must be retained by the centre. In addition to this, it is essential that all centres adhere to the controlled assessment receipt deadline.

For more information about this unit please refer to the specification or the 'Controlled Assessment Support Book - Writing'. Both of which can be found on the Edexcel website.

Grade Boundaries

Grade	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw mark boundary	60	48	43	38	33	27	21	15	9	0
Uniform mark scale boundary	90	81	72	63	54	45	36	27	18	0

The modern foreign languages specifications share a common design, but the assessments in different languages are not identical. Grade boundaries at unit level reflect these differences in assessments, ensuring that candidate outcomes across these specifications are comparable at specification level.

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