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Italian (continuers)

2015 Chief Assessor’s Report

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## Overview

Chief Assessors’ reports give an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

## School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Folio

This year again saw the teaching of so many good topics, and this allowed students to produce work which enabled them to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Clear task design allowed the majority of students to demonstrate evidence against the criteria and gave the students the opportunity to perform at the highest standard.

Interaction

Students showed preparation and ability in this area. Genuine conversations which flowed freely between teacher and student on a variety of topics gave students the opportunity to perform well.

In order for this to happen, interaction questions need to be open-ended to allow students to elaborate. Questions requiring a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer do not allow students to show their ability to converse. Students who were given the opportunity to demonstrate a certain level of spontaneity in their responses when engaging in a conversation/discussion generally achieved at the higher level.

Teachers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the assessment conditions in the subject outline in relation to the oral interaction. To provide a reasonable opportunity for students to achieve at the A level, interaction tasks should allow for spontaneous reciprocity through dialogue. Task design that dictates an oral presentation only limits the opportunities for students to demonstrate their ability against E3. Similarly, students are encouraged to limit their reliance and use of cue cards in order to effectively demonstrate skill and ability against I1 and E3.

Text Analysis

The majority of teachers used past examination papers for this component although it was pleasing to see some teachers developing new resources/texts for this section. There was a good range of tasks and text types. The use of songs for the text analysis tasks was interesting.

Teachers are encouraged to ensure the questions for the text analysis task(s) give the students the opportunity to meet all the requirements of the assessment design criteria at the highest possible standard. Content-based questions alone will not draw responses from the students that demonstrate their understanding and skills at the highest standard in this task. It is recommended that teachers refer to the subject outline as a guide when setting tasks to ensure that all requirements are met.

Teachers are reminded that it is preferred if answers are provided for listening and responding tasks, or the transcripts, at final moderation.

Text Production

The text production topics this year were varied and interesting, and there was a wide range of text types in the form of articles, letters, diary entries, blogs and reviews.

Some responses were too brief and did not allow for the ideas and/or argument to develop in any depth or breadth. As a result, achievement at the high end of the A band was limited. At the same time, some responses in this section were well over the word limit as stated on the task sheet provided. Teachers are reminded that there are no required word counts for the text production task given in the subject outline and that task design in this aspect should consider the range of ability of the students in their class when providing information such as word counts to their students. Students are encouraged to adhere to the guidelines provided by the teacher on the task sheet, but to include depth and breadth in their responses.

Students are encouraged to edit their work with great care before submitting it to their teacher. When presenting work electronically, care must be taken to turn off the auto correct so as to eliminate errors e.g. *il problema*=> *il problem , domani* => *domain, il calcio* => *calico*

Assessment Type 2: In-depth Study

Students chose a wide variety of contemporary and interesting topics such as neorealist cinema, *cucina povera,* eco fashion, environmental issues, migration, tourism, and famous people/events in history.

Oral presentations were well-prepared and executed, as were many of the written responses, including some innovative text types such as interview transcripts. For the oral presentation students are encouraged to use cue cards with dot points, rather than reading a whole script. It was pleasing to see some students presenting information in Italian without the use of cue cards or using cue cards just to prompt them. In doing so, this demonstrates sound evidence against I1 and E1.

Teachers are encouraged to support students to identify and select appropriate topics that suit their individual interest and ability, and ensure that the task design clearly identifies a different context, purpose and audience for each of the three tasks.

Teachers are reminded that the information presented in the oral presentation should not be repeated in the writing in Italian task. Evidence of the same information being used in all three tasks does not allow the responses to demonstrate evidence of depth and breadth in treatment of ideas, and a thorough understanding of the topic/issue chosen.

On balance, the reflective responses in English were well-written and clearly showed evidence of the learning process and how an understanding of the topic/issue had developed as a result. Less successful reflective responses were simply a recount of information that had been learnt rather than an evaluation of the process and how the learning had developed. The reflective responses should not be summaries of what has been delivered in the oral presentation and the writing in Italian task.

General Comments

Teachers are encouraged to ensure that:

* a cover sheet with the task and performance standards with assigned grade for each of the folio and in-depth study tasks is included
* all student work required in the assessment group be included in moderation materials
* all materials included for moderation be clearly labelled
* student material be organised by assessment type i.e.: Assessment Type 1: Folio and Assessment Type 2: In-depth Study
* a complete set of task sheets for Assessment Type 1 and Assessment Type 2 be included.

## External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Examination

Oral examination

Many students were well-prepared for the first part of the oral examination and the conversation flowed naturally. The students were confident and able to elaborate, expanding on their ideas and taking the conversation in interesting directions. Very clear and coherent responses used a range of connectives effectively to move smoothly between ideas.

Some students were naturally nervous and on occasion this lead to simple errors but these did not necessarily impede understanding. They were often errors with agreements or conjugations. The important thing was that these students maintained the flow of a conversation. When required, students were also able to maintain the conversation by asking for clarification.

For the discussion section of the oral examination, it was impressive to see how many students had researched such a wide and interesting range of issues for their in-depth study, such as eco-fashion, anti-mafia movements, the trendy transformation of *cucina povera*, timely migrant issues, and the Reggio Emilia Approach vs Montessori. Students should be congratulated on their excellent preparation and passion for their topics, using the minute available to them to establish the scope of their study. Many were able to use subject-specific vocabulary in their discussions which added another layer of sophistication.

Another positive aspect of the discussion was the students’ ability to reflect and comment upon significant learning that they had undertaken. Even if a topic had been done before, students were able to investigate a new perspective and develop a new appreciation for what they had learnt. The strongest responses were able to explain how their chosen topic impacted on their own lives and future plans, showing that many students were able to make a personal connection with their in-depth study.

Only a few students chose to bring supporting objects such as photos and maps to support their conversation or discussion. For those who did, the supporting objects were used effectively to add valuable contributions as a stimulus to the conversation and/or discussion.

Teachers are encouraged to support students in their preparation for the oral examination by providing them with opportunities to converse in a sophisticated manner using Italian. This includes the effective use of conjunctive devices to add flow and structure to the interaction. Teachers are also implored to assist students in sourcing texts in Italian to support the research phase for the in-depth study. Authentic texts in Italian on the topic/issue will aid students’ ability to grasp the subject-specific vocabulary related directly to the topic/issue.

WRITTEN EXAMINATION

Section 1: Listening and Responding

While students often find the listening and responding section the most difficult component of the written examination, many students were able to achieve good results in this section.

**Text 1**

This text, an announcement at the train station of Bologna Centrale, was somewhat challenging for most students as it contained many numbers, some of which were necessary to answer the questions but also some superfluous information which needed to be quickly disseminated and discarded. The train was due to arrive at 14.22 or 2.22 pm but unfortunately 51% of students were not able to write this time accurately, evidencing a lack of recognition of numbers for question 1 (a).

Some students were unable to single out or recognise the word ‘monitor’ to check for the arrival and departure of the Frecciarossa train (number 9056) from platform 2 (*binario numero* 2) for question 1 (b). 42% of students scored 1 out of 2 with only 7% scoring full marks.

**Text 2**

In order to be awarded full marks for question 2 (a), students needed to include the intended audience: people interested in purchasing a holiday home (*casa vacanza*) in the mountains or in the country. Some students wrote ‘home buyers’ or ‘to buy a home’ but to score one full mark, their answer required more specificity.

Many students found question 2 (b) easier to answer after hearing the property’s description: town: Siena; type of property – apartment; rooms: modern kitchen, two double bedrooms, bathroom with shower and spacious living room.

**Text 3**

Text 3 was a conversation between two friends, Katia and Marco. Marco is interested in visiting the Cinque Terre on the Ligurian coast and Katia explains a recent article that she read on this tourist destination.

Question 3 (a) required students to explain the concept of ‘*volonturismo*’ which, according to the text, is a combination of ‘*volontariato*’ which means ‘volunteering’ and *turismo* which is ‘tourism,’ that is, volunteering to help an area while visiting it and immersing yourself in the natural environment. Some students incorrectly assumed that the first half of the word was *‘volontà*’ and that it meant ‘the will’ to be a tourist or other complicated meanings. Many were able to include the idea of ‘tourism’ in their answer.

Quite a few responses indicated that students found question 3 (b) more challenging. The ‘concept’ of *volontourismo* came about, through the council, after the bad storms and heavy rain that caused the flooding of October 25, 2011 in the area of the Cinque Terre.

Responses to question 3 (c) were varied, and while most students were able to write that Marco felt the idea was ‘clever and interesting’ only some students were able to explain this further by stating that he feels it would give him ‘great satisfaction’ to visit and work there, knowing that he has helped the Cinque Terre. He also seems excited about having a lovely lunch with local products cooked by the people of the area.

**Text 4**

Text 4 was an announcement and its purpose was to advertise or promote the Central Market in Florence, which is to be transformed into a new gastronomical destination offering local cuisine and street food. Inside one will find restaurants, pizza bars, cafes, a cooking school and a Florentine bookshop. Responses needed to include the words ‘central market’ in ‘Florence’ and ideally, ‘transformation’ or ‘new initiative’ to receive full marks.

In question 4 (b), many students were able to easily identify the activities offered at the Central Market, mentioning that visitors can taste, buy and take home real dishes made with local and seasonal produce and, during May, children (ages 5–10) can participate in free chocolate cooking lessons that will be held at a school created inside the central market. 77% of responses were successful in scoring 3 or 4 marks with 46% scoring full marks.

**Text 5**

This text was the lengthiest text and was a conversation/debate on a radio program. Many responses accurately identified the topic of discussion, which was the length of the summer holidays. Most responses successfully identified the correct answer for question 5 (b), clearly outlining the two speakers’ perspectives (Gianluca – radio host: thinks 3 months during summer is too much; he believes young people should do work experience for at least one of the three months and he doesn’t think it’s a bad thing for them to work three or four hours per day which may help them enter the world of work and help them with their choice of university courses. Daniela (guest) does not agree with Gianluca, saying that teachers give students lots of homework during the summer holidays and that there is no possibility of enjoying some free time. She believes that young people do various activities and do not stay at home, ruining their eyes in front of the TV, at the computer or with videogames. She also states that summer should be a serene and tranquil period and that young people should have the right to get some fresh air and have some freedom). Responses needed to outline at least 2 points from each speaker to score full marks. Overall, 84% of responses were awarded 3, 4 or 5 marks, with 39% achieving full marks.

It was pleasing to see that students seemed to cope better with the listening and responding section of the examination this year, particularly in response to lengthier texts.

Section 2: Reading and Responding Part A

Many students were able to achieve very good results in this section of the examination. The best answers were clearly written, with care taken to ensure correct spelling and expression. It is also important to take note of the details in the text so that responses can be precise. Students need to ensure that direct evidence to support their answers needs to be in English as directed in the task instructions, with or without the original Italian as well, and that they do not use the same information in more than one answer – this caused problems for a number of students who simply repeated their answers for 7 (b) and (c).

**Text 6**

1. This question asked students to identify what the ‘Emergency’ program involved. Since 2006 they have opened clinics staffed by volunteer doctors and nurses throughout Italy which provide free health care for those who could not otherwise afford it.
2. The information required for this answer was found in the middle of the text, and responses needed to explain both how and why the program has changed over time. At the beginning, the clinics provided care for the many immigrants who did not speak Italian and were not aware of their rights. Now the program has been expanded to include foreigners, pensioners and unemployed Italians who make up part of the 12 million people who cannot afford specialist care or medicine.
3. Responses to this question needed to identify the benefits of the program correctly – that it offered free, high quality medical care to anyone who needed it, from newborns to the elderly, and that it was staffed by excellent personnel. The program was so successful that it had been expanded into dental care as well which is typically very expensive.

**Text 7**

1. The majority of responses correctly identified the purpose of this text – to inform the reader of the work done by Doctors Without Borders around the world, and to seek donations so that they can continue their work. It was evident that there was some confusion or misinterpretation of the question. Some responses indicated that Franco Rossi was a 10 year old boy who was speaking on behalf of the organisation, while others misread the text and thought it was about a television program. It is important to check vocabulary to ensure that it makes sense within the context.
2. Many responses were able to describe the work done by the organisation, using specific examples from the text. These included offering emergency medical assistance to people affected by war, epidemics, malnutrition, or natural disasters. They also help those who cannot access medical care because of discrimination, and most of all, they help people who couldn’t otherwise afford medical help. They go wherever they are needed.
3. Most students identified the obvious clue in the text about ‘*i nostri progetti’*, and were specific in their responses, stating that the work involved caring for people suffering from HIV/AIDS in Africa, and those suffering from malaria in Guinea. In addition, they offer specialised medical care and sent surgeons in to help in war zones such as Syria and Afghanistan. Finally, they offer psychological support for those who are victims of trauma in Central Africa, the Sudan, Colombia, India, and many other places including Italy.
4. In the final question, the students were asked to comment on the language used by Franco Rossi which needed to be supported by evidence from the text. Franco begins by directly introducing himself to the reader and giving a brief introduction of his work. His speech is informative, giving details of some of the specific projects that the organisation has undertaken and outlining the scope of the organisation’s work. He also used inclusive language to draw in the reader, and directly appealed to them for help (‘*Aiutateci*!’ Help us!). Short sentence fragments saying that they are ‘*indipendenti. Neutrali. Imparziali’* (‘independent. Neutral. Impartial’) are punchy statements which attract the reader’s attention, and highlight the fact that the group is genuine. Franco also appeals to the audience’s emotions through the repetition of strong words like *‘essenziale’* (‘essential’), and guarantees the reader that any money donated will be used for those who need it most, thus encouraging them to donate to the cause.

Section 2: Reading and Responding – Part B

This year, it seemed as though students found this task manageable. All students approached it well, understood the information and were able to respond, providing their thoughts and opinions on the topic.

Some of the weaker responses focussed only on Australia as a destination, rather than giving detail about school and lifestyle for young people

Students were generally well able to respond fully and in detail. These were mostly excellent. The stronger responses were usually able to elaborate on what a normal week is like and how it differs from a typical Italian student’s week. On occasion, they were able to use colloquial expressions (*sudo sette camice*) and were often humorous too (i.e. I know how much you like fashion; I can’t wait to see you in our school uniform.). Stronger responses were also able to draw on own experience and provide examples. They were able to compare Australia to Italy effectively. They were also able to expand on their ideas to incorporate more than just their experiences but also look at the broader picture and give routines of students in general. The most successful responses were able to write a good introduction also commenting on the father’s loss of work and how they felt about this before giving their weekly routine. More successful responses were also able to engage reader by using exclamations and idiomatic expressions in their writing.

Depth and breadth of content was pleasing this year. The task allowed students to elaborate on their ideas and support them with examples, school subjects were listed, part time jobs were written about with specific examples as to places of employment available for students, sport, and other extra-curricular activities were mentioned and commented on.

Overall, students had plenty of material to draw from in their own lives and the lives of their peers.

The range of expression was good overall but accuracy was variable.

It was pleasing to see students’ trying to use more complex language features, e.g. the subjunctive.

It was disappointing to see the high rate of error when conjugating verbs, agreements (*la sua papa*), non-existent accents, *piacere* verb used incorrectly, non-existent pronouns. The preposition for in a city and in a country was very often forgotten.

Expressions - *non vedo l'ora*

- *salutami i tuoi* – were rarely used correctly.

Some of the weaker responses also included incorrect tenses, spelling, poor (literal) translations (“*con due breccie*”, “*non posso attesa*” and “*e una passeggiata nella*(?) *parco*”).

Section 3: Writing in Italian

Q.9 was the most popular choice in Section C. 80% of students chose to respond to this question. The ‘gap year’, being a familiar topic and the most popular, allowed students to provide depth of ideas, information and opinions by expanding through the use of appropriate examples or explanations to support their desire for travel and persuade their friend to join them in this travel.

The weaker responses tended to resort to listing places they would visit during their gap year rather than explaining or offering deeper opinions as to why these would be of interest.

Q.10 was chosen by 13% of students

Q. 11 was chosen by 7% of students

The stronger responses were able to cope very well with the chosen question providing an interesting and engaging letter, creative story or article, adhering to the prescribed task with understanding and significant depth. These responses demonstrated an understanding of the task requirements completely, were written in a logical and sequential manner, and met the word length requirements.

The weaker responses did not always adhere to the text type specifics or provide the appropriate amount of depth required for such a task. For example, the instruction, ‘write a letter’ was very loosely interpreted as part letter/part email. A creative story for a magazine was loosely interpreted as a recount, and on occasions, ‘write an article’ was interpreted as a speech.

The majority of students were able to produce a piece of writing in Italian that was relevant to context, purpose, audience and topic. The stronger responses were able to creatively and maturely expand on the amount of detail, ideas, information and opinions to provide an increased level of interest to engage the reader. They were also able to create very original pieces of writing with a strong element of language authenticity. In addition, some students chose to manipulate their in-depth study pieces into a creative story for *Che strana esperienza*!.

The weaker responses were less able to demonstrate depth and elaboration in their piece of writing. These responses tended to be repetitive in their ideas and their use of vocabulary, verbs and expressions to convey information, ideas and opinions. The range of language structures being utilised by students was most pleasing; particularly those that implemented a variety of complex grammatical structures effectively.

It was pleasing to see that there were a range of tenses used, in particular; present, present perfect, imperfect, future and conditional, as well as pronouns. Also, the stronger responses used the subjunctive with appropriate success. In addition there was a very good selection of relevant idiomatic expressions and conjunctions incorporated where possible to add cohesion and cultural authenticity to the creative writing pieces.

In Q.9 it was evident that some students struggled with the cultural appropriateness of the opening and closing of the letter. Mismatched gender agreements such as Caro Maria, Cara Massimo and *In attesa di una sua risposta e la ringrazio per l’attenzione*, are not appropriate greetings/salutations for this type of letter. Students should remember that it is important to adhere to text type, purpose and audience for the selected writing task. With that in mind, punctuation and paragraphs remain essential components of successful expression. Many students did not observe the conventions of appropriate punctuation and or the correct use of capital letters when beginning a sentence. In addition, it is important to write in paragraphs for this allows information and ideas to be conveyed in a more organised and cohesive manner.

Students must remember the requirements and formula of specific text types:

* A letter to a friend should provide appropriate greetings/salutations and interpersonal comments, include a date and possibly an address.
* A creative piece for a magazine should have a title, be audience appropriate and incorporate the text source phrase rather than add it as an afterthought.
* An article should also have an appropriate title and ensure that it adheres to purpose and audience. In this case it should have been in the voi form.

Students are encouraged to practise reading different questions for understanding; purpose and audience are essential for each piece of writing.

Spelling is an ongoing problem with accents omitted and agreements ignored.

Other common errors include:

* Mixing up of vocabulary such as che & c’e` and e & e`
* Attempts to use *piacere & mancare* were not always accurate.
* It’s important to remember that modal verbs must be used with an infinitive and verbs in the present perfect must use the correct auxiliary verb in front of it.

At times students incorrectly selected vocabulary from the dictionary (*un breccia* for a break, *eccitato* for emotionally excited or *ho caduto* in amore for I fell in love). At other times, students were not careful with copying words from the text, using *sabatico* or *sbatico* for *sabbatico*.

## Operational Advice

School assessment tasks are set and marked by teachers. Teachers’ assessment decisions are reviewed by moderators. Teacher grades/marks should be evident on all student school assessment work.

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Chief Assessor