



Oral Component

GENERAL COMMENTS

A wide range of performance levels were demonstrated in the 2006 oral examination. Students who had prepared well performed confidently and communicated effectively with the assessors. They exuded confidence throughout the examination. These students were able to link with the assessors and maintain and advance the Conversation and Discussion. They expanded on their ideas and gave relevant information and opinions.

In contrast, students who were not adequately prepared relied heavily on the assessors to carry forward the Conversation and Discussion. These students also tended to rely on learnt phrases and were not able to give or qualify ideas and opinions. Some students needed to focus more on their pronunciation skills. A few students used English in their responses rather than trying to reword or rephrase their ideas.

Students are reminded that they are not to identify themselves, their families or their schools during the examination.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

In the Conversation section, students needed to maintain a conversation using topics from their personal world (family, school, leisure, future aspirations and work). Students were assessed in the areas of communication, content and language.

Students who achieved high scores in this section linked effectively with the assessors and carried the conversation forward with some spontaneity. They successfully gave a range of relevant information and ideas. These students also readily clarified, elaborated on and defended their opinions and ideas. The effectiveness of this communication was aided by their ability to use accurate and appropriate vocabulary and grammar.

In contrast, those with limited preparation found it more difficult to lead the conversation and were unable to extend upon the topics being discussed. These students needed to be heavily prompted and some were unable to answer basic questions, displaying weaknesses in their knowledge of Italian. Others who relied heavily on rehearsed responses were thrown off guard when interrupted by assessors. Students need to remember that although information should be well-prepared, memorised chunks are not advisable.

Students are advised that the exchange in this section needs to be more like a conversation and not like an interview situation. Students at this level are expected to be in control of basic linguistic structures; however, it was noted that many students had little more than a basic level of linguistic competence and a limited vocabulary range.

Section 2 – Discussion

In the Discussion section of the examination, students are given up to one minute to clearly introduce their topic and texts studied. The task requires students to discuss a topic which relates to an aspect of the Italian Language and Culture through texts.

Once again, there was a strong correlation between students' level of preparation and performance. It is important that teachers and students choose topics which are suited to the students' ability and which allow scope for full development and discussion. Topics selected for the Detailed Study need to be broad enough to allow a thorough discussion while still narrow enough to enable students to effectively grasp and advance the ideas. Examples of topics which were shallow and therefore difficult to assess included 'The World Cup', 'A soccer player' and 'Pastimes'. Examples of overly complex topics included 'The Reformation' and 'The reform of the Catholic Church'.

The texts used to support the Detailed Study need to be substantial in order to give students enough material to draw upon and therefore demonstrate their understanding of the topic investigated. Some students cited shallow or limited resources such as photographs, a song, a poem, a picture, or an Internet site. These texts did not allow for a full and comprehensive discussion to take place. While these texts are valid when used in conjunction with other more substantial resources, it is not recommended that students rely solely on them.



As in the Conversation section, students who were thoroughly prepared were able to maintain and advance the discussion appropriately and effectively. These students demonstrated the capacity to link with assessors and apply effective communication and repair strategies. They maintained the discussion and used the texts studied to support their ideas and opinions with reason and examples. Those students who had mastered the linguistic elements of the language used an excellent range of vocabulary and grammatical structures effectively and appropriately.

In contrast, many students experienced difficulty in this section due to inadequate preparation. They relied heavily on questions and prompting and were unable to link with the assessors and advance the discussion. These students gave a very superficial recount of a text studied without adequately exploring the theme of the topic. They also experienced difficulty in expressing ideas and viewpoints or in substantiating their answers with evidence from the texts studied. This difficulty was exacerbated by poor linguistic ability. Weaker students used very basic language skills and made many simple errors, such as agreements between subjects and verb, nouns and articles, tenses and conjugations.

For success in the oral examination, it is advised that students master the grammar expected for this level of study and prepare thoroughly for both the Conversation and the Discussion.

Written Component

GENERAL COMMENTS

During the 15 minutes of reading time it is important for students to read the questions carefully and familiarise themselves with all sections of the examination. When vocabulary is provided within the question, students are expected to spell these words correctly in their answers. Responses should be concise and of the correct length. Furthermore, students need to be aware that Sections 1 and 2 of the examination paper clearly state that 'All answers **must** be based on the text.' This means that no prior knowledge should be included in the answers.

Students should ensure that their answers are clear and logical. Some students were careless with spelling and structures or had illegible handwriting. In cases where the answers were unclear, marks could not be awarded. For example, for the question that asked, 'What features make the Antarctic cruise unusual?', many students wrote, 'It is all white with ice. It is tropical.' Obviously these students did not clearly think about their responses.

After completing the paper, students should check all answers to ensure that they are accurate, coherent and logical.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Part A

Generally this section of the examination was done well. To be adequately prepared for this section students need to spend more time practising their listening comprehension skills. Effective use of the dictionary would also aid students in this task.

While the texts were not overly challenging in themselves, careless errors were evident in 2006. For example, many students did not understand the term '*esami di maturita*', and basic elements of the language, such as numbers, were misunderstood by some students.

Text 1

Question 1

To celebrate the end of Year 12

Question 2

The sea (water)

Question 3

Features included:

- white landscape (ice, snow)
- peaceful
- marine animals.

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Question 4

She is not interested.

Question 5

Excluded were:

- taxes
- insurance
- alcoholic drinks.

Question 6

- group of at least 12
- deposit of 20 per cent to be paid within 24 hours

Text 2

Question 7

To inform listeners of an event celebrating the works of new poets

Question 8

Included were:

- a donation to the Young Poets' Society
- a booklet with a copy of the poems read on the evening.

Part B

For Part B, ten marks are awarded for comprehension of the texts and five marks for the use of language. Many students gave incomplete answers, although they appeared to have understood the information presented. It is important that students clearly understand the information required and then convey this using grammatically accurate sentence structures. They must read the questions asked carefully and check that their responses address the questions asked.

Please note that although the answers are given here in English, students needed to respond to Part B in **Italian** prose.

Text 3

Question 9

At the races (or the Melbourne Cup)

Question 10

- Supporting his training regime – taking him to morning training, and in the afternoon to the gym
- Transport to Saturday games

Question 11

Because he dropped tennis

Text 4

Question 12

Silvia:

- studious
- many commitments
- started theatre group.

Riccardo:

- doesn't like to do too many things at the same time
- took on an extra subject
- dropped sport and work.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Part A

Given that the texts in the Reading and responding section are printed on the paper, students need to be more careful when reading the questions asked and the relevant sections of the text. Better use should be made of dictionaries so that

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relevant, logical and accurate answers are provided. For example, in response to the question ‘What farming activities still occur at TACE?’, many students listed all the farming activities rather than selecting only the relevant information.

Text 5

Question 13

Two features were:

- modern comforts
- environmental sensitivity.

Question 14

- hearing – waking to the rooster crowing (at night), silence broken by the running stream, rustling of leaves
- smell – freshly baked bread
- sight – enchanting view
- taste – fresh local produce

Question 15

- dairy
- olive trees
- vineyards

Question 16

- walks – nature and historical
- picnics – on banks of lake
- evening outings – dinners by the open fire

Question 17

Mud baths, because they cure ailments and achieve total relaxation

Question 18

Stressed/busy/worn out people

Question 19

TACE is more than a holiday.

Question 20

TACE denotes peace and tranquillity.

Part B

In Part B, some students copied large slabs of information from the text rather than using the information to demonstrate their comprehension. Often there was no logical coherence to such answers. Other students did not answer the questions asked. Given that the question was asked in both Italian and English, students should have understood what was expected of them.

Some students used such poor grammatical structures that understanding was severely hindered. Students must remember that their language skills are also tested in this section. It is important that students read over the text provided a few times, keeping in mind the question that needs to be answered. Once again, all answers need to be based on the text; therefore, more care is needed in ‘unpacking’ the text given and ensuring that dictionaries are used effectively.

Please note that although the answers are given here in English, students needed to respond to Part B in **Italian**.

Text 6

Question 21

Mobile phones:

- allow for more flexible working hours/more family time
- mean small business can compete, because they don’t need to staff 24/7
- mean that people are constantly on call – they intrude in family life.



Question 22

They could be considered bad manners because:

- people do not switch them off when they should
- people answer them at inappropriate times (interrupting a conversation).

Section 3 – Writing in Italian

Criteria

- relevance, depth and breadth of content
- appropriateness of structure and sequence
- accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

The 15 marks for this section were divided in the following way:

- five marks for content
- five marks for structure and sequence (correct text type, including register and cohesive devices)
- five marks for the correct use of Italian, including range and sophistication of vocabulary and grammar and correct spelling.

All topics on the examination paper were attempted by students. In all tasks, many careless grammatical errors were made. These included incorrect agreements, verb conjugations and auxiliary verbs, pronoun use, prepositions and adjectives. Spelling was also a cause for concern. Overall, students were not proficient with the use of tenses; the present tense was generally handled well, but knowledge of other tenses was lacking. Students need to be familiar with the linguistic requirements of this examination and should be able to go beyond using only basic vocabulary and structures.

Question 23

Students were required to write a formal letter of complaint to the management of a five star resort after returning from a holiday there. In the letter students had to include at least five issues related to their stay. Possible points that could have been made included:

- dirty rooms
- lack of room service
- lack of transfers
- rude staff
- broken or unavailable facilities.

This topic was the most popular one in Section 3. Students who attempted this question generally wrote well and were able to include five complaints. The text, a formal letter, was usually appropriately structured, with most students remembering to include an opening and closing salutation, signature and date as well as the formal register, *Lei* or *Voi*.

Question 24

Students were required to write an imaginative story about life 200 years ago including at least five different aspects of daily life without technology. Possible points that could have been discussed included:

- communication
- entertainment
- transport
- study
- preparation of food
- work
- house chores
- life expectancy
- amenities such as electricity.

The text type was a story and students needed to provide a title and author details. Those who chose this topic generally provided relevant information, although some students could not expand on more than one or two aspects of life without technology.



Question 25

As the chairperson of the group ‘Youth for a Better Community’ students were asked to write a speech to be delivered at a council meeting persuading council members to increase funding for activities/facilities in their area. Possible issues raised could have included:

- parks
- sports grounds
- indoor facilities
- play equipment
- wheelchair ramps
- transport links
- better library
- more waste bins.

Students who chose this question managed to include relevant areas for improvement and elaborated on most of them. The text, a speech (including a formal opening/salutation and purpose), was reasonably well handled.

Question 26

Students were required to write a magazine article evaluating the effectiveness of an advertisement they had recently viewed. Students had to provide a title and author details as well as demonstrate the ability to write in an evaluative manner. Many students who attempted this question had difficulty in evaluating why the advertisement was successful or not as well as elaborating on aspects of the advertisement.

Question 27

Students were required to write an informative magazine report about the Italian elderly. They were required to highlight at least five ways in which elderly Italians have contributed positively to society. The text type for this question was a report and students had to provide a title and author details. Possible issues to be raised could have included:

- advice/wisdom provided by the elderly
- volunteer work undertaken in hospitals and churches
- charity work
- assistance within families
- work as war veterans.

Many students did not expand on this topic effectively; some chose to write only about food and others provided limited examples of how the elderly have enhanced society.