

Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The new format allowed students who were well prepared to demonstrate their abilities and proficiency in the language. Students were generally relaxed and confident and found that they could freely demonstrate their knowledge, control of Italian language and aspects of the Italian culture as it related to their Detailed Study. In contrast students who were insufficiently prepared lacked confidence, particularly in the Discussion.

Some students expected to be questioned on what they had read and/or heard rather than engage in a discussion using their texts to support their ideas and opinions. The focus of the Discussion is **to discuss and explore the sub-topic and aspects covered in the texts studied**. This means that students must be able to draw on the texts they have studied and discuss and explore ideas and opinions related to their sub-topic and relate this to Italian speaking communities. It is expected therefore, that students would be able to make some links with Italy and not base their discussion entirely on personal experience.

It is essential that in their introduction (up to one minute for Section 2) students state concisely the theme of the Detailed Study and the sub-topic chosen (including any particular aspect if applicable), together with at least three texts studied in class. The introduction therefore should not simply be a report, but should give assessors an indication of the area of discussion. Students should not memorise chunks of information/set statements that they expect to be able to use during the oral. Texts should be used to support, expand and explore their sub-topic and not merely as the basis of a recount.

It is important that students and teachers select materials for the Detailed Study with care so that students are exposed to a variety of views. The type of texts used by students varied significantly in complexity and it was apparent that some students had been given English texts on which to base their study. In keeping with the intent of the study design texts should be Italian texts so that students are exposed to key vocabulary related to their sub-topic. It is advisable that students are prepared with one or two substantial texts such as a film, a novel or an article. This will ensure that students have greater depth and breadth of information and a better chance to sustain a discussion on the sub-topic chosen for up to eight minutes.

Students in the past have been expected to use the 'Lei' form with assessors. It was decided that from 2001, students of Italian would also be addressed in the 'Lei' form to bring Italian into line with most other LOTEs which were already using the polite form to address their students. All students are expected to be familiar with and use the polite 'Lei' form during the oral examination.

It should also be noted that with six out of the ten assessment criteria directly relating to the student's use of Italian, it is imperative that students master their Italian grammar and vocabulary skills in the areas of accuracy, variety and clarity.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

Capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively

Performance related directly to the level of preparation of the student. Those who were well prepared were relaxed, took the initiative, and were able to advance the conversation and effectively link with assessors. On the other hand, it was obvious when students were not sufficiently prepared. Of concern were those students who thought they could initiate the conversation by presenting a monologue of memorised information. This is inappropriate as this section of the oral is a conversation which, by its nature, implies an interaction between the student and assessors. Students and teachers should note that Section 1 no longer has a requirement that three specific areas be discussed and that any of the general areas listed in the study design could, in effect, form the basis of the conversation for Section 1. Hence, students must be able to go beyond the obvious in any of the given topics.

Relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas

Students who were well prepared were able to develop more than one aspect of a topic, add breadth and depth to their conversation and support and elaborate their statements with reasons and examples.

Students who had not reflected adequately on the areas for general conversation found it difficult to expand beyond the obvious and relied on repetition. In these cases, assessors found it difficult to maintain a conversation for the duration of this section.

Section 2 – Discussion

Capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively

Those students who were well prepared were able to maintain and advance the discussion. However, some students were unable to go beyond their one-minute introduction, while others came prepared to give a report and therefore

found it difficult to respond to questions and discuss their topic. Assessors sometimes found themselves having to prompt unnecessarily. Given that 15 hours of class time in Unit 4 is dedicated to the Detailed Study, students should be able and willing to elaborate on their topic, making reference to the texts studied as well as linking with the assessors.

Relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas

The choice of texts used to research the sub-topic of the Detailed Study is extremely important. Students who studied a variety of texts such as films, articles and novels were generally better equipped to present a range of information, ideas and opinions and support and elaborate on them. In contrast, those who only based their study on, for example, a graph, a quiz and a song found it difficult to sustain an effective discussion. Where students did not have sufficient information from their support material, they relied unduly on personal knowledge in an attempt to make conversation. Another misunderstanding on the part of students was that they thought they could support their topic by simply restating the contents of their texts.

Teachers and students should note that the sub-topic chosen should be broad enough to allow for wide-ranging discussion and that it should relate to Italian-speaking communities and not just to Australia in general. In their preparation, students must be provided with opportunities to make supporting reference to the texts they have studied. Students must be able to support and justify their facts, opinions and ideas (by directly linking their texts to the discussion).

Topics which are too broad should be avoided. An example of such a topic in 2001 was *l'arte è un divertimento*, with the sub-topics being art, architecture, music and film. As each of these sub-topics could have been a topic in themselves, only a smattering of ideas could be covered in the discussion. Given that the Detailed Study is the basis for Section 2 and that a significant amount of time both in class and at home has been dedicated to it, students are expected to demonstrate a level of sophistication of ideas, opinions and information which are appropriately elaborated and supported.

At this level, students are expected to use a variety of linguistic features, tenses, structures and vocabulary, appropriate to the context, purpose and audience of the task.

Accuracy of vocabulary and grammar

This year the use of English in relation to general areas of conversation such as the names of subjects being studied or career choice increased, while use of dialect was less evident. The lack of knowledge of key vocabulary related to the sub-topic chosen for the Detailed Study was of concern. Common errors noted this year were inappropriate use of the infinitive, incorrect conjugation of tenses (including the present tense), wrong agreements, incorrect use of auxiliary verbs and articles, 'essere' to express age, incorrect word order and the non-use of the polite 'Lei' form to address the assessor. Where there was inaccurate use of vocabulary and grammatical structures, assessors sometimes found it difficult to understand the student.

Range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

Given the amount of time allowed for each section, students require a more extensive range of vocabulary and grammatical structures. Examples might be the use of idiomatic expressions where appropriate, going beyond the present tense to express ideas and opinions and more depth in preparation, including knowledge of specialist vocabulary related to the Detailed Study. Teachers are advised to consider strategies to assist students in expanding their vocabulary.

Clarity of expression

Those students who are well prepared perform best against the assessment criteria. In the case of less able/prepared students, key words, accented words and double consonants were often mispronounced. Other problems included students speaking in monotones, gaps in the flow of conversation and incorrect phrasing and tempo, all resulting in a less fluid production of language.

Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

There were a few very good responses and most ranged from the mediocre to the poor. Many students submitted a paper where they had not accurately read and/or understood the questions given in English.

In the Listening and responding section of the paper, many students had great difficulty with the numbers in the weather forecast and the train station (texts 1 and 5). In addition, students misread, or did not understand questions in the Reading and responding section (the word 'status' proved to be difficult).

Some students did not read the instructions carefully, and answered in the wrong language. Given that there are many tasks, students must read carefully and understand what each section of the examination requires of them, before attempting any questions.

Students are asked to write legibly and **in ink** for all parts of the examination, write their answers to questions in the spaces provided, but not write their final answers in the note-taking spaces. Students should realise that the amount of space given to them to answer their questions is indicative of how long their answers should be or of how many items are required. Hence, they should not write answers of five to six sentences when only two lines are provided.

Before completing the examination, students should read over their responses in all sections, checking for accuracy, logic and coherence. In preparing for the examination, teachers should provide students with strategies for memorising grammar and vocabulary. While there is no formal grammar section in the examination, a range of grammatical, linguistic and lexical features is assessed through writing.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Listening and Responding

Possible answers to questions

Part A

Text 1

Question 1

- sunny day
- possible afternoon rain
- maximum temperature = 25 degrees
- minimum temperature = 13 degrees/at 6am this morning
- temperature now = 19 degrees

Question 2

Clearing in the afternoon

Text 2

Question 3

(d) bored

Question 4

(c) at the park

Question 5

Lies, lies, lies

Text 3

Question 6

5 star

Question 7

- elegant
- exclusive
- magnificent
- luxurious
- comfortable
- splendid
- many facilities

Question 8

- aquatic sports
- high-fashion shopping
- walks along the beach
- exciting nightlife

Text 4

Question 9

Husband is allergic to mushrooms/client told waiter to avoid them

Question 10

Meat (bolognese) sauce/spaghetti bolognese

Question 11

Lobster/crayfish

Question 12

- steak/red meat
- small pizzas
- caviar tarts/canapés
- rice
- salmon rolls/sandwiches

Question 13

She is now speaking in rhymes/talking like the waiter.

The capacity to convey general and specific aspects of texts

Better listening comprehension skills need to be developed with students. This should not happen only at Year 12, but be filtered through the school and begin at whatever level Italian starts. It was evident in student performance in 2001 that this skill is not strong. Students need to be encouraged to develop their listening comprehension in a variety of different ways and situations. Constant revision of vocabulary and grammatical structures will enable students to perform better in all sections of the examination.

While texts one to four were quite simple, responses indicated that students were neither quick nor concise enough in taking down their responses, and many did not check their responses. For example, one student wrote, in Question 1, that the maximum temperature was to be 19, the minimum was 25 and the current temperature was 13. Also in writing numbers 25 became 32, and 13 became 3. It would be expected that by Year 12, students would recognise numbers in Italian, particularly the simple numbers.

Another common error was that students wrote answers in Italian instead of English for Part A. Quite a number of students wrote, in answer to Question 11, the response *aragosta* which was perfectly spelt and correct, but in Italian and not the required English.

Part B

Possible answers to questions

Text 5

Question 14

- I had to go to platform 1
- I had to take the 10 o'clock train to Militello
- At Militello, I had to take a bus to Tombino

Question 15

- You have to take Bus no 243 from the bus stop in front of (opposite/at) the station

Text 6

Question 16

Il modo in cui i fondi sono stati spesi fin'ora (both)

Positive – Money well spent for prevention through advertising campaign.

Negative – They should have spent money on saving lives.

Com'è suggerito che i fondi vengano spesi in futuro (one only)

- more money needs to be spent on rehabilitation
- more money needs to be spent on educating parents to communicate with their children

Critica negativa riguardante la scelta dei membri del comitato anti-droga (one only)

- not wise to have like-minded people on the consultative committee
- Prime Minister's preference for those who shared his views of 'zero tolerance'

The capacity to understand general and specific aspects of texts

The capacity to convey information accurately and appropriately

The standard of responses in Part B of the Listening and responding section, where students were expected to give responses in Italian, was poor. While many students found text six quite difficult, responses to text five (which was a fairly simple text) were also handled poorly. Numbers were a problem, with bus number 243 becoming number two, three, 143, or 2333. Students also need to be sure that they understand what the question is asking them to do.

Question 14 asked them to explain what they had to do in order to arrive at *Tombino*, therefore it needed to be written in the 'io' form and in the *passato prossimo*. Question 15 stated that someone had not heard the announcement and therefore the student had to report the instructions. Hence, it should have been completed in the *tu*, *Lei*, or *impersonal forms*. Very few students were able to reword what they had heard into their own Italian. Most just wrote down what they heard, often incorrectly, showing that they had little comprehension of the task.

Question 16 was the most difficult on the paper. However, students should expect to find a range of questions, from the easier and straightforward questions to those which are more challenging. This range is designed to assess the range of skills described in the study design (p. 32). In general, it was found that student responses to this question reflected their abilities on other parts of the paper. Hence, a student who did well in the other Listening and Responding questions generally also did better in Question 16. Students and teachers should note that part B of the Listening and Responding section is worth 10 marks. Five marks are allowed for comprehension of **both** texts (in this case texts five and six) and 5 marks for use of language.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Possible answers to questions

Part A

Text 7

Question 17

- living in (political) exile
- isolated from his friends
- found refuge in Paris
- risks losing his job – he can't obtain a permanent work permit

Question 18

- asked to impersonate another person
- go to Barcelona (as this person)

Question 19

- he witnesses an attack on his friends
- he has to flee to the border

TEXT 8

Question 20

- classics
- languages
- writing
- adventures/travelling
- gold miner
- author (writer)
- interpreter (at Milan Hospital)
- soldier
- historian

Question 21

- middle class (not quite aristocratic)
- well-to-do

Question 22

- he fought for the Republic at the end of his schooling
- he returned to Italy when the battle for Unification began

Question 23

- he documented the (first and only) report of upheaval in Australian history at that time.
- important because without it, there would have been no first-hand record.

Capacity to understand and convey general and specific aspects of texts

Most students adequately handled the Reading and responding activities. Students must read and understand the questions, use a dictionary where necessary and also use contextual knowledge and understanding. Teachers need to

train students in the correct use of the dictionary and to make informed choices where necessary. An example of misuse of the dictionary was the student who wrote that Carboni had had the flu from the gold, (*la febbre dell'oro*). Another example was *lingue straniere* translated as 'strange languages'. It was also noted that poor English expression lead to unclear answers. Students must concentrate on writing in good English, even though this is an Italian examination. Answers in English that are unclear, are marked wrong.

Part B

Possible questions to be addressed from letter

Question 24

1. Facilities for washing and drying
2. Clothing that is out of fashion
3. Outfit for New Year's Eve
4. Equipment/clothing for week at the snow
5. Suggestions for Australian souvenirs for host family.

The capacity to understand general and specific aspects of texts

The capacity to convey information accurately and appropriately

Part B of the Reading and responding section was handled quite well, with writing in this section generally better than writing in Italian in Section 3. Most students did not address the first issue in the letter, which was the difficulty of washing and drying clothes during winter. The other four questions were generally well answered, even though *la settimana bianca* brought some interesting responses. For example, from it being a week when you have to wear everything white to a friend whose first name was *Bianca* and whose surname was *Settimana*. This demonstrated a lack of comprehension and logical thought processes. Another word which was completely misunderstood was *giacchè* with a number of students suggesting that Shannon bring a few *giacchè* (this made no sense in the context of the letter). Another common error was that some students did not notice that Shannon was a girl, others did not take on the role of Luciano/a, others still had Shannon coming to Australia and the weather being hot. Some students just responded to the letter, completing it as a writing task, and avoided answering any of the questions. Such careless errors indicate that students were not taking the time to read and understand what was required of them.

In this section, 5 marks were allocated to 'capacity to understand general and specific aspects of text' as demonstrated in the content of student response. Five marks were also allocated to use of language and text-type where some of the features expected in responses were correct conventions of the text type, as well as correct register, structure and coherence of the text, grammar, vocabulary and spelling.

Section 3 – Writing in Italian

Relevance, breadth and depth of content

Appropriateness of structure and sequence

Accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

Most students completed Question 26, on the healthy lifestyle, but many did not include relevant content. Students were asked to focus on *changes in their lifestyle over the past six months*, as well as *how balancing fitness, social life and study* had been better for their health. Many students ignored the context of the changes made over the last six months and concentrated only on physical activity, not stipulating what their lives were like prior to this. Students need to consider all aspects of a question.

Those students who completed Question 25 generally completed it well. Despite the fact that it may have looked complex, there was much to say about how animals are used in society. Examples of answers were that *the mounted police use them for transport and they are used as sniffer dogs for drugs*. Other uses of animals in society were *as companions for children or the elderly, as guide dogs for the blind or as working animals in farming communities*. Hence, this question was not about animal rights, although this may have been included with examples such as *animals being used for testing cosmetics, new drugs*.

Those who attempted Question 27 also generally wrote well-considered responses. However, in some cases 'the past' was ignored. Famous people from the past could have included not only people from history and politicians but also music or sporting icons.

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

- 5 marks for content
- 5 marks for correct text type, including register, cohesive devices
- 5 marks for writing in Italian, range and sophistication of vocabulary, grammar and correct spelling.

There were careless errors with grammar in this section. Incorrect conjugations of both regular and irregular verbs featured highly amongst the errors, as did lack of, or incorrect, agreements; poor spelling; incorrect possessive adjectives; articles; relative pronouns and articulated prepositions. In cases where students went beyond the present tense, the wrong use and conjugation of auxiliaries was a huge problem, as was the incorrect use of the subjunctive. Some students inappropriately used English words in their Italian writing tasks.