

2015 VCE Italian written examination report

General comments

Successful completion of the 2015 Italian written examination required students to be familiar with Units 3 and 4 of the *VCE Italian Study Design*. Competency in the grammatical elements of the study as stipulated on pages 14–16 of the study design under the Grammar subheading was essential to successfully completing the examination. To achieve a high score, students needed to demonstrate their understanding of more complex grammatical features rather than just limiting themselves to basic tenses and grammatical structures. Therefore, when preparing for the written examination, students are encouraged to use a wide range of authentic texts in order to improve their knowledge of the written language and the quality of their work.

At the beginning of the examination, it was necessary for students to make effective use of the 15-minute reading time in order to familiarise themselves with the requirements of the examination. During the examination, students needed to make effective use of their bilingual dictionary as necessary. Students should read all parts of the questions carefully to ensure that relevant answers are provided. It is recommended that students reread their answers in order to ensure that they are coherent and logical. They should also take every opportunity to check their spelling and proofread their answers for clarity and appropriateness (in both English and Italian).

In Section 3 – Writing in Italian, some students did not address the question asked and instead wrote off-topic. It is important that students fulfil the requirements of the chosen question.

Specific information

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Students who performed well in this section of the examination elicited and communicated the correct information effectively. They were able to appropriately convey both the general and specific aspects of each text. These students responded in a clear and concise manner, using the language accurately and appropriately.

When completing the listening section of the examination, students need to carefully focus on the key words in the questions in order to provide relevant and comprehensive answers in the appropriate language. The note-taking space given on the examination should be utilised to ensure comprehensive responses are provided. Some students made appropriate notes in the note-taking space but failed to transfer their responses into the answer spaces. It should be noted that information in the note-taking spaces is not assessed.

Part A – Answer in English

Many students gave inaccurate or incomplete responses to some questions, highlighting their inability to make effective and efficient use of their dictionary.

Some students were careless in their selection of vocabulary. For example, in Question 1a., only half of the students accurately responded that the conversation took place in the evening; others mistook 'sera' as meaning 'night'. In Question 1d., less than half of the students gave a correct answer. In Question 2b., 'abito da sera' was mistaken for 'her dress that evening', and in Question 2c., many students inaccurately wrote that the ice cream was 'fresh' rather than 'refreshing'. These examples highlight the need for students to learn basic vocabulary.

Text 1

Question 1a.

In the evening

Question 1b.

Young people complain about not having enough money at the end of the month, but they spend a lot on designer clothes.

Question 1c.

I'm crazy about it.

Question 1d.

Monday

Question 1e.

- to convince him because she wants him to buy that dress for her Christmas present
- the dress is high fashion/expensive

Question 1f.

They should get an ice cream because they have earned it.

Text 2

Question 2a.

Ice-cream shop	Positive aspect	Negative aspect
<i>Il Cristallo</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generous serves • closer 	slow service
<i>Da Alessandra</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good quality • a new product, uses natural sugars 	The shop is far away.

Question 2b.

She plans to order two scoops because she wants to fit into her evening dress.

Question 2c.

It is refreshing and it helps you keep fit and in shape.

Part B – Answer in Italian

Scores for comprehension in this section indicated that some students needed to listen more attentively and take careful notes. Students who regularly practise this skill throughout Units 3 and 4 are more likely to perform well in the examination. Scores for writing indicated that further preparation and practice were required in this area.

It is important that students make notes while listening to the texts and check their written answers to ensure they relate to the questions and use correct grammatical expressions. In this section of the examination paper, students are awarded 10 marks for comprehension and 5 marks for their capacity to convey information in correct Italian. It is inappropriate to write answers in dot points in this section. Students should answer in full sentences.

Text 3

Question 3a.

Hanno un' ora prima dell'imbarco (They have an hour before boarding)

Question 3b.

Two responses for Nonno and two for Angela:

- *Nonno – guarda gli aerei (decollare e atterrare)* (Grandfather – watches the planes landing and taking off)
- *Nonno – guarda le borse* (Grandfather – looks after the luggage)
- *Nonno – mette in ordine le medicine* (Grandfather – puts his medicines in order)
- *Angela – fa lo shopping per i regali per i cugini* (Angela – goes shopping for gifts for cousins)
- *Angela – controlla i messaggi sul cellular* (Angela – checks messages on her mobile)

Text 4

Question 4a.

Things that have stayed the same (two of):

- *L'albero nel cortile* (The tree in the courtyard)
- *Il portone di legno della cantina* (The wooden cellar door)
- *La cantina è ancora lì* (The cellar is still there)

Things that have changed (two of):

- *I campi e i vigneti non ci sono più* (The fields and vineyards aren't there anymore)
- *Tutte le case* (All of the houses)
- *La cantina adesso è diventata uno studio dentistico* (The cellar has now become a dental clinic)

The grandfather's reaction to what he finds (one of):

- *Prova un po' di nostalgia per i tempi passati* (Feels a bit of nostalgia for times past)
- *Accetta / è contento che sia arrivato il progresso* (Accepts/is happy that progress has arrived)
- *Accetta che lo sviluppo sia inevitabile* (Accepts that development is inevitable)
- *È contento che potrà farsi controllare il dente* (Is happy that he'll be able to have his tooth checked)

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Students who performed well in this section of the examination paid particular attention to the finer details in the texts and this was reflected in their answers. They took notice of the cues given through the language used in the email and read the extracts carefully, noting the specifics of each text.

Some students had difficulty conveying accurate responses in English. Incorrect dictionary use resulted in some students providing illogical answers such as '*arrabbiata*' being misinterpreted as 'rabies'. Further, in Question 5i., less than half of the students correctly responded that '*opera d'arte*' means 'a work of art'. In Question 5d., responses varied greatly, including 'from the goats that returned to the island to disturb people', 'from the sheep that lived there', 'the island has a reputation for making shoes uncomfortable'. These examples show that some students had not carefully edited their responses as all of these did not convey the information presented in the text.

Part A – Answer in English

Text 5

Question 5a.

To give advice to his friend (Ezio) about Capri

Question 5b.

- worked there as a tourist guide
- proposed to his future wife (Gina) there

Question 5c.

He plans to get married/He has proposed to his future wife.

Question 5d.

From the goats that wandered across the island (undisturbed)

Question 5e.

- Leave high heels at home.
- Because the roads are cobbled and steep.
- Take tablets for sea sickness.
- Because she will be taking boat trips.

Question 5f.

- cliffs of Marina Piccola
- terraces of Anacapri
- rock formations/stacks/monoliths/Faraglioni
- Blue Grotto/Grotta Azzurra

Question 5g.

- Villa Jovis
- Via Krupp

Question 5h.

- at Tiberius's Leap/Salto di Tiberio
- if Claretta gets angry/when she gets angry

Question 5i.

- It has been described as a work of art.

Question 5j.

Any two of:

- His cousin works there.

- His cousin will treat them like royalty.
- They will get a good deal.

Part B – Answer in Italian

In this section it was important that students accurately base their answers on the text provided. In Question 6b., when relating the experiences of Roberto and Lidia in Australia, some students confused the details presented in the text and gave incorrect information about each person.

Text 6

Question 6a.

In cerca di lavoro (In search of work)

Question 6b.

Roberto:

- *all'inizio è contento/soddisfatto e vuole rimanere in Australia* (at the start he's happy/satisfied and wants to stay in Australia)
- *ma decide di ritornare in Italia perchè è allergico al polline e non gli piace il clima* (But decides to return to Italy as he is allergic to pollens and he doesn't like the climate)

Lidia:

- *all'inizio è scontenta del suo lavoro* (at the start she is unhappy with her work)
- *dopo è contenta: perchè prende la residenza permanente australiana/si sposterà con un ragazzo australiano* (later she is happy because she obtains permanent Australian residency/she will marry an Australian)

Section 3 – Writing in Italian

In 2015, many students' responses lacked the required depth and breadth.

Assessment criteria

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

The most popular question was Question 11, a review for an international travel website evaluating two Australian cities or towns. In order to achieve very high marks for the first criterion, the response needed to cover all aspects of the question effectively, that is, explain which of the two cities or towns would be suitable for an Italian tourist to visit and elaborate on the reasons. While students found this topic relatively easy to write about, their responses were superficial and lacked depth and breadth. Some students wrote about a suburb or state rather than a city or town, and many merely recounted a list of places to visit, failing to effectively evaluate the attributes of the destinations.

Another popular question was Question 9, which required students to write a formal letter regarding the impending closure of a children's farm. In many cases, students failed to elaborate on an alternative plan to persuade the mayor to reconsider the future of the children's farm. When writing the letter, many students failed to provide an alternative plan as stipulated in the examination question; others interpreted the farm as being a place where children and people live.

Overall, Question 10 was not answered adequately. Many students explained aspects of the Mediterranean diet but did not reflect on the changes in Australian eating habits in recent years or comment on how these reflected the social context of the country.

The least popular questions were Questions 7 and 8. Responses lacked depth as students failed to take careful note of all aspects of the set task. Some students wrote off-topic and provided irrelevant information that did not address the question.

In preparation for this examination, it is recommended that students regularly practise writing in a variety of styles for different purposes and audiences.

When attempting Section 3 it is strongly advised that students:

- consider all aspects of the question very carefully, ensuring that they have the ideas to expand and elaborate on appropriately
- plan their responses by paying particular attention to the key words in the question
- select a variety of tenses and grammatical structures that are appropriate to the purpose of the task
- include all features of the text type
- write a piece that is logically structured and sequenced, using correct spelling and vocabulary
- take careful note of the kind of writing required for the chosen question and include appropriate language and style in the finished piece.