



2003

LOTE: Italian GA 3: Examination

Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The performance of students in the oral examinations indicated that those who were well-prepared were able to demonstrate their abilities and proficiency in Italian. In contrast, students who were insufficiently prepared lacked confidence, particularly in the discussion. The focus of the discussion is *to discuss and explore the sub-topic and aspects covered in the texts studied*, and students needed to come to the examination prepared to discuss and explore ideas and opinions by using and referring to the texts studied and making links between the texts.

Some students thought that the introduction to Section 2 (up to 1 minute) meant that they could give a monologue of their sub-topic studied. It is essential that students understand the purpose of this time is to inform the assessors of their chosen sub-topic and the titles of at least three different types of texts used in their study.

Section 1 – Conversation

Capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively

There was a strong correlation between performance in this criterion and the level of preparation of the student. Those who were well-prepared were able to advance the conversation and link with assessors effectively. Students were not sufficiently prepared, and who memorised chunks of information for their general conversation were less able to converse and became unsure when interrupted.

Given that students are well aware of the topics for conversation, it is expected that they would go beyond the obvious answers, learn the appropriate repair strategies and not rely so heavily on the assessors to move the conversation forward.

Relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas

Students' performance varied from superficial to passionate. Students need to be more willing to interact with the assessors. Well-prepared students were able to develop various aspects of their topic and could add depth and breadth to their conversation by supporting and elaborating their statements.

Students who had not reflected adequately on the areas for general conversation found it difficult to extend beyond the obvious and relied on standard, memorised answers. They also found it difficult to link their ideas between the topics. These same students were too passive and rarely ventured away from basic conversation and the recitation of lists. In these cases, it is difficult to maintain a *conversation* for the whole 7 minutes.

Section 2 – Discussion

Capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively

It is advisable that students be made aware of the expectations of this part of the examination. As part of their preparation they should be familiarised with various ways of saying 'detailed study' such as *studio dettagliato/speciale/approfondito*. In addition, students should not rely only on the assessors to move the discussion forward as this leads to a question and answer session rather than an informative discussion of their topic.

In this part of the examination, students should come prepared to interact and discuss their topic with the assessors. Well-prepared students were able to maintain and advance the discussion. However, many students were unable to go beyond their introduction. Memorising whole chunks of answers in monologue style does not allow the student to demonstrate an ability to exchange appropriately and effectively with the assessors.

Relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas

The focus of the discussion in Section 2 of the examination is *to discuss and explore the sub-topic and aspects covered in the texts studied*. By using and referring to the texts studied, students should be able to 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 make links with Italy and/or Italians in Australia.

Some students expected (relied on) to be questioned only on what they had read and/or heard, not reflecting on the material studied and the links between the texts whilst others mentioned texts studied. However, when questioned on these texts they were unable to elaborate. The mere mention of three different texts is not sufficient.

It is essential that in the introduction to Section 2 of the examination (up to 1 minute) students state clearly and succinctly, in Italian, the theme of the detailed study and the sub-topic chosen, including any particular aspect if applicable, and the titles of at least three different types of texts used in their research. The introduction should give assessors an indication of the areas for discussion. The texts should be used to support, expand and explore the sub-topic and not merely as a basis of a recount.

It is important that students and teachers select appropriate materials and sub-topics for the discussion. An example of an appropriate sub-topic might be *the historical origins and significance of Carnevale* whereas an inappropriate topic used in 2003 was *The European Union*. Whilst both of these topics are considered appropriate the latter is very complex and requires a more sophisticated knowledge of vocabulary and grammar in order to be dealt with adequately.

It is advisable to avoid topics listed for Part A of the examination as assessors will usually explore these in the first half of the examination and, where the detailed study topic is related, one may find that the areas for discussion have already been covered.

Those students who choose to support their discussion with an object must realise that:

- the object is for support and not the focus of the discussion
- the assessors may choose not to use it
- cue cards, pictorial or written, are not permitted.

Students must come to the oral examination prepared with authentic Italian texts. In this way they will have been exposed to the key vocabulary related to the sub-topic. The texts selected and studied should vary in length and complexity so that students may be exposed to a **balanced** study and a variety of views. Text should not be studied in English, nor should the texts be fabricated. This includes personal diaries and journals kept by the student, or ‘my mother’ as the aural text.

The recommendation in the study design is that students study a range of at least three different kinds of text. Furthermore, at least one or two texts should be substantial, including a mix of aural and written resources, for example, a novel, a documentary and a report. In contrast a photo, statistics and an article do not give the students adequate exposure to a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures appropriate to the sub-topic. Students should mention the title of the texts they have studied, not just indicate that they have studied an article. Students and teachers should be aware of what constitutes a text, therefore a ‘CD’ ‘the Internet’ or ‘an Internet site’ are not text types. Rather, the student should say that they have studied article X from an Internet site.

It is obvious that the choice and number 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, novels were generally better equipped to present, support and elaborate a range of information, ideas and opinions. When students had extracted enough information from each of the texts, there was no problem with the discussion. When their preparation was limited they penalised themselves as they did not have enough to say and did not have an extensive range of vocabulary and grammatical structures appropriate to the topic. Some, while mentioning three different texts, were unable to use them to support their discussion.

Given the amount of time devoted to the detailed study, it is expected that some sophisticated ideas, opinions and information which are appropriately elaborated and supported by the texts be presented.

Criteria specific to *Language*

Six of the ten criteria used to assess this examination directly relate to the student’s use of Italian. Hence, it is imperative that students master their Italian grammar and vocabulary skills in the areas of accuracy, variety and clarity.

In 2003, there was a strong correlation between well-prepared students and their ability to use grammar and vocabulary accurately. These were the students who were able to use a variety of language, tenses, structures and vocabulary, appropriate to the context, purpose and audience of the task that should be evident at this level.

Accuracy of vocabulary and grammar

Use of English, both in relation to general areas of conversation such as the names of subjects being studied or career choice and use of dialect is not acceptable. The lack of knowledge of key vocabulary related to the sub-topic chosen for the detailed study was a cause for concern as was the poorer linguistic ability of students in general in the discussion. Common errors noted this year were speaking in the infinitive, incorrect conjugation of tenses (including the present tense), wrong agreements, incorrect use of auxiliary verbs and articles, use of the imperfect, use of ‘*essere*’, incorrect word order, object pronouns, agreements, numbers etc. Of concern was the inability or non-awareness of the use of the *Lei* form (confusion about whether it meant ‘she’ or ‘you’).

Range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

Students require a more extensive range of vocabulary and grammatical structures. Examples might be use of idiomatic expressions, subjunctive, conditional, future where appropriate, expressing ideas and opinions in more depth and a knowledge of specialist vocabulary related to the detailed study. Many students demonstrated a limited range of vocabulary, structure, style and register appropriate to the discussion.

Clarity of expression

The most serious problems relate to students rote learning large portions of material. When interrupted, there were gaps in the flow of the conversation and incorrect phrasing and tempo, resulting in a less fluent production of language.

Students need to work on the clarity of their pronunciation, for example *cane* does not become *carne*.

Written component

GENERAL COMMENTS

In 2003 many student responses were quite mediocre, with only a few exceptions in the excellent range. In part A of the Listening and Reading and responding sections, students submitted responses which indicated that they had not accurately read and understood the questions in English. An example of this was the response to Question 20 where students had to provide information about the types of guest rooms available, with the correct answers being *family rooms*, *rooms with living area* or *interconnecting rooms*. Many students answered this question with *more than 400 rooms with direct phone line* or *rooms with a hairdryer in the bathroom*; incorrect responses that indicated lack of understanding of the requirement of the task in English. Another example from the same question was where students were asked to provide information under the heading 'outdoor activities'. Listed under this heading were the following: *swimming pools*, *deck chairs*, *various sporting grounds/courts* yet many students completed this answer with *volleyball*, *swimming* and *tennis*.

It is vital that students read carefully both instructions and also what is on the paper, so that they may provide intelligent answers to the questions. Responses should answer the question and not be a mere translation of the information provided in Italian. The amount of space to answer a particular question is a good indicator of how long the answer should be. One to two lines indicates a short answer; several lines requires a longer answer, and bulleted points indicate the number of short answers to a question.

Students' use of English remains poor and in some cases was incomprehensible. Just because they are sitting a LOTE examination students should not believe that their English spelling or expression is not important. Answers must be coherent and therefore students should write in good, clear and precise English. Students are also asked to write legibly and **in ink** in all parts of the examination. Students must also write their final answers in the spaces provided and not in the note-taking spaces.

Before leaving the examination, students should read over their responses checking for accuracy, logic and coherence in both English and Italian. In preparing for the examination, students must practise grammar and vocabulary exercises. There is no formal grammar section in the examination; however, a range of grammatical, linguistic and lexical features are evident through students' responses to comprehension questions and in their writing pieces. Students are requested not to provide word counts and corrections in red biro on their writing pieces.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Possible answers to questions

Part A

Text 1

Question 1

- blue sunglasses
- short-sleeved/checked/blue and white shirt
- black shorts
- white hat/cap

Question 2

- broken (plastered) arm

Question 3

- August

Question 4

- to announce a lost child
- in a shopping centre

Text 2

Question 5

- to organise a song festival

Question 6

In correct order:

- turn left into Via Roma
- turn right into Via della Repubblica (third street)
- hall is 200 metres on left

Question 7

- they don't know each other well (speaking in polite form)

Text 3

Question 8

- Euro became the only legal currency

Question 9

- they can be changed into Euro at a bank
- people have 10 years to do this

Question 10

- mixed feelings/uncertainty/confusion

Question 11

- costs have increased
- pension only lasts three weeks
- people must dip into their savings
- purchase fewer presents for Christmas
- people have to be careful of what they buy

The capacity to convey general and specific aspects of texts

More time needs to be spent developing listening comprehension skills. These can be developed in a variety of different ways. Constant revision of vocabulary and grammatical structures will enable students to perform better in this section of the examination as sometimes answers hinge on a particular grammatical point, for example the tense of a verb.

Students found Text 3 to be the most challenging in this section. From responses given to all three texts, it was evident that students were unable to correctly identify numbers, directions, items of clothing, colours and even months, days and years. Students should also be advised that where details are presented in Italian, these details should be included in their English responses. For example, in Question 1 it was not sufficient to say shirt, pants and glasses.

Part B

Text 4

Question 12

- to advise of the fire danger period

Per avvisare la gente del periodo di pericolo d'incendi

Question 13

- when atmospheric conditions increase the risks of a severe fire starting

Nei giorni in cui le condizioni atmosferiche aumentano il rischio di gravi incendi.

Text 5

Question 14

Use of gas/electric BBQs

- BBQ must be a fixed construction
 - *dev'essere una costruzione permanente, fissa*
- clear all around trees, shrubs, dangerous materials
 - *libero tutto intorno di alberi, cespugli e altro materiale pericoloso*
- adult must be near the BBQ at all times
 - *un adulto deve rimanere vicino al bbq*

- at least 10 litres of water near the BBQ, at arm's reach
- *almeno 10 litri di acqua vicino, a portata di mano*
- for portable BBQs, they must be at least 20 metres from other constructions
- *i bbq portatili devono essere almeno 20 metri di distanza da qualsiasi altra costruzione.*

Capacity to understand general and specific aspects of texts/Capacity to convey information accurately and appropriately

In this section, students are expected to give responses in Italian. The Italian responses were generally mediocre to poor, with a number of students transcribing word for word what they heard in the listening text. Question 14 clearly asked for information related to use of gas or electric barbecues; however, many students gave information about barbecues in general indicating that the question had not been clearly read and understood.

It is clearly stated in the study design that a range of comprehension skills is assessed in this section, so students should expect to answer a range of questions. It should be noted that Part B of the Listening and Responding section is worth 10 marks. Five marks are awarded for comprehension of **both** texts and 5 marks for use of language, incorporating accurate and appropriate grammar and vocabulary, cohesiveness of extended response/s and accurate spelling.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Part A

Text 6

Question 15

- avoid lunchtime
- because it is too crowded

Question 16

- attempted robbery
- the cries of a woman

Question 17

- the bold one had a scar on his cheek
- the other one limped in an obvious way

Question 18

- Nutella is an effective weapon against crime (projectile)

Question 19

- a little sweetness goes a long way/when you're nice, you can achieve anything

Text 7

Question 20

Rooms

- interconnecting
- family rooms
- rooms with living area

Meeting Places

- conference rooms
- buffet restaurant
- games room
- kids' rooms/kids' club

Outdoor activities

- spa
- sunbaking
- bike hire/riding
- playing spaces for children

Health related

- doctor's surgery

Question 21

- award won for the protection of the environment

Capacity to understand and convey general and specific aspects of texts

Most students were able to adequately complete the activities related to the Reading and Responding passages. Students should ensure that they read and understand the questions and use a dictionary effectively and appropriately. Multiple answers are not to be given. In Question 20 under the heading 'health related' the answers *sick bay/clinic/first aid* were given. Where one answer is required, a choice must be made. If the student insists on giving multiple answers only the first one will be read. As for the Listening and Responding section, poor English expression leads to unclear answers. Students must write in clear, precise English ensuring that what is written is accurate and cohesive. When answers in English are unclear, these are marked incorrect.

Part B

Text 8

Capacity to understand general and specific aspects of texts

Possible points to be addressed from the memorandum:

- comment on food – quality, quantity and variety
- thoughts re other activities organised
- suggestions for possible improvements
- thoughts and reasons re concert suggestion
- how to raise money.

Capacity to convey information accurately and appropriately

A letter is not always the text type to be produced in this part of the examination. However, many students wrote a letter to Signor Bauli disregarding the instruction on the task which explicitly asked students to write a report. Features of this text type should have included a title and author, referred to the teacher in the *Lei* form and been written in the *io, noi* or *impersonal form*.

Five marks were allocated to the text type for use of language and text type. The features expected in responses were correct conventions of the text type, correct register, structure and coherence of the text, range and accuracy of grammar and vocabulary and correct spelling.

Part B of the Reading and Responding section was generally handled well. Most students were able to address the 5 points listed above; however, some students did not realise that the task referred to an Australian school. Many students find it difficult to remain within the word limit and so are penalised in both the content and the language criteria. It is important that students remain within the required word length.

Section 3 – Writing in Italian

Relevance, breadth and depth 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:

- 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.

The most popular topic chosen was Question 25 where students had to write a letter to a friend in Italy describing five plans for the future. While this was an imaginative piece, most students who attempted this were far from creative with many very predictable responses (*travel, study, housework, gardening, art, hobbies*). The text type, informal letter, was well handled with conventions, content and style being mostly appropriate to the task.

Questions 23 and 24, the education system in Australia and the benefits of having studied Italian received close to equal attention from students. The informative and persuasive/evaluative kinds of writing required for these tasks were handled well. Answers for Question 23 might have included a *possible comparison with Italy; 4 terms, long day, 5 days, uniform, school structure, starting age*, and for Question 24 answers included *ability to communicate, access to Italian media, improved mother tongue, increased job prospects, cultural appreciation, travel*. The text types, article and journal were generally handled well and conventions, content and style were mostly appropriate to the task.

Few students chose to attempt Question 26. Students were able to choose their position and possible answers were (*positive*) – *monotonous, bad language, no music skill, poor role model, negative lyrics* and from the negative point of view, modern music is *relevant to youth, mood, identity, role models*. The required text type, script of a speech, was well handled with conventions, content and style appropriate to the task.

In all tasks students made careless grammatical errors: incorrect conjugations of verbs, incorrect auxiliaries, poor spelling, incorrect agreements, possessive adjectives, articles, relative pronouns and articulated prepositions were all problems. Some students were not able to conjugate the present tense or move beyond to the past, future or conditional as required by the respective task. Students need to be aware that one of the criteria assesses *range* of vocabulary and

structure and therefore should go beyond the obvious vocabulary and tenses of verbs. As for content, it is inappropriate to use the information studied in the Detailed Study and make it 'fit' into one of the topics.

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