

Examiners' Report Summer 2008

GCE

GCE Italian (8330/9330)

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6561/01 Listening and Writing Examiner's report

Candidates are required to listen to authentic recorded target-language material, to retrieve and convey information by responding to a range of mainly target-language questions and by producing a guided summary in English. They are also required to provide personal responses in the target language.

Assessment principles

Up to 26 marks are awarded positively for correct information retrieved and conveyed in response to target-language questions (questions 1, 2, 3 and 4). The quality of language is not relevant unless it impedes communication.

Up to 4 marks are awarded for content and 4 for quality of language for each of the two personal responses to questions 5 (a) and (b) according to the relevant grids, for a maximum total of 16 marks.

Up to 8 marks are awarded positively for a guided summary in English showing the ability to understand the gist and details, infer ideas, select information, transfer it and communicate it concisely. No marks are awarded in this section for answers totally or partially in Italian.

Candidates' responses

Candidates showed understanding of the requirements of this unit and performed generally well.

Question 1 (multiple choice): was intended to be accessible to the majority of the candidates. In actual fact, whilst on the total cohort 75% scored full marks, only about 20% of the weaker candidates understood that the advert was mainly addressed to non smokers (Q1(i)). It was assumed that '*Tu che non fumi*' at the beginning of the text would be accessible to most candidates.

Question 2 (table) was as accessible as it was intended to be. Even the majority of the weaker candidates managed to score 3 points. The items that caused loss of points was Q29(iv) where candidates wrote € 19 instead of 19.90. In some cases Q2(i) was left blank, possibly having been overlooked.

Question 3 (gap filling). The majority of candidates scored at least 4 of the 6 marks available. 3(c) and 3(f) were not always understood and often misspelt. Allowances were made for singular/plural and for incorrect spelling that were recognisable but not ambiguous (unfortunately, '*meta*' could not be credited instead of '*metà*' because of the different meaning). Candidates at the lower end of the ability range generally managed two marks, for (a) and (b).

Question 4 (target language questions and answers)

The passage was about 'Vacanze in crociera' and was reasonably well understood in spite of being perhaps a somewhat unfamiliar type of holiday with most of the candidates.

This set of questions catered well for all ranges of abilities. Some factual questions could be successfully tackled by all candidates, some required more interpretation and were intended to separate the more able candidates. Most of the weaker candidates managed to score 5 or 6 marks out of the 12, whereas top ability candidates scored 11 or 12 marks.

Q4(a) and 4(b) there was occasional confusion between 4, 14 and 40 or the wrong number of noughts from those who decided to use figures instead of letters.

Q4(c) and 4(d) were factual questions and most candidates scored at least two marks for correctly identifying and transcribing the relevant information. There were the occasional transcriptions or the wrong piece of information (eg. *'tutti che vogliono divertirsi'*)

Q4(e) was targeted at the more able candidates as it required a fair amount of interpretation and manipulation. Many candidates showed both lack of comprehension and had difficulty in wording the answer. Only very able candidates scored both points.

Q4(f) many candidates overlooked the implication of the word *'modi'*. The simple lift of two places with no context was only worth one mark.

Q4(g) was intended to be an inferential question, but a larger number than expected managed to score both marks thanks to a fairly accurate transcription of the text.

Questions 5 (personal response)

Many candidates performed poorly within this section of this paper. They did not make good use of the 40 word limit, thus making it difficult to convey interesting ideas. Some candidates simply lifted *'Secondo me i vantaggi di una vacanza in crociera rispetto alla vacanza in albergo...'* therefore wasting 14 words and gained little credit for content and none for quality of language. Candidates should be reminded to read through their written text before and after extraneous words are crossed out, as what is left sometimes does not always make sense. There were nonetheless a few very good answers to both questions.

For Q5(a) there were some interesting suggestions of a safer environment, social expansion, stress free holiday as everything is provided, availability of different forms of entertainment close at hand, and being able to visit many places in one holiday without needing to pack every day. The majority of answers, though, often consisted on lifting from the text with very little personal contribution both in terms of language and contents. Some candidates wrote about luxury hotels on the beach which showed they did not understand *'crociera'*.

For Q5(b) there were also some interesting suggestions: advertising campaigns, special prices and group discounts, doing away with *'eleganza'* and offering cheaper fast-food options, disco music, stop-over at resorts which appeal to young people and so on. A large proportions of candidates only listed examples of other facilities they would add, including football pitches, tennis courts and computer games. Some candidates even included cinemas, having paid little attention to the fact that they are already on a cruise ship. Some candidates wasted words to say what a good idea it was to have *'crociere riservate ai giovani'* or to suggest that older people should not be allowed to take part in them.

Question 6 (guided English summary)

This question was answered well on the whole. There were no more than a handful of answers in Italian and it was pleasing to see that word count was generally adhered to. Where it was not, it was mainly because of excess detail in box (a).

The majority of candidates managed to score at least one mark for each box. In box (a) nearly everybody retrieved the idea of 'picnic' but weaker candidates could not work out

what the young people were celebrating. In some cases, excess of detail about the place where the picnic was being held wasted a lot of words which would have been useful later on. In box (b), the idea of shelter was conveyed by most candidates but lack of specific reference to 'storm' rather than the generic 'bad weather' was often the cause of the loss of the second mark. Many lost marks in box (c) for not specifying the number of people injured. There were also several imaginative answers about the tree falling down, cars crashing into trees and even thunder hitting the tree(!), but the idea of 'lightening' was successfully retrieved by most. Box (d) was meant for the information about the man who was flown to Palermo but who was expected to make a full recovery. However the bullet point was often misunderstood to mean more than one person. Given the ambiguity of the English wording, which does not give any indication of singular or plural, 'were taken immediately to the local hospital' was also accepted as a creditable point.

Advice and Guidance

Candidates appeared to be generally well trained to tackle this unit. More candidates were able to answer questions requiring more than just identifying factual information, but more training on answering questions requiring inference would be useful. This skill will be required also in the new format which will be examined for the first time in 2009. Advice about Q5 and Q6, will be of interest to the candidates who will be sitting the new AS exam in 2009.

Candidates are reminded that tidy presentation is even more essential now that answers are marked on line. Candidates are strongly advised to write their answers in the space provided or to indicate it clearly if for any reason the answer is completed elsewhere.

6562/01 Reading and Writing Examiner's report

In this paper candidates are required to read authentic texts in Italian and to retrieve and convey information given in the texts by responding to a range of question types mainly in Italian. Candidates are also required to write 140-160 words in Italian based on a short printed stimulus and a list of 4 bullet points in the target language. The paper this year consisted of five texts of varying lengths. Reading tasks were set on the first four passages and in the final task candidates were required to write a letter in Italian in response to a few extracts from a newspaper article.

The paper produced a good range of marks and once again a good number of candidates scored in excess of 60 marks.

Assessment Principles

Candidates were awarded marks for Q1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 as shown in the Mark Scheme. If certain details are underlined in the Mark Scheme then these formed an essential part of an answer. The quality of the Italian in the answers to Q4 is not assessed as the marks are allocated for the correct content, unless of course the quality of the Italian is so poor as to render an answer incomprehensible. This was often the case with the very weak candidates. It was encouraging to note that most candidates now realise that they are not allowed to copy their answers verbatim from the text and they made every effort to respect the instruction in the rubric to this question. Inevitably it is usually the weaker candidates who lack the linguistic skill to do other than copy. In answer to question 4(d) *un generale peggioramento nella qualità dei pasti, una certa sporcizia generale e un pericoloso declino dei prodotti locali* was a fairly frequent response where all terms were copied verbatim from the text. Many candidates simply added *c'è* and then proceeded to copy the text. It is worth reminding candidates that manipulation must occur within the text itself. A small percentage of candidates sometimes wrote very long answers. The answers to most questions are quite brief. It is worth reminding candidates that they are not expected to find synonyms for every word but they are expected to re-phrase some part of the original text. The written task, Q6, was marked for Content (20 marks) and Quality of Language (20 marks). There are still many candidates who write over the word limit, although, on the whole, this year the word limit was much better adhered to. This year, some candidates wrote far too much for the second bullet point, or tended to write in general terms about the importance of family and friends and about the hobbies of young people in general before addressing the questions. Unfortunately for these candidates, their efforts go unrewarded. In fact they often end up by being penalised quite heavily under Content, as within the 160 word limit only one bullet point has usually been addressed. The message is the same as it ever was: abide by the rubric.

Candidates' Responses

The first three exercises are intended to be a 'gentle introduction' to this paper and, in the main, the results bore this out. The very good candidates often scored the maximum 18 marks. The less able also coped quite well. Those who performed poorly in these initial exercises usually struggled with the remainder of the exam, given that the level of difficulty increases in Q4 and Q5. Unless someone fails to answer Q6 then it is extremely unlikely that a candidate does not gain some credit for both Content and Language. Having said this, Q6 certainly discriminates between those candidates who respond appropriately and fairly accurately to the bullet points and others whose linguistic skills are weak.

As already mentioned most candidates coped well with the first three questions. It was rare that a candidate got less than three out of four marks for question 1. Q2 should now be very familiar to those who have worked on past papers but there were still many

candidates who wrote out a chunk of the text instead of the one word required for every question except (c). Questions (a), (b) and (c) were not answered as well as they could have been. Q3 was generally very well done.

Q4. The questions were carefully devised to ensure that candidates could not just lift their answers verbatim but there are always some who manage to do so. Questions (a) to (d) were quite straightforward, whereas (e) to (g) imposed a few more demands on the candidates. Questions (a) to (e) were overall very well answered, showing at times a degree of sophistication in the manipulation of the source text. In many cases, candidates were unable to manipulate *in base all'impatto del turismo* and copied it verbatim. The answers to (b) were varied, but most candidates managed to convey the idea that the tourist contributed to the decline of Venice. Question (c) was misunderstood by a significant number of weaker candidates, who rather than express the concept of the Venetians exploiting the tourists, tended to respond *non gli piacciono i turisti* or a similar concept of the Venetians not liking the tourists. A considerable number of candidates gave the answer that the tourists did not understand the life of the Venetians, thereby showing a misunderstanding of the question and of the conjunction *dal momento che*. The most frequent error in (e) was the reply *no, sono tutti negativi*, which showed a misunderstanding of *nonostante* and was obviously not acceptable. Questions (f) and (g) required candidates to manipulate the elements of the source text placed in inverted commas. Many candidates were unable to manipulate the text and copied verbatim once again, when changing *una cattedrale restaurata in maniera meravigliosa* to *la cattedrale è stata restaurata in maniera meravigliosa* would have been sufficient. The manipulation of *le strutture per i portatori di handicap* proved beyond many candidates.

Q5. This question gave ample opportunities to candidates across the ability range to gain some marks. However it was disheartening to see some candidates failed to understand basic words that should feature regularly in the GCSE programme of study. A case in point were several instances of 'leave the TV' to render *spegni* in (a). On a positive note there were many candidates who demonstrated a good understanding of the relevant details of the text and provided very good, clear answers. Most candidates were able to obtain the mark allotted to the second part of the first question. (b) and (c) were also generally well answered, with most candidates able to gain at least one mark in (c). In question (d), many candidates did not understand *nata un decennio fa* and gave 'last year' as the answer. Questions (e) and (h) certainly served to discriminate between the more able and less able candidates. To answer (e) candidates had to understand the meaning of *avrà portata nazionale* and not many did, with 'it will have brought a nationwide thank you' being a frequent, incorrect, answer. *In un luogo ancora da stabilire* also required precision in the answer, with many candidates opting for 'in a stable place'.

Q6 A high percentage of the candidates now seem to realise the importance of answering this question within the stipulated number of words. (The appropriate letter format is not counted in the maximum 160 word limit). There were some really excellent answers to this question. It was good to see so many candidates who dealt with the four bullet points in the order in which they were presented, refrained from irrelevance and waffle, and scored very high marks under Content. The first bullet point was generally very well developed, with the majority of candidates able to produce a balanced response to the question. A minority of candidates misunderstood or misconstrued the question and gave a general response on the importance of friends/family as opposed to the personal response required in the question. The second bullet point produced a more mixed response. Many candidates simply listed their hobbies without giving an opinion, as was required by the question. Generally candidates responded to both parts of the question. However, in a significant number of cases, candidates wrote too much on this point, thereby rushing the final one in order not to exceed the word limit. The third bullet point elicited a wide

variety of answers on whether alcohol and cigarettes are a problem, and many candidates expanded to state that other problems are more serious, e.g. drugs. The fourth bullet point was not always as well developed as the 2nd and 3rd bullet points. Presumably because of the constraints posed by the word limit. Most candidates gave one or two suggestions, with very few able to expand beyond this.

As far as Quality of Language is concerned, the outcome was much as expected. There were some excellent candidates who displayed a good range of structures and vocabulary and made very few errors. A written task that has just a few errors can be awarded maximum marks and there were candidates who reached this pinnacle. The middle-of-the-road candidates tended to use a limited number of tenses and structures and the variety of vocabulary was lacking. The very weak candidates had very little inkling of the basic rudiments of the language. At this level candidates should be able to write a simple sentence with a certain degree of accuracy.

Many of the structures that the weaker candidates attempted to use were rather anglicised. Other weaknesses included: adjectival agreement; incorrect endings of regular verbs in the present, future and conditional; incorrect use of the definite and indefinite articles; incorrect use of the auxiliary with frequently used verbs e.g. *ho andato*.

Advice and Guidance

The advice and guidance is no different from that suggested in previous reports. As regards the rubric for each question, it seems that this year the majority of candidates complied with all the necessary instructions. It is always worth reminding candidates of the need to answer the final written task within the word limit as failure to do so can result in a lot of marks for Content being needlessly lost. It is always a good idea to draw candidates' attention at frequent intervals to the various strategies that can be employed to guess the meaning of Italian words, of particular importance for questions 4 and 5. In this year's paper candidates should have been able to guess for example *apatia*, *isolamento*, *impatto* to mention but a few. In order to develop a good range of vocabulary candidates need to be exposed to a variety of texts and have ample practice in different exercise types to be able to deal competently with the first three questions. All candidates require a good deal of classroom practice in re-phrasing and manipulating the language of the original text to be able to cope adequately with Q4. For Q5, spelling and the inability to communicate answers in English will remain a problem if candidates do not spend sufficient time reading in their native language. It would at least be useful if teachers concentrated on parts of a text they are using in class and got their students to express the meaning of certain expressions in English. Training in time-management and reading techniques such as skimming and scanning should also form an integral part of exam preparation. Candidates should always be reminded of the fact that 50% of the marks for this Unit are allocated to the Writing Task (Q6). They would be well advised to devote an appropriate amount of their time to this activity and ensure that it is well planned so that all the bullet points are dealt with appropriately. All candidates need regular practice in the art of getting the essential parts of the message across in a concise way. In a Writing task that imposes a maximum word limit of 160 words there is no place for irrelevant passages.

6563/15 Prepared Oral Topic Examiner's report

Candidates, in this Unit, are required to prepare, present and discuss with their teacher examiner (TE) a topic of their choice, dealing with an aspect of Italian culture and/or society. They will need to research their chosen area and undertake extended reading from a variety of sources. The Oral form, (see Appendix 1 in the specification), must be completed with the topic title and 5-10 headings (in Italian) must be completed and be used for reference during the test to remind the candidate and the TE of the key aspects of the topic.

The Unit 3 prepared oral test although devoted entirely to a prepared oral topic must show the candidates' ability to engage in a conversation, to provide information and to express opinions and thereby demonstrate **knowledge and understanding (K/U)** of the chosen topic.

Assessment Principles

Up to 60 marks will be awarded positively using the revised grid for: **Quality of Language 20 marks (10 for Accuracy and 10 for Range); Response 20 marks; Knowledge and Understanding 20 marks.**

Candidates' Responses

The overall impression this year indicates that many candidates were very well prepared and well researched with a wide range of well chosen topics which produced very good performances. A large number of candidates had thoroughly prepared their chosen topic and were able to present all of the relevant facts, had the ability to analyse them in a remarkable way and as a result express their opinions in a spontaneous discussion.

The importance of spontaneity must be mentioned once again in relation to performances that can only be described as:

- stage-managed, in which candidates have learned everything by heart for the whole oral and at times spend an agonizing 10 minutes regurgitating information, often leaving out bits so that the conversation becomes largely meaningless.
- monologue, with no teacher participation.
- one centre one topic, when a class had studied the same topic and TE rotates the same unpredictable questions to all candidates (all of whom had learned the answers more or less well).

This is often done in complete good faith but lack of spontaneity limits severely the marks for Response. The repetition of language, often far above candidates' real level of competence, can only result in poor levels of accuracy.

Some candidates demonstrated up-to-date knowledge of Italian social problems with at the top of the list *Il problema dello smaltimento dei rifiuti in Campania*, making interesting links with Camorra. Literary subjects were popular as usual including titles like: *Il giorno della civetta*, *Se questo è un uomo*, *Io non ho paura*, *Romanzo criminale e Seta*.

The wide range of films studied included some more recent one like: *Le fate ignoranti*, *Io non ho paura*, *Le conseguenze dell'amore*, *La stanza del figlio* and the more classic *Il Postino* e *Cinema Paradiso*. Among the most popular topics featured there were: *una regione*, *il carnevale*, *l'unificazione d'Italia*, *scandali e problemi del calcio italiano*, *l'immigrazione*. The *Mafia* was also a popular topic, although many candidates failed to provide enough analysis in their replies. Stronger candidates were able to explain the

importance of the immediate post-war situation in the development of mafia links with politics and argued that both *Mafiosi* and politicians benefited from this relationship.

On the whole topics were generally wisely chosen, although there were some candidates who chose topics such as: *il cibo italiano, la moda, gli stilisti italiani, il fumo, l'anoressia*, that were very general and strayed consistently from the Italian context and/or tended to be within the level of factual knowledge. In these instances the marking of knowledge and understanding was reduced for the lack of opinions and evidence offered by the candidates. A few topics were based on a comparison with the UK or regrettably some TE insisted on eliciting it during the discussion. On a few occasions candidates, who were native speakers, had prepared nothing and have done no research on the topic and just turned up for a nice chat. One or two candidates failed to relate the topic of their choice to the Italian context.

Performances in terms of linguistic criteria did not differ from the previous exam series: the range was wide and well distributed, from very good performances - above specification requirements - to moderate but still extension of linguistic skills from GCSE. The range of lexis was good or even very good, but structures were very often limited and repetitive, with a large number of candidates not attempting any subordinate clauses. In the case of scripted material, structures were often too complex for the candidates' ability and resulted into ridiculously flawed regurgitation.

Accuracy about agreements, gender and often verbs endings still a problem even with stronger candidates and errors in word stress remain frequent. A recurrent use of two false friends has been noticed, these are *Affettare* e *Supportare*. In addition, almost all candidates seem to ignore that *la clima, la problema, la tema, la sistema* are, in fact, masculine rather than feminine nouns.

Teacher Examiners (TE)

The exams were generally well conducted. It was evident that a good number of TE had conscientiously prepared their candidates' topics eliciting very good performances from their students. These TE also tend **NOT** to correct their candidates and limit their input to a minimum. However there are some TE who tend to test specific facts, keeping the conversation within the level of factual knowledge rather than encouraging discussion. Some, although few, TE encourage discussion on personal experience and interests, others follow the bullet points without challenging the candidate, several correct and interrupt candidates. There are still examiners that don't appreciate the difference between a discussion and a chat and often ask GCSE type questions or stuck to minimalist, ambiguous questions or fail to introduce unpredictable questions. Pre-arranged unpredictable questions do not gain any credit.

Administration

There were still problems with the timing (anything between 8 and 35 minutes). It must be reiterated that candidates are not likely to gain anything from a longer exam. If they are able they can demonstrate that in the time given. If they are not so able, they are more likely to show their weaker points as the exam goes on. Shorter exams are self-penalising because they don't offer the opportunity to show the required amount of K/U and the ability to sustain response and quality of language. Shorter exams marks will be reduced proportionally to the time.

In some oral forms questions were written instead of headings and/or bullet points were random sentences which looked more like notes than headings. These can make difficult

to identify the unpredictable elements and can also show the not spontaneous nature of the discussion.

Quality of recording was generally good but would all centres please ensure that recording equipment is in good order so that recording can be made that are of good quality. It is extremely difficult to try to assess the accuracy of the language when one has to struggle with fuzzy background noises or candidates barely audible. This year yet again some exams could not be marked. It is recommended that the quality of recording is checked at the end of each exam.

Advice and guidance

Advice and guidance can be derived from comments made in the report. In particular:

- candidates should chose a topic of personal interest; the topic must be related to the culture and society of Italy or an Italian speaking community
- extensive research and reading should be taken
- the topic should not only involve factual knowledge but imply analysis, valuation and opinion
- candidates should plan and prepare, not memorise, their 2 minutes presentation and be ready to discuss the topic thereafter.

Teacher examiners should:

- elicit discussion and not test for knowledge only
- refrain from engaging candidates in comparison with UK
- make sure the topic is focused on Italian context and steer the candidates towards it when he/she strays away
- ask genuine unpredictable questions related to the chosen topic
- give an hesitant candidate the chance to respond but don't correct or interrupt
- rephrase a question when a response is not appropriate.

6564/16 Oral Discussion of Issue Examiner's report

Candidates are required to choose and prepare an issue on which they must adopt a stance. There is NO requirement to relate the initial issue to the culture and society of the target language and candidates may select any viable issue to debate but this issue must not be related to the Unit 3 topic or to Unit 5. Candidates must complete the Oral form with a brief statement, in Italian, of their issue and stance to debate.

The test begins with the candidate outlining his/her stance for about 1 minute. The examiner then challenges it and the candidate must defend it in discussion for 3-4 minutes. For the remaining 10 minutes the examiner (TE) initiates a spontaneous discussion on TWO further issues, moving away from the chosen one onto unpredictable areas. Candidates are expected to express and justify opinions, argue a case, discuss problems or current controversies as they arise naturally in spontaneous conversation.

Assessment Principles

Up to **60 marks** are awarded positively using the revised grid: **Quality of Language 20 marks (10 for Accuracy and 10 for Range); Response 20 marks; Issue 5 marks; Justification and Debate 15 marks.**

Candidates' Responses

This year's candidates showed genuine interest in their chosen issue and were motivated to discuss it intelligently. A good number of chosen issues lend themselves to a good debate; however in a significant minority of cases the debate was over-rehearsed. Similarly most teachers were excellent in opposing the candidates' views and eliciting good debate. A wider range of issues was chosen and it was interesting to listen to discussions concerning current issues such as: *diritti delle coppie di fatto; accidents at work; GMO and GM food; inefficiency of health screening; new road safety regulations; organ donation and recent governmental proposal; stem cell breakthrough; il ponte di Messina; boycott Beijing 2008; whale hunting.*

The most popular topics were: *abortion, death penalty, euthanasia* (if one topic was chosen the other two automatically were a certainty in the course of discussion); *global warming; ban on smoking; legalisation of drugs, smoking, alcohol; fashion and 0 size; immigration; nuclear energy; pollution.*

On the topic of Abortion, candidates were able to refer to specific regulations and scientific arguments. The most successful candidates succeeded in presenting a balanced argument between scientific and ethical perspectives taking into account social and cultural circumstances. However, in a number of cases candidates presented rather unsubstantiated views based on common and often populist beliefs.

Immigration was also a popular topic in which candidates explored the European migration and its effects on economy, the world of work, religious and social integration. Arguments encircled work-related issues, the reaction of most countries towards immigrants, the necessity to regulate laws in order to protect human rights, the rise in violence and crime in inner cities and terrorism.

In a few instances candidates referred specifically to minority groups, for example "*le badanti*" exploring their role supporting the elderly and a plight of mainly Romanian, Nigerian and Albanian young girls driven to prostitution.

The better prepared candidates discussed the benefits of a multicultural society balancing the problems with the positive side of immigration.

Overall candidates who debated on immigration were well prepared and opinionated.

On the topic of euthanasia, candidates discussed well-known, current cases and the way different countries deal with the moral and medical approach towards ending the life of sufferers. Frequently stances seemed to deal with the polar opposites of Christian and atheist views on life and failed to explore the grey areas.

Feminism in 21st Century Italy was also a popular choice in which candidates highlighted the ever present problem of women establishing careers and related difficulties with starting a family and child care. Candidates often tried to be provocative in their discussions mentioning stereotypes such as “*mammismo*”, the Church pressure on family values *et al*, and this led occasionally to lose the thread of the debate or to contradiction. Candidates who did not do so well as they could have, did so more because of teachers’ misinterpretation in conducting the exam rather their own inability or lack of preparation.

Teacher Examiners (TE)

Candidates’ success in Unit 4 is even more reliant on a good conduct of exam than Unit 3 as the quality of debate depends very much on TE counterarguments for the chosen issue and the nature of the questions asked for the further issues. Whilst thanking many examiners who were good in conducting the exams bringing out the best from their candidates, it could be useful to highlight examples of less successful conduct for the benefit of future TE or those in need to improve their skills. The TE should get sight of the oral form before undertaking the conduct of the oral and should prepare valid counterarguments to avoid awkward silences and/or to be stuck for issues to discuss. For the debate to be interesting the counterarguments must be well focused. The all too frequent “*Cosa ne pensi?- Perchè sei interessato?- Dove hai fatto le ricerche? - Sei a favore o contro?*” are likely to produce nothing more than a wishy-washy debate. After about 5 minutes the TE should initiate a SPONTANEOUS discussion covering two further issues. A significant number of examiners completely ignored the requirements to explore at least TWO further unpredictable issues and on several occasion inappropriate personal questions were asked which clearly impacted on the overall tone of the test. If a TE covers just one issue then the mark for Justification and Debate is drastically reduced. The exam still about J/D, although examiners are not required to take the opposite view in the unpredictable areas, inputs like “*Adesso cambiamo argomento .Che cosa sai su...?*” will not prompt a high level of debate, original thoughts and independent judgement. A small number of TE still not aware of the requirements treating the second part of the test more as a conversation rather than a debate and causing candidates to lose marks. In one instance on the topic of immigration in Italy these were the type of questions asked :

“ *Perchè vengono così numerosi? Quali nazioni sono rappresentate? La maggioranza è mussulmana? Sono loro a commettere il maggior numero di crimini? Perchè vanno in Italia? Ci sono possibilità di lavoro? E il ruolo della Chiesa?*” The role of TE is not to ask questions to elicit factual information, although the candidate might well refer to some factual information to help to support and justify a point of view.

Some TE made the mistake to introduce too many issues without allowing any in depth discussion. It is acceptable to move on if a candidate is really floundering and might handle another issue better, but a string of issues only just touched upon is not likely to show the candidate’s ability to **sustain** the debate.

Some teachers seems to believe that after the debate of the initial issue the exam can be turned into a cosy chat and even state the fact “*Adesso passiamo alla seconda parte dove possiamo fare un po’ di conversazione*”. This generally means that the debate is over and two thirds of the exam are spent on irrelevant material.

TE must remember that a good debate depend very much on the challenge that he/she puts to the candidates, both for the chosen and unpredictable issues. If candidates are trained regularly in the art of debate and discussion, they will almost certainly do well.

As far as quality of Language is concerned performances did not differ much from previous series. Control over agreements, gender and verbs endings remain a problem also at this level. Some inaccuracies were related to single words or phrases such as: “*le streghe del sabato sera*” instead of “*le stragi del sabato sera*”, “*in galleria*” instead of “*galera*”, “*il punizio*” instead of “*la punizione*”, “*utanàsea*” instead of “*eutanasia*”, *la sistema, la problema* as well as the recurrent use of two false friends “*Affettare*” and “*Supportare*”. However, there is more to success with this unit than just level of language. A well prepared set of arguments in support of the stance taken on the chosen issue can go a long way to compensate for language weaknesses, whereas a low level of debate may deny access to top marks even when the language is there.

Administration

Some problems arising from the administration of the test can be recap as follow:

- Recording equipment tested and in good working order, but microphone moved away from the candidate during the test, resulting in almost inaudible recording;
- register/Oral Form missing;
- title of topic on Oral Form in English;
- stance not clear
- exam either too long or too short. Too many teachers finished the examination between 4 and 6 minutes early, with tragic consequences for candidates’ final mark, which is reduce proportionally to the time of the test.

Advice and Guidance

Teacher’s examiners should:

- make sure that the issue is clearly stated and a stance is taken;
- prepare challenging counterarguments;
- debate the chosen issue for the time required, but no longer;
- introduce two further issues
- exploit all the potential of subsequent issues;
- refrain from being too antagonistic;
- keep the debate going;
- remember that eliciting knowledge or chatting about personal experiences is a waste of time and opportunity.

Candidates should:

- select an issue that is of genuine personal interest;
- adopt a stance and be ready to defend it;
- be prepared to be engaged in a free-ranging discussion of further issues for the remaining 10 minutes.

In the interest of candidates, teacher examiners are advised to scrupulously adhere to administrative procedures.

Can I also remind to all teacher’s examiners that the new Unit 3 “Understanding and Spoken Response in Italian”, whose first examination will start in 2010 is based on the current Unit 4. Students will have to take a clear stance on any issue of their choice and use the language of debate and argument.

6565/01 Topics and Texts Examiner's report

Assessment Principles

All answers are marked according to the mark grids in the syllabus and each was read once for language and once for content. The mark grids make it clear that five essential elements of the work are being evaluated:

- knowledge of the text and/or topic
- the ability to use and analyse that knowledge
- coherent and persuasive organisation of material
- logical sequencing and development of ideas
- accuracy and sophistication of written Italian

As was the case last year, candidates' responses showed a range in terms of quality, with some limited responses. While there was a decrease in the number of questions where candidates failed to address the question set, there was still a significant number of responses which failed to meet the requirements of the question. This seemed to be the case where candidates misread or misunderstood the question. It is essential that candidates address the question set and they are advised to read the question carefully. There were also many good or very good responses and the majority of candidates wrote substantially more than the 250 word limit in their answers. The majority of candidates proved comfortable writing their responses in Italian.

Candidates are reminded clearly on the front of the paper of the need to correctly indicate their choice of answer and more importantly, the part of the question they are answering. In spite of the fact that this was as explicit as ever, many candidates still indicated that they were answering one part of the question for instance, 3a when they were answering the other part, 3b.

Candidates were once again keen to quote from the texts studied, and once again there were instances of misquoting. It was however encouraging to see that this was not as commonplace as in previous years. Candidates do not need to quote from texts but textual reference to exemplify and substantiate the points made is desirable and necessary. Some candidates did at times misspell the names of characters or places and this creates a poor impression. This is something that the candidates should learn reliably.

Although there is a word limit, this is merely a guide and better candidates produced more than this limit through development of their ideas and a greater degree of analytical sophistication. Some candidates who wrote extensively on a topic or text tended to lose sight of the question and incurred penalties as a result. Equally candidates who wrote very short responses tended to lose marks due to the lack of development and analysis within their argument. Candidates who clearly planned their answer tended to do much better as a lack of planning often results in rambling responses where ideas are not well sequenced and material is not presented logically. Candidates are reminded of the importance of planning their response within the context of the question set. They are also reminded of the importance of clear and careful presentation in their answers.

There were a small number of responses on the *Italia anni 2000* topic this year, with Q1(a) proving considerably more popular than Q1(b). In Q1(a) candidates were generally able to mention some key instances of political and economic opposition to immigration. Candidates mentioned the policies of the *Lega Nord*, the economic situation (particularly in relation to employment, where they felt that Italians fear for their jobs as a result of increased immigration) and the nature of Italian society in general among their reasons. Candidates did not prove as successful in their discussion of the extent to which racism has

become a problem in Italy. Many responses entered the realms of a discursive essay on racism and lost marks accordingly.

There were very few responses to Q1(b) and even fewer successful ones. Candidates who answered this question tended to produce a generic, discursive-style essay on the role of women in society. These answers were generally largely irrelevant to the question set and very few marks were awarded as a result.

There were again few responses on the *Risorgimento* this year, although these were generally better than in the previous year. For Q2(a), some candidates felt that the *Risorgimento* was a political triumph, some felt it was a military one and some felt it was a combination of both. Many candidates mentioned the contribution of key figures from the period, most notably Cavour, Mazzini and Garibaldi. The ideology of these individuals, as well as the role of Vittorio Emanuele was often mentioned in discussions, as was the *spedizione dei mille*.

Q2(b) offered candidates a great deal of scope for their response. Many candidates felt that the *spedizione dei mille* or the march on Rome were the key moments in the birth of Italy. Some candidates felt that it was a combination of different factors and felt that it was not possible to identify one precise moment. This was a valid response as long as answers were fully justified and points substantiated. However, several candidates lost sight of their argument and failed to express their response sufficiently well within the confines of the question and scored poorly as a result.

The topic on the Italian region once again proved to be very popular and part (a) attracted the vast majority of the responses to this question. Candidates were generally very knowledgeable about the products associated with the *tradizioni gastronomiche* of their chosen region and were able to give examples of fish, wine, fruit and other products as well as describe many of the regional specialities. Some candidates mentioned the eating habits of the region's inhabitants and some mentioned the changing nature of these as a result of factors such as immigration, the changing nature of society and the influence of fast food, for example. Where candidates made these points well, they added to the overall degree of sophistication of analysis. On the other hand, some candidates produced responses which were rambling, largely due to a lack of coherence to the argument being made. In response to the second part of Q3(a), candidates mentioned exports and tourism as ways in which these *tradizioni gastronomiche* represent an economic advantage to the region. Unfortunately, the majority of candidates did not substantiate these points well and the failure to do so resulted in a lower mark. It is also worth noting that some candidates chose to focus on the economic disadvantages. When the possible disadvantages were discussed by way of contrast to the advantages, this was acceptable. However, where candidates focused solely on the disadvantages a significant part of their response was totally irrelevant to the question set. Another point of concern is the number of candidates who clearly did not know what the word *gastronomiche* meant. Some candidates discussed the historical, religious or cultural traditions of their chosen region and as a result failed to score as these responses were completely irrelevant.

Q3(b) included recent initiatives to do with transport, the environment, property and tourism. However, very few candidates managed to discuss these in detail nor did they outline the positive and/or negative effects of these initiatives on the inhabitants of the region in a convincing manner. Responses to this question were generally disappointing.

Q4 attracted a fair number of responses, with Q4(b) proving to be the more popular of the two options. Q4(a) was on the whole disappointing. Candidates rarely went beyond a basic description of *omertà* as a code of silence. There was little discussion as to the origins of

this or the way in which it works. There was even less successful discussion of the extent to which *omertà* continues to play an important role within the Sicilian mafia. Some candidates also mentioned the *Camorra* and *'Ndrangheta* and while this may have been valid by way of contrast, this was rarely the case and as such, was irrelevant to the question.

The responses to Q4(b) were generally much better. Candidates were generally able to mention some of the key events in the fight against the mafia in the 1980s and 1990s. Answers included the *pool antimafia*, the *maxiprocessi*, the *pentiti* and the work of key figures such as Borsellino and Falcone. Other candidates mentioned the role of the Church, with figures such as Don Pugliesi in this struggle. Some candidates also mentioned the role the ordinary people played during this period, with changing perceptions and increasing protest. In answer to the second part of the question, candidates mentioned the impact of the mafia in terms of the impact of the arrests of its members and the subsequent need for the organisation to restructure and diversify its activities.

As with last year, the fascist era texts attracted a fairly limited number of responses. Candidates generally displayed a good knowledge of the texts, the most popular of these once again being *Il giardino dei Finzi-Contini* and *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*. Candidates were able to give examples of characters that collaborate with the fascist regime and in a discussion of their motives for collaboration candidates mentioned the need to survive, intentional self-preservation, stoic acceptance of the situation and greed as possibilities.

Q5(b) was slightly more popular with candidates displaying an ability to provide examples of both optimism and pessimism within the texts they studied. Most candidates felt the message of the texts to be more pessimistic than optimistic, although others felt that the messages were ambivalent on the whole.

The *letteratura e cinema* option was extremely popular, attracting a very large number of responses. Q6(a) attracted the vast majority of these responses and candidates were generally able to give some examples of childhood innocence in the novel and the film. Candidates mentioned the childhood games and dialogue, the reaction of Michele when he finds Filippo and Michele's initial veneration of his father as examples of this. Better candidates were able to discuss the interpersonal relationships among the children as well as the use of imagination and imagery in response to this part of the question. There was a wide range in terms of ability to answer the second part of the question. Most candidates felt that innocence was lost to a greater or lesser extent in the end. Most referred to Michele's realisation of events and the changes in his relationship with and perception of his father at the end.

Q6(b) attracted a small amount of responses. Candidates were generally able to give examples of the climate and landscape and these included the isolation of *Acqua Traversa*, the torrid summer, the oppressive nature of the climate by way of example. In an attempt to discuss how these elements are important for the development of the story, candidates mentioned the fact that the heat forces the adults to stay indoors, allowing the children to roam free and creating the situation whereby Michele can find Filippo. Others mentioned the isolation of the place as a motive for the kidnap of Filippo as the adults wanted to escape the desolation of their surroundings. Better candidates mentioned a sense of foreboding which results from the oppressive atmosphere. Others mentioned how the backdrop allows the children's imaginations to develop and that this is vital to the imagery. In terms of whether the film or the novel is more effective in the presentation of the backdrop, some candidates felt that the novel is more effective as it allows the reader to use the greater detail in the source material to develop the story in their own imagination. Other candidates felt that the film gives the reader an immediate visual

point of reference and is therefore more effective. Others felt that both were equally effective. All options were valid provided that points were substantiated and conclusions fully justified. This question did however produce many poor responses as some candidates appeared to struggle with the demands and complexities of the question. Some candidates gave a generic comparison between the novel and the film and did not refer to the landscape and climate. As a result many marks were lost.

Q7 was again very popular although the number of responses was down on previous series. Both parts of the question were equally popular and responses displayed a range of quality.

For Q7(a) many candidates focused on the behaviour of Annetta's parents as that which is typical of the adults in the novel and subsequently on that of Annetta in particular as representative of young people. In terms of the older generation they mentioned an obsession with upholding traditions, the perpetration of gender roles and the narrow mindedness they display. In terms of the young people, many candidates mentioned a desire to rebel and break free from the constraints of family life and those of society in general. Many candidates felt that the older generation wins the struggle here as Annetta ultimately does what is expected of her in the end by marrying Nicola. Other candidates felt that the young people, and particularly Annetta wins this struggle as she challenges aspects of society to such an extent (for example through going to the police about Vicenzino) that things must necessarily change for the best.

In Q7(b) candidates clearly had an understanding of what *onore* means in the context of the novel yet many did not express this as explicitly as would have been expected. Candidates felt that *onore* is inextricably linked to the good name of the family and the obsession with the *bella figura* in the society. They felt it to be so important for the Annetta's relations as they want to belong in a society where gossip can have serious repercussions. Some candidates expressed that this *onore* is so important as Annetta's family's economic standing is low so having a good name gives them a sense of purpose. Candidates were largely able to discuss the impact of the importance of *onore* on Annetta. Weaker candidates simply told the story of what happens to Annetta whilst better candidates were able to analyse the events in terms of what they actually mean for Annetta.

Q8 was an increasingly popular choice this year. Q8(a) was the more popular option by some way and responses generally showed candidates to be knowledgeable of the text. Answers varied significantly in terms of quality from simple retellings of the story to more sophisticated evaluative responses. The vast majority of candidates were able to give some examples of violence in the novel. Those most frequently mentioned were the death of Manuel Roca and his son and the events at Mato Rujo, and the circumstances surrounding the deaths of Salinas' brother, El Gurre's wife and Tito's father. Many candidates also mentioned the violence discussed by Nina and Tito in the second part of the novel. Better candidates mentioned the violence in the imagery and the language used by Baricco. In terms of the extent to which the characters remain *senza sangue*, most candidates felt that none of the characters was without blood on their hands. They felt that Nina and Tito were those who were the most *senza sangue* due to their peaceful discussion and the way in which the novel ends. They felt that in a way these characters had come 'full circle' and hence were closer to innocence than the others. Some candidates did discuss the degree to which other characters were *senza sangue* and offered explanations such as the feeling that some of these characters were victims of circumstance forced into violence by the war and others mentioned vendetta as a motive for violence and as a means of retribution, thereby exonerating the characters for their actions to a certain extent. Many interpretations were valid, provided that they were fully justified.

Q8(b) attracted only a few responses and these were generally not very successful. Some candidates felt that the use of an 'invented' society allowed the reader to focus on the themes and a few discussed the universality of some of the themes in the novel.

There were relatively few answers on Dante although candidates who answered on *Inferno* tended to do so successfully. For Q9(a), in terms of the most important moment in the spiritual development of Dante *personaggio*, candidates chose the meeting with Francesca da Rimini, Brunetto Latini and Dante's meeting with Virgil, as well as the opening and closing *canti*. They generally showed a good knowledge of these events and talked about Dante's realisation about the nature of sin, the *contrapasso* and the reaction of Dante *personaggio* in the different situations as a means of justifying their choice.

In answer to Q9(b), the majority of candidates displayed at least a good knowledge of the first *canto*. Dante finding himself in the dark forest, the three beasts and the meeting with Virgil were the elements that were described in the greatest detail. Amongst the themes introduced by this *canto* candidates discussed the nature of sin and the journey Dante *personaggio* would subsequently take. Some candidates alluded to the political situation of Florence at the time and some discussed the importance of Virgil in both spiritual and literary terms.

There were very few responses on Fo's *Mistero buffo* this year and the quality of responses was slightly lower than in previous years. Candidates did display satisfactory knowledge of the piece but generally failed to provide any real sophistication of analysis in their discussions.

The Ginzburg text remains a fairly popular choice. Q11(a) was not as popular as Q11(b). Candidates who answered part (a) tended to focus on the role of the female characters as a wife, and the need to marry well. Many concluded that the text was therefore not a feminist one in terms of showing women to be independent. Some candidates mentioned aspects of some of the female characters which they considered to be 'feminist' in their view, such as independence of character and determination to pursue their goals.

In Q11(b) many candidates focused on Elsa's relationships with her mother and Tommasino. They discussed the nature of these relationships and mentioned the oppressive nature of Elsa's mother and her interference and passion for gossip as a barrier to true love between her and her daughter. In terms of the relationship between Elsa and Tommasino, many candidates felt that their relationship was doomed to fail as the nature of society prevents real love from developing. Some candidates also saw the nature of the characters themselves as a barrier to this. Many candidates concluded that real love does not exist in this society whilst others felt that there are some examples of real love. A range of conclusions were possible, provided these were fully justified.

The Moravia text attracted a relatively small number of responses but the majority of candidates who answered on the novel did so well.

In Q12(a) candidates were generally able to successfully describe the episode when Luca finds his parents in front of the safe. Many mentioned the importance of this episode in terms of Luca's subsequent relationship with money and his feelings towards his parents. The majority of candidates felt this event to be very significant in Luca's *disubbidienza* but that it was not the primary cause of this. They made reference to other episodes such as the train journey and Luca's attitude to school by way of illustration and justification.

There were very few responses to Q12(b), in which candidates were generally able to describe Luca's relationship with sex fairly well, describing events with the *governante*

and the *infermiera*. They felt that Luca's sexual awakening was pivotal in the improvement of his condition and that his experiences gave him a new desire to live.

The number of responses to Pirandello's *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore* was significantly lower this year. In answering both parts of the question, candidates generally displayed a good knowledge of the work although weaker candidates were limited by their ability to discuss this knowledge in an evaluative manner. In Q13(a), candidates mentioned the initial surprise and confusion of the *Attori* and their change in perception towards the *personaggi* as they learn more about their story. Candidates mentioned curiosity and a feeling of sympathy as possible reasons why the *Attori* agree to collaborate in the end.

In response to the less popular Q13(b), candidates were able to mention some aspects of the relationship between the *Padre* and the *Capocomico*. They discussed the importance of their dialogue in terms of both being the figurehead of their respective groups and in terms of the artistic process. Some candidates felt the either *Padre* or the *Capocomico* maintains control and others felt that there was a balance of control between the two. Again, a range of conclusions was possible, provided that all arguments were fully justified.

6566/01 Listening and writing Examiner's report

Candidates are required to listen to authentic recorded target-language (TL) material, to retrieve and convey information by responding to a range of TL questions and by producing a summary in English.

Assessment principles

For part one, up to 15 marks are awarded positively for correct information retrieved and conveyed in response to TL questions. The TL must be unambiguously understandable but its quality does not form part of the assessment. For part two, up to 15 marks are awarded for English summary skills, showing the ability to understand the gist and details, infer ideas, select information, transfer it and communicate it concisely. Up to 5 marks are awarded for GPS (grammar, punctuation and spelling). Summary and GPS are marked using the relevant grids printed in the current Specifications.

Candidates' responses

Part one (TL questions and answers)

This year too, the vast majority of candidates scored well over half the marks available for part one. Candidates appear to have understood most of the text and when the question required identifying a straightforward piece of information it was normally well answered. But as soon as a little manipulation or interpretation was necessary the performance dropped dramatically.

For marking purposes the questions were grouped 1a-g and 1 h-k. Statistics indicate 73.8% of correct answers for 1a-g and 63.3% for 1h-k. The top ability students actually answered h-k slightly better than a-g, whereas at the bottom end of the spectrum the gap was much wider (49.9% for a-g and only 13.4% for h-k).

Question 1

In general, there was an adequate understanding of the main ideas of the text. In detail:

1a) Most candidates interpreted '*fare a meno dell'automobile*' correctly. However, some understood that people had to '*usare meno l'automobile*'. Some cases of unsuccessful manipulation included '*non ne abbia veramente bisogno*', which meant that people did not need a driving licence. Among the confused spellings, '*almeno*' was not accepted for '*a meno*', whereas a more lenient attitude was adopted towards those candidates who wrote '*lo tanta per cento*', as the percentage itself was not targeted.

1b) was a straight forward question and was mostly answered correctly.

1c) A number of candidates appeared not to be familiar with the word 'lobby' (there was even the suggestion that it is a pun on 'hobby!') and failed to refer to the notion of pressure and /or promoting of the use of bikes. Some simply lifted '*estrazione sociale*' or '*orientamento politico*'.

1d) Most candidates noted the fear factor and /or sense of insecurity. However, the link between this and feeling invisible was not always evident.

1e) On the whole was well answered, in spite of the apparent lack of familiarity with the term '*i mezzi pubblici*'. Some answers were invalidated by the addition of '*e le bici*'.

1f) Both notions of width and measurement were expected in the answer: *'più di quattro metri'* was not considered sufficient proof of comprehension (especially as more than a handful of candidates actually referred to the length rather than the width!)

1g) Answered correctly for the most part. It was interesting to note the very many candidates who, instead of copying *'chilometri'* from the question in the exam paper, opted for *'kilometri'* instead! .

1h) Able candidates identified the need of linking the separate sections into a proper network. Unsuccessful answers either showed a failure to understand this or an inability to convey this through the language manipulation required in the question. *'Non sono una rete vera'*, or *'sono tratti separati'* did not answer the question *'Che cosa bisognerebbe fare..?'*.

1i) Many candidates understood the notion of time restriction, thus gaining one mark, and most of them conveyed the times accurately and gained full marks. Some invalidated the notion of time restriction by offering incorrect information by way of example (e.g.: *'dalle 6 alle 7.30'*). Many candidates do not know when to use *'no'* and *'non'*. Thus all too many answers began: *'Non, perché..'*

1j) Many candidates understood the *"tenere in considerazione"* and were able to manipulate the text in order to make the answer consequential. Repetition of elements of the question, like *'cambiare la mentalità'* or the lift: *'non cambia se non si fa nulla per cambiarla'*, are clearly not creditable, nor is the idea that *'non si può fare nulla'*.

1k) Weaker candidates showed that they were unable to make the required manipulation to change from the first person in the text to the third person required for the answer or showed inconsistency, as in *'devono impegnarsi per far sentire la nostra voce'*. English syntax had been followed in some cases (e.g.: *'per fare la voce sentito'*).

As for the quality of language, problems with gender, agreement and even spelling were not infrequent, but these did not affect the assessment unless they impaired communication.

Part two

To gain full credit in the English summary candidates had to cover all the bullet points in the question, and provide most of the details listed in the mark scheme. These however, only served as a checklist and the mark awarded reflected the quality of summary skills as shown in the relevant grid.

Most candidates showed good comprehension of the text and almost all candidates had something to offer for each of the four bullet points. Very noticeable was the improvement in the candidates' ability to adhere to the word limit and many of them were able to convey the main idea concisely, using well structured syntax. Nevertheless, summary skills remains a bigger problem than the comprehension of spoken Italian.

There were still candidates who included redundant information or unnecessary preamble, like: *'The article concerns the project called Bicincittà which Gianluca Pini has helped to set up.'* Also the use of wrong cognates was prevalent: (*'Communal administration'*, *'disposition'*, *'deposit'*, *'in 'complete autonomy'* *'an immediate operation'*, *'near the card to the machine'* and the like). Some sentences were far too long and, in some cases, the detail being conveyed was unclear owing to the absence of punctuation. Crossings out

added to the problem, whereas inserted details did not always tie in well with the rest of the sentence.

Among the most difficult elements to understand and/or convey were 'colonnina' which prompted some amusing renditions from 'bollard' to 'colony', and 'isciversi', often understood as 'writing', thus leading away from the comprehension of the context.

'Tasti' was often not understood and in some cases misunderstood as 'taxes' and the word '*display*' prompted the occasional wrong guess of a pay and display system. Very few candidates understood the idea of 'apposito ufficio del comune' some did not and some suggested 'the post office' which would be a likely office to obtain such a card in the UK context.

Advice and Guidance

Teachers are strongly recommended not to neglect the development of the skills and strategies that are necessary for a successful completion of this Unit, in particular a careful reading of the question and the ability to identify and select relevant information and manipulate it in a way for it to be consequential to the question.

For part 2, as the English summary outweighs the TL question and answers, teachers and candidates alike must be aware that good summary skills and English GPS are essential in order to access the top range of marks.

6566/02 Reading and Writing Examiner's report

In this part of the paper candidates are set two questions. In the first they are required to read an authentic text in Italian and respond to a number of target language questions. In the second they are required to translate an English passage of approximately 80 words into the target language. It is important to bear in mind that the passage revolves around the same topic as that used for the first question.

Assessment Principles

For Q1 there are 15 marks available, 8 for answers that contain the correct factual information and 7 for quality of language. If the way in which the factual content is expressed in Italian is poor it renders the answer incomprehensible then, no marks can be awarded. Answers that are lifted verbatim from the text without the slightest attempt to manipulate the language gain no credit. As regards the quality of language it is essential that candidates make every effort to express their answers in their own words as stated in the rubric. The more language they use from both the text and the questions themselves the less they will be rewarded under this category. Obviously this does not mean that they are expected to find synonyms in every case and it is perfectly understandable that they incorporate into their answers a small percentage of the words from the passage. The remaining 10 marks for this paper are allocated to Q2, the transfer of meaning exercise. As happened last year, this short passage is divided up into 30 assessable elements and a mark is given for each correct element. The final total is then divided by 3 and rounded down or up accordingly. This system worked well again this year, proving to be much fairer to students across the ability range and ensuring greater consistency of marking. Teachers should remind their students that a limited number of words/phrases from the Italian text can be used in this transfer of meaning exercise.

Candidates' Responses

The principle underlying the first question is no different from that of the same question type used in the AS paper. Every effort was made to ensure that the questions were put in such a way as not to allow candidates to lift their answers verbatim from the text. It seems now that this message has got through to most candidates. The very good candidates usually take the opportunity to demonstrate a good variety of structures and vocabulary in their answers. The weaker candidates almost inevitably lean more heavily on the text, as they do not have the linguistic skill or command of the language to do otherwise. Candidates are awarded the mark(s) for content provided that the answer is comprehensible and unambiguous.

As already mentioned candidates are not necessarily expected to find synonyms for every word e.g. *inquinamento*, *circolazione*, *rumore*, but of course the better candidates will replace the nouns with verbs and show the linguistic flexibility that is going to be best rewarded under the category of Quality of Language, the grid that you will find on page 40 of the Specification.

The overall response to Question 1 was satisfactory with a good number of the candidates showing the ability to extrapolate the required information from the passage and express it in their own words. The downside for a number of answers was the quality of language - the inability to use more complex structures, idiomatic language, the incorrect use of auxiliary verbs in compound tenses and, spelling. Unless candidates do have a particular problem then it is rather disappointing to see the misspelling of words that are actually in the text. The questions that proved the most difficult were (b) and (d), for the reasons explained below.

- (a) A high percentage of the candidates coped well with this question.
- (b) The majority of candidates understood that bad weather was hoped for, although few picked up the idea of forecast. Many candidates did not understand the meaning of *polveri sottili* and talked about *polvere*. In many cases the text was copied verbatim, as weaker candidates were unable to manipulate *vengono evocati* and *scendendo dal cielo*. Surprisingly, several candidates were also unable to use the verb *piovere*.
- (c) produced many answers in which the idea of a more human city was clear but very badly expressed. Many candidates resorted once again to copying *senza il rumore dei clacson*.
- (d) Many candidates understood the idea of *miglioramento*, *estensione* or *sviluppo* of public transport, but a considerable number gave answers like *fare e non parlare / fare le cose con energia*. Many candidates copied *si dovrebbero* from the question but used it as if it were a singular verb.
- (e) Many candidates realised that the tone of the article was ironic. For many candidates this tended to be the longest and most complex answer, and many displayed a good standard of language use.
- Many candidates are failing to read the questions carefully or to make good use of the forms suggested in them.

Q2 As this transfer of meaning exercise is divided up into 30 assessable units it does allow the weaker candidates to score some marks, particularly for *è necessario*, *e perciò*, *il governo*, etc. It has already been mentioned that some of the words/expression appear in the passage for question 1. Most candidates are able to lift and re-use these appropriately. There are always some candidates who fail to do this, however, and write *carbone* in stead of *carbonio*. The misspelling of words that appear in the text for question 1 is not rewarded. In fact, one of the requirements for this task is a high degree of accuracy. Thus, candidates who omitted to put the accent on *città* were penalised.

There were some excellent translations by candidates who not only adapted or lifted accurately the vocabulary that appeared in the text in question 1 but also had the ability and linguistic competence to cope well with the 'unseen' elements. The more able candidates did occasionally lose marks by trying to be over-ambitious. In their endeavour to modify the original passage unnecessarily they sometimes omitted essential words or oversimplified some of the structures. Having said this, however, the intention is to mark as positively as possible in these situations and give credit where it is due.

In the main, candidates did make an effort to write something or paraphrase as best they could rather than leave gaps. One of the most testing bits of this exercise was the translation of 'affects Italian city-dwellers', which very few candidates translated correctly. The sentence 'for many years' also caused problems for many: the use of *per* and the past tense instead of *da* and the present tense was the most common mistake and very surprisingly a large number of candidates translated 'should' with *dovremo*. Few candidates managed to translate 'both in summer and in winter' correctly, although a few alternatives were accepted. A very large number of candidates did not gain marks for *nelle grandi città* because of the wrong preposition combined, very often, with the wrong adjectival ending.

A surprising but pleasing fact was the number of candidates who translated *intervenga* and *introducendo* correctly. More than once these were correctly expressed by candidates who had previously made errors in much simpler structures. On the other hand, the conditional *dovremmo* was achieved by a surprisingly small number, and an even smaller one managed *più della metà*.

Advice and Guidance

The advice and guidance for Q1 is no different from that which applies to the same question type in Unit 2 at AS. It is always worth reminding candidates that they are expected to answer the questions as much as possible in their own words, although most candidates seem to be aware of this now and make every effort to comply with this requirement. Some answers obviously require less manipulation of the text than others. Candidates should change whatever they can without going overboard and producing answers that become incomprehensible because they lack the grammatical expertise to write with any degree of accuracy. As for Q2 teachers should point out to their students that they do need to stick as closely as possible to the original passage and try and avoid translating too loosely or freely. For those teachers who may be preparing candidates for the first time here are two possible suggestions on how to approach this part of the examination: 1) find a suitable text from an original source - newspaper or magazine - that deals with the same topic that you have been working on and adapt it to your needs by changing/simplifying if necessary some of the structures and vocabulary; 2) translate into English a part of an Italian text you have been working on with your students and get them to translate it back into Italian. However, do not make the English passage an identical translation of the Italian one. Make some structural changes and alter some of the vocabulary. Inform your students that they will find some of the vocabulary in the Italian text they have been reading. This at least will serve to simulate an exam situation. This kind of activity will help students to focus both on points of grammar and vocabulary acquisition.

6566/03 writing and Registers Examiner's report

All the questions set elicited some answers, with answers being well spread across the three registers. This year there were some surprising choices: the most popular register was still Discursive Essays, particularly question 5, which elicited the most answers, but it was followed by Creative Writing, question 3 especially, and then by the Task Based Assignments, mainly question 9. The least popular choice this year was the newspaper article in question 3.

A wide range of abilities was demonstrated. Linguistic standards varied as usual but they appeared to have levelled out, pointing to a general improvement.

Bearing in mind that the mark scheme awards up to 20 marks for content and 20 marks for language (divided in 5 for Accuracy, 10 for Lexis and 5 for Manipulation of Language) most candidates generally scored reasonable marks. The best answers were obviously those that fulfilled the three main criteria as indicated by the four mark grids.

The best mean scores were awarded to some essays on question 4, where very good candidates had the opportunity to display an excellent knowledge of their chosen issue and some very sound topic specific vocabulary. The lowest mean scores instead were awarded to some essays on question 7, where on the contrary the weakest candidates demonstrated a poor knowledge of very common vocabulary and produced some rather shallow answers.

Some answers were far too long, well over the word limit and thus had to be penalised. Unusually, this year there were also a few answers that were too short and were also penalised.

Content

Section A - Creative Writing

Creative writing is often the choice of native speakers.

Question 1 (story based on the message on the answering machine) had to be rooted in the stimulus paragraph and had to be written in the form of a dialogue. Candidates had to explain the reasons why the person Paolo had phoned no longer wanted to see him. The majority of candidates followed the rubric requirement to write in a dialogue format and did so in an imaginative way. Many stories involved a relationship that had broken down (friendship, marriage/engagement, an argument between parents and children) but it often ended well with a reconciliation. A few candidates did not use the dialogue register and wrote a narrative story instead, thus losing marks. The dialogue format provided good candidates with an opportunity to display some colloquial vocabulary and structures such as the imperative, for which they were duly rewarded.

Question 2 (the photograph of people on a boat) had to be written in the first person, it had to arise from the picture stimulus and it had to provide an answer to the various questions in the title, including plans for the future. Most stories inevitably dealt with immigration issues. Most of the candidates' responses involved arriving in Southern Italy to create a new future for themselves and/or their family after escaping violence, war or famine in their country of origin. Some candidates omitted the last task about plans for the future and were thus penalised under content.

Question 3 (article about the girl escaping from home to go to school) had to be in the form of a journalistic article and most candidates who chose this question had been ably prepared for this type of writing. Many answers echoed the story of Annetta in "*Volevo i Pantaloni*" (probably prepared for Unit 5), that is a girl trapped by a bullying father who wanted to have the freedom of an education in order to escape a traditional life at home. Violence was a common general theme in this question. Some failed to use the right

journalistic style and produced either a personal narrative story or else an essay about domestic abuse.

Section B - Discursive Essays

Question 4 (congestion charge) dealt with a rather topical issue and was done well, with many candidates showing an awareness (although not a requirement of the examination) of environmental issues in Italy, such as the *Ecopass* in Milan. Many mentioned other measures adopted in Italy such as *targhe alterne*, again demonstrating a very good knowledge of Italian society. Most avoided the temptation to write a general piece about the environment and pollution but some showed a lack of subject specific lexis, more so than would be expected at this level, for example using *santé*. On the other hand good candidates demonstrated an excellent knowledge of topic specific vocabulary (*polveri fini, ossido di carbonio* etc).

Question 5 (the art of conversation) produced interesting responses which were well balanced, dealing with both sides of the issue of young people and changes in spoken communication. The main reasons given for this tended to be the increasing use of technology for communication, such as mobile phones, email and chat rooms. Many concluded that conversation styles have evolved rather than changed in any detrimental way but some indicated that a lack of family communal living had contributed to young people having lost the ability to converse, citing not eating together at meal times as a common example. Others saw it more in terms of a generation gap. A few candidates interpreted the question in a deeper, more philosophical way, viewing conversation as an art and mentioning lack of education or again lack of practice as the main reasons for a drop in standards.

Question 6 (donations) led to some candidates copying words verbatim from the graphic included with the question. Many agreed that donations for medical research were to be expected as scientists struggle to find cures for some of life's significant diseases, such as cancer and Alzheimer's, and as these affect the vast majority of us somehow it is right that a lot of money should go to support this research. Many responses however disagreed with this idea saying that Italians should have a less selfish outlook on life and should donate money to other worthy causes, such as the environment or the Third world.

Question 7 (reality shows) inevitably dealt with the dumbing down of TV programmes, citing *Grande Fratello*, *L'isola dei famosi* and other similar Italian or British shows and analysing why people liked to watch them, often concluding that watching other people "sad" lives make us feel better and enables us to escape the mundanity of our own, or else that it offers hope to any ordinary person aspiring to get rich and/or famous. They were also seen as an easy way of winding down at the end of a difficult day and a way of easing stress by watching a programme that requires little cerebral response. Some of the weaker responses were more superficial or repetitive and demonstrated a rather limited lexical knowledge, with GCSE standard vocabulary.

Section C - Task Based Assignments

Question 8 (TBA on *Viva Italia* fair) was the least popular of the two TBAs as it was more demanding in terms of language: it required business style language needed for a trade fair. In terms of content both TBAs give a clear structure with bullet points to respond to and most candidates adhered to them. Most candidates who opted for this question possessed very good linguistic skills both in terms of vocabulary and structures and were able to respond fully to the task with an appropriate formal register, thus achieving the highest mean mark for this paper this year. Many students also showed some creativity and variety in their descriptions of the products they wanted to display at the fair. Incorrect register was not as much of a problem as in previous years, as anyone unfamiliar with the formal register could opt for the other TBA.

Question 9 (TBA on *ecoturismo* holidays) was very popular but the weaker candidates failed to make good use of the stimulus, especially when they had to explain what appealed to them about ecotourism. Some produced rather shallow responses about being in the open air and away from the city, whilst stronger candidates provided various deeper environmental reasons. Many copied too much from the stimulus either to explain why they supported ecotourism or which holiday they preferred. Common objections expected from their friend tended to be either financial or the problem of looking after children or pets. Solutions were creative and generous, ranging from paying for their friend's holiday themselves to a relative sorting out the child/pet care or else taking their dog to Umbria with them. Some candidates surprisingly used the wrong register: as they were writing to a friend they had to use an informal register but some used the formal register instead, perhaps misunderstanding the nature of the task and thinking that they had to write a formal letter to book a holiday.

Language

Accuracy

Accuracy tended to be variable although on the whole more than adequate. Wrong verb endings and agreements are still the most common errors, together with a widespread misuse of prepositions and articles. Examiners noticed however some good use of the subjunctive imperfect/conditional but often alongside basic errors in more straightforward language.

Range of lexis

In terms of Lexis there were some instances of good topic specific vocabulary, especially in the Discursive Essays section, especially the question on the congestion charge, and obviously some excellent and varied vocabulary from native speakers, especially in Creative Writing. However there are still many minor spelling mistakes such as “*technologia*” and some anglicisms such as “*improvare*” and “*affettare*”.

Manipulation of language

The examiners commented positively on the degree of attempted manipulation of language, with many candidates displaying good use of the conditional tense and hypothetical sentence structure, including the imperfect subjunctive. However, the subjunctive in general was often misused, being applied even when it was not required.

Statistics

Unit 1 Listening and Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	39	35	31	27	23
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

Unit 2 Reading and Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	80	60	54	49	44	34
Uniform boundary mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

Unit 3 Prepared Oral Topic

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	60	45	40	35	30	25
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

Unit 4.1 Oral Discussion of Issues

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	60	44	39	34	30	26
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

Unit 5.1 Topics and Texts

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	90	60	55	50	45	41
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

Unit 6 Listening and Writing, Reading and Writing & Writing in Registers

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	70	63	57	51	45
Uniform boundary mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

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