

ITALIAN (PRINCIPAL)

Paper 9783/01
Speaking

Key Messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- in Part I, consider the issue raised in their chosen article and their own reaction(s) to it
- in Part II, choose a subject which genuinely interests them and which clearly relates to a country where the target language is spoken
- in Parts I and II, be prepared to take the lead in the conversation
- in Parts I and II, be ready to engage in natural and spontaneous discussion

General Comments

Assessment:

The exam consists of two parts: Part 1 – Discussion of article; Part 2 – Prepared Topic Discussion.

Part 1 and Part 2 can also be taken in reverse order, although candidates tend to prefer to start with the discussion of the article that they prepared just before the exam.

Part 1

Comprehension and discussion (14 marks)

Range and accuracy (10 marks)

Pronunciation and intonation (6 marks).

Part 2

Factual knowledge and opinion (14 marks)

Range and accuracy (10 marks)

Pronunciation and intonation (6 marks).

The discussion of the article (Part 1) represents a freer and more challenging exercise than Part 2. Candidates have the opportunity to demonstrate the ability to engage in a fairly unpredictable discussion, based initially on an article which candidates read before the exam, then moving on to explore other aspects of the general theme.

Part 2 is the discussion of a prepared topic, which, as it is prepared, involves a lesser degree of unpredictability.

Candidates are generally able to maintain their level of performance over the entire exam. Performances for the two parts of the exam were well balanced, with only a marginally higher mean mark for language in Part 2, as could be expected.

Comments on Specific Questions

Part 1

Candidates could choose a stimulus card from four of the following, picked at random by the examiner:

- 1 *Il piacere di mangiare* (Theme: Food and drink)
- 2 *Donne e carriera* (Theme: Work and leisure)
- 3 *Uno studente su tre ammette di aver copiato all'esame* (Theme: Education)
- 4 *Due gradi e non di più* (Theme: Environment)
- 5 *Il vecchietto dove lo metto?* (Theme: Contemporary aspects)
- 6 *Casalinghe ad alta tecnologia* (Theme: Scientific and technological innovation)

Comprehension and Discussion

Candidates are not required to understand the article in detail, but only well enough to be able to engage in discussion on the issues raised. Most candidates were able to outline the main theme of the article, discuss the issues it raised and broaden the conversation to the general theme. **Card 3** was the most popular choice as it provided candidates with the opportunity to discuss the wider issues connected to education. **Card 2**, *Donne e carrier*, gave rise to interesting discussions where candidates suggested various future scenarios and examples of more successful policies to redress the gender balance at the work place. **Card 6** gave rise to rather more circular, anecdotal considerations, though this did not prevent candidates from successfully discussing the various pros and cons of technological advance.

Part 2

For **Part 2** candidates choose a topic of their own interest that it is related to the history, current affairs or culture of an area of the world where Italian is spoken. Any topics lending themselves to analysis, evaluation and opinion represent a good choice. The choice of the topic is of paramount importance. Some topics, although well researched, may remain rather dry and unproductive in discussion. Literary texts or films remain popular and, when explored in depth, they allow candidates to demonstrate their full potential. Some candidates had chosen to talk about matters of personal interest, historical events and people and their presentations were interesting and impassioned.

All candidates showed genuine interest in their topic and pleasure in discussing it. Presentations were generally well timed and well articulated, leading naturally to discussion. Most candidates were able to present a good range of pertinent facts, had the ability to analyse them in an interesting way and to express their opinions in a naturally flowing conversation with the examiner.

Language (range and accuracy)

In terms of language, there was a wide range of competence. Most candidates were able to use complex structures and a good range of pertinent vocabulary. Accuracy was generally well controlled. As could be expected, scores for language were slightly higher for **Part 2**, but only marginally so. The most common mistakes involve the use of prepositions, lack of control over agreements, gender and occasionally verb endings.

Pronunciation and Intonation

Most candidates appear to have mastered the sounds of Italian, in spite of the occasional misplaced stress and mispronunciation of double consonant or vowel sounds.

Conclusion

Most candidates have fully understood the requirements of this unit, were well prepared for it and performed to the best of their abilities.

PRINCIPAL COURSE ITALIAN

<p>Paper 9783/02 Reading and Listening</p>
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Key messages

- Reading section: candidates are required to target pieces of information in the text, and tailor an answer to the questions asked, using a degree of inference and justification or providing multiple points where necessary.
- Success in the translation question is dependent on being as directly faithful as possible to the original, and on the ability to identify and re-use key vocabulary items that have been presented elsewhere in the paper.
- Listening section: candidates needed to be able to follow information sequentially, and use the material heard selectively in order to answer the questions. Candidates should give succinct answers and ensure that their answers are tailored directly to the question asked.
- In the summary question, candidates need to keep to the word count and respond directly to the bullet points, correctly identifying the most salient points of the passage.

General comments

On the whole, candidates performed well on this paper. However, agreements and prepositions continue to present occasional problems on the translation question, and there are still some candidates who don't respect the word limit in the summary exercise.

Comments on specific questions

PART I

Testo di lettura 1

Question 2

Some candidates struggled to make two separate points, repeating the idea of limitation rather than the contrasting concept of enabling greater numbers of tourists to visit.

Question 6

There was some confusion between active and passive voice here, meaning that occasionally candidates were unable to express what had been done.

Testo di lettura 2

Question 13

Candidates must beware of repeating the premise of the question: many included in their answer the fact that video games are addictive, at the risk of compromising one of the content points.

Question 14

Strong candidates were able to move away from an answer totally grounded in cognates to explain the concept of *'lo sviluppo armonioso dell'ossatura'*.

Testo di lettura 3

Strong candidates found a variety of creative solutions to the rendering of 'given up/both football/and the guitar'. There were however many misspellings of *'chitarra'*. The rendering of 'had been doing for' continues to be problematic, as does the use of *'troppo'* (when adjective/adverb). The use of the preposition *'da'* was variable.

PART II

Brano d'ascolto 1

Question 18

Able candidates recognised the difference between content points and illustration of the same, and in most instances both pieces of information were successfully given.

Question 22

Candidates wrestled, more or less successfully, with expressing the idea that Ornella had been asked to return to the same place for three more dates: on occasion the time frame/concept of more concerts seemed problematic.

Question 24

Some candidates answered with *'jazz' tout court*.

Brano d'ascolto 2

Question 25

Many candidates picked up on the *'non tanto'* of the recording and so avoided erroneous material in their answer.

Question 32

Close attention must be paid to the time frame. Some candidates answered with what the company had already done for publicity.

Brano d'ascolto 3

Question 33

On the whole candidates adhered well to the word count and bullet points. A number of candidates did not accurately translate *'libreria'*. Care must be taken to avoid including superfluous material (material not pertaining in any way to a bullet point) as this jeopardises the word count.

PRINCIPAL COURSE ITALIAN

Paper 9783/03
Writing and Usage

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- In Part I, choose a title on which they have something to say and for which they have command of appropriate structures and a wide range of lexis
- In Part I, plan their essay to produce well-structured and persuasive arguments
- In Part I, write complex sentences when appropriate, but without losing the thread of the argument
- In Part II, read each question carefully and make sure they understand the sense of the sentence(s)
- In Parts I and II, carefully proofread their responses.

Comments on specific questions

Part I – Discursive Essay

The best essays here were coherently argued, with points relevantly illustrated, through use of a range of complex structures and pertinent vocabulary. Many candidates offered a good structure to their essays through use of specific linking phrases. Weaker answers suffered from lack of exemplification and from repetition of terms used in the title without definition or use of appropriate lexis to demonstrate understanding. Candidates should be reminded that they are assessed on the quality and relevance of vocabulary and to try their best to provide a wide range of lexis and to avoid repetition. It remains important to urge candidates to check their work carefully before handing it in.

Question 1

- (a) This was a popular question. Better answers conceded that while some of the surprise and pleasure afforded by a first look at a landscape or country might have been lost due to the presence of so many images available through the internet, there was always the possibility for discovery at another level, for example travellers can learn a lot about themselves through their interactions with other cultures. Candidates also remarked that as travel was cheaper and more accessible than in the past, there were more not fewer opportunities open for people to discover new things. If candidates defined their understanding of '*scoprire cose nuove*', rather than simply repeat it, they were able to make more substantive points.
- (b) This was a fairly popular choice of question but was not generally well answered. It was crucial for candidates to define their understanding of the two key concepts in the question '*comunicazione virtuale*' and '*rapporti interpersonali*'. Too often these were repeated many times in the course of an essay and no exemplification was provided. Better answers pointed to the fact that platforms such as Facebook allowed people to establish relationships with like-minded people and that these might extend into face-to-face meetings in the real world and therefore it was not the case that initial contact through the internet made relationships harder to form. Conversely some candidates felt that a bad experience on the internet would lead to mistrust of other people and so make relationships more difficult. Other candidates pointed to the benefits of keeping in contact with family and friends abroad through modern technology. Very few candidates were able to back up their assertions with data from surveys or discuss the role that an individual's personality might play in establishing friendships.
- (c) Candidates mostly approached this question reasonably well, teasing apart the notions of injustice and inevitability. Most conceded that women, rather than men, do have to make a choice between having children and rising to the top in their career. Most thought that while this was definitely

unjust, as it is in society's interest that women have children, it was probably inevitable. Disappointingly, few candidates were able to offer concrete solutions to help women, though mention was made by one of stay-at-home fathers sharing the burden of child-rearing. There was little awareness of equality legislation in this domain and no discussion of the recent developments in paternity leave entitlement.

- (d) In general, this question was not approached as thoughtfully as was perhaps necessary. It invited candidates to address the topical questions of how much responsibility people should take for their own health and, in a British context, how to provide health care for all in an ever more stretched NHS. Candidates largely felt that people should not be charged as for poor people this would make them even poorer and, as a consequence, sicker. No candidate seemed aware that systems of charging for medical consultations on a means-tested basis already exist in a number of European countries, including Italy, although some candidates did cite the example of the US as a country where charging seemed to have failed because so many people were obese there. Answers would have benefitted from a less anecdotal approach and therefore was not one to be attempted without relevant facts.
- (e) Candidates who attempted this question were able to point to the environmental problems posed by rapid industrialisation of countries such as China, India and Brazil, though why this should affect western countries disproportionately, and hence create fear, was not made clear. It was also claimed that population growth would be a problem which would end up at the door of the West. More nuanced answers were able to point to the fact that development is a two-edged sword with companies able to offer cheaper technology to the West while setting up in competition to it. Some of the examples chosen to illustrate points were not the most convincing. Candidates surprisingly did not explore the notion of a country's right to develop and what steps might be taken to ensure sustainable development.

Part II – Use of Italian

There was a wide range of performances in **exercises 1 and 2**, with many candidates showing an excellent knowledge of some of the most advanced grammatical structures as well as a very pleasing familiarity with irregular verbs. Perhaps surprisingly, the past participle of *spegnere* required in **Question 6** was erroneously conveyed by some more grammatically able candidates as *speso* or *spinto*. The *si passivante* structure required for **Question 7** was missed by many and the placement of the pronouns in **Questions 8 and 9** puzzled many candidates. It was a shame that several candidates, having identified the need for a relative pronoun in **Question 11**, invalidated their answer by not using the preposition they were given, *presso*.

Exercise 3 seemed to be the less challenging one where even less advanced candidates, perhaps taking advantage of the multiple-choice format, managed to score a number of marks. There were several candidates at the top end who got almost everything right here. The one question which candidates stumbled on was **Question 31** where English interference presumably made candidates choose *da* rather than the correct *di*.

PRINCIPAL COURSE ITALIAN

Paper 9783/04
Topic and Texts

Key messages

To score well in this paper, candidates should read the questions carefully and give due consideration to both parts of a two-part question. In addition, candidates should spend time planning which extracts from the books and films best exemplify their response to the question rather than use examples they have prepared which might have a more tenuous link. Quotation for its own sake is not rewarded but accurately reproduced citations can be used effectively if they clearly illustrate a point.

General comments

The most popular topics chosen this year were *Il cinema di Nanni Moretti* and *L'immigrazione*. Familiarity with the plots and main themes of texts and films was generally good and many candidates were able to bring clear evidence from the sources to support assertions. Less successful answers were hindered either by lack of clarity due to a less confident command of the language or by an approach which was more descriptive than analytical. Candidates who referred in a detailed and balanced way to two sources generally did better than those who referred to all three in a more superficial manner.

The most popular texts this year were those of *Dante*, *Sciascia*, *Ammaniti* and *Lampedusa*. Candidates are advised to spend time planning their essays and it is particularly important to define any specific terms given in the question to illustrate their personal understanding of them. Thereafter they should try to organise material in a clear, coherent manner which links directly to the question. Some students might benefit from writing out the question in their answer booklets in order to refer to it while preparing their plan as they are unable to get full credit for sometimes extensive knowledge of the text without an adequate framework.

Comments on specific questions

Part I: Topics

Question 1

IL CINEMA DI NANNI MORETTI

- (a) All candidates who chose this topic chose this question. Candidates were asked to choose the one theme they felt to be the most important in Moretti's work. The question allowed for a wide range of personal responses. Many candidates appeared to have good knowledge and understanding of the films. Better responses identified one key theme, such as *la famiglia* and set about exemplifying and analysing its presence in detail in the various films they had studied. Some candidates chose a rather abstract or ambitious theme, such as *la società italiana*, and others did not restrict themselves to one theme or even identified a number of sub-themes within a theme. They generally had more difficulty in providing evidence in a structured manner and answers could be rather superficial. Candidates needed to explain more clearly why they felt their chosen theme was the most important in relation to the films they had studied. Candidates could improve on targeting the second part of the question which expected them to examine how Moretti, a film director, presented his theme. Some description of his cinematographic technique and appropriate vocabulary would be expected to achieve the highest range of marks.

Question 2

L'EPOCA FASCISTA

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 3

L'IMMIGRAZIONE

- (a) This was a popular question and many candidates were able to cite examples and statistics from *Blacks Out* in an impressive manner to support their assertions. Both films, *Terraferma* and *Terra di mezzo*, were used in responses to the question and candidates were able to identify positive and negative attitudes in both. The best answers were able to demonstrate Italians' attitudes through direct quotation and to show how these attitudes were explained in the texts, for example that some Italians felt frustrated that immigrants were taking their jobs or that their presence was damaging to their own business, for example, Nino in *Terraferma*. Candidates could well have pointed to the hypocrisy of certain Italians who, whilst criticising immigration, nonetheless rely on immigrant labour to support their way of life. Candidates needed to target the word 'crescente' in the title to answer the question fully and it would have been worthwhile to distinguish between different types of immigrants. The picture is clearly complex and some discussion of the background to the current immigration situation would have put answers in context.
- (b) This was also a popular question. There were some good answers which were able to cite in detail both the economic and social impact of immigration and to distinguish between improvements at the societal and individual level. Many candidates were able to cite statistics from *Blacks Out* pertaining to numbers of new businesses started by immigrants and their relative readiness to pay taxes. They then balanced this with the disadvantages attributed to the influx of illegal immigrants, such as a rise in criminality. Most candidates conceded that *Terraferma* contained little to attest to an improvement in life for the islanders but many felt that Filippo and Giuletta had 'grown' in compassion and understanding through their contact with Sara and the other migrants and so had been improved morally or psychologically. Some perceptive accounts discussed the moral dilemma faced by Ernesto and Filippo, caught between the law of the sea and the law of the state. Candidates need to remember to focus fully on the second part of the question, which was quite often ignored in responses. Not many candidates used evidence from *Terra di mezzo* in response to this question although some did remark that the cheap Albanian immigrant labour meant that Italians could improve their own lives through saving money. The point of *Blacks Out*, i.e. to demonstrate that life without immigrants in Italy is unsustainable, could have been articulated more clearly.

Question 4

LA GRANDE GUERRA

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 5

LA DONNA NELLA SOCIETÀ ITALIANA

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Part Two: Texts

Question 6

DANTE

- (a) No candidates chose the commentary this year.

- (b) The question invited candidates to respond to a critic's view of the genius of Dante's *Inferno* and to determine whether they agreed with the critic's understanding of the term *contrappasso*. Many candidates in fact accepted the critic's understanding uncritically without exploring whether it was accurate. Better candidates were able to explain and exemplify cases where sinners did not suffer an embodiment of their sin and thus take issue with the critic's definition, pointing out that sinners might suffer a punishment which opposed rather than mirrored their sin. Few offered their own understanding of the theological reasoning behind Dante's invention of the *contrappasso*. The examples of *contrappasso* most often cited were those of Paolo and Francesca (with varying interpretations as to whether the punishment embodied the sin), Filippo Argenti, Cavalcanti and Satan. Some candidates had engaged with the text in a personal way though on occasion this was at the cost of a more detailed analytic approach. In order to access the highest marks, candidates needed to be more rigorous in their examination of the question, paying attention to each word, for example they could have discussed whether 'eternal' was appropriate, given the advent of Judgment Day when the sinners will be judged again. Alternative explanations for Dante's genius could also have been explored.
- (c) This question invited candidates to explain how and why Dante's relationship with Virgil changes in the course of their journey through the *Inferno*. Candidates needed first to briefly explain Dante's (the poet's) choice of Virgil as a guide for Dante the pilgrim and might have been expected to know that Virgil was limited in that he would not be able to enter *Paradiso* with Dante. Candidates were able to point successfully to the fact that Dante grows in wisdom (about the process of *giustizia*) and resilience during his journey and could cite examples of interactions between Virgil and Dante which were indicative of a changing relationship. The necessity of this change, and Dante the pilgrim's realisation of this necessity, was not generally alluded to and often accounts focused more on the change in Dante rather than the change in the relationship.

Questions 7, 8 and 9

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 10

AMMANITI

- (a) No candidates chose the commentary question.
- (b) The question invited candidates to discuss the extent to which Olivia's downfall contributed to the salvation of Lorenzo. Candidates were expected to explain the terms 'downfall' and 'salvation' in this context and use detailed exemplification from the text to make their case. The observation that it was enough for Lorenzo to encounter and have a (fraternal) relationship with his half-sister to help him grow up and overcome his difficulties and that she did not have to die was well made. Candidates need to ensure they stay focused on the question and not spend time digressing into irrelevant speculations, however interesting in themselves. It might have been pointed out that Olivia's addiction could have easily resulted in the downfall of Lorenzo too if he hadn't been inherently strong enough to cope. Other factors at play in the 'salvation' of Lorenzo, such as his growing maturity or his relationship with his grandmother could have been offered to counter the claim.
- (c) No candidates chose this question.

Question 11

SCIASCIA

- (a) No candidates chose the commentary question.

- (b) This question was popular with candidates and a number of thoughtful and well-argued responses have been provided. The very best answers were able to articulate well why it was necessary for Sciascia to allow Bellodi to fail to convict Arena in order to make his point that while the mafia are so entrenched at all levels of Italian, and not just Sicilian, society, it is impossible to bring them to justice. Some candidates could have made a clearer case had they defined the term 'fail'. Only a few candidates took issue with the word 'fail' and pointed out that Bellodi did in fact succeed in identifying the guilty party behind the killings, but failed to bring him to justice because of the interfering machinations of the anonymous *mafiosi* who sit in the shadows and manipulate a corrupt government. Bellodi cannot be allowed to bring the whole house of cards down and so is moved off the case. Many responses identified other reasons for Bellodi's failure intrinsic to the investigation, notably the Sicilian's sense of *omertà*. Whilst candidates correctly pointed out that Bellodi's being a Northerner meant that he had a lot to learn about Sicilian customs and dialect, some responses misinterpreted Bellodi's different interrogation style as naïve and misunderstood some of Sciascia's use of irony. A handful of candidates were successful in pinpointing the moment during his interrogation of Arena when Bellodi himself realises that he will fail to secure a conviction and that this is the climax of the book.
- (c) This question produced a wide variety of interesting responses. Candidates were asked to identify who or what was the *civetta* of the title. Most candidates were clearly aware that the title related to the epigraph to the novel in which Sciascia uses an extract from a speech from Somerset in Shakespeare's Henry VI '*...come la civetta quando di giorno compare*'. Many went so far as to transfer the whole meaning of the Shakespearean context to their analysis of the Sciascia novel and tried to find evidence of a character or entity, such as the mafia, who was 'mock'd and wonder'd at'. This led at times to some rather contrived answers which often lacked detailed analysis of the Sciascia text and ignored other, equally valid, interpretations. Many responses offered several alternative candidates for the *civetta* from Bellodi via Parrinieddu to the mafia and to Sciascia himself. Generally the more proposals considered, the weaker the structure of the essay and the analysis of the text became. That said, the general consensus emerged that the mafia was the most likely *civetta* but for a variety of different reasons, from their organisation being brought into the light of day by Sciascia, through the instrument of Bellodi, to the fact that they can operate with impunity meaning that they no longer have to work in the shadows but can be blatant. There were some very good analyses along these lines.

Question 12

DI LAMPEDUSA

- (a) No candidates chose the commentary question.
- (b) This question was very open and therefore candidates needed to be particularly focused in their responses. Nonetheless it would not be expected that candidates could limit themselves to one factor to which to attribute the novel's success and might wish to refer to style, characterisation and historical setting. Essays which focused primarily on the character, rather than the characterisation, of the Prince, for example, were too descriptive and narrative, despite being convincing that the Prince had reader-appeal. Candidates need to be attentive to the structure of their essays with questions such to prevent themselves from veering off topic. It would also be expected that direct reference be made to the text with quotation in Italian.
- (c) Whilst the quotation used in the question is one of the most well-known in Italian literature, this does not mean that it does not require explanation. Candidates need to put the quotation in its context within the novel, revealing who said it in what context and what its significance is. It is important also to analyse both parts of the quotation in detail. A response which discussed the need for change and how it could be achieved by Tancredi marrying Angelica rather than Concetta went some way to answering the question. Answers needed to also target the first point about the *status quo*. Who desires this? Claims that change has to happen so that 'the people' could stay as they were seemed at best vague and at worst to miss the point. More sophisticated answers could discuss how Tancredi's utterance of this phrase at the beginning of the novel works slowly through the Prince's mind, who, as he begins to understand it, rearticulating it for himself '*tutto sarà lo stesso mentre tutto sarà cambiato*', pursues a course of action which is the basis of the novel. This would give candidates the opportunity to discuss meaningfully and with exemplification the question of whether the novel is 'summed up' by the quote or not.

Question 13

DE LUCA

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.