



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission**

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION 2005

ITALIAN

**ORDINARY LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT
HIGHER LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT**

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1. General Introduction

1.1 Background to the Report

This report should be read in conjunction with the relevant examinations papers, CD and marking schemes for the 2005 Leaving Certificate Italian Ordinary and Higher Level examinations. The current Italian Syllabus was examined for the first time in 1997. The most recent Chief Examiner's Report for Italian was carried out after the 2000 examinations.

1.2 Content of Italian Leaving Certificate Examinations

Both Ordinary and Higher Levels have four main components:

Oral Test

Reading Comprehension

Written Production

Aural Test (Listening Comprehension)

Allocation of Marks

Both Ordinary and Higher Level examinations carry 400 marks which are allocated to the various components as follows:

| | Oral | Written (Reading Comprehension and Written Production) | Aural (Listening Comprehension) |
|-----------------------|-------------|---|--|
| Ordinary Level | 80 (20%) | 220 (55%) | 100 (25%) |
| Higher Level | 100 (25%) | 220 (55%) | 80 (20%) |

1.3 2005 Leaving Certificate Examinations

The Oral Test, which is common for Ordinary and Higher Levels, was conducted between April 11 and 22, 2005. All candidate tests were recorded and a monitoring and moderation process was carried out in May and June.

The written and aural components of the examinations were held on Friday June 24 2005, beginning with the written examination at both Ordinary and Higher levels from 9.30 a.m. to 12.00 noon, followed by the aural test from 12.10 to 12.50 p.m.

1.4 Numbers of Candidates taking Italian – 2000 to 2005

| Year | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Ordinary Level | 67 | 40 | 58 | 71 | 74 | 117 |
| Higher Level | 133 | 102 | 115 | 96 | 115 | 167 |
| Total | 200 | 142 | 173 | 167 | 189 | 284 |

There was a significant decline in the number of candidates taking Italian in 2001 but this had been almost redressed by 2004. There was a very encouraging increase of 50% in 2005 over 2004, which augurs well for the future.

1.5 Grades achieved by candidates taking Italian – 2002 to 2005

(expressed as percentages of total candidates)

1.5.1 Ordinary Level

| Year | Total | A1 | A2 | B1 | B2 | B3 | C1 | C2 | C3 | D1 | D2 | D3 | E | F | NG |
|------|-------|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 2002 | 58 | 0.0 | 5.2 | 3.4 | 13.8 | 8.6 | 6.9 | 22.4 | 15.5 | 10.3 | 3.4 | 5.2 | 5.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| 2003 | 71 | 2.8 | 1.4 | 2.8 | 12.7 | 4.2 | 9.9 | 5.6 | 14.1 | 9.9 | 9.9 | 19.7 | 5.6 | 1.4 | 0.0 |
| 2004 | 74 | 1.4 | 2.7 | 8.1 | 5.4 | 14.9 | 20.3 | 10.8 | 6.8 | 8.1 | 8.1 | 5.4 | 6.8 | 1.4 | 0.0 |
| 2005 | 117 | 0.0 | 3.4 | 4.3 | 9.4 | 7.7 | 12.8 | 13.7 | 12.8 | 11.1 | 6.0 | 8.5 | 6.8 | 3.4 | 0.0 |

Comment

The percentages of candidates achieving A and B Grades and Grades A to C combined were lower in 2005 than in 2004. It is difficult to draw any firm conclusions because of the small numbers of candidates taking Italian in these two years and also because of the significant increase in the numbers taking the examination in 2005.

1.5.2 Higher Level

| Year | Total | A1 | A2 | B1 | B2 | B3 | C1 | C2 | C3 | D1 | D2 | D3 | E | F | NG |
|------|-------|------|------|------|------|-------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 2002 | 115 | 17.4 | 7.8 | 8. | 10.4 | 11.3 | 8.7 | 9.6 | 7.8 | 4.3 | 3.5 | 7.8 | 1.7 | 0.9 | 0.0 |
| 2003 | 96 | 18.8 | 11.5 | 9.40 | 10.4 | 7. | 8.3 | 6.3 | 5.2 | 10.4 | 6.3 | 3.1 | 3.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| 2004 | 115 | 19.1 | 9.6 | 8.7 | 11.3 | 12.20 | 9.6 | 4.3 | 8.7 | 7.0 | 5.2 | 4.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| 2005 | 167 | 13.2 | 10.2 | 12.6 | 10.8 | 12.6 | 8.4 | 12.6 | 7.2 | 7.8 | 2.4 | 2.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

Comment

There has been a decline in the percentages of candidates achieving A Grades in the last two years. The percentages achieving B and C Grades and Grades A to C combine have increased. With the small numbers of candidates taking Italian, it is really not possible to draw any definite conclusions from these figures.

2. Oral Examination - Ordinary and Higher Levels

2.1 Introduction

The Leaving Certificate Oral Examination in Italian is common to Ordinary Level and Higher Level. Marks are allocated as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Higher Level | 100 marks |
| Ordinary Level | 80 marks |

All candidates, both at Ordinary and Higher Level, were marked out of a total of 100 marks by the oral examiners. The marks of Ordinary Level candidates were adjusted at a later stage to reflect the fact that 80 rather than 100 marks are allocated to their oral tests.

The oral examination consists of three parts:

Section 1

General Conversation **50 marks**

Section B

Role-play **25 marks**

Section C

Picture Sequence **25 marks**

The candidate's performance is assessed on communicative competence, fluency, range of vocabulary, and grammatical and phonetic accuracy.

2.2 Performance of Candidates

All examiners noted that they were very impressed with the overall standard of the 2005 candidates, in particular, in the general conversation. They felt that there was a significant improvement in recent years in the fluency of the candidates and a much greater self-confidence in their ability to express themselves. Examiners also noted some weaknesses and problems which are dealt with in the following paragraphs.

2.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

General Conversation

As already stated, satisfaction was expressed by examiners at the standard of the majority of candidates in the general conversation. Though candidates still have difficulty with grammatical structures, may often use inaccurate language and do not always have the necessary vocabulary to express themselves as they would wish, the majority of candidates showed a willingness and an enthusiasm to communicate. Candidates spoke on a wide range of topics and showed an ability to engage with the examiner. This was a significant improvement on recent examinations where candidates tended to speak on a narrower range of topics.

Candidates may talk about one of the Italian literary texts prescribed for the written examination (at Higher level). This year, as in the past number of years, no candidate took this option.

Role-Play

Examiners expressed less satisfaction with the performance of candidates in this section. There was a strong tendency by some candidates to use memorised material.

While the role-play can be a useful test to see how a candidate would cope in a 'real' situation, the reliance on memorised material often created difficulties, for weaker

candidates in particular. The fact that they had prepared the role-plays in advance at times seemed to be a disadvantage. Many candidates seemed to put more energy into trying to remember what they had memorised than in reacting in the role-play situation. Some candidates just read the prompts in Italian from the role-play card and made no effort to participate in the conversation. It must be mentioned that in the role-play where an Irish student telephones a doctor in Verona to come and see a sick friend in the youth hostel, a number of candidates gave the address of the hostel as O'Connell St. Verona, Pearse St. Verona, Main St Verona etc.!

For the past three years the role-play card has been bi-lingual and this has proved both a help and a hindrance to the candidate. From 2006 the role-play card given to the candidate at the oral examination will have only **one** language (English or Irish) on it. The bi-lingual cards (English/Italian or Irish/Italian) are for classroom use to help students build up vocabulary and prepare for the oral examination.

Picture Sequence

Examiners also expressed some dissatisfaction with the performance of the candidates in this section. It can be said, however, that that the task itself is not entirely satisfactory and can be a frustrating exercise for candidates and examiners alike. The examiner has a passive role in this section as the candidate merely narrates the story of the picture sequence – no questions are asked by the examiner nor is there any discussion on the story itself. Therefore, there is no opportunity for interaction between candidate and examiner. Once again many candidates relied on memorised material. Therefore it was not always easy to assess the candidate's performance. The picture sequence may be a useful task to help candidates expand vocabulary and develop narrative skills but it does not seem to provide a valid test in an examination in its current state.

Problems noted by examiners

While a high percentage of candidates were well able to exchange information in a natural way and to discuss topics of current interest, it was also noted by some examiners that there was a tendency for some candidates to learn material off by heart.

The following are some of the problem areas noted by examiners

- Incorrect auxiliary verb in the *passato prossimo*
- Use of *essere* to talk about age
- Incorrect use of pronouns
- Responding to a question by repeating verb used by examiner*Dove abita? Abita.....*
- The question “*Sei mai stato in Italia?*” was very often not understood by candidates and had to be rephrased to elicit a response
- Incorrect use of articles
- Overuse and incorrect use of “*mi piace*”
- Sono + gerund for continuous present tense
- Non agreement of adjectives
- Not using subjunctive where required

2.4 Conclusions

It is most encouraging to note that all examiners commented on the high quality of spoken Italian shown by many candidates. However examiners also said that they were frustrated at times by the fact that, while some weaker candidates performed quite well in general conversation, they may not have done well overall as they performed very badly in the role-play and picture sequence.

2.5 Recommendations

- The use of Italian as the language of the classroom is the most effective way of ensuring that candidates gain the fluency and ease with which to express their ideas, both orally and in writing. Candidates should have as much exposure to the language as possible.
- It is strongly recommended that candidates should try to express their own ideas rather than attempt to learn off material on specific topics.
- Candidates should ensure that they have familiarised themselves with all five role-plays and picture sequences.
- They should also be encouraged, particularly in the picture sequence, to describe only what is relevant to the narrative and not describe in detail objects that appear in the pictures unless they are part of narrative.

3. ORDINARY LEVEL - WRITTEN AND AURAL

3.1 Introduction

In addition to the **Oral Test (80 marks)** the Leaving Certificate Examination at Ordinary Level in Italian consists of the following components:

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Written Paper consisting of Reading Comprehension and Written Production | (220 marks) |
| Aural – Listening Comprehension Test | (100 marks) |
| Total Written and Aural | (320 marks) |

Written Paper

The Written Paper contains three sections – **Sections A and B** which test reading comprehension and **Section C** which tests written production. Marks were allocated as follows:

| Section A | Section B | Section C | Total |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| 80 marks (40 +40) | 80 marks (20+20+18+22) | 60 marks (30+22+8) | 220 marks |

Section A consists of two reading comprehension passages to which candidates answer in English or Irish. **Section B** consists of a number of advertisements and publicity pieces where once again candidates answer in English or Irish.

There are three parts in **Section C**. Candidates choose to write an Informal Letter or a Dialogue (**30 marks**), fill in a form/questionnaire (in Italian) (**22 marks**) and re-order a jumbled message (**8 marks**).

Aural - Listening Comprehension Test

There are two sections in the Listening Test, **Section A** which is multiple choice and in 2005 tested the weather, announcements and general information and **Section B** which is divided into three parts - each a dialogue containing items of general interest - in 2005 hobbies, lifestyle and an interview with a famous Italian (Valentino Rossi). There were 24 questions in all in the various sections and parts and marks were allocated as follows:

| | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| Section A | 32 marks |
| Section B1 | 20 marks |
| Section B2 | 14 marks |
| Section B3 | 34 marks |
| Total | 100 marks |

3.2 Performance of Candidates

The Reading Comprehension was not particularly challenging and did not cause many problems for the candidates. The performance in the Written Production was most disappointing with a very poor standard being shown by many candidates. 10% of candidates did not answer the Letter or Dialogue at all while 20% wrote no more than a few words. The other two parts of Written Production do not really test writing ability as they are more comprehension than anything else.

The general standard of the answers in the aural section was good. Many candidates did very well in the multiple-choice section. No particular problems presented themselves. If candidates had not scored so well in the aural section there would have been lower grades in the final results.

3.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

3.3.1 Written Paper

Section A – Reading Comprehension

The criterion used in the marking of the answers to the comprehension questions is the level of understanding shown by the candidates to the questions or statements made. There is a lot of emphasis on understanding of single items of vocabulary.

Question 1. I compiti a casa? Meglio farli in classe

Question.1.1: Most candidates did not understand “più di” and just wrote “20 minutes” rather than “**more** than 20 minutes”. Therefore did not get full marks in this question.

Question.1.2: 90% of candidates answered correctly.

Question.1.3 and 1.4 were well answered (Q.1.3 was a true/false question).

Question.1.5: 60% of candidates did not understand “la quantità di lavoro **augmenta**” and only achieved half marks for this question.

Question 2. Vacanze....da cani

Many candidates did not understand this passage at all. Some thought it was about abandoned animals.

Question.2.1 was not well answered. Only 25% of candidates answered correctly.

Questions.2.2 and 2.3 were not well answered as candidates did not know vocabulary relating to the question.

Question.2.4: Everybody knew “dog or cat sitter”, but 70% of candidates did not give another answer, as required, thus losing 6 marks.

Section B - Publicity Pieces/Advertisements

1. Italiawood

(a) and (b) were well answered by most candidates.

(c): Only 20% of candidates understood the expression “riempite il modulo”.

(d): Only 8% of candidates answered this question correctly.

2. Ristoranti d'Italia

Apart from (c) which was a multiple choice question, this question was answered very badly.

(a): Only 5 candidates understood “stampare le informazioni”; nobody understood “fare ricerche per zona geografica”.

(b): The word “prezzo”. was understood by only 30% of candidates.

(d): No candidate understood “bonifico bancario” or “conto corrente postale” but all answered credit card.

3. Scuola di Danza

The candidates understood this passage and they answered well. However 60% of candidates were not familiar with “segreteria telefonica”.

4. CEPU

On the whole, this passage was well understood. and candidates answered well.

(a): Candidates were not familiar with the expression “più di”, thus losing 2 marks.

Almost all candidates understood “numero verde”.

Section C – Writing

1. Informal Writing

The general standard of the written composition was extremely poor. Only a fraction of the candidates were able to write the letter or the dialogue in an acceptable way, 10% leaving the whole section blank, with another 20% writing either very little or using material (that had probably been memorised for the oral) that had nothing whatsoever to do with the specific task required. Or they merely transcribed words from the instructions to the page below.

50% of those who wrote the letter did not understand that they had to tell their Italian friend that they had found a job for the summer. Many asked their friend to find them a job or they wrote learnt-off letters, which did not relate to the letter in question. At least 50% of the candidates have great difficulty with grammar and idiomatic expressions. Many candidates still have great difficulty in using the past tense. 50% of the candidates are not familiar with the layout of a letter and thus lost marks needlessly. Those who chose the telephone conversation (8%) did quite well and produced material of a reasonable standard from both a content and language point of view

2. Questionario

This was answered well by 90% of candidates although 2 candidates left it completely blank. “*Caratteristiche fisiche*” was not understood by about 50% of candidates, who left it blank. However, while this task is part of the writing section of the examination paper it is really a reading comprehension task and therefore cannot be considered a productive task as such.

3. Message

70% of candidates gained less than half marks for this exercise which consists of putting a number of statements in the correct order. For many it was probably guess work. Once again it must be said that as in the case of the *questionario* this task is first and foremost reading comprehension rather than productive writing.

3.3.2 Aural - Listening Comprehension

The general standard of answering in the aural section was good. 16 candidates got over 90%, 45 candidates got between 80% and 90%, while only 9 candidates got less than 40%. These performances obviously helped the overall results of many candidates.

Section A

Generally, most candidates, including some of the weaker candidates, answered this section very well, many getting full marks. This was a multiple-choice test and one cannot always be sure how much was actually understood.

Section B

Dialogues 1 and 2 did not present many problems and candidates answered quite well.

Dialogue 3 proved to be the most challenging part of the aural test.

Surprisingly 10% of candidates did not answer the age correctly in Question 2.

In Question 4 many understood what Valentino Rossi's ambition was, but few were able to say why.

Questions 5, 6 and 7 were not particularly well answered and in Q.8 it was surprising that only 50% of candidates understood "mi piace dormire".

3.4 Conclusions

- The overall standard of the Ordinary Level Leaving Certificate examination in Italian could be improved. In particular, the level of written Italian is very poor and needs to be addressed. Were it not for the high marks achieved in the Listening Comprehension Section many more candidates would have got less than a D grade.
- The fact that 10% of candidates did not attempt the letter – which is essentially the only piece of productive work in the target language in the examination – gives grounds for concern.

3.5 Recommendations

- The use of Italian in the classroom is one of most effective ways to improve both oral and written communication skills. Candidates should have as much exposure to the language as possible.
- Candidates should be encouraged as much as possible to attempt all questions, in particular in the written section.
- All candidates should be familiar with the required layout for an informal letter.
- Basic vocabulary, as an important aspect of language acquisition, should be revised.
- Candidates should be encouraged to read different varieties of authentic texts.
- Candidates should be asked **not** to write in pencil in any part of the examination.

4. HIGHER LEVEL - WRITTEN AND AURAL

4.1 Introduction

In addition to the **Oral Test (100 marks)** the Leaving Certificate Examination at Higher Level in Italian consists of the following components:

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Written Paper consisting of | |
| Reading Comprehension and | |
| Written Production | (220 marks) |
| Aural – Listening Comprehension Test | (80 marks) |
| Total Written and Aural | (300 marks) |

Written Paper

The **Written Paper** contains three sections:

Section, A which tests **Reading Comprehension** on a journalistic passage.

Candidates answer four questions in Italian and a fifth question in English or Irish.

Section B

Candidates have **three** options and choose **one**

- 1) an unseen literary passage
- 2) a literary passage from prescribed novels
- 3) an essay in either English or Italian on one of the two prescribed texts.

Section C which tests written production.

There are three parts in this section. Candidates write a short composition on a topic linked to a journalistic passage, they write a short composition based on key-words given to them and they write **one** of a choice of two formal letters.

Marks were allocated as follows:

| Section A | Section B | Section C | Total |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| 60 marks | 60 marks | 100 marks 25+25+50 | 220 marks |

Aural - Listening Comprehension Test

There are two sections in this test, **Section A** which is multiple choice and tested the weather, general announcements and information and **Section B** which is divided into three parts, each a dialogue containing items of general interest – hobbies, lifestyle and an interview with a famous Italian (Valentino Rossi). There were 30 questions and marks were allocated as follows:

| | |
|-------------------|----------|
| Section A | 16 marks |
| Section B1 | 16 marks |
| Section B2 | 16 marks |
| Section B3 | 32 marks |
| Total | 80 marks |

4.2 Performance of Candidates

Candidates generally coped well with the paper. Section A in the written paper was, in general, well answered. The unseen literary option in Section B was well done on the whole and there was a “varying” standard on the literary options. Written production has improved but there are still quite a number of candidates with a poor range of vocabulary and who experience problems with grammatical structures. The general standard of answering was high as is reflected in the results. The listening comprehension test was not too challenging and candidates did very well.

4.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

4.3.1 Written Paper

Section A - Journalistic passage

The criterion used in the marking of the answers to the comprehension questions is the level of understanding shown by the candidates to the questions or statements made and an ability to manipulate language where necessary. The topic of the passage was interesting and candidate friendly, but some candidates did not understand the difference between the theories of education in France and Italy as expressed in the passage and therefore questions 4 and 5 were not always well answered.

Question.1 was only partly answered, as many candidates did not say that in some cases it would be better to separate the sexes, thus losing marks.

Question.2 (a) and (b) (ii) were generally well answered, but Question.2 (b)(i) was badly answered, as many candidates did not know what plural feminine adjectives were.

Question.3 was generally well answered. Those candidates who used their own words had some problems with the manipulation of the text, but in most cases their effort could be rewarded.

In Question. 4 the obvious answer *l'esperienza di oltre 40 anni* was missed by a large number of candidates.

In Question. 5 not all candidates expressed three points in a coherent way.

Section B

In Section B candidates have **three** options:

an unseen literary passage

a literary passage from prescribed novels

an essay in either English or Italian on one of the two prescribed novels.

Below is the breakdown of the candidates' choices in 2005:

| | Option | No. of candidates |
|-------------|--|--------------------------|
| B 1 | Unseen Literary Passage <i>Una barca nel Bosco</i> | 101 |
| B 2A | Literary Passage from <i>Gli Occhiali d'Oro</i> | 5 |
| B 2B | Literary Passage from <i>A Ciascuno il Suo</i> | 11 |
| B 3A | Essay in English on <i>Gli Occhiali d'Oro 1</i> | 13 |
| | Essay in English on <i>Gli Occhiali d'Oro 2</i> | 2 |
| B 3B | Essay in English on <i>A Ciascuno il Suo 1</i> | 31 |
| | Essay in English on <i>A Ciascuno il Suo 2</i> | 4 |
| | Total | 167 |

It is interesting to note that the number of candidates who chose the unseen literary passage has been increasing in recent years. In 2005 a total of 60% took this option and this suggests that there is a tendency in schools to move away from the study of the prescribed novels.

Section B 1 - Unseen Literary Passage

Una barca nel bosco

101 candidates opted to do the unseen literary passage and, in general, they did quite well with a higher proportion of candidates than in previous years achieving an A or B grade in this section. The passage was straightforward and suitable for the level of

the candidates. For some candidates the difficulty lay in the use of direct and indirect pronouns when manipulation of the text was required.

Questions. 2 (c), 3 (b), and 4(a) were well answered.

Question.1 (a): Some candidates used '*ne*' without mentioning '*le foglie*' which showed they did not really have a full understanding of the answer they were giving.
(b): The majority wrote "viene dall'isola di viali", they did not know the expression "di viali neanche l'ombra".

Question.5: Some candidates answered this question very well. Others did not focus on the Gaspare's feelings and just described what happened.

Section B2 – Literary Passages from Prescribed Novels

Candidates, on the whole, understood the passages from the prescribed novels with the exception of those who probably had not read them.

A - Gli Occhiali d'Oro

Five candidates opted for this passage. Generally, they understood the passage as a whole, the answers for the first four questions were good, but the fifth question showed that they had a poor knowledge of the novel or possibly had not even read it.

B - A Ciascuno il Suo

11 students chose this option and the questions were generally well answered. The main problem was Question.2, where candidates did not understand the pharmacist's political choices.

Question.5 could be answered reasonably well even from the passage without much reference to the novel, as the pharmacist is not of major importance in the novel. It is evident, though, that many candidates had a very poor knowledge of the novel as a whole.

Section B 3 - Essay on prescribed novel

The number of well-written essays was higher than in the previous years. A number of candidates showed a deep knowledge of the chosen novel and analysed the questions very well with appropriate references both in English and Italian.

From some essays it would appear that candidates had read only the English translations of the novel. In some cases there was a lack of a critical sense, which would have enabled candidates to answer the question asked with much greater competence. The retelling of the story and a great use of irrelevant material were very common features of some candidates' work.

Gli Occhiali d'Oro

15 candidates wrote an essay on this novel – 13 chose A1, and 2 chose A2. Only a small number achieved a high grade. There seemed to be a lot of confusion about characters and many who attempted this question did not seem particularly familiar with the novel.

A Ciascuno il Suo

31 candidates chose essay B1. While most candidates listed the strengths and weaknesses of Laurana as a detective, some did not develop these points enough to show they really understood his character. Once again there was much irrelevant information given. On the other hand some candidates were able to describe Laurana's character extremely well and achieved a very high grade.

The 4 candidates who chose essay B2 did quite well, describing how the women in the novel, while appearing weak on the surface, in reality were manipulative and wielded great power. The characters of Laurana's mother, Luisa and the widow Manno were well developed.

Section C – Writing

Composition linked to journalistic passage

The overall standard of the 2005 candidates was significantly better than that of candidates in previous years, particularly in relation to content. Many candidates wrote well about their personal experience of school as well as the Irish situation, but they failed to give their opinion on the article. There were problems with language, in particular, incorrect use of tenses, wrong auxiliary verb, lack of agreement. Other common errors were use of: *è* and *c'è*; *bene/buono*.* However, there were also some good examples of the use of idiomatic expressions and a wide range of vocabulary.

*these errors applied to all three exercises of the written section.

Guided Composition

On the whole it was quite well done and most candidates used all expressions given. However some candidates did not use the word “partita” in the correct way (they thought it was from the verb *partire*.) Also the word “panico” caused some problems and some candidates used it as a verb and tried to conjugate it. “Riesco” and “risolvere” also caused some problems.

Formal letter

The majority of candidates opted for the semi-formal letter to the family. In general, content and communication were good, but in some cases irrelevant material was used which they had learnt by heart for other letters. Being a semi-formal letter, students were not clear whether to use “Lei” or “Voi” and in some cases ended up with “Tu”. Many candidates are still not familiar with the opening and closing formulae for letter writing. It is also most surprising that there are still candidates at Higher Level who do not spell the months of the year correctly!

The very few candidates who opted for the letter to the Italian State Tourist Office did better. Very specific information is required and candidates seem to make fewer grammatical errors and rarely use irrelevant material.

Some good idiomatic sentences taken from the scripts

1. Written composition linked to journalistic passage:

Avere un tenore di vita molto alto. Meglio tardi che mai.

Se la classe ha un buon rapporto con la professoressa è così che s'impara.

Le classi miste sono ottime perché aiutano i due sessi a conoscersi meglio.

2. Guided composition

Sono una patita dello sport. Ero al verde. Che bel pasticcio!

Come per magia. Si dà il caso. In fin dei conti. Mi ha invaso un senso di panico. Ho perso il sangue freddo. Non avevo la più pallida idea.

Incomincio a sudare freddo.

3. Letter (a)

È mio vivo desiderio passare un po' di tempo in Italia.

A dire il vero sono bianca come una mozzarella e non mi piace quando fa un caldo bestiale

Vorrei ringraziarvi di cuore.

Il vostro Paese mi ha incantato

3. Letter (b)

Le sarei molto grata se mi inviaste del materiale.

Avevamo in mente di fare una cosa semplice ma interessante e cioè far avvicinare l'Italia agli Irlandesi.

4.3.2 Aural - Listening Comprehension

The results overall were very good and many candidates achieved full marks or near full marks in this section. 49% achieved an A grade and 27% a B.

Section A

This section was well answered by most candidates though it must be recognised that the multiple choice format is not always an effective way of testing comprehension.

Section B

In Dialogue 1 not all candidates understood “ultima partita” in Q2 and in Q3 (ii) more than half of the candidates did not give “they had no time” as the answer but said “the queue was too long” and so did not achieve full marks.

Dialogue 2

Questions 1, 3 and 4 were well answered.

Question.2: Many candidates did not understand “summer was approaching” and used their imagination to guess. (generally incorrectly).

Dialogue 3

This dialogue presented more difficulties than 1 and 2.

Questions. 2, 6 and 7 were generally well answered.

Question.1: Amazingly a number of candidates gave exaggerated figures like 47 million instead of 4700.

Question.4 (a): Many students did not understand Valentino’s achievements.

Question.5 was not well answered.

Question.8: Many did not understand that he was not punctual.

4.4 Conclusions

- The overall standard of the Higher Level Leaving Certificate examination in Italian was satisfactory.
- In the Reading Comprehension, the journalistic passage was accessible to most candidates.
- It would appear that most candidates are choosing the unseen literary passage rather than choosing one of the prescribed texts.
- While Written Production has improved, there are still great weaknesses in the areas of grammatical structures and vocabulary range.
- Candidates performed very well in the Aural Section and their marks there certainly boosted their overall results.

4.5 Recommendations

- The use of Italian in the classroom is one of most effective ways to improve both oral and written communication skills. Candidates should have as much exposure to the language as possible.
- It is important that candidates have the opportunity to read and discuss a wide variety of material. This helps to widen their vocabulary and to the development of a greater sense of both language and cultural awareness.
- There should be greater emphasis on grammatical accuracy and spelling.
- Candidates should be discouraged from trying to translate elaborate sentences from English into Italian or to learn sentences by heart and use them in any

context. Teachers could encourage better-written production by urging their candidates to write simple, correct Italian.

- Candidates are asked **not** to write in pencil in any part of the examination.

5. Exemplars of Standard, Ordinary Level

Section C

Writing

Question 1 – Informal Writing

(30 marks)

(a) *Hai trovato un lavoro estivo in Italia per due mesi dopo la maturità. Scrivi una lettera ad un amico/un'amica italiano/a e raccontagli/le un po' del tipo di lavoro, gli orari, e qualsiasi altra informazione (in italiano)*

Exemplar (a)

24 giugno, Dublino

Caro Marco,

Come stai? Sono molto bene perché ho trovato un lavoro estivo in Italia pre due mesi dopo la maturità. Saró una commessa in un supermercato. Sono andata in Italia con la mia scuola in Settembre, ma ha piovuto sempre. Se avessi saputo della pioggia, sarei andato in aprile. Andró in Italia 3 luglio!! Sarà bella in luglio! Ma sono preoccupata anche perché conosco un'pocchino dell'supermercato. In Italia, quando lavora con i cliente? Anche lavora con soldi? Quali gli orari tipici? Lavora alla fine settimana? Pagano soldi bene? Anche spero che tu scriva con altra informazione. Studio per l'esame italiano!

Baci,

Marks awarded: 26/30

Exemplar (b)

24ú giugno '05

45 Firenze Rd.

Italia

Cara Silvia,

Buongiorno! Come stai? Io bene. Sono lavoro in ristorante, cameriera per due mesi. Sono lavoro Quattro giorni di settimana, dalle ore 9.00 alle 5.00. Abito a Firenze con i miei amici. C'è molte do fare, per esempio; c'è un centro sportivo e molte negozi. Vado in discoteca con i miei amici, si chiamano, Marco, Carlos e Luicia, anche vado al cinema. Vedere "Hitch" e "Sin City." Ci sono molto fabulousa. Come un famiglia? Arriverò, Dublino in due mesi, per scuola. Ciao!

Scrivano, Sarah xxx

Marks awarded: 21/30

Exemplar (c)

Dublino, 24 giugno 2005

Cara Maria,

Come stai? Io sto bene, nó, Io sto bellissimo perché ho finito gli esami. Ho trovato un lavoro estivo in Italia per due mesi dopo la maturità. Io sto lavoro per due mesi, luglio é agosto, í ristorante. In Irlana, mi piace bere la Guinness, é birra, é mi piace ballare, uscire é ascoltare la musica. Vorrei andare la Roma, vistare il tua casa, e vorrei bene il vino. Vorrei visitare tanti città in Italia. Italia e grande. L'Irlanda é un'isola. None e molto grande.

No mi vede l'ora di veduto, + Scrivimi presto,

Ciao, Anna xxx

Marks awarded: 16/30.

Exemplar (d)

Dublino, il 24 Meitheamh 2005

Come stai? Sto bene! Ho lavoro al topshop. Guadanare il otto euro per ora. Lavoro al weekends lavoro al topshop estate scorso Mi diverto lavora in topshop Vado al topshop i piedi Con gli amici.

Scrivimi Presto, Sharon.

Marks awarded: 8/30.

6. Exemplars of Standard, Higher Level

Section C Writing

Written composition linked to comprehension of journalistic passage. **25 marks**

Descrivete (in italiano) la vostra esperienza scolastica personale e la situazione irlandese riguardo le scuole miste, ed esprimere la vostra opinione sul tema dell'articolo.

Exemplar (a)

La mia esperienza personale delle scuole miste in Irlanda è sicuramente molto positiva. In Irlanda ci sono molte scuole con solo ragazzi o solo ragazze. Io ho frequentato una scuola media monosesso pero poi ho cambiato scuola e sono andata a una scuola mista. Senza dubbio preferisco la scuola mista. La scuola con solo ragazze non mi piaceva per niente. A volte le ragazze possono essere molto antipatiche e ci sono molti argomenti tra le ragazze. Invece penso che i ragazzi siano più rilassati. Per questo motivo la scuola diventa più piacevole e non ci sono così tanti argomenti. Si dice che le ragazze ricevono voti più alti. Questo non lo capisco perché secondo me ogni persona è differente e dipende dal loro livello. Però sono d'accordo che le ragazze hanno più capacità di studio. Spesso le mie amiche vanno a casa a studiare dopo la scuola mentre i ragazzi giocano a calcio o vanno in giro . Però certamente non è sempre il caso. Secondo me è buono per i ragazzi stare con le ragazze perché non diventano così violenti. Può aiutare con il loro comportamento perché generalmente se hanno molte amiche sono più gentili e meno testardi. Secondo me è veramente importante avere le scuole miste.

Marks awarded: 24/25 (14 + 10)

Content: All points covered

Language: Appropriate use of idiomatic expressions, very good range of vocabulary and very accurate grammar

Exemplar (b)

Penso che le scuole 'monosesso' sono più migliore delle scuole miste. Sono andata a una elementaria miste ma adesso frequento ad una scuola 'monosesso'. Da quando vado è più meglio per le ragazze andare a una scuola monosesso. Generalmente è più facile di lavorare senza i ragazzi perchè i ragazzi non sono calmo o timido di solito. Infatti loro sono totalmente contro di questo. Credo che lavoro più migliore e spero che i miei risultati sarà buono.

In Irlanda il maggiore delle scuole scuole sono miste. Al giorno d'oggi il gente crede che sia più naturale per i ragazzi e le ragazze essere insieme. Dobbiamo fare interazione con l'altro sesso. Anche ci sono un sacco di scuole monosesso per gli studenti che lo vogliono.

Come questo l'articolo penso che molti studenti non hanno la opportunità di realizzare le loro potenzialità, nelle scuole miste. È vero che le ragazze sono più mature dei ragazzi durante la pubertà, in genere. Penso che sia un bisogno di più scuole monosesso in Irlanda.

Marks awarded: 20/25 (13 + 7)

Content: Good level of coherence

Language: Adequate vocabulary but some grammatical inaccuracy

Exemplar (c)

Sulla base della mia esperienza personale pensa che sia le scuole miste è cattivo. Prendiamo il esempio di mia scuola. Vado all scula 'monosesso' e siamo molto bene, abbiamo molto bene grande e facciamo meraviglgora nell'esame. Vado d'accordo con l'autore che le ragazze è più docilità, capacità di studio e rispetto delle regole che il sistema impone. Le ragazze lavorano dura. Per esempio quest'anno quando ho studiato i miei amici c'erano giocare il calico e il tennis e la studiare era poco di importanza. Il maggiore problema nelle scuole miste e al giorno d'oggi i giovani vogliono più attenzione e piaciono vestire le moda. I giovani non è lavora dura quando sono miste. È ovvio che le scuole miste è cattivo e pensa che sia arresto.

Marks awarded: 12/25 (8+4)

Content: Not always coherent

Language: Incorrect verbs and some spelling mistakes

Formal Letter (50 marks)

- (a) *Hai deciso di viaggiare con l'Inter Rail e desideri passare un po' di tempo in Italia. Scrivi a una famiglia italiana che conosci per chiedere consiglio su dove andare. Parla dei tuoi interessi, di quando andrai e di quale sarà il tuo budget.*

Exemplar (a)

Dublino, 4 luglio

*Signora Bianca
13 Corso Cavour
Toscana
Italia*

*Gentile Signora Bianca,
Grazie per la Sua lettera che ho ricevuto due giorni fa. Sono rimasta contenta di sapere che sta bene. Come ben sa, frequento l'università quest'anno. Avrò le vacanze estive molto lunghe e quindi ho deciso di viaggiare con l'Inter Rail per due mesi. È mio vivo desiderio passare un po' di tempo in Italia e così spero di passare tre settimane in Italia, dal dodici luglio al otto agosto. Inoltre, studio l'italiano all'università e mi piacerebbe molto avere l'opportunità di migliorare la mia conoscenza della lingua.
Sarei molto contenta se si può consigliarmi. Verrò con tre amici. Il nostro budget è abbastanza piccolo, ma sappiamo che c'è molto da fare e da vedere in Italia, e vogliamo fare o vedere tutti! Parlo un po' dei miei interessi e poi, capisce quali cose mi piacerebbe fare! Amo il nuoto e mi piace anche prendere il sole. Sono sicurra che ci sono tante spiagge bellissime in Italia e mi piacerebbe molto visitarle. Inoltre, mi piace molto fare lo sport e faccio la barcavela e vado a cavallo spesso. Vorrei migliorare il mio italiano e dunque non voglio andare in un luogo turistico.*

Preferisco essere in contatto con la gente italiana. Finalmente , mi piace molto la storia, soprattutto la storia di Roma. Mi piacerebbe molto vedere il Colosseo. Ho l'intenzione di andare in giro e vedere Venezia, Firenze, Milano e Toscana, e graderei se si può mandarmi informazioni su questi regioni. Cerco anche il suo consiglio personale su dove andare. Spero anche di fare visita alla sua casa. Non vedo l'ora di vedere la famiglia!

In attesa di una sua risposta le porgo i più distinti saluti

Marks awarded: 48/50 (10+24+14)

An excellent example of letter

Content: All points covered

Language: Appropriate use of idiomatic expressions, very good range of vocabulary and very accurate grammar

Exemplar (b)

Dublino, 23 maggio 2005

*Via Dante 17
20135 Roma
Italia*

Gentili Signori Bianchi,

Finalmente, ho appena finito il mio esame di maturità, e ho molti progetti per le vacanze estive. Prima di continuare a studiare vorrei viaggiare un po'. Allora ho comprato un biglietto Inter Rail.

Come sapete bene sono stata in Italia parecchie volte e con ogni visita mi piace sempre di più. Quindi, ho intenzione di venire in Italia possibilmente durante il mese di luglio.

Non conosco bene il paese e vi sarei grata se mi poteste mandare delle informazioni sulle diverse zone.

Mi piace l'Italia molto. È un bellissimo paese. La gente è accogliente e espansiva. E poi il tempo è sempre bello. La cosa che mi colpisce di più in confronto all'Italia è la cucina italiana. Per questo motivo vorrei visitare Bari, dove il mangiare è ottimo. Un mio amico mi ha consigliato di stare almeno una settimana a Roma per potermi godere la panorama. Avete altri consigli su dove dovrei andare?

Purtroppo ho molto tempo libero ma pochi soldi, allora sto cercando una vacanza poco costoso. Ho 900 euro per questo soggiorno. Potreste mandarmi alcuni opuscoli delle zone diverse unitamente a alcuni indirizzi di pensioni per favore. La ringrazio del vostro aiuto. Questo sarai un'ottima possibilità per me. Non vedo l'ora di venire in Italia.

In attesa di una vostra risposta, invio distinti saluti.

Marks awarded: 46/50 (10+ 23+ 13)

Content: All points covered, some irrelevant material

Language: Appropriate use of idiomatic expressions, good range of vocabulary, some very minor grammatical errors

Exemplar (c)

Dublino, 24 giugno 2005

*Signora Rossi,
Piazza Garibaldi,
Firenze.*

Gentile Signora Rossi,

Spero che voi e la vostra famiglia siete bene attualmente. Mi dispiace di non aver scritto recentemente ma ho avuto molti esami la mesa scorso.

Ho deciso di viaggiare con l'Inter Rail a Europa. Vorrei passare tre settimane in Italia. Mi ha piaciuto molto quando ho visitato l'anno scorso, non vedo l'ora di ritornare.

Sarò con mia amica, Emer, per il viaggio.

Vorrei passare un po' di tempo con voi e la vostra famiglia, forse una settimana. Mi ha piaciuto molto la sua casa, é la sua famiglia siamo stati molto bene con me. Firenze è una città bellissima. Non vedo l'ora di vedere il Davide.

Dove una bella città per passare due settimane in Italia? Vorrei vedere molti luoghi con mia amica, é spero che il tempo non é troppo caldo. Andremmo in Italia durante l'estate prossimo, forse agosto, ma non lo so al momento.

Sono molto interessante nel arte. Voglio andare alla galleria degli Uffizi quando sono a Firenze. Anche, vorrei visitare il museo nel Ponte Vecchio.

Naturalmente, vorrei andare per lo shopping quando sono in Italia. L'anno scorso ho comprato una borsa bellissima, Louis Vuitton, nel mercato in vicino l'Arno. Forse prenderai me al quest'mercato?

Sono stato il mio compleanno la settimana scorso, durante gli esami. Al momento ho una mila euro per il mio viaggio.

In attesa di una sua cortese risposta,

Marks awarded: 38/50 (10+18+ 10)

Content: Some points could have been developed a little more and some irrelevant material

Language: Many incorrect verbs, some spelling mistakes (agosto!) mixing of tu/voi and Lei form

- (b) *Vuoi organizzare una giornata italiana nella tua scuola e per farlo vuoi utilizzare anche del materiale turistico. Scrivi all'Enit (Ente Nazionale Italiano per il Turismo), 1, Princes Street London W1R 8AY, parlando del tuo progetto e richiedendo di inviarti del materiale, specificando il tipo di materiale che ti potrebbe interessare.*

Exemplar (a)

Dublino 24 settembre

*ENIT
1 Prince's Street
London W1R 8AY*

Spettabile Direzione,

Sono una studentessa irlandese e quest'anno faccio l'anno di transizione. Vorrei organizzare una giornata italiana nella mia scuola per il mio progetto di quest'anno. Vi scrivo per chiedervi informazione culturale di Italia. Spero che potete aiutarmi. Vorrei avere un tavolo con opuscoli dei posti di interesse storico in Italia per esempio il Colosseo, Pompei Venezia e Firenze. Desidero avere cibo italiano per assaggiare e per questa ragione potrebbero mandarmi ricette italiane per fare il cibo. Vorrei avere un film corto dell'industria turistica in Italia. C'è un grande interesse nella lingua italiana nella mia scuola e vorrei avere dei opuscoli circa il studio della lingua se è possibile. Incluso una manca affollata con il mio indirizzo. In attesa di una vostra gentile risposta vi porgo i miei più distinti saluti e ringraziamenti.

Marks awarded: 40/50 (10+20+ 10)

Content: Points covered and developed well

Language: Appropriate vocabulary, grammar not good, sometimes interfering with meaning

Exemplar (b)

Dublino , 24 giugno

*Ente nazionale Italiano per il Turismo
Princes Street 1
London W1R 8AY*

Spettabile Ufficio,

Sono uno studente d'italiano in una scuola secondaria a Dublino. Vorrei organizzare una giornata italiana nella mia scuola e per farlo voglio utilizzare del materiale turistico.

Vi sarei molto grata se poteste mandarmi alcuni opuscoli turistici, ai soggetti dell'arte, dell'architettura, del cibo d'Italia e sul paese in genere se possibile. In attesa di una Vostra risposta, Invio distinti saluti

Marks awarded: 40/50 (9+18+ 13)

Content: Points covered well but not developed

Language: Appropriate vocabulary and good grammatical accuracy