

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
THE MATRICULATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION
ADVANCED LEVEL

ITALIAN

MAY 2006

EXAMINERS' REPORT

MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATIONS BOARD

**AM ITALIAN
MAY 2006 SESSION
EXAMINERS' REPORT**

STATISTICS

Table 1 below shows the distribution of grades for the May 2006 session

Table 1: Distribution of Grades - May 2005

Grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	Abs	Total
N of Grades	28	61	116	35	32	52	14	338
% of Total	8.3	18.0	34.3	10.4	9.5	15.4	4.1	100

The statistics for this May Session 2006 in the Matriculation Certificate Advanced Italian show that the rate of passes (A to E) is higher when compared to last year's examination. The failure rate was 9% less. It must be noted that the new syllabus is proving to be more user friendly to the students than the previous one. However, some tasks [language exercises and précis writing] were easier than the previous examination and therefore favoured the candidates' overall performance.

As stated already in the 2005 examiners' report, teachers and students are to follow closely the aims, subject content, assessment objectives, and assessment scheme as designated in the syllabus.

The following comments are meant to help teachers guide their students in their examinations:

Listening Comprehension

Seeing that 80% of the candidates did not bother at all about the 'about 50 words' limit (they seem to think that writing 70 is permissible and writing 120 is not too bad), it might be helpful if a limit is to be kept, to specify that 'in about 200 words' means 'between 180 and 220' words. Adding "The mark will be given on the first 220 words you write, the rest will be ignored. If you write fewer than 180 words you will most probably be penalising yourself". Seeing that it cannot get anywhere with its usual rubrics, the Board feels it should start hammering some sense into the candidates' head the hard way.

Candidates should be told in no uncertain terms that their work should be "IN YOUR OWN WORDS. TRANSCRIBING WHAT YOU ARE HEARING WILL NOT EARN YOU ANY MARKS". Because this is just what very many of them did: just transcribe. And in most cases it was very clear that they had not understood. Indeed they do not seem 'to try' to understand; they are simply in a desperate hurry to put down the words being read out to them, so that later they will rewrite them neatly for the final copy.

Generally speaking the level is depressing. It is hard to believe that most of these candidates have followed an Advanced Level course, and even harder to imagine them following a B.A./B.A.(Hons.) course with profit. Their spelling is atrocious, their punctuation of Primary school level. The general knowledge of some of them is neither knowledge nor general. Over 15 different spellings of Beirut. Similarly with 'Trebisonda' and 'Maometto'; the good prophet and his followers will not like seeing his name written as 'Marmetto', 'Mammetto', or 'Mau Metto', amongst

others; and that is not counting the number of times the name starts with a small letter. Not more encouraging are sentences like 'Bay Root è capitale della Danimarca', (or is it 'Delimarca'?) or "Trebisonda è in Ancara', 'la diocesi si chiama Don Andrea'. 'Brutta la luna' is not as bad as 'Buddah la luna'; but religious feelings could turn bad with an 'Allah Akbar' becoming 'Alla bagdad'. Some other gems of spelling: Turkija, Turcija, turichia, l'Ibano, danimarka.

Essays:

- Hardly any candidate performed any form of revision strategy as the essay texts were not edited, re-read or corrected by the student himself.
- Spelling and phonetic interference from Maltese was a persistent problem in a considerable number of texts.
- A considerable number of essays were morphologically and syntactically weak. Most students persistently showed incompetence in the use of the articles, the prepositions, the *coniuntivo*, *le frasi ipotetiche*, *gli accenti e la concordanza (dei tempi e degli aggettivi/nomi/articoli)*.
- Hardly any students used punctuation marks in essay writing.
- Many essays lacked meaningful or original introductions/conclusions, cohesion, planning and interesting ideas.

Language Exercises

- Most students mastered all exercises.

Literature and Culture

Section A

- A great number of students seem to lack the awareness that questions which carry a high score cannot be answered in the same way as questions which carry a low one! Students indiscriminately gave the same emphasis in answers to questions carrying varying marks!
- Students are required to have a sound knowledge of the literary and historical context.

Sezione B

- The general impression is that very few students studied the text book. Most of the content given in the text book was hardly visible in the essays.
- Only a few of these essays presented a mature view on Italian culture.
- The quality of the writing was extremely poor in a considerable number of cases. Students do not seem to have realised the difference between *registro parlato e registro scritto*!

The following table explains in detail the candidates' performance in the Literature and Culture Paper:

Candidates	Section A 1	Section A 2	Tot. Lit.	Section B	Total
Reg. Candidates	238	238	238	238	238
Absent	19	19	19	19	19
Present	219	219	219	219	219
Passed	139	87	106	38	68
% Passed	63.47	39.73	48.40	17.35	31.05
Failed	80	132	113	181	151
% Failed	36.53	60.27	51.60	82.65	68.95

Comprehension

The texts chosen for comprehension [listening, reading and writing] are usually taken from Italian media. Candidates must be encouraged to read and analyse Italian newspapers [thanks to Internet, now available on-line]. Only in this way will they be able to better their vocabulary, their language, comprehension skills and knowledge of current affairs as could be seen in this session's passages.

Chairperson
Board of Examiners

September 2006