

# EXAMINERS' REPORT

**IM ITALIAN**

FIRST SESSION 2018



**L-Università  
ta' Malta**

**MATSEC  
Examinations Board**

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## Statistics

The table below shows the number of candidates who registered for the Italian examination at Intermediate Level in May sessions between 2015 and 2018 included.

	<b>May 2015</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>May 2016</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>May 2017</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>May 2018</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>No. of Candidates</b>	139	100	121	100	91	100	72	100
<b>Grades A - C</b>	83	59.7	72	59.5	53	58.2	41	56.9
<b>Grades A - E</b>	120	86.3	105	86.8	74	81.3	57	79.2
<b>Grade A</b>	7	5	5	4.1	4	4.4	6	8.3
<b>Grade B</b>	30	21.6	23	19.0	14	15.4	12	16.7
<b>Grade C</b>	46	33.1	44	36.4	35	38.5	23	31.9
<b>Grade D</b>	19	13.7	19	15.7	14	15.4	9	12.5
<b>Grade E</b>	18	13	14	11.6	7	7.7	7	9.7
<b>Failed</b>	12	8.6	14	11.6	13	14.3	10	13.9
<b>Absent</b>	7	5	2	1.7	4	4.4	5	6.9

The number of candidates sitting for Italian at Intermediate Level is so strongly decreasing that in the past four years the number has gone down by nearly 50%. The overall performance, shown on the table in the percentages of those who, in the last session, obtained Grades A-C and Grades A-E, is quite similar to that of 2017. However, when examining the different grades separately, there is a remarkable progress in Grade A (from 4,4% in 2017 to 8.3% in 2018) and a fall for both Grades C and D.

## Remarks

### Paper I – Aural/Oral

Out of 72 candidates who applied for the exam, 6 missed the oral exam, one of whom missed only the oral exam and sat for the written session. The free conversation and the topic presentation together had a weight of 20%. Apart from the good communication skills showed in the free conversation, the presentation of a topic selected by the candidates themselves facilitated the good achievements acquired. All those who sit for the exam, including private candidates, need to bear in mind that the topics have to be exclusively chosen from the list provided in the syllabus.

### Listening comprehension

In this task, the majority of candidates performed favourably. None of the candidates failed the test with the majority scoring very high marks. It is evident that language receptive skills are well within the competence of the candidates.

The majority of candidates opt to answer the questions by copying words they have listened to from the recording. A minority of candidates tackled the answers by paraphrasing the text they had listened to and reference type questions seem to be the most popular with the examinees and easier to tackle. Inferential questions are found to be more difficult to answer. In the case of Question 6 a very high percentage of the candidates failed to score any points.

## Paper II - Written

### Comprehensions

Candidates scored better on the first comprehension test. There were questions where candidates could not just lift the answers from the text, but had to consider the information provided. At times these questions were partially answered, or answered in a way which strayed from the question. Candidates have to be more conscious of the importance of reading the text carefully, and not assuming that finding a familiar word that appears in both the text and question will lead them to the part of the text that contains the answer. It should be emphasised to candidates that their responses should be full, relevant and to the point.

### Essay

Some candidates presented very mature comments. There were candidates with a strong knowledge of the Conditional and Subjunctive tenses as well as the Conditional sentences. Most of the candidates chose essay F and were extremely repetitive and lacked originality. Nobody chose essay D. Essay C (the letter) was not chosen by many: some of those who did failed to use the "Lei" form to address the "Sindaco", opening the letter with "Caro Sindaco" and signing off with "Saluti".

A number of candidates scored low marks because of poor sentence construction. They had difficulties in syntax, and a number of them found difficulty to write complex sentences and limited their work to very basic constructions. Some essays appeared fragmented as candidates wrote one whole sentence for one idea in one paragraph.

The following are some of the most recurrent mistakes:

- Interferenza linguistica: the use of "realizzare" instead of "rendersi conto"; or words like: eliminazione, vaganza, tecnologia, comunicare, milioni, negativo;
- Internet is often wrongly used with the article: l'Internet, nell'Internet;
- Poor use of punctuation;
- Lack of knowledge on the use of the "preposizioni articolate";
- Frequent mistakes in the concordanza: le cose si sono trasferiti, tutti i generazioni, molto gente, molti personi, la gente potevano, le sue vantaggi, un altra problema;
- Mistakes in the use of the accent: anch , cosi, piu, puo, perciò, perché, attività
- Errori di ortografia: uzato, falzo, schermo.

It is important to point out the importance of legibility which besides being esthetically pleasing, is most helpful to understand the syntax of the text. Excessive corrections by crossing out sentences quite heavily with a number of lines; and attempting to write three full sentences in the space of two lines, makes life rather difficult for the person reading the text.

The main difference between those who obtained a satisfactory mark and those who did not, was related to attention to spelling and grammar and the capability of using sentence structures that demonstrate the ability to go beyond basic levels of writing in Italian and developing coherent ideas presented in an orderly manner.

### Literature: Ammaniti / Cassola / Benni

The questions set on *Io non ho paura* of Ammaniti were tackled by 23 candidates, with Brano 1 being more popular than Brano 2. A very large number of responses included answers which candidates had learnt as part of their teacher-led exam preparation. In some cases, candidates produced almost identical answers. Candidates should be provided with the appropriate literary terminology which will enable them to tailor their responses according to the questions being asked in order to produce more focused answers. Less high achieving answers made arguable

and unsupported assertions and often substituted response to the question with a good deal of unnecessary preamble.

The majority of the candidates chose the questions of Brano 3 or Brano 4 on *La ragazza di Bube* of Carlo Cassola. Apart from the fact that, among the candidates who chose to answer questions on Cassola, very few were able to give correct answers, almost all of them found it very difficult to express themselves in fluent Italian. The majority who opted for Cassola did not have knowledge of the facts as described by the author. Most of the answers were, in fact, either incomplete or not precise, especially in those questions that were more specific in nature. It is worrying to note that a good number of candidates who study Italian at Intermediate level still have difficulties to distinguish between "è" and "e", verb conjugations, definite and indefinite articles, prepositions etc. Overall the general level of both the content knowledge and the linguistic level is quite poor.

Only 8 candidates attempted the question on *Margherita Dolcevita*. Most candidates attempted the questions set on both passages when the candidates had to choose one.

All in all, the majority of candidates answered correctly to the questions set on the passage. A few candidates showed evidence of high competence by referring to other characters or parts of the plot relevant to the question. Others even quoted a phrase or two to highlight some outstanding feature of the characters. A few others, however, showed that they were not familiar with the text. Two candidates did not attempt most of the questions.

Markers for this section on literature are suggesting the following points that might help candidates to score better in this part of the examination. Candidates need to:

- Read the questions carefully and identify the key words;
- Use these words as a framework for their answers;
- Provide textual reference in support of their points;
- Select appropriate quotations and comment on them;
- Explore how writers achieve their effects through language, imagery and structure;
- Know the texts extremely well.

It is worth pointing out to candidates that lack of knowledge of the text will reveal itself very quickly. Given the number of marks the candidates tend to be dealing with, the above comments severely impacted on their performance.

Chairperson  
Examination Panel 2018