



**L-Università
ta' Malta**

**MATSEC
Examinations Board**



Examiners' Report

IM Italian

First Session 2025

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A. STATISTICAL INFORMATION

This report refers to the May session 2025. The table below shows the number of candidates who registered for the Italian examination at Intermediate Level in the May sessions of 2023 and 2024, and that of 2025.

	May 2023	%	May 2024	%	May 2025	%
No. of Candidates	57	100	51	100%	55	100
Grades A - C	29	50.9	24	47,1	31	56,4
Grades A - E	39	68.4	39	76,5	41	74,5
Grade A	7	12.3	4	7,8	5	9,09
Grade B	12	21.1	8	15,7	15	27,3
Grade C	10	17.5	12	23,5	11	20,0
Grade D	7	12.3	10	19,6	8	14,5
Grade E	3	5.3	5	9,8	2	3,64
Failed	7	12.3	5	9,8	1	1,82
Absent	11	19.3	7	13,7	13	23.6

Table 1: Grades obtained by candidates in 2023, 2024 and 2025

This year, from the 55 candidates who registered for the exam, 13 did not turn up both for the oral/aural and the written paper and another 3 candidates missed the oral exam.

As indicated on the table, the number of applicants has increased by 4 candidates but on the other hand, the percentage of absenteeism has increased substantially – it is very worrying to see that nearly ¼ of those who apply for the exam, do not sit for it. It is surely positive that only one candidate did not obtain an overall pass mark and that there has been a remarkable increase in the percentage of those obtaining a grade between A and C, with the greatest increase being in Grade B.

GRADE	A	B	C	D	E	F	ABS	Total
NUMBER OF CANDIDATES	5	15	12	7	2	1	13	55
% OF TOTAL	9.1	27.3	21.8	12.7	3.6	1.8	23.6	100

Table 2: Distribution of grades for IM Italian 2025 First Session

B. COMMENTS ON PAPER I (Aural/Oral)

The **Aural Component** is made up of a **Listening Comprehension**.

The marks obtained by the candidates in this section were very good: out of the 42 who set for the exam, 9 candidates got full marks (10) 16 got between 9.5 and 8, 14 between 7.5 and 5, and only 3 candidates failed to obtain a pass mark. In most cases, marks were lost for two reasons: either the candidate failed to be specific in the way he or she answered, or else, the candidate found it difficult to express himself or herself well in Italian.

For the Oral Component of paper I, there were an extra 3 candidates absent, i.e. 39 attended, and they were asked to describe and discuss a picture, and to present a topic on Italian Culture and Civilization. The

candidates fared quite well in this section: 8 got the full 20 marks, another 21 obtained a mark between 19 and 15, 9 candidates between 14 and 10, and only one candidate failed to get a pass mark.

Paper II – Written

Comprehensions

The 2 reading tasks carried 20% of the marks. Only one candidate scored full marks, however 22 out of the 42 candidates obtained between 19,5 and 15,5 and only 2 examinees failed to attain a passing grade and received a score of less than 10.

Most candidates showed a strong understanding of both reading comprehension texts, indicating that they had dedicated adequate time to reading and reflecting on the content before answering. This preparation was evident in the quality of many responses, which were accurate, relevant, and clearly expressed. Comprehension 1, *Le città verdi*, saw a higher level of success, as the questions were more accessible and closely tied to the text, allowing candidates to respond with confidence and clarity.

However, candidates found Comprehension 2, *Paesi intasati al Brennero, sindaci contro Google*, more demanding. The passage and corresponding questions required deeper interpretation and higher-order reasoning skills, which posed difficulties for some. Despite this, several candidates were still able to demonstrate insightful analysis and an ability to engage with more abstract ideas, which is encouraging.

Overall, performance across both comprehensions was good, reflecting not only a solid grasp of the Italian language—including grammar, syntax, and vocabulary—but also an ability to comprehend and respond to texts thoughtfully. This suggests that candidates are being exposed to appropriately challenging reading material and that their preparation is in line with the expectations for this examination level. The outcome is a positive indicator of language competence and academic readiness.

Essay

The 42 candidates who sat for the exam, chose the essay title as follows: title a – 0; title b – 2; title c – 9; title d – 12; title e – 19. It is evident that most candidates preferred titles d (an email to a friend who is coming to settle in Malta) and e (an argumentative essay about the good use of mobile phones) to the rest.

Although the candidates most probably included both native speakers and Maltese candidates, there was a widespread deficiency in language proficiency, particularly concerning coherence, clarity, punctuation, and planning—elements that were evident in the top compositions.

Some candidates failed to write the essay title letter, so the markers had to figure out which title was chosen when reading the essay. Others do not take notice of the limit of words which is expected. Some go beyond and some fail to write the required word limit or to distinguish between the spoken language and the written language. In some essays, there is lack of clarity of expression, even because some lack essay organisation skills and consequently, they failed to plan the essay and develop it in paragraphs.

Some candidates did give points in the development of their essay. They could build an argument and give different opinions on the matter discussed. However, some had very basic ideas and tended to be repetitive in the attempt of writing the number of words expected. Some candidates showed a moderate level of proficiency, with occasional errors that indicate some evident struggles in the language. Overall, candidates remained focused on the assigned themes, with no major deviations from the topic, and were consistent in

addressing the prompts with relevance and clarity. At this level, more focus on accuracy, organisation and development of ideas is required.

Most candidates performed strongly in the grammar and sentence structure component of the written essays, demonstrating accuracy and confidence in their use of standard Italian forms. The overall structure, coherence, and organisation of their writing were also commendable, reflecting careful preparation and a clear understanding of how to present ideas effectively. They produced flowing and understandable Italian, with some good expressions and some good structures, however, quite a few lacked the basics of the language, let alone the correct use of *say*, the *condizionale* and the *congiuntivo*. Unfortunately, there are examinees who have not succeeded yet in improving the language skills from those expected at ordinary level. Some basic grammar mistakes were noted such as the good use of the article, the *preposizioni articolate*, the agreement between noun and adjective, the use of the direct and indirect object pronouns and complete omission of the relative pronouns. Candidates encounter greater difficulties with more complex language structures, particularly conjunctions. For instance, they tend to use *e per aggiungere*, which could be more appropriately replaced with *per giunta* or *inoltre*. At an Intermediate level, as shown by L2 research, the learning process needs to be scaffolded by more extrinsic instruction, not only at the formal/grammar level but also at the pragmatic level. At this level, candidates should know that it is *efficace* and not *effettuoso*; *la vita notturna* and not *la vita della notte*; *lo svantaggio più grande dell'avere* and not *uno svantaggio che è il più ovvio*; *giornali cartacei* and not *portatili*; *affrontare* and not *affacciare*.

In terms of content, most essays were well developed and reflected a solid level of preparedness. Candidates showed an ability to elaborate on ideas with sufficient detail, and their arguments were generally clear and well thought out. However, a common area for improvement lies in the complexity and originality of the ideas presented. In many cases, the arguments could have been more intellectually ambitious or creative. This lack of depth limited the potential for awarding higher marks in originality and critical thought. Another aspect that can be strengthened is the use of more sophisticated Italian syntax and stylistic variety. While the foundations are strong, further development in syntactic complexity would enhance the overall quality of the essays. Once the sentence starts getting long, as is expected when developing an argument, some candidates, fail to comply to the language rules. With targeted focus on these areas, candidates can further elevate their performance.

Literature

Niccolò Ammaniti, Io non ho paura

Only 14 out of 42 opted to respond to the questions presented on this book for a total of 30 marks and were divided equally between Brano 1 and Brano 2.

This year, the candidates were much more prepared than in the past years. In fact, 86% (12 candidates) got a pass mark in this section and only 14% failed it (2 in number). This positive result means that most of the common errors identified in the past years like for example, confusion in the presentation of work such as not indicating the exact questions that are being answered, lack of cohesion, repetition of the same concept for the same questions, not coming prepared for the exam and confusing information, amongst others, were not present in this cohort.

Carlo Cassola, La ragazza di Bube

Out of the 42 candidates who sat for the exam, 27 replied to the questions on *La ragazza di Bube*. They demonstrated clarity and precision, addressing each prompt directly without digression. Their answers reflected a thorough comprehension of the text, supported by well-chosen details. Particularly commendable was their ability to recall specific facts and contextualize them effectively within the broader themes of the novel. The style and syntax used were consistently appropriate and demonstrated strong command of the Italian language.

Stefano Benni, Margherita Dolcevita

Only one candidate chose to answer a question on Benni. The candidate displayed a remarkable grasp of the novel's structure and key developments. The response showed consistent awareness of the central events and, more importantly, an understanding of the characters and their roles within the narrative.

Overall, all candidates exhibited a solid and thoughtful understanding of the novels. Their responses were well-organized and stylistically coherent, demonstrating good control of Italian grammar, syntax, and idiomatic expression. Moreover, their ability to link character development with thematic elements contributed to answers that were broad, analytical and well-articulated.

C. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

This May 2025 session of Italian at Intermediate level can be undoubtedly considered as positive. Candidates were more well prepared than in previous years. There was only one candidate who did not obtain a pass mark and a remarkable increase in those who obtained Grade B, passing from 15% in 2024 to 27,3% in 2025.

Chairperson
Examination Panel 2025