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

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)

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

The discussion of the article 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, the same exercise required for the Short Course (SC) speaking test. The mark grid for Part 2 is interpreted and applied in the same way as for the SC: candidates performing at the same level will obtain the same mark.

The overall exam is rather long but candidates are generally able to maintain their level of performance over the entire exam, probably because the second part involves a lesser degree of unpredictability. Performances for the two parts of the exam were well balanced with only a marginal higher mean mark for language in Part 2, as could be expected.

Part 1

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

1. *Una casa per i giovani* (Theme: Young people)
2. *Sport e doping* (Theme: Sport)
3. *Il patrimonio artistico: risorsa o costo insostenibile* (Theme: Cultural heritage)
4. *Bruciare i rifiuti producendo energia* (Theme: Environment)
5. *Adozione o provetta* (Theme: Family)
6. L'Italia, nazione cattolica o laica (Theme: Religion and belief)

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. 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 4 was the most popular choice. The environment is a topical subject which tends to be taught well in all schools. This meant that candidates had a great deal of factual and subject-specific vocabulary.

Candidates who chose this topic often had strong views on the environment. Better answers were able to discuss the pros and cons of refuse-burning power stations and their impact on local communities using terminology not given in the text. Wider discussion of environmental issues elicited concerns about global warming and limited levels of recycling in certain countries or communities. More could perhaps have been made of the need for people to change their lifestyles and expectations to tackle climate change.

Card 2 was the second most popular and those who chose it generally had a lot to say about the topic of doping in sport. Better answers were able to cite examples of specific sports and events, such as cycling and the Tour de France, to back up their assertions. Most felt that it was important that sporting events be free from the unfair and contaminating influence of drugs, but some also felt that a lifetime ban for individual athletes was too harsh a punishment and that athletes should be allowed to participate in international events once they had been proved to be drug-free.

Candidates who chose any of the other cards chose them because of a keen interest in the relevant topic area and were able to produce interesting discussions.

Part 2

For Part 2 candidates can choose a topic of their own interest, provided 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 opinions 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 matters of personal interest, historical events, car manufacturers, or an Italian speaking community outside Italy.

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. Even at this level, the most common mistakes remain the use of prepositions, lack of control over agreements, gender and occasionally over verb endings.

Pronunciation and Intonation

Candidates appeared to master the sounds of Italian, in spite of the occasional misplaced stress and mispronunciation of double consonant or vowel sounds.

Conclusion

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

- Reading section: candidates are required to target pieces of information sequentially in the texts and adapt them to fit the format of the question. Occasionally, a degree of inference or justification is required. Some answers require more than one point.

- The translation question requires a close translation – staying as faithful as possible to word order and meaning as possible. It also includes the use of lexical items that have been presented in the preceding texts.

- Listening section: similarly, candidates are required to target information in the order that it occurs in the listening stimulus, and make selective use of the material in order to appropriately and succinctly answer the question.

- The summary question requires adherence to the word count, along with the ability to discern the most pertinent points of the stimulus heard, in accordance with the bullet points given in the question.

General comments

In both parts of the exam, candidates must ensure their answer material ‘fits’ the question; some answers, although seemingly targeting approximately the right area in terms of content, fail to constitute an answer to the question.

Comments on specific questions

PART I

Testo di lettura 1

With specific regard to Questions 5 and 6, straight lifts, which did not tailor material to the question, could not be rewarded.

Testo di lettura 2

Question 10

Some candidates answered as to the general economic benefit of solar panels, along the lines that they ‘pay for themselves’ or similar.

Testo di lettura 3

The construction ‘more and more’ continues to present a challenge for many candidates, as do prepositions, and the issue of when to capitalise or not (e.g. countries/nationalities).

PART II

Brano d’ascolto 1
Question 18

A significant proportion of candidates feminised ‘il clarinetto’.

Brano d’ascolto 2

Question 29

Answers that imply a degree of comparison continue to be challenging for some candidates.

Question 32

Candidates are reminded that if making two points, the second point is not to be a re-wording of the first.
Brano d’ascolto 3

Candidates sometimes struggle with English expressions on this task. ‘Being social’ does not express the idea of using social media in English. Candidates are encouraged to think about the concepts that are being expressed and what they really mean, to avoid producing language that ultimately does not correspond to the original meaning.
Key messages

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

- in Part I, choose a title about 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 Part I and Part 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 submission.

Question 1

(a) This was a popular question. Many candidates were clearly very engaged with the topic and cited the referendum on the UK’s membership of the EU and the election of Donald Trump as US president as examples of how an uninformed electorate can be manipulated into making the ‘wrong’ decision in voting, in some cases mentioning the phenomenon of fake news. More discussion of the role of the media in manipulating public opinion might have been expected. Better answers were able to distinguish between referenda and the election of representatives to parliament to act on citizens’ behalf. The general public did not need to be experts but needed to be able to trust their elected representatives. Several candidates raised the issue of the difficulty of deciding who would be deprived of the right to vote. There was unanimous agreement that voting was a hard-won democratic right which should not be tampered with. Many felt that schools should be involved in educating young people about politics and a good answer expressed the view that the solution to having a better-informed electorate was through engagement not disenfranchisement.

(b) This was another popular choice of question but was not generally well answered. Whilst some candidates gave exemplification of the term reality show, even though from UK television programmes, too few attempted to define the premise of such programmes or gave much thought to the production values thereof. There was a general lack of vocabulary relevant to a discussion of the medium of television. Many candidates talked about a damaging cult of celebrity rather than about the pros and cons of seeing ‘real people’, i.e. not actors, in unscripted programmes. Again, the phrase ambizioni false was often not explained and so it was not clear whether the participants or the viewers were the victims here. Both were possible. Most candidates claimed that because these programmes were popular the government had no right to ban them but did not explore this in sufficient depth. The same argument could supposedly be made for pornography. Better answers asserted that the general public could be trusted to treat programmes such as Love Island...
as harmless entertainment but that the promotion of an ideal body shape or the portrayal of casual relationships might be damaging to young people and were therefore undesirable.

(c) A small number of candidates answered this question. Better answers pointed to the fact that school already fulfils the function of moral and ethical educator as teachers were expected to be both role models and guides for young children. Some candidates felt that schools should be left to concentrate on academic subjects and that moral education was a job for parents. Such answers could have gone on to explore what should happen in the case of inadequate parenting skills and the repercussions thereof for society.

(d) This was another popular question. Some very good answers gave examples of how the infrastructure often necessitated by the hosting of large international sporting events could lead to long-term regeneration of cities and was thus a valuable investment. Furthermore, the events themselves generated income through ticket sales, sponsorship and tourism. Other advantages were seen to be the promotion of sport as a healthy activity, the development of a sense of national pride and the betterment of international relations. On the other side of the argument, candidates cited examples of where money had been lost through corruption or wasted when expensive infrastructure projects were not used after the event. Many candidates felt that hosting sporting events should not be a priority in countries where poverty was widespread.

(e) Candidates who attempted this question needed to distinguish between cinema as a venue and cinema as an art form. It was the latter that question was intended to address. Several candidates unfortunately referred almost exclusively to the former citing problems of dwindling audiences and costs of building maintenance leading to the moribund state of cinema. Whilst it would have been valid to talk about the attraction of seeing films on the big screen where special effects are maximised along with the pleasure of a shared experience, the question required deeper consideration of the key elements of this art form and how it is developing or not. Some candidates did refer to the development in delivery platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime and how this made cinema more accessible to more people, refuting the argument that it was a dying art form. A few candidates interpreted the question as a discussion of the future of the cinema as opposed to that of live performance of theatre or music. This might have been more fruitful had they referred, for example, to the crossover between film and theatre for many actors.

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. Some subjunctive triggers were missed, as in Questions 4 and 9 and the present tense of attrarre in Question 6 eluded all but a few candidates.

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 two questions which caused most confusion were Question 22 and 27 where purché and occorre seemed unfamiliar to candidates.
**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 that they have prepared which might have a more tenuous link.

**General comments**

Candidates are reminded of the need to address the question and to define key terms within it in their own words to demonstrate understanding. Language marks are awarded on a consistent use of accuracy, complexity and lexis throughout the paper. Occasional use of (possibly rote-learned) phrases which may contain structures which are superficially complex, will not by themselves access the higher bands, unless it is evident that the candidate can manipulate the language consistently throughout their work. Where candidates are not particularly confident, it is generally better to write more simply in order to ensure that their message is clearly conveyed. They will often attract more content marks in this way. Quotation, for its own sake, is not rewarded but accurately reproduced citations can be used effectively if they clearly illustrate a point. Students should be encouraged to produce evidence that they have read texts in the original language, where translations in English exist.

The most popular topics chosen this year were *L’immigrazione* and *Il Cinema di Nanni Moretti* although candidates answered on all topic areas. Familiarity with the plots and main themes of texts and films was generally good and several candidates were able to bring clear evidence from the sources to support assertions. Less successful answers were those which did not adequately respond to the precise demands of the question, often because an understanding of key terms was not evidenced. Some candidates’ responses suffered from lack of clarity due to a less confident command of the language or from 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*, and *De Luca* although nearly all the texts were chosen and more commentary questions were chosen than in previous years. As usual, candidates are advised to spend time planning their essays. 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) The vast majority of candidates who chose this topic chose this question. Candidates were asked to comment upon Moretti’s presentation of human nature. The question allowed for a wide range of personal responses and candidates could define *coerente* as either consistent between the films...
studied or coherent as a portrayal of human nature. The question required a much more sophisticated and complex analysis than many candidates were able to provide and it was necessary to address both parts of the question to access the higher range of marks. Better responses identified certain traits of human nature, such as egocentrism, narcissism, avoidance of responsibility etc. and chose characters and events in the films which evidenced them. Many responses were largely narrative and some candidates were uncertain how to interpret natura humana. Some answers were very muddled and too few were able to explain what techniques Moretti used to present these traits. Some description of his cinematographic technique and appropriate vocabulary would be expected to achieve the highest range of marks.

(b) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 2

L’EPOCA FASCISTA

(a) Candidates were asked what the most important lessons were that the authors/director wanted people to learn from the Fascist era and how effectively they were communicated. Whilst some candidates evidenced a reasonable knowledge of the plots of works studied, they needed to better marshal their evidence into a coherent response. There was some circularity of argument. A more general awareness of the history of the period in question would have been beneficial to candidates.

(b) This was the more popular of the two questions. Better candidates were able to clearly point to the many examples of abuse of power and how it was possible for the abuse to happen. Particularly convincing examples were drawn from Fontamara although candidates were tempted to take an over-literary approach to the answer. More awareness of the way the Fascist regime functioned would have been beneficial for a successful response on the other two works.

Question 3

L’IMMIGRAZIONE

(a) This was the more popular question on this topic. It required candidates to question the idea that Italians see immigrants as a homogeneous group. More successful answers were able to point to the fact that there are many distinctions to be made, not least between legal and illegal immigrants, and that Italians’ attitudes towards them depended upon the nature of their contact with them. Better answers pointed out that racism was more evident towards Black or Chinese immigrants than white eastern Europeans and that women were viewed differently from men as the jobs they did often took them into the heart of families and made them indispensable. On the other hand, some people, like Ernesto in Terraferma, could be seen to treat all immigrants in an equal way, as human beings, and therefore worthy of respect. Candidates also pointed to the hypocrisy of many Italians who condemned mass immigration but would then use the services of individual immigrants in their everyday lives. There was an impressive recall of statistics and quotes from those who had studied Blacks Out. Candidates needed to answer the question set; those who provided an answer for a question they had prepared for, about integration or Italians’ attitudes towards immigrants in general, were limited to lower band marks.

(b) This was also a popular question. Candidates were asked to explain how the experience of women migrants differed from that of men. Stronger candidates were able to point to specific differences, for example the types of work undertaken, the nature of their relationship with Italians, the risk of sexual violence and the way they were treated. Weaker responses did not find any differences and talked in general terms about how all migrants are abused and exploited. Some answers based on Blacks Out pointed to the fact that women, particularly badanti, could integrate better into Italian family life and society than men working as labourers. Those studying Terra di mezzo pointed to the fact that prostitutes, as their work is illegal, stood less chance of becoming citizens.

Question 4

LA GRANDE GUERRA (2)

(a) This question asked candidates to decide whether it was justified to say that officers often behaved in a way which was detrimental to the men under their command. A good response was able to
give detailed examples from two sources, La grande guerra and Uomini contro, and make clear comparisons between the two.

(b) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 5

LA DONNA NELLA SOCIETÀ ITALIANA

(a) This question asked candidates to consider to what extent education and work were necessary for women’s self-esteem. Better responses were able to clearly distinguish between the two, concluding that whilst work did allow women to gain financial independence and could improve self-esteem, it was not per se the route to emancipation. Education, on the other hand, was deemed necessary for women, such as Vanna in Donna in Guerra, to develop an awareness of their own condition and be able to respond to it. More nuanced answers were able to make contrasts between Vanna in Donna in Guerra and Rosalba and Grazia in Pane e Tulipani, neither of whom were well-educated, and whose self-esteem derived more from their relationships than their work, although that was a factor.

(b) This question required candidates to discuss the theme of solidarity in the works they had studied and to decide whether such examples of solidarity were always positive. There were many different possible approaches to this question. A good answer would have clearly defined what was understood by the term solidarity. Weaker answers appeared to vacillate between different interpretations of the term and/or were over-narrative in their approach, offering little analysis.

Part II: Texts

Question 6

DANTE ALIGHIERI

(a) The commentary question asked candidates to comment from an extract from Canto XXXII. Candidates were able to make many of the key points that emerged from a close reading. Among these was the clear presence of the two Dantes, pilgrim and poet. A clear example of the intervention of the poet comes in line 4 when the pilgrim, the poet’s creation, disingenuously claims he can’t remember whether he intended to kick the face of one of the sinners. Candidates could also have pointed to the even more obvious example in lines 19-21, where Dante the poet steps into the shoes of the pilgrim to suggest that he will be able to immortalise Bocca in his writing. The evidence of pride (hinted at in Canto 1 by the presence of the lion) still present in Dante at this point suggests that his spiritual journey is not entirely complete, despite the fact that his journey through Inferno is nearly over (l. 1 inver’lo mezzo). In other ways Dante the pilgrim was seen to have grown considerably in confidence, which we see from the way he addresses Virgil so directly, and in his ability to interpret God’s laws. The fact that he is prepared to pull out Bocca’s hair stands in contrast to his earlier coyness regarding punishment, when he had to be berated by Virgil. Good responses could point to the fact that Dante takes the opportunity to make a political point about the defeat of the Guelfs at Montaperti in 1260. In this type of answer more focus on the effectiveness of Dante’s language would be expected. The rhyming pair mezzo and rezzo serve to indicate that we are located at the frozen heart of Hell and some mention of the context and the contrapasso might have been expected.

(b) The question invited candidates to show how Canto 1 establishes themes found throughout the work. This was a popular question and there were a large number of themes available. Many candidates were able to point to key themes and illustrate how they recurred or developed and changed throughout the work. Other candidates needed to be clearer about what constituted a theme, for example antithesis and familiarity may be devices but are not themes per se. Candidates identified how Canto 1 introduces us to the theme of the journey, both real and allegorical as Dante the pilgrim, both as himself and as Everyman, and Dante the poet make the journey through Hell together. The term Dante-personaggio, when used as a shorthand for the former, should preferably be glossed. Several candidates alluded to the theme of the use of reason in the contrast between the emotional and the rational and how Virgil, embodying rationality, encourages Dante to question himself. Mention was made of the introduction to Virgil, Dante the
pilgrim’s guide to Hell and Dante the poet’s inspiration. There was some good discussion of the mixture of the real and the allegorical; Dante is meeting real people, starting with Virgil, on his journey – something that will be continued throughout Inferno. He will also be encountering real characters from the contemporary and Roman periods and fictional ones from Classical literature. Canto 1 includes mention of and Aeneas and Turnus, significantly characters from the Aeneid, Virgil’s own account of an epic journey. Reference was made to the symbolic use of the number three, to represent the Trinity, in many manifestations, not least in the use of terza rima but also in the presence of the three beasts. More could have been made of the allegorical meaning of these beasts and how Dante’s personal connection to the sins they denote would resonate through the cantos, for example the lonzo, representing lust, foreshadows Dante’s meeting with Francesca in Canto V and his very clear identification with her sin, The physical aspects of light vs dark and depth vs height and their metaphorical use were alluded to by some candidates in an exploration of the theme of God’s love and many were able to link the mention of the colle to the ascent towards Purgatory as Dante and Virgil emerge from Hell at the end of the Inferno. More able candidates might have referred to the recurring theme of Dante’s exile as the embittered poet obliquely alludes to contemporary enemies and allies, such as l’ Veltro in verse 101.

This question invited candidates to analyse the impact of the physical backdrop on Dante’s narrative. Most candidates made the point that the familiarity of realistically presented natural phenomena allowed readers to interpret the allegorical intent of the text and to picture vividly the presentation of the punishment of the sinners within it. Examples of natural phenomena cited were the dark wood and bright hill of Canto 1 (though this is not strictly part of Hell), the burning sands of Canto XIV, the frozen lake of Cantos XXXII and XXXIV, the river Styx in Canto VII, and the 7th Bolgia in Canto XXIV. The point was made that the landscape often provided an obstacle to Dante the pilgrim and was symbolic of his struggle, however it could also provide a means of transition from one circle to the next, as with the river Styx. Natural phenomena, such as sand, rocks, fire, wind, water and ice were involved crucially in the system of contrapasso. Candidates are reminded to stick to the terms of the question. The city of Dis was only tangentially appropriate to a description of natural phenomena, perhaps as a counter-example. Some candidates referred to the topography of Inferno as instrumental in exciting and sustaining readers’ interest. Better answers could have described the general topography of Dante’s Inferno so as to better contextualise their particular examples and discussed the many ways in which Dante evokes these landscapes through vivid physical description and devices such as similes.

Question 7

ITALO CALVINO

(a) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

(b) Candidates were asked to consider whether the ending of Calvino’s novel was pessimistic or optimistic. To earn higher band marks candidates needed to focus on the end of the novel and offer a nuanced and balanced analysis of the positive and negative messages Calvino is trying to convey in his ending. There was a lot to say. Some candidates limited themselves to lower band marks because they were overly narrative, retelling the story rather than analysing it. Others hypothesised alternative endings, which while interesting, did not address the question to a satisfactory extent.

(c) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 8

NATALIA GINZBERG

(a) Candidates answering the commentary question were successfully able to demonstrate that the passage reveals Delia’s immaturity, materialism and egotism. They could point to the fact that she shows no interest in her baby, not even naming him. Candidates could have made the observation that neither does she name her servant, nor show any respect to her mother-in-law, who are both taken for granted. Her attitude towards her parents’ home is one of shame as she luxuriates in her new surroundings. More could have been made of what this passage tells us about her continued feelings for Il Nini. There was some discussion of style. There was more analysis available of features such as lexical choice and implicit indirect speech.
(b) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

(c) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 9

BEPPE FENOGLIO

There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

Question 10

NICCOLÒ AMMANITI

(a) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

(b) There were too few candidates to make comment appropriate.

(c) This question required candidates to consider which factors most influenced the development of the character of Lorenzo in the novel. Candidates could have better answered the question by contextualising Lorenzo's point of departure. Key to his development was his interaction with his family, away from the stifling over-protection of his parents to the more poignant and revelatory relationship with Olivia. His grandmother too has a role. The growing awareness of his and others' mortality through his discovery of the dangers of drug addiction was mentioned. Candidates could have gone further to consider that time, particularly time out alone, such as that experienced by Lorenzo might be expected to give pause for reflection as Lorenzo realises that he needs other people. Analysis needed to be more sophisticated than was sometimes offered to achieve the higher bands.

Question 11

LEONARDO SCIASCIA

(a) No candidates chose the commentary question.

(b) This question invited candidates to decide which were the most significant elements of Sciascia's narrative style and their effect on the reader. Better candidates cited the fact that the novel opens in media res immediately captures the reader's interest. Mention was made of the use of the anonymous voices off of the characters in Rome. In a question of this type it would be expected that candidates would refer to elements of narrative style such as the type of narrator, the type of language used both in narration and dialogue, the use of metaphor, heavy irony, humour, satire, imagery and so on. Stronger answers were able to illustrate many of these features and link them to their effect on the reader. The second part of the question needed to be specifically addressed to earn the higher bands of marks.

(c) This was a very popular question and there were many good attempts. Candidates alluded to the parallel systems of justice in operation in the novel. The mafia was seen to have its own internal and ruthless form of justice in which truth played no part as the culture of omertà ensured that citizens would not inform the police. Candidates made the point that the search for justice could appear futile as characters like Arena would not be prosecuted due their protection in high places. Better answers described the irony that Bellodi, through his detective methods, does discover an objective truth about Arena's finances and therefore has enough evidence to convict but that this truth is overturned and justice distorted by unknown powers to be replaced by the lie of a crime of passion. Candidates could have gone further to point to a potential optimism in Bellodi's determination to return to Sicily to continue to seek justice. In order to access the higher bands of marks, candidates needed to respond to both parts of the question. Better answers were able to conclude Sciascia used the novel to expose the existence of the mafia and their modus operandi with its consequent impact upon justice both in Sicily and the mainland.

Question 12

GUISEPPE TOMASI DI LAMPEDUSA
(a) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

(b) This was a popular question and was generally answered well. Candidates were invited to analyse the portrayal of women in *Il Gattopardo*. Most candidates were able to argue strongly that women were critical in effecting societal change and cited Angelica’s role in establishing the new order through her marriage to Tancredi, contrasting it with Concetta’s inability to change. Some candidates went further to claim that women were used as political weapons. The erotic portrayal of women was discussed, particularly with reference to the characterisation of Salina. Reference was made to his sensuality and sexual appetite, which on the one hand fuelled his desire to live whilst on the other hand engendered feelings of mortality. Stronger candidates discussed the portrayal of Concetta and her sisters at the end of the novel, dried up like the relics which were symbolically being removed.

(c) This question invited candidates to decide whether death and decay or change and rebirth prevail in the novel. A good answer was able to point out that death is necessary for change and rebirth to take place and could cite some of the many instances where Salina becomes increasingly aware of his own mortality. Hence neither prevail and both are necessary. The rich imagery used by Tomasi di Lampedusa throughout the novel could have been alluded to more in order to enrich answers.

Question 13

ERRI DE LUCA

(a) This was a popular question. As with all commentary questions, answers needed be anchored in the text itself. Stronger candidates were able to locate the extract in the text and discover a great deal about the recurring themes of the novel. The theme of growing up was evidenced by the boy’s decision to stop writing his diary and to avoid the abusive don Liborio. Stronger answers could have alluded also to the way the boy accompanies Don Ciccio to the door and shakes his hand as a sign of increased maturity. The passivity of the adults and their unwillingness to protect the children, particularly from the abuse of other adults, was discussed by some candidates. Some candidates developed this theme by explaining on the one hand how Maria fulfils the role of protector by holding the boy’s hand and on the other hand how she simultaneously gives herself courage to vent her anger at the discovery that Don Ciccio knew about her abuse. Discussion of the important theme of Neapolitan dialect versus standard Italian and its recurrence in the novel was made by all candidates with some convincing accounts of the power of the dialect as a weapon to protect the young people. More could have been made of the effect of Maria’s switching between the two in this passage and the turn-taking of silence. Some candidates discussed certain elements of the form of the extract, such as De Luca’s use of the narrative present which adds immediacy to the narration. The use of irony in Don Ciccio’s final utterance would have been a point well-made and the use of imagery and devices such as pathetic fallacy as Maria sits silently while the sauce bubbles away on the stove to convey the anger bubbling inside her. Discussion of De Luca’s economic style might have been expected, explaining how with few words he conveys a wealth of detail.

(b) There were too few answers to make comment appropriate.

(c) Candidates were asked to consider the character of Maria and her role in the development of the narrative. It was necessary to distinguish between the development of the narrative and the development of the protagonist to earn the higher bands of marks, as whilst the two are closely related, they are not interchangeable. In a question of this type it is useful for candidates to imagine how the narrative would have developed without the presence of the character in question. Candidates cited Maria’s role in the boy’s sexual awakening. A strong answer would have indicated that the question of whether this relationship would be consummated was a strong factor in the development of the narrative for the reader. Maria’s emotional and physical support of the protagonist was cited in her dual role as lover/mother figure after his mother’s death. It was noted that Maria had a strong role in the development of the boy’s maturity and in giving him courage to act independently as a result of his love for her. Language is a factor too. Consideration could have been given to the role of Neapolitan dialect, as spoken by Maria, in the development of the narrative.