

## ITALIAN A

### Overall grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	E	D	C	B	A
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-7	8-15	16-22	23-28	29-36

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

The range of the work submitted was generally adequate, as the candidates were able to choose a good variety of topics, dealing with a wide range of authors and texts. Some essays were imaginative and insightful both in the choice of the topic and/or its treatment. This year some candidates presented some original pieces of work on graphic novels and on mass media, finding innovative ways to approach such topics. However, in several cases the Category 3 essays resulted in vague generalizations as candidates did not use their sources effectively (see below for further indications). In general, there was a tendency to adopt a merely descriptive approach, at least for a significant part of the work, and/or to provide insufficient explanations and support for the statements made (see below for further indications).

### Candidate performance against each criterion

#### Criterion A: research question

The candidates were generally able to fully satisfy this criterion; the research questions were generally clearly stated in either the introduction or the title page and were focused, so that adequate treatment was possible within the 4000 word limit. In a few cases, though, the research question was not completely clear, or was too broad in scope for effective treatment, for example including a large number of works for analysis or containing unclear definitions.

#### Criterion B: introduction

This criterion was usually only partially met, as only some students were able to explain clearly why they had chosen their research question, what it had to offer, how it was related to existing knowledge on the topic and why it was worthy of investigation. Also, some candidates did not have a clear idea of the difference between the abstract and introduction; under the heading “abstract” they actually wrote an introduction, explaining why they had chosen their topic and its significance. As a result, the abstract was often weak as well.

### Criterion C: investigation

This criterion was usually treated adequately; the candidates were able to select an appropriate range of sources, at least with regard to quotes and references from primary sources, which must be the main focus of the essay. However, more attention should have been paid to the quality of the secondary sources used (some internet-based secondary sources were not of an appropriate nature, particularly when used in isolation).

### Criterion D: knowledge and understanding of the topic studied

This criterion was usually adequately satisfied but, as the students did not always support their statements through appropriate references to their primary sources, it was at times difficult to ascertain their understanding.

### Criterion E: reasoned argument

This criterion appeared to be one of the most problematic. Most students tended to put forward their interpretations without any appropriate support and justification. Also, in several cases the argument did not proceed in a logical and coherent way and there was no proper development of ideas. As stated in the Extended Essay Guide, “Students should be aware of the need to give their essays the backbone of a developing argument” and “Personal views should not simply be stated but need to be supported by reasoned argument to persuade the reader of their validity” (pg. 35).

### Criterion F: application of analytical and evaluative skills

This criterion was also quite problematic. Several students did not adopt an approach suitable for literary criticism and analysis, overlooking the literary and linguistic aspects of the texts or dealing with them in a cursory and superficial manner. Also, several students did not use persuasive analysis and argument to support their personal interpretation.

### Criterion G: use of language appropriate to the subject:

This criterion was generally satisfied and most students used an appropriate register. However, only a minority of them were able to show actual skill in the use of the appropriate technical literary terminology.

### Criterion H: conclusion

This criterion was usually at least partially met, even though in some cases the conclusion was taken as an opportunity to put forward personal opinions not directly related to the development of the essay and not derived from its reasoned argument.

### Criterion I: formal presentation

This criterion was usually satisfactory, and in several cases even good or excellent. In some cases though, the candidates did not pay enough attention to consistency and accuracy, especially with regards to references and bibliography (page numbers or other essential data were often missing).

### Criterion J: abstract

Quite often one or more of the three required elements was missing or not clearly stated. Also, some of them tended to include in the abstract the reason why they had chosen their research question, which should be included in the introduction of the essay.

### Criterion K: holistic judgement

In this criterion the candidates generally performed well, showing genuine understanding and initiative.

## Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Since one of the responsibilities of the supervisor is to discuss “the choice of topic with the student and, in particular, help[s] to formulate a well-focused research question” (Extended essay guide, p.5) it is hoped that supervisors are successful in discouraging students from choosing topics that are not entirely appropriate to the subject, and from formulating research questions that are either vague or too broad and too ambitious. In particular, for candidates attempting a Category 3 Extended Essay, supervisors should make sure that the essay is not of “a general culture nature” (“not appropriate”, according to the EE Guide p.23) and that the essay is clearly based on the analysis of a text, in the broader sense this word acquires in the context of a Category 3 essay.