

Chief Reader Report on Student Responses: 2021 AP[®] Italian Language and Culture Free-Response Questions

• Number of Readers	32			
Total Group				
• Number of Students Scored	2,102			
• Score Distribution		Exam Score	N	%At
		5	433	20.6
		4	475	22.6
		3	613	29.2
		2	392	18.6
		1	189	9.0
• Global Mean	3.27			
Standard Group*				
• Number of Students Scored	1,567			
• Score Distribution		Exam Score	N	%At
		5	182	11.6
		4	370	23.6
		3	525	33.5
		2	339	21.6
		1	151	9.6
• Global Mean	3.06			

The following comments on the 2021 free-response questions for AP[®] Italian Language and Culture were written by the Chief Reader, Professor Federica Santini of Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, Georgia. They give an overview of each free-response question and of how students performed on the question, including typical student errors. General comments regarding the skills and content that students frequently have the most problems with are included. Some suggestions for improving student preparation in these areas are also provided. Teachers are encouraged to attend a College Board workshop to learn strategies for improving student performance in specific areas.

Question #1**Task:** Email Reply**Topic:** Vita contemporanea**Max. Points:** 5**Total Group Mean Score:** 3.08**Standard Group Mean Score:** 2.85***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

This task assessed writing in the interpersonal communicative mode by having the student write a reply to an email message. Students were allotted 15 minutes to read the message and write the reply. The response received a single holistic score based on how well it accomplished the assigned task. Students needed to be able first to comprehend the email and then to write a reply using a formal form of address. The reply must address all the questions and requests raised in the message, as well as ask for more details about something mentioned in the message.

The question assessed students' performance in Interpersonal Writing by engaging them in a series of exchanges on a familiar topic within the course theme *Vita contemporanea*. Content and context were provided by an email from Mauro Rossi, the director of *Agenzia Sotto il Sole*, a travel agency that organizes trips to Italy. The email offered information regarding itineraries and services that the agency provides to travelers—such as transportation, accommodations, guided tours, and reservations for cultural events or activities. Students were expected to answer using a variety of grammatical structures and vocabulary appropriate to the context. They had to provide some details about their trip by answering two questions: the first about how they wanted to spend their week in Italy; the second about the type of services the students and their group needed. In addition, students had to demonstrate their ability to ask questions by asking for further information about something mentioned in the email message.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?**Content and skills**

The level of students' achievement on the task varied:

- Most of the responses had some or frequent elaboration, showing a certain level of familiarity with the cultural components of the topic.
- Few responses did not request further information about something mentioned in the prompt.

Language

- Most responses used simple sentences or strings of sentences.
- Some responses used a variety of compound sentences.
- Few responses included transitional words.
- The vocabulary used was generally appropriate, even though some responses mainly relied on vocabulary from the prompt.
- Some responses lacked accuracy and control of grammar structures. Recurring problems were errors in subject-verb agreement, article-noun agreement, adjective-noun agreement, and verb tenses and conjugation. There was frequent use of verbs in the infinitive mode or present tense. Frequent conjugation errors were noticeable in the use of the future (“*viaggarò*”) and conditional (“*piacererebbero*”) tenses.
- Many responses contained appropriate and varied vocabulary, though with some spelling errors (“*Egreggio*”; “*personi*”; “*viaggare*”; “*guidate*”; “*suggerische*”; “*maccina*”; “*significi*”).
- Several responses used an inappropriate register, most often in the body of the email message, but at times also in the opening and closing.
- Some responses showed Spanish or English interference (“*necesito*”; “*lugare*”; “*novio*”; “*quarti*”; “*locazioni*”; “*suggezione*”; “*marveloso*”; “*suona molto divertente*”).
- Some responses used idiomatic language (“*vale la pena*”).
- At times, the closing salutation consisted of memorized phrases or expressions.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

The directions of this task clearly indicated that the email was in response to an inquiry about a visit to Italy. While most responses were appropriate, a few responses did not request services for the group, but rather only requested services for the sender.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A few responses asked for services for the sender only, instead of for the entire group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Successful responses indicated which program students were most interested in attending. They clearly explained the reason why they chose a specific program, guided tour, or cultural and recreational activity, and stated the group's lodging and transportation preferences.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A few responses did not mention the group.	

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

Teachers should do the following to help students improve their performance in this section of the exam:

- Guide students through the task's instructions and ensure that they know and understand all its requirements: use of proper greetings and closings; answers to all questions; request for more details about something mentioned in the stimulus; use of the formal register.
- Explain the scoring guidelines for the task to students in order to help them become familiar with performance expectations.
- Help students familiarize themselves with the task and build their skills and confidence in responding by directing them to look for specific content in the email that they can use to ask for more information.
- Develop practice emails related to the six course themes and have students write the response under actual exam conditions; score the responses according to the AP World Language and Culture Scoring Guidelines.
- Use the sample email tasks available online on AP Classroom, in the AP Daily videos, and in previous AP exams, from 2012 to 2021, available online on AP Central, for practice.
- Assist students who continue to struggle with the formal form of verbs and, consequently, with formal address. It would be helpful to focus and practice the formal-informal distinction in writing and speaking through role-plays; to practice both reading and answering business correspondence; to practice everyday life scenarios (for instance, conversations with one's doctor, a professor, a store manager, or an adult stranger).
- Develop targeted vocabulary activities to provide students with more vocabulary resources.
- Encourage control and accuracy in grammar and syntax by stressing the importance of gender and number agreement, subject-verb agreement, and verb conjugations.
- Stress the importance of spelling and proper accentuation of words.
- Create opportunities for students to develop the habit of proofreading their work so that they can identify common lexical, grammatical, and/or syntactic errors. Encourage supportive peer reviews, reflection, and discussion of such errors in order to avoid them in the future.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The AP Italian Language and Culture Course and Exam Description (CED) contains suggestions in the unit guides for building students' skills in writing successful email replies. The email reply task model is presented and practiced in Units 1, 3, and 5. The CED can be accessed here: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/pdf/ap-italian-language-and-culture-course-and-exam-description.pdf>.
- Teachers should become familiar with all the online resources available to support instruction and assessment for AP Italian Language and Culture within AP Classroom: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-italian-language-and-culture/classroom-resources?course=ap-italian-language-and-culture>.
- Through AP Classroom teachers can access the AP Question Bank. This is a searchable collection of past AP Exam questions where teachers can find and access email replies from previous exams. Teachers can also access three practice exams aligned to the 2021 Exam in the AP Question Bank, which provide additional practice in the email reply and can be scored using the provided scoring guidelines.
- Teachers can view the AP World Language and Culture online module on interpersonal writing, Interpersonal Communication: Developing Writing Abilities by Nyan-Ping Bi, to learn some strategies that focus on developing students' interpersonal writing skills. Teachers can access this online module here: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/resources/ap-world-language-culture-interactive-online-modules>.
- Teachers can download the scoring guidelines for this task available on the AP Italian Language and Culture Exam page and use them to review expectations for student performance: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-italian-language-and-culture/exam>.
- Teachers can choose a sample email reply prompt from the posted free-response questions from 2012–2021 and access the corresponding student sample responses of high, mid, and low performances to share with students so they can examine student work vis-à-vis the scoring guidelines. This will inform them further of expectations for performance on this task, as well as the evaluative criteria for each score point: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-italian-language-and-culture/exam>.
- Teachers can assign email replies for students to complete under the same conditions and time constraints as on the exam and then score them using the scoring guidelines. Feedback to students should focus on what students should do to move their performance to the next higher level.
- Teachers should meet with colleagues who teach French, German, and Spanish to determine what common shared issues there are across languages and to share strategies that will improve student performance.

Question #2**Task:** Argumentative
Essay**Topic:** Identità privata e pubblica**Max. Points:** 5**Total Group Mean Score:** 2.84**Standard Group Mean Score:** 2.65***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

This task assessed writing in the presentational communicative mode by having the student write an argumentative essay on a given topic while referencing three sources of information about the topic. Students were first allotted 6 minutes to read the essay topic and the two printed sources. Then they listened to the one audio source. Afterward, they had 40 minutes to write the essay. The response received a single holistic score based on how well it accomplished the assigned task. Students needed to be able first to comprehend the three sources and then to present the sources' different viewpoints. They also had to present their own position and defend it thoroughly, using information from all of the sources to support the essay. As they referred to the sources, they had to identify them appropriately. Furthermore, the essay had to be organized into clear paragraphs.

The course theme for the argumentative essay was *Identità privata e pubblica*, and the prompt asked students to express their own opinion about the importance of knowing the language of the country in which one lives in order to feel a sense of belonging to it. The response needed to be based on three different sources:

- A written article about the correlation between language, identity, and culture. The article discusses the fact that language was a very important element of cohesion in Italy immediately after World War II, but nowadays it has lost a little of that relevance. It points out how, because of social media and migrations, language is no longer a clear sign of nationality, and that today we live in a world of plurilingualism. On the other hand, the article states that there are other languages that could create a sense of belonging: among them, the languages of art, design, architecture, or fashion.
- A chart showing the use of Italian among foreigners living in Italy, divided into three main categories: at work, with friends, and with family. A final column offers the cumulative percentage. The percentages are based on 2008–2009 data.
- An audio file in which, during an interview, Pier Paolo Pasolini answers questions about the status of the Italian language. He points out that, despite the fact that Italian is linguistically a unified language (thanks to literature and television), when Italians speak, they show many of the traits of the dominant dialect of their city or their region.

The prompt was in the form of a question and did not require previous knowledge of the topic. The three sources provided students with the contextual and content support to develop their essay. However, students were expected to understand the main idea(s) and supporting details of the three sources, understand unfamiliar and idiomatic vocabulary by inferring its meaning from the context, and comprehend paragraph-length discourse, vocabulary, and structures. They were expected to demonstrate critical reading skills by distinguishing facts from opinions, understanding the intent of the texts, and using all that information to develop and defend their argument.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?**Content and Skills**

The level of students' achievement on the task varied:

- Many responses demonstrated the ability to identify the main idea(s) of each source, some supporting details, and the intent of the texts.
- Some responses did not address the prompt and talked about dialects, or the teaching of Italian in schools, or produced a cultural comparison. Nevertheless, they were still able to demonstrate a certain degree of comprehension of the sources.

- Some responses did not integrate content from all three sources to support the student’s position, but they often cited or identified at least two sources. The least understood and integrated source was the audio (Source #3).
- Some responses did not provide effective treatment of the topic within the context of the task because students were not able to correctly interpret the second and third sources while offering their own viewpoint.
- A few responses presented summaries of the sources without effectively integrating the information in support of their own arguments.
- Some responses reflected a misinterpretation of the table (Source #2) as to whether the non-native residents reside in Italy and speak Italian at work, or speak Italian at work in their home countries. Some responses also reflected a misinterpretation of the audio (Source #3) in reference to the creation of the French language for political, national, and administrative reasons, and did not understand that Italian was born out of purely literary motives.
- Some responses demonstrated a moderate/low degree of comprehension of the sources.
- A few responses presented the student’s position, but there was no development in support of it.
- A very few responses demonstrated the ability to identify products and practices related to the topic and discern the perspectives behind them.

Language

- There was a general lack of accuracy and variety in grammar, syntax, and language usage.
- There were frequent errors in subject-verb and noun-adjective agreement.
- There was some use of modal verbs, progressive, and impersonal forms.
- There was limited variety in the use of verbal modes. Very few responses used the subjunctive or the conditional. There were few if-clauses.
- There were frequent spelling mistakes and transfers from native language(s).
- Most responses developed paragraph-length discourse with effective transitions using a variety of simple, compound, and complex sentences. The majority used simple and compound sentences to construct their paragraphs.
- The vocabulary used was appropriate, indicating that students were comfortable with the topic. Some responses used rhetorical questions and emphatic exclamations.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

The task required students to write an argumentative essay to submit to an Italian writing contest. The essay topic was based on three sources offering different viewpoints on the topic and included both printed and audio material. Most students understood Source #1 and referred to it appropriately. Many students understood Source #2 and misunderstood Source #3. However, most students were able to extrapolate and pull enough information from the sources and use it in support of their argument.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The table in Source #2 indicated the degree of use of Italian by non-native residents living in Italy at work, at home, and with friends, organized by gender and country of origin. Some responses concluded that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ non-native residents residing in Italy speak Italian at work for work; ○ non-native residents speak Italian at work in their home countries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful responses correctly understood the sources' information and used it to support their argument—how the majority of non-native residents mostly use Italian at work, while with family and friends they tend to use their own native language(s). • Successful responses used information from Source #2 to support their argument on how speaking Italian at work allows non-native residents to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Feel part of society and contribute to its economy; 2. Engage and connect with co-workers and friends through the use of a common language; 3. Better understand the culture of the country they live in; 4. Achieve a better economic status.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The audio in Source #3 is an interview with author Pier Paolo Pasolini. He talks about Italian as a language unified through literature and explains how Italian is unified linguistically in the media, while geographically there is still diversity with many dialects. Some responses concluded that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Italian is an old language and needs to change; ○ Italian is important for political, national, and administrative reasons (this is stated in the interview in reference to French and not Italian). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful responses correctly understood Source #3 and used it to support their argument on how: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Italian is a unified language for literary reasons, thanks to Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch; 2. Italian is unified linguistically but not geographically, because of the many dialects.

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

Teachers should do the following to help students improve their performance in this part of the exam:

- Make sure students understand the nature and characteristics of an argumentative essay.
- Remind students to carefully read the prompt and emphasize the fact that the essay is above all a response to it, while the information from the three sources serves to support the students' position on the topic as required by the prompt.
- Provide students with strategies for how to express their own position on a topic and construct their argument in a clear and organized manner, with supporting evidence from the three sources.
- Remind students to carefully read the introduction accompanying the sources.
- Develop strategies and activities that help students recognize the sources' viewpoints.
- Remind students that the sources do not necessarily express viewpoints for or against the topic.

- Develop activities in which students are asked to identify examples of summary versus integration of sources and provide strategies for how to incorporate information from sources to support an argument.
- Encourage students to take notes about the sources and use them to design an outline before writing the essay.
- Invite students to be more concise; many low-scoring responses were two-to-three-pages long but lacked a coherent argument.
- Stress the importance of clear handwriting, spelling, proper accentuation of words, gender and number agreement, subject-verb agreement, and verb conjugations.
- Create opportunities for students to develop the habit of proofreading their essays, so that they can identify common lexical, grammatical and/or syntactic mistakes.
- Encourage peer reviews, class analyses, reflections, and discussion of common errors to help students avoid them in the future.
- Review the students' most common vocabulary mistakes, especially those that derive from English or Spanish interference (e.g., “*affettare*” for “to affect”; “*finalmente*” for “finally”; “*appreciazione*” for “appreciation”; “*reasoni*” for “reasons”; “*historia*” for “history”; “*humani*” for “humans”; “*exempio*” for “example”; “*nazionale*” for “national”; “*acceptare*” for “to accept”; “*reflecto*” for “to reflect”; “*existono*” for “to exist”).
- Train students to use common transitional elements and cohesive devices (e.g., *prima di tutto*; *inoltre*; *poi*; *quindi*; *infine*; *da ultimo*; *per finire*; *in conclusione*) while avoiding false cognates such as “*finalmente*” for “finally.”
- Contextualize familiar and high-frequency verbs that have more than one meaning to help with their recognition. Many responses showed problems with the following verbs: “to know” (*sapere* vs. *conoscere*); “to say” (*dire* vs. *parlare*).
- Constantly expose students to authentic materials in instruction and assessment.
- Work on the comprehension and interpretation of authentic written and oral materials.
- Practice listening comprehension and provide note-taking strategies such as listing key words, key ideas, and relevant details.
- Help students become familiar with the scoring guidelines and essay samples posted on AP Central; read, analyze, and discuss the samples in class with them to understand how the scoring guidelines are applied.
- Assign the sample tasks from 2012 to 2021 available online on AP Central for the purpose of practice. Score them using the scoring guidelines and provide feedback that will help students get to the next higher level of performance on future essays.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The AP Italian Language and Culture Course and Exam Description (CED) contains suggestions in the unit guides for building students' skills in writing successful essays. The argumentative essay task model is presented and practiced in Units 2, 4, and 6. This task is scaffolded to build students' skills and confidence. The first time it appears in Unit 2, students write an argumentative essay responding to a prompt using only two sources, and subsequently in Units 4 and 6 they write essays using three sources. The CED can be accessed here: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/pdf/ap-italian-language-and-culture-course-and-exam-description.pdf>.
- Teachers should become familiar with all the online resources available to support instruction and assessment for AP Italian Language and Culture within AP Classroom: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-italian-language-and-culture/classroom-resources?course=ap-italian-language-and-culture>.
- Through AP Classroom teachers can access the AP Question Bank. This is a searchable collection of past AP Exam questions where teachers can find and access argumentative essay tasks from previous exams. Teachers can also access three practice exams aligned to the 2021 Exam in the AP Question Bank, which provide additional practice with the essay task and can be scored using the provided scoring guidelines.
- Teachers should view the two AP World Language and Culture online modules on Presentational Writing—the first, Presentational Communication, A Focus on Writing, by Federica Santini; and the second, Building Students' Skills in Developing Effective Arguments, by Ann Mar—to learn some strategies that focus on developing students' presentational writing skills. Teachers can access these two online modules here: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/resources/ap-world-language-culture-interactive-online-modules>.

- Teachers should download the scoring guidelines for this task available on the AP Italian Language and Culture Exam page and use them to review expectations for student performance as well as the evaluative criteria for each score point: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-italian-language-and-culture/exam?course=ap-italian-language-and-culture>.
- Teachers should choose a sample essay prompt and its sources from the posted free-response questions from 2012-2021 from AP Central (<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-italian-language-and-culture/exam>) and access the corresponding student sample responses of high, mid, and low performances to share with students, so that they can examine student work vis-à-vis the scoring guidelines. This will further inform students of expectations for performance on this task.
- Teachers should assign other argumentative essay prompts under the same conditions and time constraints as on the exam and then score them using the scoring guidelines. Feedback to students should focus on what students should do to move their performance to the next higher level.
- Teachers should meet with colleagues who teach French, German, and Spanish to determine what common shared issues there are across languages and to share strategies that will improve student performance.

Question #3**Task:** Conversation**Topic:** Sfide globali**Max. Points:** 5**Total Group Mean Score:** 2.37**Standard Group Mean Score:** 1.94***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

This task assessed speaking in the interpersonal communicative mode by having the student respond as part of a simulated oral conversation. Students were first allotted 1 minute to read a preview of the conversation, including an outline of each turn in the conversation. Then the conversation proceeded, including 20 seconds for students to speak at each of 5 turns in the conversation. The series of 5 responses received a single holistic score based on how well it accomplished the assigned task. The responses had to appropriately address each turn in the conversation according to the outline as well as the simulated interlocutor's utterance.

The course theme for the conversation task was *Sfide globali*. For this task students needed to respond to 5 audio prompts spoken by Simona, a friend with whom the student is writing a blog on environmental issues.

The question assessed students' performance in Interpersonal Speaking by engaging them in a series of exchanges on a particular topic—important elements to include when talking about the environment and organizational issues one encounters when collaborating with someone—generated by Simona's inquiries. The students had to interact with the interlocutor to produce language that appropriately responded to Simona's questions. They were expected to understand Simona's utterances by relying on familiar vocabulary or by using the context to infer the meaning of unfamiliar words. They needed to maintain the conversation in a culturally appropriate fashion consistent with the informal register. Moreover, the conversation required students to perform a series of language functions—answer questions; express preferences and opinions and justify them; make suggestions; solve a problem by suggesting a solution—through simple, compound, and complex sentences, and through the use of different time frames.

1. Simona and the student are co-authors of a blog on the environment. Simona asks the student if a post on automobile pollution is a good topic for the upcoming blog publication. The student had to agree with the suggestion and explain why this was a good topic for the blog.
2. Simona suggests inserting a graph in the article on auto pollution and asks the student to prepare it, since she cannot do it. The student had to refuse and propose an alternate plan.
3. Simona says that it would be a good idea to write about the bicycle lane recently opened downtown and asks for the student's opinion. The student had to express an opinion and explain the reasons behind it.
4. Simona acknowledges that there is a lot of work to do before the blog publication deadline and proposes working independently. Simona asks the student how the workload can be divided between them. The student had to make a proposal.
5. Simona is aware that in order to finalize the blog, a last meeting is necessary on the night before the publication date. She adds that they cannot meet at her home because her sister is giving a birthday party that night, so she asks the student for an alternate plan. The student had to offer a solution.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?**Content and Skills**

Although most students understood and responded to most of the questions posed, many responses were only generally appropriate. Questions 1, 2, 4, and 5, which required students to express an opinion and support it, were generally challenging; question 3 was hard to understand for many students. The responses were only generally appropriate, due to limited vocabulary and lack of accuracy and variety in grammar, syntax, and usage. Vocabulary, accuracy, variety in grammar, syntax, and usage are essential components of the interpersonal mode, which requires interpretation and language production.

Below are the details:

- Question 1: Simona asks the student if an entry on automobile pollution is a good topic for the upcoming blog publication (“*Ricordati che dobbiamo aggiornare il blog per sabato. Perché non parliamo dell’inquinamento delle auto?*”). Most students understood the question and agreed that a blog on the environment was a needed resource and that it represented a good venue to talk about auto pollution, but very few explained why writing about auto pollution was a good idea or supported their statement.
- Question 2: Simona suggests inserting a graph in the article on auto pollution (“*Oltre ai dati, sarebbe utile avere anche un grafico*”) and asks the student to prepare it, since she cannot do it (“*Io però non posso farlo. Lo prepari tu?*”). The student had to refuse and propose an alternate plan. Most students understood this question (only a few did not follow the instructions and accepted—instead of refusing—to work on the graph) but struggled to propose an alternate plan.
- Question 3: Simona says that it would be a good idea to write about the bicycle lane recently opened downtown (“*Stavo pensando che potremmo dedicare un po’ di spazio alla nuova pista ciclabile in centro*”) and asks for the student’s opinion (“*Credi che possa interessare ai nostri lettori?*”). The student had to express an opinion and explain the reasons behind it. In question 3, the words “*piste ciclabili*” represented a challenge in the whole conversation: only a few students understood it, and many responded with generic utterances.
- Question 4: Simona acknowledges that there is a lot of work to do before the blog publication deadline and proposes to work independently (“*Senti, visto che c’è molto da fare, possiamo lavorare separatamente*”). Simona asks the student how the workload can be divided between them (“*Come vogliamo dividerci il lavoro?*”). The student had to make a proposal. Almost all the students spoke about work and different types of engagements, but very few were able to articulate responses that addressed the question specifically.
- Question 5: Simona is aware that in order to finalize the blog, a last meeting is necessary on the night before the publication date. She says that they cannot meet at her home because her sister is giving a birthday party that night (“*Allora, per mettere insieme il tutto, ci dobbiamo vedere venerdì, ma a casa mia non si può perché mia sorella fa la festa di compleanno*”), so she asks the student for an alternate plan (“*Come facciamo?*”). The student had to offer a solution. The majority of the students made specific references to the birthday party of Simona’s sister, but most offered generic solutions or proposed inappropriate plans for the situation.

Language

- Most responses demonstrated basic vocabulary and limited use of idiomatic language. Lack of vocabulary resources affected the quality of the responses, especially for questions 1, 2, 3, and 5.
- Accuracy and variety in grammar, syntax, and usage were not always present.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Students had to participate in an informal conversation on a familiar topic related to writing a blog about the environment within the course theme Global Challenges (*Sfide globali*). They had to maintain mostly uncomplicated communicative exchanges, express opinions and preferences, and provide supporting facts. However, although the students understood most of the questions posed, their responses were only generally appropriate due to limited vocabulary and lack of accuracy and variety in grammar, syntax, and usage.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some responses only generally addressed questions 1, 2, 4, and 5, such as: “<i>Yes, a blog on environment and cars is good. We must care about the environment.</i>” “<i>No, I don’t like graphs.</i>” “<i>Yes, I also have a lot of work to do.</i>” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful responses included elaboration such as: “<i>Yes, I think that talking about auto pollution is important because it negatively affects the environment, and it is important to make our audience aware of the risks associated with it.</i>”

<p><i>“Happy birthday to your sister! We could meet on Sunday and eat a gelato.”</i></p>	<p><i>“No, I cannot do it because I do not have the right application for graphic design on my computer” or “No, I don’t think so. Graphics are obsolete and hard to understand. Why don’t we use an interview or include a link to a video?”</i></p> <p><i>“I could write the article and you could edit the text and insert the images.”</i></p> <p><i>“Yes, it is important that we meet before the deadline. We can meet at my house, if the library is closed.”</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The question on <i>“piste ciclabil”</i> was not understood, and elicited generic utterances such as: <i>“Yes, I like the idea; it’s a good idea!”</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful responses included elaboration such as <i>“Yes, it is also a good way to advertise this major improvement and maybe more people will start using bicycles.”</i>

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

Teachers should do the following to help students improve their performance in this part of the exam:

- Make students aware that sometimes they need to produce more than one language function in response to an audio prompt. Provide practice conversations that have students engage with two language functions in at least some of their responses.
- Make students aware that they may be asked to deal with some complicated situations or less familiar language functions, as described in the outline of the conversation (suggest an alternative, pose a problem, express doubts, express an opinion and justify it).
- Have students practice informal, spontaneous conversations in class by providing them with topics and outlines that require them to greet, answer and ask questions, provide details, make a counterproposal, give advice, raise a doubt, etc.
- Encourage students to read and listen very carefully to the instructions about how to respond to the task, making sure that they make connections between what they hear and what is written in the conversation outline.
- Have students practice responding in 20 seconds. Encourage them to provide elaboration and details and to try to fully use their response time. Have students listen carefully to the prompt and say something relevant in response, even if what they say is brief. This sort of practice needs to occur throughout the school year.
- Provide students with some strategies to use if they do not understand one of the prompts or get off-track.
- Offer students opportunities to listen to a wide variety of female and male voices. Appropriate audio clips from various media would be useful for students both in and outside the classroom. Many of these materials are easily accessible on the internet.
- As the speaking component in the classroom should not be solely focused on the conversation task, a variety of activities should be introduced into the curriculum, such as interviews and debates. Consequently, teachers should also:
 - Provide opportunities for students to respond spontaneously in a variety of situations and contexts. This will improve students’ fluency and confidence in their speaking abilities.
 - Encourage students to pay attention to verb tenses, subject–verb agreement, and other language structures that may impede effective communication when incorrect. Encourage students to self-correct when they hear themselves making a mistake, as successful self-correction is always viewed favorably.
- Help students expand vocabulary by exploring many of the recommended contexts/subthemes of the six required course themes. Work with students to develop their skills in circumlocution so that they will be able to continue speaking even if they do not have the most appropriate word for the context.
- Assign the sample conversations from 2012 to 2021 available online on AP Central under the same conditions and time constraints as on the exam, and then score them using the exam scoring guidelines. Feedback to students should focus on what students should do to move their performance to the next higher level.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The AP Italian Language and Culture Course and Exam Description (CED) contains suggestions in the unit guides for building students' skills for engaging in the conversation task model. This task model is specifically presented and practiced in Units 1, 3, and 5. The CED can be accessed here:
<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/pdf/ap-italian-language-and-culture-course-and-exam-description.pdf>.
- Through AP Classroom teachers can access the AP Question Bank. This is a searchable collection of past AP Exam questions where teachers can find and access conversation tasks from previous exams. Teachers can also access three practice exams aligned to the 2021 Exam in the AP Question Bank, which provide additional practice for the conversation task and can be scored using the provided scoring guidelines.
- Teachers should go to AP Central and view the AP World Language and Culture online module by Clarissa Adams-Fletcher in order to learn about strategies, resources, and activities that focus on developing interpersonal speaking skills. Teachers can access this online module here:
<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/resources/ap-world-language-culture-interactive-online-modules>.
- Teachers should meet with colleagues who teach French, German, and Spanish to determine what common shared issues there are across languages and to share strategies that will improve student performance.
- Teachers should work with students so they can respond with elaboration and detail in the 20 seconds they have for each response.
- Teach students how to use the conversation outline to their advantage. Look at commonalities from year to year so students can anticipate possible types of questions and responses.
- Teachers should download a copy of the scoring guidelines for the conversation task available on the AP Italian Language and Culture Exam page and use them to review expectations for student performance. They should have students listen to the sample student responses available on AP Central and use the scoring guidelines to understand how performance is assessed on the exam:
<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-italianlanguage-and-culture/exam>

Question #4**Task:** Cultural Comparison**Topic:** Famiglia e società**Max. Points:** 5**Total Group Mean Score:** 2.32**Standard Group Mean Score:** 2.05***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

This task assessed speaking in the presentational communicative mode by having the student make a comparative oral presentation on a cultural topic. Students were allotted 4 minutes to read the topic and prepare the presentation and then 2 minutes to deliver the presentation. The response received a single holistic score based on how well it accomplished the assigned task. The presentation had to compare an area of the Italian-speaking world to the student's own or another community, demonstrating understanding of cultural features of the Italian-speaking world. Furthermore, the presentation had to be organized clearly.

The course theme for the cultural comparison task was *Famiglia e società*. The task consisted of a question that asked students about the types of events or activities (for instance, sports, holidays, pastimes, etc.) that are typical in the winter season in an Italian-speaking community that they know well and in another community of their choice. Students had to plan and produce a spoken presentation, comparing an area of the Italian-speaking world with another community in relation to the given topic.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?**Content**

In order to demonstrate an understanding of different features of the target culture, students could rely on their previous and personal knowledge, first-hand experience, or recombine information from materials they saw, analyzed, and discussed in class when covering the six themes of the AP Italian Language and Culture curriculum. This year the theme was Families and Communities (*Famiglia e società*). Responses, however, could make use of other disciplines and other themes and subthemes inherent to the topic within the AP Curriculum (e.g., *Contemporary Life*).

Skills and language

Responses were expected to accomplish the comparison task by organizing the presentation in paragraph-length discourse. It was expected that students use a variety of simple and compound sentences in major time frames. Vocabulary needed to be varied and appropriate for the context and to make the presentation understandable. Also, pronunciation, intonation, and pacing contributed to the accomplishment of the task by making the presentation comprehensible.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

The task required students to make a comparative oral presentation on activities typical in the winter season in an Italian-speaking community with which they are familiar and in another community of their choice. The students were able to discuss at length a variety of Italian holidays and festivals and were well prepared on the topic of sports in Italy and on the cultural and social aspects of soccer. However, many students did not clearly understand the specific topic of the prompt ("winter activities").

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A few responses did not address the prompt and talked instead about subjects irrelevant to the topic (e.g., family, food, school). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most responses clearly addressed the topic of winter activities, holidays and past-times, in both the target culture and the student’s own culture.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some responses talked about the activities and events (sport, holidays, etc.) in general, without any reference to the winter season. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students showed their understanding of the topic of the prompt through the selection of activities and events they discussed in their answers, even if they did not explicitly mention winter.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some responses focused on the “<i>Tema del corso</i>” (<i>Famiglia e società</i>) instead of developing a response to the “<i>Argomento della relazione.</i>” Therefore, in their presentation some students talked about the similarities and the differences between the two cultures and did not present a response to the specific topic. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some responses discussed the topic only within the target culture or their own culture, without developing any comparison. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses, for the most part, were well-organized.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some responses mentioned two cultures but their comparison mainly consisted of statements with no development (2 lists). 	

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

Teachers should do the following to help students improve their performance in this part of the exam:

- Advise students to read the directions carefully and make sure that in their response they address the “*Argomento della relazione*” and not the “*Tema del corso.*”
- Remind students that they need to address all aspects of this task by making clear comparisons between a community belonging to the target culture and another community of their choice by including relevant details and examples.
- Remind students that the target culture has to be mentioned explicitly by referring to Italy, Italian culture, Italians, or such, and that they need to demonstrate their knowledge of the target culture.
- Have students practice making connections among different topics, so that they are prepared to address all elements of the task.
- Select updated, current materials to discuss the target culture and guide students toward moving from stereotypes and generalizations to a deeper understanding of the Italian culture.

- Provide models to help build students' skills in organizing, comparing, and presenting information while preparing a cultural comparison.
- Continue to review cohesive devices and transitional elements so that students can deliver an organized presentation.
- Provide students with a list of conjunctions, adverbs, and transitional elements for making comparisons.
- Have students pay attention to grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. Even though the AP Exam is not focused on grammar, students cannot effectively communicate and perform well when they have a limited control of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The AP Italian Language and Culture Course and Exam Description (CED) contains suggestions in the unit guides for building students' skills in the cultural comparison task model. This task model is specifically presented and practiced in all six units and is scaffolded to build students' skills and confidence over time. For example: in Unit 1, students give a one-minute cultural presentation about an aspect of culture learned in that unit; in Unit 2, they do a one-minute cultural comparison; in Unit 3, they do a full two-minute cultural comparison; and subsequently, they produce full comparisons on topics of increasing difficulty in units 4, 5, and 6. The CED can be accessed here: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/pdf/ap-italian-language-and-culture-course-and-exam-description.pdf?course=ap-italian-language-and-culture>.
- Teachers should become familiar with all the online resources available to support instruction and assessment for AP Italian Language and Culture within AP Classroom: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-italian-language-and-culture/classroom-resources?course=ap-italian-language-and-culture>.
- Through AP Classroom teachers can access the AP Question Bank. This is a searchable collection of past AP Exam questions where teachers can find and access cultural comparison tasks from previous exams. Teachers can also access three practice exams aligned to the 2021 Exam in the AP Question Bank, which provide additional practice for the cultural comparison and can be scored using the provided scoring guidelines.
- Teachers should go to AP Central and view the AP World Language and Culture online module on presentational speaking by Angelika Becker to learn about strategies, resources, and activities that focus on developing presentational speaking skills. Teachers can access this online module here: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/resources/ap-world-language-culture-interactive-online-modules>.
- Teachers should meet with colleagues who teach French, German, and Spanish to determine what common shared issues there are across languages and to share strategies that will improve student performance.
- Teachers should download a copy of the scoring guidelines for this task available on the AP Italian Language and Culture Exam page and use them to review expectations for student performance: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-italian-language-and-culture/exam>.
- Teachers should have students apply the scoring guidelines to student samples of cultural comparison responses posted on the exam page on AP Central to help them understand how the scoring guidelines are applied to student work.