

# L'ESAME DI STATO

## Strategie e suggerimenti per la prova scritta

*(a cura di Silvia Minardi)*

### **PROVA SCRITTA (Prova 2)**

- **Part 1: Comprehension and interpretation**  
Question A (Testo non letterario), Question B (Testo non letterario)
- **Part 2: Written production**  
Task A (Opinion essay), Task B (Agree/Disagree essay)

## PROVA 2

## PART 1: Comprehension and interpretation

## Question A

**Uncertainty in a globalised world**

I do not think one could say that the world in which we live today is more uncertain than that of previous generations. I do not see how such a claim could be validated in any case. It is the sources of uncertainty which have changed. We live increasingly in a social and material universe of what I shall call manufactured uncertainty. Manufactured uncertainty, or manufactured risk, comes from human involvement in trying to change the course of history or alter the contours of nature. We can separate manufactured risk from external risk. External risk refers to sources of uncertainty which come either from unmastered nature or from 'unmastered history' – that is, history as lived by taken-for-granted traditions, customs and practices.

The debate about global warming – which is a debate about 'nature that is no longer nature' – offers on among many examples of the advent of manufactured uncertainty. The majority of scientific specialists believe that global warming is occurring, even if all forecasts of its likely consequences are imponderable. Some scientists, however, believe that the whole idea of global warming is a myth, while there is a minority view that what is taking place is actually the reverse – a long-term process of global cooling. The uncertainties which surround the global warming hypothesis do not derive from 'unmastered nature', but precisely from human intervention into nature – from the 'end of nature'. Since we cannot be wholly sure whether or not global warming is occurring, it is probably best on a policy level to proceed in an 'as if' manner. As some of the consequences of global warming could be calamitous, it is sensible for nations and the larger world community to take precautionary measures.

Manufactured uncertainty is by no means limited to 'nature which is no longer nature'. It invades most areas of social life too, from local and even personal contexts of action right up to those affecting global institutions. Take as an example the decision to get married today on the part of someone living in a Western society. Fifty years ago, someone who decided to marry knew 'what it was he or she was doing'. Marriage was a relatively fixed division of labour involving a specified status for each member of the married couple. Now no one quite knows any longer what marriage actually is, save that it is a 'relationship', entered into against the backdrop of profound changes affecting gender relations, the family, sexuality and the emotions.

What explains the increasing dominance of manufactured over external risk? Obviously the origins of this transition are bound up with the advent of modernity as a whole. However, a series of very basic changes sweeping through the world over the past several decades have intensified this transformation of the conditions of uncertainty and risk. [...]

The first concerns the effects of globalization. The word globalization appears almost everywhere these days, but thus far has not been well conceptualized. As I would understand it here, globalization does not simply refer to the intensifying of world economic competition. Globalization implies a complicated set of processes operating in several arenas besides the economic. If one wanted to take a technological fix upon the intensifying of globalization in recent years, it would be the point at which a global satellite communication system was first established. From that point onwards instantaneous communication became possible from any part of the globe to any other. The advent of instantaneous global communication both altered the nature of local experience and served to establish novel institutions. The creation of 24-hour money markets, for instance, a phenomenon that has an impact upon almost all the world's population, became possible only because of the immediacy of satellite communication.

Globalization is not just an 'out there' phenomenon. It refers not only to the emergence of large-scale world systems, but to transformations in the very texture of everyday life. It is an 'in here' phenomenon, affecting even intimacies of personal identity. To live in a world where the image of Nelson Mandela is more familiar than the face of one's next door neighbour is to move in quite different contexts of social action from those that prevailed previously. Globalization invades local contexts of action but does not destroy them; on the contrary, new forms of local cultural autonomy, the demand for local cultural identity and self-expression, are causally bound up with globalizing processes.

[734 words]

**TIPS and STRATEGIES****Dealing with multiple choice questions**

- Always look at every single option before you decide.
- Cross out those that are definitely wrong.
- Don't choose your final answer until you have read all the options.

**Question 1. What is the text about?**

- The text gives examples of what the author means with the term "globalisation".
- The text provides an analysis of how man could better take advantage of globalisation.
- The text illustrates the consequences of globalisation from an economic and financial point of view.
- The text criticises the way we are dealing with globalisation.

**Question 2. What has especially enhanced the creation of 24-hour money markets?**

- a. The birth of new world institutions.
- b. The introduction of new forms of payment.
- c. The economic growth of certain areas of the world.
- d. The use of new forms of communication.

**Question 3. Is the world we live in less uncertain than it was?**

**TIPS and STRATEGIES**

This is a **yes/no question**. When answering this type of questions, give reasons by using information, examples and quotes from the original text.

As the text explains, the world we live in is not less uncertain than in the past. In particular, the text highlights that the change has to do with .....

**Question 4. What is the main cause of today's uncertainty?**

The author says there are two main sources of uncertainty. The former is ..... while the latter .....  
The main cause of today's uncertainty is represented by .....

**Question 5. What is 'external risk'?**

**TIPS and STRATEGIES**

We suggest you should look up the word 'unmastered' in a **monolingual dictionary**. *Unmastered*: literary not controlled or ruled.

When uncertainty depends on a cause or source which is not controlled by man we call it 'external risk'.

**Question 6. What is 'manufactured risk'?**

**TIPS and STRATEGIES**

Remember to use **your own words** as much as possible.  
A good way to organise your answer is to think of what 'your own words' would be if you were telling someone who is unfamiliar with your subject (for instance, a person who has not read the article) what the original source said. Now go back to questions 2 and 3: make sure what you have written can be understood also by someone who has not read the article or is not very familiar with the topic.

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**Question 7. List the different points of view in the debate about global warming.**

In recent years, global warming has been the subject of a great deal of controversy. The scientific community is divided among those who think that .....

As the text shows, the debate is now moving away from whether humans are causing warming and toward questions of how best to respond.

**Question 8. How have our ideas regarding marriage changed over the last fifty years?**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Question 9. What example does the text provide to show that globalization's impact goes beyond the economy?**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Question 10. How is the word 'globalization' used in this passage?**

Within the context of this passage globalisation is a process which .....

It is a process of interaction and integration among people of different nations and cultures, a process driven by economic interests and aided by information technology. From what the author suggests this process has effects on the environment, on local communities as well as on .....

Question B

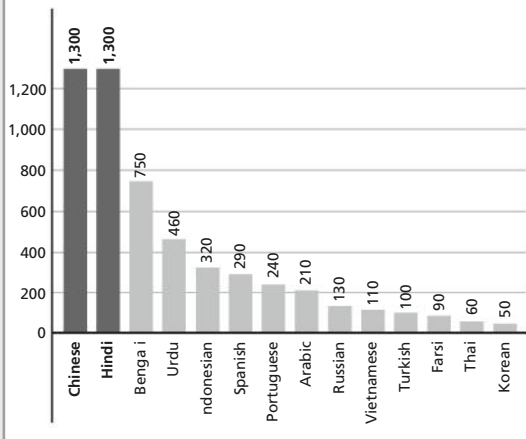
The future of language

We don't really know which languages will dominate the future as predictions mostly depend on why you need to learn a language.

*You want to make money in growth markets? These will be your languages.*

**Languages spoken in fastest growing emerging economies, ranked by demographic prospects**

In millions of inhabitants living in countries with emerging economies by 2050. Numbers are approximations.



*You want to speak to as many people as possible? How about Chinese, Spanish or French?*

Recently German linguist Ulrich Ammon has analysed the languages with the most native speakers and the most language learners around the world. The conclusions say Chinese, Spanish and French are the

top three languages you should learn. Chinese has three times more native speakers than English, but it's rarely used in sciences. And it's difficult to read and write.

15 When it comes to French, it is thought that it could gain influence again if West Africa, where it is frequently spoken, were to become more politically stable and economically attractive. However, not everyone who lives in countries where French is spoken is actually

20 fluent in French. Spanish is very popular as a second language but it doesn't have so many native speakers – just compare it with Chinese and you'll see the difference!

*What to learn if you're interested in culture?*

25 When assessing the world's major languages, you should consider the conclusions drawn by a group of researchers who have recently analysed 2.2 million book translations from around the world. They have seen that if a book is published in a smaller language, it is

30 usually translated into a hub language. Hub languages are characterized by their multi-connectedness. Take, for example, books from Azerbaijan. They will nearly always be translated into Russian. From Russian, a book will most likely be translated into English. French,

35 as well as other European languages, such as Italian, German or Dutch, are also particularly significant hub languages. What is interesting is that cultural significance does not appear to correlate with the most recent economic or demographic importance of a

40 language.

[319 words]

Answer the following questions in your own words

Question 11. Does the text give a clear-cut answer to the question "which languages should be learnt"?

[Complete the answer in your own words.]

No, it doesn't. The answer very much depends on .....  
 ..... For instance, even if you speak .....

Question 12. Is it easy to predict which languages will be essential in the future? Give reasons.

By tackling the question from different points of view the article implies that there's not only one way to approach the issue: however useful one language can be in one context it is often true that the same language may not have the same importance in a different one.

Question 13. According to Ammon, is it possible to identify Chinese, Spanish and French as the languages of the future?

[Even though this is a yes/no question, always give reasons to support your answer.]

.....  
 .....  
 .....

Question 14. What is a "hub language"?

TIPS and STRATEGIES

The question has a key word you should look up in a monolingual dictionary before answering it.

**hub** 1 the central and most important part of an area, system, activity etc, which all the other parts are connected to 2 the central part of a wheel to which the axle is joined.

[Complete the answer in your own words.]

In the text the word "hub" is used for languages which are especially used in translations as they have .....

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**Question 15. Consider the graph: which are the languages of the future?**

Apart from Chinese, ..... will dominate much of the business world by 2050, .....  
 ..... Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic and Russian.

## PART 2: Written production

### TASK A

"Although the position of women in society today has improved, there is still a great deal of sexual discrimination." Support your views on the topic in an essay of about 300 words.

### TASK B

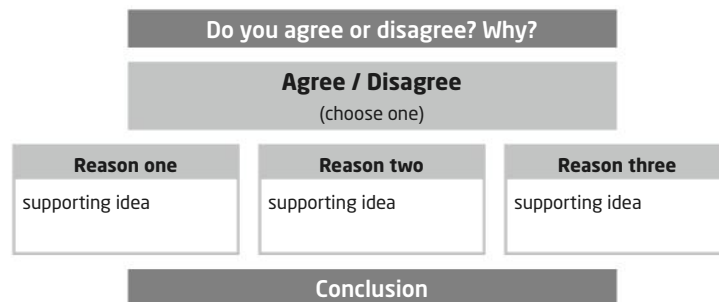
"This is the moment when we must build on the wealth that open markets have created, and share its benefits more equitably. Trade has been a cornerstone of our growth and global development. But we will not be able to sustain this growth if it favors the few, and not the many." (Barack Obama). In a composition of some 300 words express your personal view on Obama's quote.

## TIPS and STRATEGIES

### An opinion essay

To write an opinion essay follow the steps below.

- **Step 1:** decide what you think: do you agree that
  - women are still discriminated against?
  - economic growth should go hand in hand with social justice?
- **Step 2:** craft your thesis, which should be a clear, strong, statement of what you stated in step 1.
- **Step 3:** find your support: write down at least three support items.
- **Step 4:** write the introduction which can be an anecdote (a very short personal story), a surprising fact, a quote, a rhetorical question.
- **Step 5:** let the reader know about the issue you will be writing about. This is not your point of view (thesis) but a very brief summary of the issue - in this case, the fact that some 'global changes' have been very drastic or too rapid or that not all the changes have been beneficial for everyone.



Now you can start writing!

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 .....  
 .....