Chief Reader Report on Student Responses:

2018 AP® Italian Language and Culture Free-Response Questions

- Number of Readers   29

Total Group
- Number of Students Scored   2,926
- Score Distribution

Exam Score	N	%At
5	540	18.5
4	531	18.1
3	937	32.0
2	626	21.4
1	292	10.0

- Global Mean   3.14

Standard Group*
- Number of Students Scored   2,218
- Score Distribution

Exam Score	N	%At
5	180	8.1
4	412	18.6
3	833	37.6
2	544	24.5
1	249	11.2

- Global Mean   2.88

* Standard students generally receive most of their foreign language training in U.S. schools. They did not indicate on their answer sheet that they regularly speak or hear the foreign language of the exam, or that they have lived for one month or more in a country where the language is spoken.

The following comments on the 2018 free-response questions for AP® Italian Language & Culture were written by the Chief Reader, Paola Morgavi of Northwestern University, Evanston, IL. 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   **Theme:** Sfide globali
                      Max. Points: 5   **Total Group Mean Score:** 3.33
                                               Standard Group Mean Score: 3.20

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 e-mail 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 e-mail, 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 the students' performance in Interpersonal Writing by engaging them in a series of exchanges on a familiar topic within the course theme *Sfide globali*. Content and context were provided by the e-mail from Michele Gallo, a public relations director for the World Wildlife Fund Italia. The e-mail offered students a summer internship in Torre Salsa, where they would volunteer to guard turtle nests. Students were expected to create with the language by using a variety of grammar structures and vocabulary appropriate to the context. They had to give information about themselves by answering two questions: the first about the reasons for their interest in the protection of animals; the second about the importance and impact the experience in Torre Salsa would have on their future plans. In addition students had to demonstrate the ability to request further information about something mentioned in the message. In this question, content and skills were closely interwoven, and the task ultimately assessed what students could do with the language in a specific context.

In this question content and skills were closely interwoven, and the task ultimately assessed what students could do with the language in a specific context.

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

The mean score for the Standard Group was 3.20 out of a possible 5 points. The mean score for the Total Group was 3.33. Both the Standard Group and the Total Group performance on this response were statistically lower than the other writing task but higher compared to the interpersonal speaking task.

Content and skills

- Many responses provided elaboration by talking about previous experiences in similar contexts, love for animals, and by expressing interest in studying biology, veterinary science, environmental science, and working in those fields in the future.
- Very few responses missed one of the questions.
- Few responses lacked a request for additional information.
- Few responses requested information already given in the stimulus.
- Some responses acknowledged details from the stimulus and summarized them.

Language

- Some responses used a variety of compound and complex sentences.
- Some responses included transitional words.
- The vocabulary used was generally appropriate, showing a certain level of familiarity with the topic.
- Many responses were able to deal with unfamiliar expressions (e.g., "*Si stima che*"*)* by focusing on the general meaning and relevant details of the stimulus.
- Many responses lacked accuracy and control of grammar, syntax, and usage of the language, even if all the required information was provided. Recurring problems were errors in subject-verb agreement, article-noun agreement, adjective-noun agreement, and verb tenses and conjugation. There was a frequent use of verbs in

the infinitive or present tense. Also, frequent conjugation errors were noticeable in the use of the future tense. In addition, the conditional was mainly used in memorized phrases. Some of these errors occurred even in the best responses.
- Many responses contained appropriate and varied vocabulary, though with spelling errors ("*Egrigio*," "*razone*," "*ringratzio*," "*specalmente*," "*auito/auitare/autare*," "*protettere*"). Very often mandatory accents were missing.
- Some responses showed Spanish or English interference ("*especiale*," "*cuidare*," "*popular*," "*polluzione*," "*expensive*," "*contributare*," "*dangeroso*," "*concerni*").
- There was a noticeable lack in the use of idiomatic language, even though the responses were fully understandable and contained frequent elaboration.
- At times, the closing salutation consisted of memorized phrases or expressions.
- Some responses used an inappropriate register, mostly in the body of their response, as well as in the opening and closing.

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 summer internship. While most responses were appropriate, some asked for future employment with the WWF and the possibility to have their travel expenses covered because of economic difficulties. A few responses mistakenly interpreted "*progetti futuri*" as "school projects."

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	*Responses that Demonstrate Understanding*
- In some responses, "*suoi progetti futuri*" was erroneously interpreted as Mr. Gallo's intent to expand WWF environmental plans in Sicily and/or in Italy. - In a few responses, "*progetti futuri*" was interpreted as school projects.	- Successful responses indicated interest and enthusiasm about the opportunity to volunteer. They clearly stated how this opportunity could enhance a students' future university acceptance, study, and professional plans.

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

Students are accustomed to responding to emails, but most of this kind of correspondence involves interpersonal writing with friends, which requires the familiar register. This task, instead, required the use of formal register.

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 to familiarize them with expectations for performance.
- Familiarize students with the task, and build their skills and confidence in responding by having them write practice email replies under actual exam conditions. Score the responses and provide feedback according to the AP World Language and Culture Scoring Guidelines.
- Develop practice emails for students to respond to within the six course themes of the AP Italian Language and Culture Curriculum.
- Assist students who continue to struggle with the formal form of verbs and with formal address. It could be helpful to focus and practice the formal-informal distinction in writing and speaking through role-plays, through the practice of both reading and answering business correspondence, and through the creation of every-day life situations.
- Develop vocabulary activities to provide students with more vocabulary resources.

- Encourage control and accuracy in grammar and syntax by underlining the importance of spelling, gender and number agreement, subject-verb agreement, and verb conjugations. Create opportunities for students to develop the habit of giving their work a final proofreading so that they can identify common lexical, grammatical and/or syntactical mistakes. Promote peer reviews, class analysis, reflection and discussion of common errors to help students avoid them in the future.
- Remember that the skills required for successful completion of an AP language exam should be cultivated from the beginning levels of language study. In the case of the Email Reply, practice can begin as early as the first year of Italian through easy tasks (e.g., sending messages to friends/pen-pals, in which students provide some personal information; describing people and basic objects; stating some activities they like; answering and asking simple questions; etc.). In this way, student skills in writing emails can gradually, over the course of several years, reach the level of complexity necessary to succeed on this AP task.
- Use the sample email tasks from 2012 to 2018 available online on AP Central at the AP Italian Language and Culture Exam page for practice.

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

- Teachers should view the AP World Languages and Cultures Online Module on Interpersonal Writing: *Interpersonal Communication: Developing Writing Abilities*, by Nyan-Ping Bi, for ideas on building their students' skills in interpersonal writing: 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: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-italian-language-and-culture/exam?course=ap-italian-language-and-culture
- Teachers should choose a sample Email Reply prompt from those posted from 2012-2018 and access the corresponding student samples 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 inform them further of expectations for performance on this task. https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-italian-language-and-culture/exam?course=ap-italian-language-and-culture
- Teachers should assign the other Email Reply prompts from 2012-2018 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 be able to move their performance to the next higher level.

Question #2
Task: Persuasive essay **Theme:** Vita contemporanea
Max. Points: 5 **Total Group Mean Score:** 3.57
Standard Group Mean Score: 3.47

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This task assessed writing in the presentational communicative mode by having the student write a persuasive 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 twice. 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 their different viewpoints. They also had to present their own viewpoint 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 persuasive essay was *Vita contemporanea*, and the prompt asked students to express their own opinion on the idea that technological progress always improves the quality of life and work. The response needed to be based on three different sources:

- A written article about the ability of children—from a very young age—to use and entertain themselves with electronic devices. The journalist argues that technology has improved both children's and adults' lives by stimulating and helping children express their creativity, which then helps parents by alleviating children's boredom during long waits at the doctor's office, the post office, etc.

- A graph showing the presence of technological devices and services in Italian households in 2013 and 2014.

An audio source in which a journalist discusses the negative impact on professional journalism when information encountered accidentally is recorded and disseminated by individuals using devices such as smartphones. Because there are now so many amateur journalists lacking expertise or methodology, the authoritativeness of traditional news—which depends on investigation conducted over a significant period of time—is now at risk.

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 that uses a variety of language structures. Students were expected to demonstrate critical reading skills by distinguishing facts from opinions, understanding the intent of the text, and using all that information to develop and defend their argument.

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

The main score for the Standard Group was 3.47 out of a possible 5 points. The mean score for the Total Group was 3.57. Both the Standard Group and the Total Group performance on this response were statistically the highest of all four free-response questions.

Content and Skills

The level of achievement of students on the task varied:
- Most responses were able to identify the main idea(s) of each source, some supporting details, and the intent of the text.
- A few responses did not address the prompt and talked about technology for personal use, but 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 their viewpoints: they often cited or identified only one or two sources.

- A few responses did not provide effective treatment of the topic within the context of the task because students were not able to fully understand the first and the third source while offering their own viewpoint.
- A few responses wrote summaries of the sources without effectively using the information in support of their arguments.
- While responses clearly reflected an understanding of the graph (Source #2), a few misinterpreted Source #1 and/or Source #3.
- Some responses demonstrated a moderate/low degree of comprehension of the sources.
- A few responses stated their own viewpoint but were not able to develop and defend it.
- Many responses were able to identify products and practices related to the topic and discern the perspectives behind them.

Language

- There was a lack of accuracy and variety in grammar, syntax, and usage of the language.
- There were frequent errors in subject-verb and noun-adjective agreements.
- There was frequent use of verbs in the infinitive, indicating that many students struggle with tense recognition and conjugation.
- Many responses developed paragraph-length discourse with a variety of simple, compound, and complex sentences. The majority used simple and compound sentences to construct their paragraphs.
- Many responses used transitional elements and cohesive devices.
- A few responses included strings of sentences rather than paragraph-length discourse.
- The vocabulary used was generally appropriate, indicating that students were familiar with the topic; some responses included idiomatic expressions.

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

The task required students to write a persuasive essay to submit to an Italian writing contest. The essay topic was based on three sources presenting different viewpoints on the topic. Most students understood Source 1 and Source 3 despite the sources' difficult and idiomatic language. Students were able to extrapolate and pull information from both sources and use them in support of their argument. Students understood Source 2 and referred to it appropriately.

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	*Responses that Demonstrate Understanding*
• The article in Source 1 argued that technology and electronic devices have improved life for both children and adults. Some responses concluded that: 1. Technology allows family and friends living far away to be closer. 2. Technology makes family and social relations harder because its abuse reduces real social interaction.	• Successful responses correctly understood the source's viewpoint and used it to support their argument—in favor or against—on how technology has improved the quality of life and work.

• The audio in Source 3 presented the viewpoint of a journalist about the negative impact that technology has on professional journalism. Some responses did not show understanding of the source's viewpoint and interpreted technology as a reason for either job loss or job creation.	• Successful responses argued that: 1. A misuse of technology is a threat to professional journalists' expertise and methods, but technology allows for the circulation of opinions and information. 2. A misuse of technology due to the casual distribution of accidentally encountered "news" may undermine the authoritativeness of traditional journalism.

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to 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 a persuasive essay.
- Develop strategies and activities that help students recognize the sources' viewpoints.
- Provide students with strategies for how to express their own viewpoint on a topic and build their argument in a clear and organized manner with supporting evidence from the three sources.
- Stress the importance of spelling, gender- and number-agreement, subject-verb agreement, and verb conjugations. Create opportunities for students to develop the habit of giving their essays a final proofreading so that they can identify common lexical, grammatical and/or syntactical mistakes. Encourage peer reviews, class analysis, reflection and discussion of common errors to help students avoid them in the future.
- Review with the students the most common vocabulary mistakes, especially those that derive from English interference (e.g., "*affettare*" for "affect").
- 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 students' argument on the topic raised by the prompt.
- Remind students to read the introduction accompanying the sources carefully.
- 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. Encourage students to take notes about the sources and use them to design an outline before writing the essay. Provide graphic organizers or templates to help students take efficient notes and organize their ideas.
- Develop activities to identify examples of summary versus integration of sources and provide strategies for how to incorporate information from sources to support an argument.
- Remind students that quantity does not necessarily means quality. Encourage them to be more concise; many low scoring responses were 2-3 pages long but lacked a coherent argument.
- Familiarize students with the scoring guidelines and essay samples posted on AP Central. Read, analyze and discuss the samples in class to help students understand expectations for performance and how the scoring guidelines are applied.
- Teach 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" and *in addizione* for "in addition."
- Assign the sample tasks from 2012 to 2018 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.
- Remind students to use a large, neat, and clear handwriting so that responses are legible.

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

- Teachers should view the two AP 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 Written Arguments*, by Ann Mar—for strategies to build their students' skills in presentational writing: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/resources/ap-world-language-culture-interactive-online-modules
- Teachers should download the scoring guidelines for the Persuasive Essay, 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?course=ap-italian-language-and-culture
- Teachers should choose a sample Persuasive Essay prompt from 2012-2018 and access the corresponding student samples 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 inform them further of expectations for performance on this task: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-italian-language-and-culture/exam?course=ap-italian-language-and-culture
- Teachers should assign the other Persuasive Essay prompts from 2012-2018 during the course of the year 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 be able to move their performance to the next higher level.

Question #3
Task: Conversation
Max. Points: 5
Theme: Famiglia e società
Total Group Mean Score: 2.73
Standard Group Mean Score: 2.48

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 five turns in the conversation. The series of five 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 *Famiglia e società*. For this task students needed to respond to 5 audio prompts spoken by Sofia, a friend that the student has not seen for a while. The question assessed the students' performance in interpersonal speaking by engaging them in a series of exchanges on a familiar topic—neighborhood changes and events—generated by Sofia's inquiries. The students had to interact with the interlocutor to produce language that appropriately responded to Sofia's questions. They were expected to understand Sofia'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 agreement, preference, and opinion and justify them; make a counterproposal—through simple, compound, and complex sentences, and through the use of different time frames.

1. Sofia meets the student in a place far away from the student's home. She is surprised and asks why the student is in that neighborhood. The student had to respond by indicating the reason(s).

2. Sofia talks enthusiastically about the modernization of her neighborhood and asks if the student agrees that modern neighborhoods are more attractive. The student had to express agreement with Sofia's opinion and explain why.

3. Sofia proposes a visit to a fountain in a nearby piazza. The student had to decline the invitation and make a counterproposal.

4. Sofia informs the student about two upcoming events and invites the student to choose one of the two to attend together. The student had to express a preference and explain the reason(s) for the choice.

5. Sofia informs the student that two of her art-enthusiast friends will be visiting the following Sunday and asks for advice about something to do with them downtown. The student had to offer suggestions.

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

The mean score for the Standard Group was 2.48 out of a possible 5 points. The mean score for the Total Group was 2.73. Both the Standard Group and the Total Group performance on this response were statistically lower than on the interpersonal writing task but higher than on the presentational speaking task.

Content and Skills

The most problematic questions were 2, 5, and 4, in this order. It was very hard for many students to accomplish the following tasks: Understand the question (Question 2, 5, and 4) and justify their opinion (Question 2). The responses to these questions were somewhat inappropriate, mainly due to misinterpretation/misunderstanding of vocabulary.

Below are the details:

- **Question 2 →** Sofia says that she is visiting the "Casa della Musica" ("*Io sono qui per vedere la nuova Casa della Musica*"), and then she states that a modern neighborhood is more attractive, soliciting the student's agreement ("*Stanno rimodernando un sacco di cose in questa zona. Finalmente, era ora! È più bello un quartiere moderno, non è vero?*"). However, the phrase "*Casa della Musica*" was misunderstood by some who focused either on "*Casa*" or on "*Musica*" and articulated their response around one or both words. Additionally, some students did not understand the word "*quartiere.*"
- **Question 4 →** The student had to choose an event to attend with Sofia ("*il mese prossimo apre il nuovo museo archeologico e comincia anche il festival del cinema. Scegli cosa preferisci e ci andiamo insieme*"). Some students did not understand the word "*archeologico*"—or mispronounced it—and confused the word "*festival*" with the word "*festa,*" and thus talked about going to a party or watching a movie.
- **Question 5 →** Sofia says that two of her art-enthusiast friends will come to town on Sunday and asks the student for advice about something to do with them downtown ("*domenica arrivano due miei amici appassionati d'arte. Se venissimo in centro, cosa ci consiglieresti di fare?*"). Some students neglected to refer to the "*amici appassionati d'arte*" and interpreted the question instead as an invitation to plan an outing with Sofia.

Language
- Some responses demonstrated basic vocabulary, limited use of idiomatic language, and mispronunciation (mainly with the word "*archeologico*"). They also showed the use of rehearsed formulas for responding, sometimes applied out of context.
- Accuracy and variety in grammar, syntax, and usage were not always present. There were errors with agreements (subject-verb; noun-adjective), misuse of articles, errors in word order, and limited use of dependent clauses.

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

Students had to maintain mostly uncomplicated communicative exchanges and to express opinions and preferences and provide supporting facts. However, some students did not understand some key words in Sofia's utterances. Consequently, their responses were only partially appropriate.

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	*Responses that Demonstrate Understanding*
• Some responses provided incorrect information for the second turn in the conversation, such as "*Oh yes, music is very important, I always listen to music in my room at my house.*"	• Successful responses included information such as "*I agree, modern neighborhoods are attractive*"; "*old neighborhoods are also beautiful, but I prefer the modern ones.*"
• In response to the question about which event to attend, some responses suggested going to a *museo del cinema*, to watch a movie, or out to eat something with Sofia.	• Successful responses presented the student's choice, such as *"I prefer the Film Festival because I like watching new movies.*"
• In response to the prompt that asks for advice about the activities that Sofia's art-enthusiast friends should do downtown, some responses suggested an outing with Sofia, such as "*Sure Sofia, you and I could go to the park or to a restaurant.*"	• Successful responses included information such as "*You and your friends could go to a museum not too far from here where you can see famous artworks.*"

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

Teachers should do the following to help students improve their performance on 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.
- Provide opportunities for students to respond to five prompts, including those that require them to initiate an exchange, such as by asking a question.
- Have students develop a sense of how to respond in 20 seconds. Encourage them to provide elaboration and details and to try to fully use their response time. This sort of practice needs to occur throughout the school year.
- Have students listen carefully to the prompt and say something relevant in response, even if what they say is brief.
- 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, and AP Central has a list of links to audio materials. Teachers can access audio files on the AP Italian Language and Culture Teacher Community.
- 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 their 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 increase vocabulary by exploring many of the recommended contexts/sub-topics of each 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 lack some vocabulary.
- Assign the sample conversations from 2012 to 2018 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?

- Teachers should view the AP World Languages and Cultures Online Module on Interpersonal Speaking: *Interpersonal Communication, Developing Speaking Abilities*, by Clarissa Adams-Fletcher, for strategies on building their students' skills in interpersonal speaking: 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: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-italian-language-and-culture/exam?course=ap-italian-language-and-culture

- Teachers should choose a sample Conversation from 2012-2018 and access the corresponding student samples of high, mid, and low performances and review them with students against the scoring guidelines. This examination of student work will inform them further of expectations for performance on this task. https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-italian-language-and-culture/exam?course=ap-italian-language-and-culture
- Teachers should assign the other Conversations from 2012-2018 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 be able to move their performance to the next higher level.

Question #4

Task: Culture Comparison
Max. Points: 5

Theme: Famiglia e società
Total Group Mean Score: 2.45
Standard Group Mean Score: 2.24

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 the student's own community to an area of the Italian-speaking world, 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 importance of the *piazza*, or similar places where people can meet and socialize, in both their own community and in a target language community they know well. Students had to plan and produce a spoken presentation that compares their own community to an area of the Italian-speaking world in relation to the given topic.

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

The mean score for the Standard Group was 2.24 out of a possible 5 points. The mean score for the Total Group was 2.45. Both the Standard Group and the Total Group performance on this response were statistically the lowest of all four free-response questions.

Content
In order to demonstrate an understanding of different features of the target culture, students could rely on their personal knowledge or first-hand experience, or recombine information from material they saw in class when covering the six themes of the AP Italian Language and Culture curriculum. This year the theme was *Famiglia e società.* Responses, however, could make use of other disciplines and other themes and sub-themes germane to the topic within the AP Curriculum (e.g., Contemporary Life, Personal and Public Identities, Beauty and Aesthetics).

Skills and language
Students were expected to accomplish the comparison task by organizing their presentation in paragraph-length discourse. It was expected that students use a variety of simple and compound sentences in major time frames. Vocabulary had to be appropriate for the context and make the presentation understandable. Also, pronunciation, intonation, and pacing played a role in making the presentation comprehensible.

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

Common misconceptions included the following:
- A few responses did not answer the prompt and talked instead about subjects irrelevant to the topic (e.g., school systems, fashion, cuisine).
- Some responses provided only lists of characteristics/places found in *piazze* and other meeting places, without addressing the topic of socialization.
- Some responses interpreted *piazza* as plaza (e.g., a shopping center or strip mall) and concluded that there are no plazas in Italy.
- Some responses discussed the topic only within the target culture or their own culture.
- A fair number of responses focused on the "Tema del corso" (*Famiglia e società*) instead of developing a response to the "*Argomento della relazione.*" Therefore, in their presentations, some students talked about the importance of the family in the US and in Italy.

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
• A few responses did not address the prompt and talked instead about subjects irrelevant to the topic (e.g., school systems, fashion, cuisine).	• Responses clearly identified the *piazza* or other meeting places in both the target culture and their own culture.
• Some students provided only lists of characterisitcs/places found in *piazze* and other meeting places, without addressing the topic of socialization.	• Responses provided relevant examples and supporting details for the *piazza* and other places as places of meeting and socialization.

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to 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 "*Argomento della relazione*" and not the "*Tema del corso.*"
- Remind students that they must address all aspects of this task by making clear comparisons between their own community and a community belonging to the target culture, and by including relevant examples.
- Point out to students that it is not enough to name "two countries," without saying which ones they are. The target culture (Italy) should always be mentioned in some fashion.
- Remind students that "community" can refer to something as large as a "continent" and as small as a "family unit".
- Provide students with a list of helpful conjunctions, adverbs, and transitional elements for making comparisons.
- Provide graphic organizers or templates as models to 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 organized presentations.
- Have students pay attention to grammar and syntax. 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 and syntax.
- Suggest that students start their presentation by talking about Italian culture first. Due to anxiety that students might experience while taking the exam, it could be difficult for them to manage time during their presentation, and they might run out of time before they start presenting what they know about the target culture, which is the main purpose of task 4.
- In class, present and discuss cultural materials in the target language. In this way, students will be exposed to the vocabulary needed to develop a strong presentation. Often students have good ideas, but it appears that they lack the appropriate vocabulary to express them. Use the prompts from 2012 to 2018 available online on AP Central for the purpose of practice.

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

- Teachers should view the AP Online Module on Presentational Speaking: *Presentational Communication: A Focus on Speaking*, by Angelika Becker, for ideas on how to develop their students' skills in Presentational Speaking: 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: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-italian-language-and-culture/exam?course=ap-italian-language-and-culture

- Teachers should choose a sample Cultural Comparison prompt from 2012-2018 and access its corresponding student sample responses of high, mid, and low performances and review these against the scoring guidelines to help students understand expectations for student performance and how the scoring guidelines are applied: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-italian-language-and-culture/exam?course=ap-italian-language-and-culture
- Teachers should assign the other Cultural Comparison prompts from 2012-2018 over the course of the year 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 be able to move their performance to the next higher level.