



**AP® ITALIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE  
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTION TRYOUT SCORING COMMENTARY**

**Speaking: Picture Sequence Story Narration**

**Sample: E  
Score Category: High**

The student follows the directions completely and narrates a story with a beginning, middle, and end. Moreover, the response sounds like storytelling, not merely a description of pictures. This is in part due to the use of connection words such as “*poi*” and “*così*” and the spontaneous movement from present tense to past tense narration—once the day is over and characters reflect on previous times in their lives.

There are some grammatical errors like “*y*” for “*e*,” “*quando è finita il pasto*,” and “*non ha comprato abbastanza frutta (non aveva comprato)*,” but these errors are effectively compensated for by some good vocabulary choices and expressions such as “*tutto quello per cui*,” “*parlano delle cose che hanno fatto insieme*,” “*si è reso conto*,” and “*hanno riso*.” Despite the occasional hesitations in the story and the apparent use of the Spanish “*y*” as a conjunction, the narration is smooth, steady, and coherent. The pauses are natural for the most part.

The student has a good accent and uses appropriate Italian intonation. The response employs strategies to keep the narration flowing. When, for instance, the student cannot come up with the word “*presto*,” he continues since he realizes that the story will be comprehensible without it. The student is attentive regarding his use of tenses and switches from the past tense to narrative/historical present (“*si è svegliato*” to “*si sveglia*”). At the conclusion of the story, the narration fruitfully returns to the shopping scenes from earlier in the story but remains in context nonetheless. This works well with the content at the end of the narrative (the dinner) and adds an almost humorous touch, which renders the response even more of a story and helps fulfill the assigned communicative task of narrating the story as if to a friend. The addition of a detail such as the friends reflecting on their lives and Marco's accomplishments, contributes to the thoroughness of the narration and has a sophisticated effect.

**Sample: J  
Score Category: Low**

The response does not clearly complete the task of narrating a story with a beginning, middle, and end. Additionally, the narration of the story is limited in many ways. Despite the first sentence being nicely joined by the conjunction “*così*,” the story is not fluid. Rather, it is characterized by frequent hesitations, and the student uses the English fillers “*uh*” and “*um*” or the Italian “*e*” throughout for gaps lasting anywhere between 3 and 15 seconds.

Grammatical mistakes range from gender and agreement errors to incorrect vocabulary (“*cacchiano*”—meaning “spoons” or “they chat?”) and expressions, sometimes as a result of interference from another language (“*è un buon tempo a casa di Luigi*”). In addition, the vocabulary used is basic and limited to the elementary words and structures found in a typical Italian 101 curriculum (foods, gift, “*fare la spesa*,” “*professoressa di biologia*”). Likewise, the discourse level is predominantly characterized by short descriptive sentences and descriptive lists (items at the dinner). Pronunciation (accent and intonation) is worse than expected for this level, making one word in particular (“*cacchiano*”) incomprehensible.



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**Speaking: Story Narration (continued)**

This response would have benefited from fewer silences and more content, even if simple linear descriptions of characters, objects, and events. Using richer vocabulary (nouns, verbs, expressions) and more cohesive devices and adverbs of time such as *oggi*, *presto*, *stamattina*, *poi*, *dopo*, and *alla fine*, could have also strengthened the story. During moments of hesitation, the narration would have benefited from the use of Italian fillers such as *cioè* and *voglio dire*.