MALTESE HISTORY

Unit I

Education Reforms
The Early Political Parties
The Language Question

Form 4
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unit I.1 Education and Schooling in Malta, 1800-1900</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>The years 1800-1836</strong></td>
<td>Very little was made in primary education because the Government did not want to enter into a costly programme of educating the people. The <em>Royal Commission of Inquiry of 1836</em> reported this on the level of education of the Maltese: ‘There are no schools in the villages, no tolerable education for the middle classes.’</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td><strong>The Royal Commission of 1836</strong></td>
<td>In 1836 the Commission found only three primary schools. The Commissioners criticized the widespread illiteracy because working class families were too poor to send their children to school. The Commission suggested the opening of more schools in the towns and villages. It advised the Government to increase the teachers’ pay and to double the annual expenditure on education. Monsignor <em>Fortunato Panzavecchia</em> was appointed Inspector of Primary Schools in 1840.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Paolo Pullicino</strong></td>
<td>Between 1850 and 1880 <em>Canon Paolo Pullicino</em> was Chief Inspector of Primary Schools. Pullicino left six reports on primary education. Pullicino set at once to organize primary education. He asked village parish priests to use their sermons to persuade parents to send their children to school. He tried to persuade the Government to increase the pay given to teachers and opened the Model School at Valletta to train teachers. As long as Pullicino was in charge, the Italian language was given first preference over everything else.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Patrick Keenan’s Report on Education</strong></td>
<td>In 1878 another Royal Commissioner, <em>Patrick Keenan</em>, came to investigate possible reforms in education. He concluded in his report that teachers were not badly paid and not properly trained. In most schools there were no playgrounds for re-creation. Classrooms were small and badly ventilated. The Government rented houses instead of building new schools. Discipline was poorly kept and pupils made a lot of noise. Textbooks were too difficult for the pupils to understand. The level of pupils’ writing, reading and spelling was very poor. Many pupils repeated the same class or left school at the age of 11 to find work.  Keenan suggested the setting up of a separate <em>Department of Education</em> headed by a <em>Director of Education</em>. To encourage pupils to learn, prizes were to be distributed every year. Schools were to be administered by a committee of four persons with the parish priest as chairman. Teacher had to receive better training by the Government. He suggested that parents should pay a small fee for sending their children to school for he was of the opinion that ‘what people get for nothing they esteemed to be of little or no value’. Children from poor families were to be admitted to school free of charge. Keenan proposed to start teaching pupils English before Italian in primary schools. Italian was to be taught after school hours. The persons who tried to put into practice these reforms were Sigismondo Savona and Gerald Strickland.</td>
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Unit I.1 Education and Schooling in Malta 1800-1900

1. Why did the British do very little to improve education and schooling in Malta before 1836?  
____________________________________________________________________________________ (1)

2. Why did the British Government change its mind on education after 1836?  
____________________________________________________________________________________ (1)

3. Mention two measures taken by Canon Pulicino to improve schooling in Malta.  
____________________________________________________________________________________ (2)  
____________________________________________________________________________________ (2)

4. What major criticism did Keenan put forward about the way schools were run when Pulicino was in charge?  
____________________________________________________________________________________ (1)

5. Identify three factors which made learning in schools very poor in Malta in 1878?  
____________________________________________________________________________________ (3)
____________________________________________________________________________________ (3)
____________________________________________________________________________________ (3)

6. Mention two suggestions put forward by Keenan to improve schooling in Malta.  
____________________________________________________________________________________ (2)  
____________________________________________________________________________________ (2)

7. How did Keenan’s report effect the development of Maltese politics after 1880?  
____________________________________________________________________________________ (2)  
____________________________________________________________________________________ (2)

8. How was Sigismondo Savona involved in Maltese education in the 1880s?  
____________________________________________________________________________________ (2)

9. Write true or false for these statements on Maltese education in the 19th century:

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<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>The University was closed down by the French Government in 1798-1800.</td>
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<td>b</td>
<td>Gov. Maitland appointed the first Director of Primary Education in Malta.</td>
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<td>c</td>
<td>The Royal Commission of 1836 was in favour of compulsory education.</td>
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<td>d</td>
<td>Keenan wanted to increase the teaching of English at the expense of Italian.</td>
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<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>Keenan’s reforms caused the beginning of Maltese Language Question.</td>
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<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Canon Pulicino was in favour of the teaching of English in primary schools.</td>
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(Total = 20 marks)
### Unit I.2 Education and Schooling in 20th Century Malta

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<th>Compulsory Attendance Act of 1924</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>In the early 1900s more educated people in Malta wanted to see <strong>compulsory primary education</strong> introduced. The Director of Education F.J. Reynolds said that Malta was the only country in Europe with no compulsory primary education. He said that parents had the liberty to educate or leave their children ignorant. This attitude could only be changed if school attendance became obligatory. The Government however decided that such a law had to wait until that war was over. An important development took place when the <strong>1921 Constitution</strong> placed education under the Maltese Government. <strong>Albert V. Laferla</strong> (Director of Education) complained of poor attendance because many parents still were against sending their children to school. For this reason, the <strong>Compulsion Attendance Act</strong> became law in 1924. But this law still left pupils free to be absent from school for 25% of the school days without a medical certificate. Parents were still left free to choose whether to enroll their children to school or not.</td>
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<th>Compulsory Education Act of 1946</th>
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<td>6</td>
<td>After World War II <strong>John Brennan</strong> (Director of Education, 1943-48) remarked that the war experience had made the people more eager to learn. The prospects of emigration made parents more eager to register their children in schools. The Government saw that the time has now arrived to introduce a new education act, known as the <strong>Compulsion Attendance Ordinance of 1946</strong> until the age of 11. Parents now became obliged, under penalty of a monthly fine, to send their children to school on reaching the age of five.</td>
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<th>Secondary School for All Act of 1970</th>
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<td>7</td>
<td>The basis of Malta’s modern education were laid down when <strong>Joseph Vassallo</strong> was Director of Education. During the 1950s and 1960s more primary and secondary schools were built in many towns and villages. <strong>St Michael’s Training College</strong> for teachers was opened in 1952. The new <strong>University at Tal-Qroqq</strong> was inaugurated in 1964. In 1970 the <strong>Secondary School for All Act</strong> made secondary education compulsory from 11 to 14 years. With the <strong>Education Act of 1974</strong>, the school leaving age was extended to 16. By the end of the 1970s, both state and private schools in Malta had reached the level of some of the most advanced countries in Europe.</td>
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Unit I.1 and I.2 - Education and Schooling in Malta, 1800-1974

1. Complete this chronological list of events connected to education and schooling in Malta since 1800:
   (a) 1836 ____________________________________________________________
   (b) 1840 ____________________________________________________________
   (c) 1850 ____________________________________________________________
   (d) 1878 ____________________________________________________________
   (e) 1924 ____________________________________________________________
   (f) 1946 ____________________________________________________________
   (g) 1970 ____________________________________________________________
   (h) 1974 ____________________________________________________________ (8)

2. How did the Compulsory Schooling Acts of 1924 and 1946 differ from each other?
   __________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________ (4)

3. State briefly the contribution that these gave to the development of education and schooling in 19th and 20th century Malta:
   ____________________________________________________________________ (8)
   (a) John Austin and Cornwall Lewis: ______________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   (b) Paolo Pullicino: ____________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   (c) Patrick Keenan: ____________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   (d) Albert V. Laferla: _________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   (e) Joseph P. Vassallo: ________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

(Total marks = 20)
1. The Reform Party
In 1879 Sigismondo Savona set up the RP and served as Director of Education (1880-87). He retired from politics in 1898. The Riformisti wanted to change the education system by introducing the teaching of English in the primary classes, substitute Italian for English at the University, in the Council of Government and in the Law Courts. They aimed at abolishing the bread tax, open more schools and continue the underground drainage system. These measures were intended to improve the living conditions of the working classes. The party was supported mostly by the civil service employees, the dockyard workers and the businessmen.

![Sigismondo Savona](image1.png)  ![A Reformist mass meeting of 1879](image2.png)  ![Fortunato Mizzi](image3.png)  ![Panzavecchia](image4.png)

2. The Partito Nazionale
Fortunato Mizzi was a lawyer and President of the Chamber of Advocates. In 1880 he set up the Partito Anti-Riformista to oppose the education and language reforms proposed by Keenan and Savona. In 1884 the name of the party was changed to Partito Nazionale. The supporters of the party from Anti-Riformisti started to be called Nationalisti (Nationalists). The greater support for the party came from the pro-Italian Maltese, the greater part of the clergy, the landowners, the professional class and the peasants. It strongly attacked the language reforms to substitute Italian with English. They wanted self-government in local matters. They opposed the abolition of the bread tax and the undertaking of expensive public works projects.

![A Popular Party mass meeting in Floriana, 1896](image5.png)  ![A Nationalist mass meeting at Blata l-Bajda, 1901](image6.png)

3. The Partito Popolare (Popular Party)
Monsignor Ignazio Panzavecchia was a Canon of the Cathedral Chapter and he represented the clergy in the Council of Government in 1891-2. In 1895 he set up the Partito Popolare to oppose the Mixed Marriage Law proposed by the British Government. In 1911 he set up the Comitato Patriottico to continue Mizzi’s policy of opposition against the British Government. After the war he set up a new party, the Unione Politica Maltese (UPM) and won the 1921 elections. The party received its greater support from the clergy and the peasants. For this reason the British often called it the ‘clerical party’.

The Popular Party stood for Malta’s Italian and Catholic culture and traditions and in this respect they were similar to the Anti-Riformisti. They opposed the Civil Marriage Law of 1892. Like the Anti-Riformisti, they wanted a self-governing constitution.
1. Give the full name of the following political party abbreviations and their respective leader.

- **P.R. of 1879**
- **P.A.R. of 1880**
- **P.N. of 1884**
- **P.P. of 1894**

2. What aspect of British policy in Malta brought about the formation of the first political parties?

3. How did the first Maltese political parties make their ideas known to the people? Mention two examples.

4. How did the Maltese Church get involved in party politics in Malta in the 1890s and later?

5. Name two issues which involved directly the political parties between 1880 and 1921?

6. Which political party did most of these people support in late 19th century Malta?
   - (a) the professional class (lawyers, doctors, notaries etc.)
   - (b) the greater part of the clergy (priests and friars)
   - (c) the civil service (government) employees
   - (d) the businessmen and the merchants

7. Why is it very important to have different political parties in a democratic country?

(Total 20 marks)
1. **How did the Language Question begin?**

In the 1870s there was in Malta a pro-British group of people who wanted to substitute the Italian language for English as the language of education and culture in Malta. The Royal Commissioner Patrick Keenan in his report on the education system proposed that English was to be taught in primary schools and Italian was to be studied as an optional subject after school. In the Lyceum and the University lecturing in Italian was to remain only in the Faculty of Theology.

Knowledge of English was more common in the harbour towns than in the villages and in Gozo. Italian was the language of culture, the administration, the Law Courts, and the University.

These proposals brought a storm of protests from all those in Malta who preferred the Italian language (known as italophiles). Those supporting the English language became known as the Reformers, and those supporting the Italian language as anti-Reformers. But the majority of the elected members strongly opposed Keenan’s education reforms. This division led to the formation of the first two political parties in Malta.

Sigismondo Savona, the new pro-British Director of Education tried to introduce in 1881 the pari-passu system of teaching English and Italian simultaneously in the primary and secondary schools. The Anti-Reformers members in the Council of Government refused to vote money for Savona’s education reforms. These developments marked the beginning of a long dispute known as the Maltese Language Question, a dispute that lasted for nearly 60 years.

1. **Why did the Language Question become a hotter issue between 1898 and 1903?**

When **Gerald Strickland** (1869-1940) became Chief Secretary to the Government in 1889 he introduced the free choice (libera scelta) by which parents were to choose the language of instruction for their children between English and Italian. The Government launched a propaganda campaign in favour of English, stressing how important it was for the lower classes to know English to find work or to emigrate in other English-speaking countries.

The pro-Italians started holding public demonstrations and mass meetings in Floriana against the Government’s language policy. Mizzi and Savona joined the protests and blamed the crisis on Strickland and asked for his removal from Secretary to the Government. At this point, the British Government, who wanted to keep friendly relations with Italy, postponed the language reforms in the law courts. Joseph Chamberlain, the British Secretary of State went to Rome for talks with the Italian Government on the Maltese Language Question. In 1902 King Edward VII put pressure upon the British Government to cancel the reforms in the law courts. Strickland left Malta when he was appointed Governor in the West Indies.

But the Nationalists continued to demand the withdrawal of all language reforms made by Strickland. In June 1903 the crisis reached a deadlock when the Nationalist elected members refused to vote money for education. Thus Chamberlain suspended the Constitution of 1887.
1. Why did the Language Question flare up again in the 1920s and 1930s?
When the Maltese were given responsible government in 1921, the Constitution declared English and Italian as the official languages. When Gerald Strickland became PM in 1927 his language policy was supported by the Labour Party. The Government started giving more importance to English and Maltese. Italian was removed from post-office notices, government notices and documents and street names. English was made more important than Italian for those seeking promotion in the Civil Service or employment in the dockyard. The urban working class had no choice but to accept English as their second language. The prospect of emigration to English speaking countries encouraged the working classes to learn English rather than Italian. In 1929 the Government permitted for the first time the use of Maltese in the Law Courts. The Malti Safi movement was set up by some Maltese writers with the aim of removing Italian loan words from the Maltese language.

2. How did the British Government restrict the influence of the Italian language after 1933?
When the Nationalists were in government again in 1932-33, they tried to put the clock back and reintroduce Italian in the primary schools. The British Government became concerned with the spread of Italian Fascist propaganda in Malta. The Italian Government had opened the Istituto di Cultura to lent Italian books and arranged for famous Italian scholars to visit and hold talks in Malta. Thus, the British Government decided to stop Italian scholars from holding public lectures in Malta. In November 1933, when the Maltese Government tried to vote money for the teaching of Italian in primary schools, the Governor suspended the Constitution. Recent evidence however shows that the British Government used the language question to suspend the Constitution because they feared a future war with Italy.

From 1933 onwards the British Government took decisive steps to eliminate the remaining influence of the Italian in Malta. English, Italian and Maltese were declared the official languages of Malta. English was to be the only official language of the administration. Knowledge of English and Maltese only were necessary for employment in the Civil Service. Maltese became the language of the Law Courts. In 1935 a law sanctioned the use of Maltese in all legal documents. The Government opened a private cable radio station known as Rediffusion to diffuse BBC programmes in English among the people.

In 1936 relations between Britain and Italy moved closer to war. By 1939 the Governor had closed down the Istituto Italiano di Cultura, set up the British Council and banned the importation of Italian newspapers and magazines and abolished Italian as one of the official languages of Malta.

In June 1940 Italy declared war on Britain. The first Italian bombing of Malta signaled the end of the Language Question as far as the Italian language was concerned. In 43 pro-Italian Maltese were interned (exiled) to Uganda until the duration of the war. Among those exiled there were Enrico Mizzi, Herbert Ganado and Sir Arturo Mercieca, all three leading Nationalists.
1. Mention two causes that brought about the Language Question in Malta?

__________________________________________________________________________________________

(2)

2. What language did the majority of the Maltese speak at the time of the Language Question?

__________________________________________________________________________________________

(1)

3. Which category of Maltese people spoke English or Italian at that time?

__________________________________________________________________________________________

(1)

4. What effects did Keenan’s proposal on language reforms have in Malta?

__________________________________________________________________________________________

(2)

5. Why did Gerald Strickland’s actions intensify the Language Question?

__________________________________________________________________________________________

(2)

6. Italian influence was strongest in Malta at the time of the language question in three of the following. Underline the correct ones.

(law courts, university, local government, the Church, the village people, newspapers)

(3)

6. (a) What was the aim of the Nationalist Government of 1932-33 on the Language Question?

__________________________________________________________________________________________

(2)

(b) What did the British Government do to stop this language policy of the Nationalists?

__________________________________________________________________________________________

(1)

(c) Mention three measures of the 1930s aimed at reducing the influence of Italian in Malta.

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

(3)

7. How did the British Government use the Language Question to reduce Malta’s Constitutional developments in the 1930s?

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

(2)

8. In what way did the outbreak of World War II effect the Italian language in Malta?

__________________________________________________________________________________________

(1)

(Total marks = 20)
Unit I.6 - Political Parties, Education, the Language Question
Essay Questions

Read carefully the following essay titles and answer any ONE in about 200 to 300 words. Essays carry 20 marks each.

PAPER 2A

1. From 1800 till 1836 education in Malta had been largely neglected. In 1836 two Royal Commissioners were appointed and education was closely examined.
   (a) What did the Royal Commission find regarding education in Malta? (8)
   (b) What suggestions did it make in this regard? (6)
   (c) How did the suggestions made contribute towards a change in the situation of education in the Islands? (6) (SEC 1996)

2. As from the 1880s Malta saw the formation of political groups which later became strong political parties.
   (a) What caused the birth of such political formations in the 1880s? (10)
   (b) How could such political parties make a difference in Malta’s constitutional development up to 1921? (10) (SEC 2000)

3. (a) How did the Keenan report accentuate the Language Question in the 19th century? (10)
   (b) How did this question affect the subsequent constitutional development until 1921? (10) (SEC 2010)

PAPER 2B

1. The last twenty years of the 19th century saw the rise of political parties and formations.
   (a) Who were the more important local politicians of this period? (3)
   (b) What ideals did they hold? (6)
   (c) What political strategies did they use to try to control government policy and arrogance? (11) (SEC 1997)

2. (a) What were the main causes for the Language Question? (8)
    (b) Give the brief details about the main political personalities during this time. (6)
    (c) How did the Language Question affect the constitutional development up to 1903? (6) (SEC 1998)

3. (a) What do you understand by the ‘Language Question’? (4)
    (b) When did the issue really hot up and why? (8)
    (c) When can the Language Question be said to have come to an end? Why? (8)

4. Explain briefly the contents of the Keenan Report and how it affected the development of the Language Question. (SEC 2010)

5. During the 19th and the early 20th century, the Maltese politicians were very much concerned with the Language Question. Discuss under these titles:
   (a) the Royal Commission of 1878-1879 (6)
   (b) the Reformists and the Anti-Reformists (6)
   (c) Gerald Strickland and the Language Question (circa 1880s.1930s) (8) (SEC 2012)