



GCE Examiners' Report

Subject Spanish
Level GCE
Summer 2024

Introduction

Our Principal Examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each unit.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.¹

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	WJEC offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the WJEC subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For unitised specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and unit level. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each unit that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results, Grade Boundaries and PRS (wjec.co.uk)

¹ Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

Exam Results Analysis	WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.wjec.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	Portal by WJEC or on the WJEC subject page.
Become an examiner with WJEC.	We are always looking to recruit new examiners or moderators. These opportunities can provide you with valuable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	Become an Examiner WJEC

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Executive Summary

This series candidates generally performed well across all five units. In the speaking many candidates were able to produce accurate language, showing a good knowledge of appropriate lexis and structures. Pronunciation and intonation were also good. There were interesting topics, and many candidates were able to deliver an excellent performance with spontaneous interactions with the teacher-examiner. Candidates performed best where they had undertaken sound research and demonstrated competent language skills when delivering the analysis of their findings.

On the written units 2 and 4 candidates performed reasonably well in the comprehension exercises. Translation was the area which separated the weaker candidates from the stronger ones. There was a wide variety of marks achieved, with several candidates scoring in excess of 80%. It was pleasing to see improvement in performance on open-ended questions in the reading comprehension. This was evident across the ability range.

Successful essays were produced when candidates were able to successfully interpret a writer's intentions. The best essays were those which demonstrated a candidate's ability to take a step back and maintain a sharp focus on answering the question as set.

However, candidates are still making basic errors. These include incorrect genders, missing adjectival agreement and incorrect subject-verb accord. These errors prevent the candidate from communicating their thoughts clearly. Candidates must ensure they have a sound knowledge of language and structure. Recurring areas for improvement are developing a sound knowledge of language and grammar, building an arsenal of theme specific vocabulary empowering the candidate to significantly improve their communication skills and linguistic performance. Candidates are required to demonstrate a cultural understanding of the Spanish-speaking world relevant to the themes taught at AS and to gain a level of language surpassing that at GCSE.

Importantly for candidates, teacher-examiners should pay particular attention to the conduct of the speaking units in terms of delivery and timing so as not to disadvantage the candidate. The role of the Teacher-examiner is that of facilitator and they should keep their contribution to the discussion to a minimum. Centres are reminded that any IRP topic not firmly rooted in Spanish-speaking culture, or which attempts to compare Spanish-speaking countries with the UK is inappropriate and will adversely affect marks on AO4. Centres must ensure they upload a detailed copy of the IRP with every candidate's recording.

Areas for improvement	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
Course Delivery	WJEC GCE SPANISH	Subject Specification
Resources	RESOURCE GUIDE	Resource Guide
Guidance for Unit 3 IRP	UNIT 3 IRP	Preparing candidates for the IRP

SPANISH
GCE
Summer 2024
UNIT 1 SPEAKING

Overview of the Unit

This Unit aims to test the candidate's ability to use the spoken word in Spanish. The assessment lasts for 12-15 minutes in total. Candidates have fifteen minutes preparation time prior to the test.

The test contains two tasks; in the first task, the candidate is required to argue a point of view based on a stimulus card. This card is based on the theme *Understanding the Spanish-speaking world* and contains two opposing standpoints of an argument. The candidate is required to choose one of the standpoints and defend it against the examiner. This task allows the candidate to use the language of argument and debate.

In the second task, the candidate is required to discuss with the examiner. The discussion is initiated by questions based on a second stimulus card; this card is based on the theme *Being a young person in Spanish-speaking society* and contains a short text and three questions.

In this Unit, the candidate is assessed on all four assessment objectives:

- AO1 Understanding and responding in speech to spoken language
- AO2 Understanding and responding in speech to written language
- AO3 Manipulating the spoken language accurately using a range of lexis and structure
- AO4 Showing knowledge and understanding of, and responding critically to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries or communities where the language is spoken.

Candidates are assessed on AO1, AO3 and AO4 in Task 1 and on all the Assessment Objectives in Task 2.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Timing is important in these tests and should be observed carefully. Task 1 should last for between 5-6 minutes and Task 2 for between 7-9 minutes. Any speaking evidence which is produced beyond these timings will not be marked and failure to produce enough evidence will inevitably lead to the candidate being unable to access the full mark range. Candidates are allowed to complete the tasks in any order. It is the responsibility of the teacher-examiner to ensure that the timings are carefully observed; failure to do so could well affect the candidate's mark. If the candidate opts to begin the test with Task 2, the teacher-examiner must ensure that the timing remains between 7-9 minutes; this year, there were tests in which the candidate starting with Task 2 was only allocated 5-6 minutes, which inevitably affected their mark.

In Task 1, the candidate is required to defend a point of view. Many did so successfully but others were not equipped with the language of argument and debate and so found it difficult to vary their language when responding to the examiner's opposing argument. Again, it is the teacher-examiner's responsibility to ensure that this section of the examination takes the form of a debate and they must robustly argue the alternative standpoint to the one that the candidate has chosen; it is not appropriate to merely discuss the topic in question. Candidates need to be reminded of the importance of showing their knowledge and understanding of Spain or Spanish-speaking countries in order to back up their arguments. It is not relevant to discuss generic issues or those which are not specific to the Spanish-speaking world and it is the teacher-examiner's responsibility to ensure that the discussion remains on track. At this level, it is not appropriate for the teacher-examiner to ask personal questions, such as *¿Te gustaría ir a un festival?* or *¿Has probado la comida española?*

This year, the most popular cards in Set A were Card A1 (*fiestas*) and Card A3 (*la cocina*). Candidates need to be aware that they need to show knowledge and understanding of the topic within the context of Spanish-speaking society and that their arguments must be supported by relevant evidence. Some candidates had clearly revised the topics well and were able to offer appropriate information to illustrate their points of view. However, too many candidates limit their knowledge and understanding to offering a list, such as festivals or food, without using their knowledge to draw conclusions based on their understanding of Spanish culture.

In Task 2, candidates need to be aware that this part of the test will begin with the three printed questions on the stimulus card and that they should use the information in the text to help them answer. Teacher-examiners should ask the three questions consecutively and no extra questions should be asked until these questions have been answered. This year, there were examples of teacher-examiners asking extra questions between the compulsory questions and even, on occasions, forgetting to return to the compulsory questions.

To score high marks for AO2, the candidate is required to show that they can “respond in speech to written language”; they must therefore use the information in the text and reply giving the appropriate information. However, candidates should attempt to explain the content of the text using different vocabulary in order to demonstrate that they have a good understanding; it is not enough to read out sections of the text.

In the subsequent discussion, the teacher-examiner must ensure that the conversation remains centred on Spanish-speaking society; generic discussions on topics will result in candidates losing marks for AO4. Equally, it is not appropriate to make comparisons with the United Kingdom. The teacher-examiner should aim to ask open questions which will give the candidate the opportunity to develop their ideas and arguments; candidates can be challenged and prompted to offer more development on a topic by prompts such as *Explícame un poquito más* or *¿Por qué piensas así?* The teacher-examiner should focus on guiding the candidate towards producing an answer which contains more depth; the teacher-examiner should avoid offering their own views or speaking for too long as this will restrict the candidate's time.

Native (or near-native) speakers, although they often score well in AO1 and AO3, frequently lose marks on AO2 and AO4 because they do not show the level of knowledge and understanding needed to score high marks or they do not refer to the text when responding.

Many candidates were able to offer accurate language, showing a good knowledge of appropriate lexis and structures, and had good pronunciation and intonation. However, many candidates are still making basic errors, such as incorrect genders, missing adjectival agreement and incorrect subject-verb accord which can have the effect of confusing the message that the candidate is trying to convey. Candidates should ensure that they have a range of appropriate vocabulary that will allow them to discuss the AS topic areas with confidence. Too often, in Task 1, candidates are able to produce a good introduction which they have prepared but they do not have the range of language to allow them to perform well in the subsequent conversation.

The role of the teacher-examiner

Most teacher-examiners conduct the tests well and are sympathetic and supportive to the candidates. The most skilful ask concise, open questions and do not allow candidates to deliver pre-learnt material. However, there is still a minority whose conduct of the test is putting their candidates at a disadvantage. It is the teacher-examiner's technique that allows the candidate to produce the best possible performance. Teacher-examiners should remember that their role is one of a facilitator and they should not be tempted to contribute too much to the discussion. To allow the candidate to access the highest bands for AO1, the interaction between the two speakers must be genuinely spontaneous. Where candidates are attempting to offer long sections of pre-learnt speech, the teacher-examiner should gently interrupt and move the conversation forward. The two speakers should each pick up on what the other has said in order to produce a genuinely spontaneous discourse.

It is important to use a timer and keep carefully to the timing set out by the Board. The teacher-examiner should steer the candidate away from generic discussions which are not related to the Spanish-speaking world.

Administration

Centres are reminded of the importance of clearly recorded tests. It should be possible for the examiner to hear both the teacher-examiner and the candidate clearly; too often, the teacher-examiner's voice is clear and the candidate's voice is more muffled. Therefore, it is important that sound tests are carried out before the examination begins and that the recording equipment is tested. In addition, the teacher-examiner is required to record the candidate's name and number at the beginning of the recording before beginning each test.

The tests should take place in a suitable venue which will be quiet throughout the examining period and where there will be no risk of background noise.

Tests and relevant documentation should be uploaded in .mp3 format to Surpass within 48 hours of the assessment.

Summary of key points

- In Task 1, the candidate should use the language of argument and debate.
- In Task 2, the candidate should answer the first three questions by referring to the text.
- In both tasks, candidates must show their knowledge and understanding of the Spanish-speaking world to evidence their arguments.
- Discussions between the candidate and the teacher-examiner must be genuinely spontaneous.
- Timings must be accurate.
- Recordings should be of good quality and must be uploaded to Surpass before the deadline.

Conclusion

Candidates are required to show an understanding of the Spanish-speaking world within the themes covered at AS and to have a command of language which goes beyond GCSE level.

This year, many candidates were able to undertake the two tasks very successfully and it was a pleasure to listen to candidates whose command of the language had developed beyond the level required at GCSE.

SPANISH

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UNIT 2 LISTENING, READING, TRANSLATION AND CRITICAL RESPONSE IN WRITING

Overview of the Unit

In this unit, the skills of listening, reading translation, and responding critically in writing are assessed (AO1, AO2 AO3 and AO4). The questions are all based on a variety of topics and films in the Specification for AS Spanish.

There was a very wide range of overall marks here. The majority of candidates did reasonably well on the comprehension questions. As in the 2023 exam, the questions which resulted in the greatest disparity in marks between the stronger and weaker candidates were the translation and essay. It was noted that in question 6, the AO3 marks with weaker students were generally lower than last year and this impacted considerably on the overall performance in the exam. However, in spite of the disruption and difficulties of the past few years, there were still some excellent overall performances from candidates. Both teachers and candidates are to be congratulated on their continued hard work and commitment to the course.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A – Listening

- Q.1 was well done on the whole, Most of the stronger candidates achieved full marks on this question.
- Q.2 as in the 2023 exam proved more problematic. The rubric requires the candidate to tick a box indicating which statements are true or false and asks them to correct the statements which are false. Unfortunately a significant number of candidates again failed to do this, so no mark could be awarded.. Candidates are again reminded that whilst lifting of whole sentences is not permitted, only minimal manipulation of the Spanish is required. For example, 2(a) *estudia en un instituto galés* or *en Galés* are acceptable. A few candidates also tried to provide justification for their answers when ticking the true box. This is not necessary. Grammatical errors are not penalised in the listening section as long as the answer is intelligible to a “sympathetic native speaker”. Candidates who could correct statements concisely and clearly scored well in this section. Weaker candidates tended to provide too much and sometimes irrelevant information.

Section B - Reading Comprehension

- Q.3 was very well answered on the whole. As in the exam of 2023 It must be stressed that for a response to be correct it must make sense both grammatically and reflect the information given in the passage. For example in 3 (a) options 2, 7 and 9 all make sense grammatically, but only 2 reflects the information given in the passage.

- Q.4 produced a wide range of marks. Candidates are reminded to pay attention to the title, which will not only give an indication of the contents of the gap filling exercise, but also provide a background to the translation in Section C.

Section C Translation

- Q.5 As in 2023, there was a very wide range of marks here. The passage contained a variety of tenses, but weaker candidates tended to translate them into the simple past or present indiscriminately. It must be stressed that the English/Welsh translation must accurately reflect that of the verb in Spanish. For example *viajaron* and *sobrevivieron* were translated as a present tense. Other problems included a lack of basic vocabulary - *todavía* was translated as today on numerous occasions and *pleno* as plane. The words *respuesta* and *algunos* were also not always known. Many weaker candidates simply left gaps for vocabulary they did not know. As in previous years, it is important to emphasise that candidates are being asked to accurately convey the meaning of the Spanish passage in English/Welsh. This does not necessarily mean a word for word translation. With the better candidates the translation from the target language read naturally and fluently in English or Welsh. Candidates are strongly urged to read over their completed translations. The finished translation must read as normal English/Welsh and not as a stilted version of the original Spanish.

Section D - Critical response in writing.

- Q.6 As in previous years, there was a very wide range of marks awarded in this section. It was encouraging to see that many candidates made a plan before writing. As emphasised in the 2023 report, writing a plan is a good way of focusing on the task in hand, and keeping within the word limit. Some of the weaker essays were well over the word limit, contained a lot of irrelevant material and made little or no reference to the title. Many of the best essays were within the word limit, made points clearly and concisely and made good use of the *puntos de partida*. Candidates are urged to clearly state which of the essay options (a or b) they have chosen, as it is not always evident from the content.

This year handwriting was an issue. On occasions the handwriting was illegible, to the extent that it was almost impossible to mark. One major problem was the difficulty in distinguishing one vowel from another, making the awarding of the appropriate AO3 mark very problematic.

Maria, Ilena eres de Gracia:

- 1 (a) was a more popular choice. The best essays addressed all points of the title and covered Maria's strength and ambition despite the poverty in which she lived. The weaker essays wrote an overall description of all the facets of Maria's character and made little, if any, reference to the essay title. Fewer candidates chose to answer 1(b) but those who did generally answered well and were able to emphasise the human aspect of drug smuggling.

Common errors were often the same as mentioned in previous reports, namely *ser* and *estar*, radical changing verbs, genders of common nouns such as *el amistad*, *la tema*, *el razón*, *el película*. Invented words or phrases such as *providar*, *protectiva*, *la situación financiera*, *porque de*, were also used. In addition, *Columbia* and *columbiano* were seen numerous times. Adjectives were used instead of nouns, such as *Maria demuestra su fuerte*. Surprisingly, candidates who made these basic errors were often able to come up with more difficult grammatical constructions without making errors. Subject pronouns, object pronouns and possessive adjectives are also a source of problems and used in an interchangeable way such as *Maria quiere una vida segura para su y su hijo*.

Volver:

- 2 (a) was by far the most popular choice. There were a significant number of candidates who failed to address the title of the essay and lapsed into storytelling. Others only referred to *secretos* and *mentiras* very briefly in the introduction and conclusion of the essay. These essays were often very long and very convoluted. The better essays were much tighter in construction, referring to key scenes such as the death of Paco, and did not lapse into narrative or include irrelevant detail. Many of them followed the *puntos de partida* and referred regularly to the *secretos* and *mentiras* in the title.

Fewer candidates chose 2 (b). Again, there was a tendency with weaker candidates to lapse into storytelling. Stronger candidates analysed the negative aspects of the male characters and used evidence from the film to back up what they said.

As in 2023, in both questions there were some cases in which candidates referred to statistics and facts in modern day Spain on families and single mothers. Some of these essays were triple the recommended word count and therefore grammatical errors multiplied. Candidates should be reminded that here AO4 applies to the response to the question, the arguments presented and knowledge of the film. If a response is, with reference to AO4 “descriptive rather than critical” then a candidate will not be placed in a higher band for this assessment objective.

The stronger essays displayed “good or very good knowledge of the film and their arguments were developed and justified, and conclusions drawn with appropriate evidence from the source material” (AO4 marking grid).

From the point of view of grammar, the following points should be highlighted:

- As in all previous years, *morir* in all its forms and *la muerte*
- Verb conjugation was an obvious weakness this year- very many verbs were in the infinitive or 1st person.
- Quotations were often inaccurate grammatically and there were numerous misquotes.
- Weaker candidates put in English words.
- Misspellings - even when the word was in the question. *Mentiras* became *mientras* and *mentirias* and *muerte* was frequently misspelled in spite of being in the *puntos de partida*.

The best essays were concise and used language/vocabulary specific to the theme/film.

There were considerably fewer candidates who studied **El Bola** and **Diarios de Motocicleta**. 3(b) and 4(b) were the most popular choices. In *Diarios de motocicleta*, there were some very good essays on “la búsqueda de la igualdad” examining the importance of this with insight and clarity. Weaker candidates tended to include pre prepared information on other themes and did not make much reference to the title of the essay.

In *El Bola* the stronger candidates were able to trace the development of Pablo and Alfredo’s friendship and provide evidence for the effect this had on Pablo’s home life. Weaker candidates tended to stray into telling the story of the film with little analysis. Common errors included *saber/conocer*, *nuevo* and *nueve*, *muchos de*, and the failure to distinguish between *hablar* and *decir*.

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UNIT 3 SPEAKING

Overview of the Unit

This Unit aims to test the candidate's ability to use the spoken word in Spanish. The assessment lasts for 11-12 minutes in total. There is no preparation time prior to the test.

The test comprises one task of which there are two parts. In the first part, the candidate is required to give a spoken presentation of two minutes about their independent research project. In the second part of the task, the candidate discusses the project with the examiner.

The independent research project provides learners with the opportunity to choose an area of personal interest for independent study through which they will be encouraged to broaden their knowledge and appreciation of the countries or communities where Spanish is spoken. It aims to help them develop research skills in Spanish, selecting relevant information from a range of authentic sources. During the examination, the candidate should analyse and summarise their research findings and elaborate on key points of interest.

The learner is required to conduct the project independently, but it is the Centre's responsibility to offer guidance to learners as to the suitability of the topic and to how to research in the target language.

During the speaking assessment, the candidate will be expected to produce spontaneous speech and to engage in a genuine discourse with the examiner. They will be expected to show knowledge of a range of lexis and structures, to apply knowledge of pronunciation and to use language learning skills and strategies.

In this Unit, the candidate is assessed on all four assessment objectives:

- AO1 Understanding and responding in speech to spoken language
- AO2 Understanding and responding in speech to written language
- AO3 Manipulating the spoken language accurately using a range of lexis and structure
- AO4 Showing knowledge and understanding of, and responding critically to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries or communities where the language is spoken.

The performance this year was largely similar to that of previous Series. There was once again a wide choice of topics. Many candidates produce an excellent performance on an interesting topic, engaging with the examiner in a spontaneous exchange of views; it is clear that these candidates have researched carefully and they are able to use their language skills skilfully to present an analysis of their findings to the examiner. However, there are still Centres where the candidates are not fulfilling the requirements of this Unit and it is the centre's responsibility to ensure that candidates receive the necessary guidance.

Comments on individual questions/sections

The choice of topic

Guidance should be given by the Centre as to the suitability of a topic for the IRP. The topic must be firmly rooted in Spanish-speaking society or culture and should allow the candidate to analyse or evaluate. A successful technique is to offer the title as a question which the candidate then attempts to answer. Titles using wording such as *¿Hasta qué punto se puede decir que...?* are often very successful because they lead the candidate to offer an evaluative approach. Centres are reminded that they can check a topic's suitability with WJEC if they are in any doubt.

This year, there were some original topics which gave the candidates scope for detailed research and an interesting discussion, such as:

- ¿Hasta qué punto se puede decir que las ideas del Franquismo son imprescindibles en la película 'Madres Paralelas' por Pedro Almodóvar?
- El partido del Clásico, ¿un partido o una guerra política en el césped?
- ¿Por qué las lenguas minoritarias en México están desapareciendo?
- "La Guerra contra las Pandillas en EL Salvador" - una campana muy controvertida
- ¿Hasta qué punto es un problema la moda rápida en España y qué eficacia tienen las marcas sostenibles a la hora de cambiar el panorama de la moda española?
- Las lenguas regionales, ¿tienen un futuro seguro en España?
- ¿Cómo ha cambiado el flamenco en la sociedad española moderna y hasta qué punto se reinventa para mantener su relevancia?

Topics that were less successful were those that were too wide as this tends to lead to a superficial approach (e.g. *las fiestas de España* or *la arquitectura de Latinoamérica*) or where the candidate had little real evidence to offer (*el reguetón*, *la tauromaquia*, *el narcotráfico*).

Centres are advised that any topic which is not firmly based in Spanish culture or which attempts to compare Spain with the UK (or any other non-Spanish-speaking country) is wholly inappropriate and will involve the candidate scoring only very low marks on AO4.

The presentation

Candidates are advised to think carefully about the content of their presentation; it is important not to offer all their ideas in two minutes but to touch on areas on which a skilful examiner might pick up in the subsequent discussion. The presentation is often pre-learnt and, as a result, the candidate can sometimes speak too quickly which can cause problems of comprehension for the listener. Candidates are advised to speak slowly and clearly in order for communication to be successful.

Candidates are advised that, in order to score high marks in AO2 in the presentation, there should be reference to at least two sources that the candidate has used in their research. The candidate does not have to name detailed sources, as these should be clear from the IRP form, but should make reference to sources that they have used by saying, *Leí en El Confidencial...* or *Según el sitio web El País...* or *Según un artículo que leí en un sitio web...* AO2 marks are awarded for “response in spoken language to the written word”. This means that the sources must be taken from a written source and they must be in Spanish. On the IRP form that must be submitted with the recording for each candidate, there should only be evidence of research in Spanish; there should be at least three sources mentioned and there should be no sources in English. It is the responsibility of the Centre to ensure that candidates clearly understand this fundamental principle.

There are still Centres which are not checking the IRP forms before submitting them; this is part of the Centre’s responsibility. Sources in English must be removed and video material in Spanish, while relevant as part of the research as a whole, must only be included on the form in addition to at least three written sources, as video material cannot be considered as evidence for AO2.

To achieve high marks for AO2, the mark scheme clearly says, “information drawn from a wide range of sources”. The candidate must therefore mention in their presentation sources that they have used as well as evidence from those sources. Candidates who use sources in English can score only in the lowest mark band.

This year, there were some very successful presentations in which the candidate spoke confidently about their topic and offered an excellent introduction to the further discussion.

The discussion

Successful candidates engaged well with the teacher-examiner in the discussion. They offered clear answers and attempted to develop their ideas and offer points of view backed up with evidence taken from their research. The discussion must be a spontaneous one, with each speaker picking up on a point the other has made and developing from there. A question and answer format does not constitute a genuine discourse and should be avoided.

Candidates who had researched well were able to show excellent knowledge and understanding of their chosen topic within the context of Spanish-speaking society; they argued their points of view successfully and were able to back them up with relevant evidence. The majority of candidates were knowledgeable about their chosen topic and were able to talk enthusiastically about it, offering facts, figures and statistics

There were many candidates this year who showed the ability to manipulate the language well and accurately, using a wide range of structures and a range of vocabulary to enable them to discuss their chosen topic in detail. This was very encouraging.

The role of the teacher-examiner

As with Unit 1, many teacher-examiners conduct the Unit 3 tests well and engage positively with the candidates.

In this Unit, the teacher-examiner’s role is pivotal. During the presentation, the teacher-examiner should remain silent and avoid making any comments. Encouragement can be given by nodding or by smiling. The teacher-examiner should not interrupt the presentation unless the candidates goes beyond the allocated two minutes.

During the discussion, it is up to the teacher-examiner to engage with the candidate to make the discussion genuinely spontaneous and also to ensure that the discussion remains entirely focused on the Spanish-speaking world. The teacher-examiner can also give the candidate the opportunity to talk about their sources by using questions such as *Háblame de tus fuentes* in order to help the candidate achieve a good AO2 mark in the discussion.

There is still a minority of teacher-examiners whose conduct of the test is putting their candidates at a disadvantage. Unfortunately, there were several instances this year of the teacher-examiner steering the discussion in the wrong direction, for example, by asking the candidate to compare regional languages (the use of Catalan in Cataluña with Welsh in Wales), British and Spanish football or the Chilean dictator Pinochet with Hitler or Mussolini. In these situations, the candidate is at the mercy of the teacher-examiner's conduct of the exam and, through no fault of their own, their AO4 mark will be adversely affected.

In addition, the teacher-examiner must remember that their contribution should be kept to a minimum; it is not appropriate for them to be offering their own knowledge on a topic and taking time away from the candidate.

Timing is also the responsibility of the teacher-examiner; the presentation must be interrupted if the candidate attempts to speak for longer than two minutes and the discussion should be ended promptly at the end of 11-12 minutes.

Administration

All candidates are required to complete and submit a completed IRP form showing details of their chosen topic with up to 10 key points in English or Welsh and details of their sources in Spanish. These forms should be completed electronically and contain active links that will allow the examiner to check the sources. It is the Centre's responsibility to upload these forms with the recordings to Surpass. The form provides evidence for the examiner that the candidate has researched in Spanish and so is crucial to the marking process. As has been stated, these forms should not contain any sources in English. In addition, Centres should make candidates aware of the unreliability of Wikipedia and encourage candidates to look for more authentic sources.

Recordings of each test should include the Centre name and number together with the candidate's name and number; this information should be given at the start of each test. It is important that the tests are conducted in a quiet space where there is unlikely to be any disruption. This year, some tests were interrupted by background noise which made it difficult for the examiner to assess the material. Similarly, the recording equipment must be tested prior to the assessments and sound levels checked (in both the candidate's and the teacher-examiner's positions). Recordings that are of poor quality make the examiner's job difficult and do not offer the candidate the best chance of a positive result. The tests should be recorded in .mp3 format and should be uploaded to Surpass within 48 hours of the assessment. They should be accompanied by all the necessary documentation and an IRP form for each candidate.

Summary of key points

- All sources used must be in Spanish.
- Timings for the test must be accurate.
- Centres should provide guidance on the choice of topic.
- The interaction between the candidate and the teacher-examiner should be genuinely spontaneous.
- There should be reference made to the sources used in both the presentation and the discussion.
- The IRP form should be completed electronically and uploaded to Surpass with the recording.
- Candidates should remember that they are required to evaluate and analyse to achieve the highest marks.

Conclusion

This Unit allows the candidate to explore an area of study linked to Spanish-speaking culture or society; it promotes the development of research skills and the use of target-language sources.

This year, once again, there were many excellent discussions in which the candidates were able to demonstrate the depth of their research on a topic in which they had a genuine interest. They used a range of structures and lexis to argue their point of view and to provide evidence to back up their arguments. These were discussions to which it was a pleasure to listen and the candidates can be rightfully proud of what they achieved.

SPANISH

GCE

Summer 2024

UNIT 4 LISTENING, READING AND TRANSLATION

Overview of the Unit

In this unit, the skills of listening, reading and translation are assessed (AO1, AO2 and AO3). The examination is based on the topics listed in the A level specification. These are divided into 2 themes, Diversity and Difference and The Two Spains: 1936 onwards.

As in 2023, there was a wide range of marks achieved, with a good number of candidates scoring over 80%. There was a notable improvement on the open-ended questions in the reading comprehension section across the ability range of candidates. The translation, however, was problematic across the board, caused principally by a lack of knowledge of basic grammar and vocabulary. The extra time allotted to the exam, as last year, had a positive impact in that fewer candidates failed to finish. There were also fewer candidates this year with scores in the 30s and 40s.

The last few years have been very challenging, and this year's results underline some very hard work on the part of both teachers and candidates.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A – Listening

- Q.1 was well done on the whole, with stronger candidates sometimes scoring full marks. Most candidates struggled with 8a, possibly because the word *tácito* was not understood in the listening passage.
- Q.2 was reasonably well done and stronger candidates also scored very highly. The latter part of the comprehension seemed to prove more tricky with numbers being mentioned in the last paragraph causing some confusion.
- Q.3 proved problematic for numerous candidates because of the open-ended nature of the questions. However overall, there has been some improvement in the quality of responses here. It should be noted that complete sentences are not always required; for example, in (a) *norteamericana americana* is an adequate response. (e) the word *nunca* is sufficient to gain a mark. Candidates are reminded that *no* or *sí* alone are not acceptable responses, something else must be added as in (e) *no, nunca*.

Fortunately, the majority of candidates attempted question 3, which had often been abandoned when they were allocated less time before 2022.

Section B – Reading

- Q.4 in this question stronger candidates scored very well in the gap filling. There was confusion between the word *época* and *tiempo*, *obra* and *trabajo* and *por* and *para*. The third extract was the most difficult with 10, 12 and 13 being problematic.
- Q.5 (b) the choice from Lista B must make sense grammatically and refer to what has been said in the passage. For example, statement 1 matches up with (a) and (c) grammatically, but only (a) reflects what has been said in the passage. When answering 5(c) it should be remembered that the number of corresponding words in the text can be bigger or smaller than the ones given. For example (d) *es hereditario* corresponds to *se traspasa de generación a generación* in the text. *De generación a generación* alone would not be given a mark.
- Q.6 the assessment objective targeted here is AO2. Grammar mistakes are not penalised if the answer is intelligible. Lifting chunks of the text to answer is not allowed, but only minimal manipulation of the text is required to gain a mark when answering. For example in 6(a) *la falta de seguridad y la carencia de servicios básicos* are acceptable. In 6(b) the word *digna* was not always understood and was interpreted in a negative way. As in other sections an answer of *sí* or *no* is not enough to gain a mark - there must be some elaboration as in 6(k) *no, casi nadie (tiene la oportunidad de ir a la universidad)*.
- Q.7 Errors of gender occurred in many of the translations even with common words such as *la país*, *los naciones* and *el oficina*. Relatively common vocabulary such as *tener hambre* or *la seguridad* were not known. The pluperfect was usually mistranslated and put into the perfect tense, *han declarado*, rather than *habían declarado*. The preterite (especially irregulars) also proved problematic, as in the case of *imponer* (*imponio* instead of *impuso* and *daron* for *dieron*). Many candidates struggled with putting the indirect and direct object pronouns in the right place. *habían nos rechazado* was not uncommon. Many candidates struggled with the translation of the passive in “they were given a little food” and got round this by changing to the active voice as in *les dieron un poco de comida*.

In spite of these problems, there were, however, some translations of a very high standard, displaying an excellent knowledge of grammar and idiom. These translations flowed fluently and naturally. The candidates were also more confident in rephrasing or tweaking their translation to achieve a more natural flow.

SPANISH

GCE

Summer 2024

UNIT 5 – CRITICAL AND ANALYTICAL RESPONSE IN WRITING

Overview of the Unit

This unit assesses the candidates' ability to respond critically and analytically, in writing, to a text that they have studied as part of their taught course.

There are four texts and candidate study one of them. There is a choice between two questions for each text. The questions cover elements such as characters, themes and the style of presentation. The questions require candidates to demonstrate their ability to use the language effectively showing that they can manipulate it, write it accurately, use wide and appropriate range of lexis and structure, as well as make the language they use appropriate to the task. This is AO3. They also need to show knowledge of different aspects of the text they have studied, set what they say in the wider context of the work and use arguments and evidence to draw conclusions in answer to the questions that are asked. This is AO4.

Comments on individual questions/sections

General comments

The best essays showed an ability to identify the artistic purpose of the writer and these candidates showed that they could stand back and look at the word as art, rather than simply produce descriptive essays. They also maintained a very tight focus on the question asked and used Point-Evidence-Evaluation approaches.

One thing to avoid is catch-all opening paragraphs with biographical detail about the author or a summary of the text. These are not relevant to the question and take candidates' time unnecessarily. A useful approach is to think of three or four key points to make in answer to the question, set them out as a 'thesis statement' in the introduction and then examine them in depth in the body of the response.

In terms of language, it is useful for candidates to write from the perspective of reader/critic and so often first person plural can be an effective vehicle. Teachers can usefully drill the basics of high frequency verbs and also the vocabulary of universal life experience that is at the heart of literary creation. We often find that 'muerte', 'muerto', 'morirse' etcetera are confused, and yet all the texts have someone die in them.

Teachers are advised to read this report in the context of the wider and more extensive guidance given in the report for summer 2023.

Q.1 This question is based on *El otro árbol de Guernica*.

- (a) focussed on the presentation of the character of Santi and candidates who performed well on this essay wrote about the effect of Santi's self-awareness on the reader, how he views the predicament of Ramón, his reactions to Mme Jacquot and also his own self-image.

- (b) focussed on the writer's use of symbols in the novel and candidates who performed well had written about the oak tree, the Basque beret, Basque songs and the Athletic Bilbao shirt.

Q.2 This question is based on ***Como agua para chocolate***.

- (a) focussed on the presentation of John Brown by the author and candidates who performed well on this essay wrote about how he represented science in a world of emotion, was a character that hinted at a different future and how his love was selfless. He was contrasted with Pedro and also his origin was examined, as he was seen to have a foot either side of the border with the USA.
- (b) focussed on the motivation of Mamá Elena and candidates who performed well wrote about how protective she was of her family as a woman in a man's world. They also wrote about selfishness in her behaviour and her reflection of the political backdrop. The character is presented, in the main, as a negative influence but it is noticeable that some candidates had viewed her through the eyes of the 21st century and praised her strength. Teachers can usefully examine with their students the key elements of social norms in the context of the Mexico of the time.

Q.3 This question is based on ***La casa de Bernarda Alba***.

- (a) focussed on the theatrical element of the play. This question was less popular than 3(b) but generally better answered. This indicates that teachers could usefully focus more on elements of style and technique of presentation. The candidates who performed well wrote about the visual impact of the play and the set and stage directions, the impact of the green dress, the way there is action that the audience does not see and also about the way the audience develops an image of Pepe, without ever seeing him.
- (b) focussed on the way in which Bernarda is more concerned with appearances than the reality of what is going on in her own house. Candidates who performed well wrote about the 'qué dirán', the stifling environment of the village, ideas related to marriage as a means to advancement, Bernarda's fear of gossip and also her blindness and wish to impose her own alternative reality.

Q.4 This question is based on ***Réquiem por un campesino español***.

- (a) focussed on the presentation and examination of the Catholic Church in the novel. Candidates who performed well wrote about how the ceremonial aspects were seen as more important than the charity that should be at the heart of the faith and how the words of the liturgy were detached from the reality of experience. They also examined the peasants' view of the church in their lives and how the poor are not loved but made to feel worthless.
- (b) focussed on the weakness and character flaws of the priest, whose faith is questionable at times because he goes through the motions but behaves in an almost bureaucratic way, rather than being a faith-leader. They spoke about his fear of loss of control and his reaction to the death of Paco. His materialism was also examined and criticised by some candidates.

Supporting you

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