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# **GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS**

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**GCE (NEW)  
SPANISH  
AS/Advanced**

**SUMMER 2018**

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:  
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### **Online Results Analysis**

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### **Annual Statistical Report**

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

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**GCE (NEW) AS/ADVANCED SPANISH**

**General Certificate of Education (New)**

**Summer 2018**

**Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced**

**AS Unit 1: Speaking**

This was the second year of the new Wales WJEC AS specification. Candidates were asked to choose two stimulus cards, one from Set A and the other from

Set A: Candidates were offered a choice of two cards and were able to see the two cards before choosing. Cards from Set A contained, as a stimulus, two opposing standpoints of an argument. Set A cards were based on the theme of Understanding the Spanish-speaking world and candidates chose the sub-theme. Either: Regional culture and heritage in Spain, Spanish speaking countries and communities, or: Literature, art, film and music in the Spanish speaking world.

Set B: Candidates were asked to choose one card (unseen) from Set B from a total of six. The cards from Set B contained a short text and three questions to be prepared by the candidate. Set B cards were based on the theme of: Being a young person in Spanish-speaking society.

Candidates were allowed fifteen minutes to prepare the two cards (A and B). Candidates were advised to make brief notes on a separate piece of paper (NOT on the cards) during the preparation period. These notes were handed to the examiner at the end of the test. The notes were to be used as a memory aid only and should not have constituted whole sentences or a continuous text or script. Most candidates chose the sub-theme of Regional culture and heritage in Spain, Spanish speaking countries and communities for Set A, although some centres had prepared candidates for both options. The candidates who chose the sub theme: Literature, art, film and music in the Spanish speaking world, in many cases, showed good knowledge of the subject being discussed.

Opinion A was chosen more often than Opinion B, but this was not always so. Many candidates had been very well prepared for this task and were perfectly able to challenge the examiner's point of view and come back at him/her with ideas of their own and using relevant phrases to show disagreement. The best candidates were able to support their views or contradict the examiner by providing detailed responses which were well supported by evidence and specific examples, thereby demonstrating very good knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Spanish-speaking culture and society as set out in the mark scheme under AO4. An example of this was reference to Cookery courses in Barcelona when discussing Card A1 on 'la cocina típica.'

The better candidates were aware of the AO4 requirement and volunteered information about various aspects of Spanish-speaking culture and society. Some candidates answered in very general terms, providing few examples to support their argument and were not able to respond to the opposite point of view put forward by the examiner. For example, it is not sufficient to merely name a fiesta or fiestas. Further information or detail is required. Some candidates agreed with the examiner's views without offering a counter argument. Weak candidates found the skill of arguing a specific point of view very demanding and had to be reminded of the importance of talking about Spain or a Spanish-speaking country.

Examiners asked candidates to refer to Spain or a Spanish-speaking country in cases where there was little reference made. When preparing candidates for this task it would be helpful if they were to look briefly at the opposing point of view so as to have some idea of what type of comments to expect, as this task requires candidates, not only to put forward their point of view, but to challenge what the examiner says. Good candidates were able to disagree by saying: 'Pues, no estoy de acuerdo contigo/con usted'. Practice in disagreeing with another point of view and discussion tasks would be a good preparation for this.

As regards Set B, candidates were asked 3 questions based on a short text. The task and discussion were expected to last 7-9 minutes. Candidates were expected to refer to the text to show understanding of the written stimulus AO2, but this was not always the case. Again, the best candidates did refer to the text and were able to provide detailed responses to the 3 questions asked with relevant examples and evidence. Weaker candidates tended to provide responses of a general nature and kept repeating the same answer, showing that they did not have the understanding or the evidence in order to prove their knowledge or understanding of the culture and society of Spain or Spanish speaking countries or communities. The text on 'el matrimonio' proved to be challenging for some candidates. In preparing future candidates, it would be advisable to get them to, not only refer to the text (AO2), but to provide further evidence or examples of their own (AO4).

WJEC wishes to thank centres for accommodating visiting examiners and providing suitable accommodation for the conduct of the orals. The mandatory use of invigilators was also very helpful.

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### General Certificate of Education (New)

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#### AS Unit 2: Listening, reading, translation and critical response in writing

##### Section A - Listening

Question 1 was generally answered well. Question 2 proved more problematic, as candidates had to correct the false statements. Candidates did not lose marks for incorrect grammar and minor spelling errors as long as the correction of the false statement was intelligible. Candidates are reminded that they should not “lift” whole sentences from the recording to use in their answers. Some sort of language manipulation is required in the correction to gain the mark. Common grammatical errors included *la sistema*, *la lictura* and the use of *media* instead of *mitad* (question 2J).

##### Section B - Reading

Question 3 was very well answered on the whole. Candidates had obviously practised this and it paid off.

With question 4 (the gap fill) students are again urged to read over the whole passage when the gaps have been filled to ensure the sentences make sense. A good proportion of students scored well on this section.

##### Section C - Translation

In question 5, the translation, a few points need to be emphasised. 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.

Care must be taken to accurately reflect the tense of the verbs in the English/Welsh translation (e.g. *Ha habido un crecimiento*, must be translated by a perfect tense in English/Welsh to render *there has been*). There is more flexibility in the translation of vocabulary, phrases and with word order. The finished translation must read as normal English/Welsh and not as a stilted version of the original Spanish. There was a huge range of marks here with the best candidates scoring the top marks. In the top range the candidates were less wary of moving away from the *word for word* translation approach and their translations flowed very well.

Vocabulary which caused problems included *no obstante*, *el papel* (translated as paper in some cases). *la disminucion* - which was translated, amongst other things as *diminishment* and *disminution*. The phrase *ya no* in the last sentence was not accurately rendered by some students.

##### Section D - Essay

On the whole, there was a pleasing improvement in the quality of the essays produced. Some of the best ones showed insight and a maturity of style which was impressive at AS level in addition to a very high level of accuracy, lexis and structure.

The higher quality essays had been well planned and there was an effort to stick to the suggested number of words. More students adhered to the essay title and kept their analysis relevant, though in some cases there was a tendency to write down everything that was known about the film, regardless of its relevancy to the title. This resulted in some essays being over long, a few of between 500 and 600 words. It is not in the candidates' interest to exceed the suggested number of words as it can often result in a lower AO4 mark and candidates often self-penalise in AO3.

There was a somewhat alarming tendency among a few candidates to make up their own quotations from the film. Quotations are not required, but if used it would be wise for the candidate to keep them short, pithy and accurate. In addition any quotation used must be relevant to the point being made.

With the film ***Maria llena eres de gracia***, 1a was the more popular choice and there were some very good answers which covered the theme of poverty and its repercussions in an analytical and interesting way. A few candidates attempted 1b and some made a good case for Pablo, Carla's husband being a positive male role model in the film, even though he is a minor character.

With the film ***Volver***, most candidates opted for 2a. Stronger candidates produced excellent answers on the relationships within the family. Weaker candidates tended to tell the story of the film and there was often little relevance to the title. Again, *morir* and *la muerte* caused problems for some students with hybrid versions of the two often appearing (*Paula muertió Paco* for example.) This was the film in which students were most tempted to give details about the director, actors etc. This should only be done when relevant to the title and limited to the film in the question.

The candidates who attempted 2b often came up with very imaginative, original ideas and different ways of interpreting the title. There were fewer candidates attempting essays on ***El Bola*** and ***Diarios de motocicleta***. In ***El Bola***, the candidates who made the analogy between *La vieja Espana* and the family of Pablo, and *La nueva Espana* and the family of Alberto did this in a relevant way. With weaker candidates, there was a lot of storytelling and a tendency to exceed the recommended number of words. In ***Diarios de motocicleta***, 4b was the more popular option, and there was some sound analysis of the effects of poverty on the development of Che's persona.

Common grammatical errors which ran through the essays were: the differences between *el personaje* and *el carácter* and *crear* and *creer*; and also between *efecto* and *afecto*. Among some candidates there was confusion between subject and object pronouns, *él*, *le* etc. and difficulty with genders with words such as *el tema*, *el fantasma*.

Regarding tenses, it is perfectly acceptable to write the film essay in the present tense. Candidates should not feel obliged to shoe-horn in a variety of tenses where they are not needed.

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**A2: Unit 3: Speaking**

This was the first year that the A level speaking examination required an Independent Research Project consisting of a two-minute oral presentation followed by a discussion of around 9-10 minutes. The topic chosen by the candidate had to be on a topic relating to Spain or a Spanish-speaking country. Candidates had to fill in a proforma stating the title, several bullet points in English/Welsh and a bibliography. The best presentations set out to answer a question and some mention was made of the reason for the choice of title and what was discovered after undertaking research. Pablo Escobar, the notorious drug baron was a popular choice but presentations on Fiestas, Flamenco or Football tended to be very general and lacked research, analysis or depth. Candidates were marked on what they had understood or learnt from their research and reading (AO2) and their knowledge of the culture of Spain or a Spanish -speaking country (AO4). Some presentations had not been adequately researched and there was limited knowledge of AO4. Weak candidates simply repeated the same answer over and over again.

However, it was clear this year that most candidates had really enjoyed carrying out independent research and were quite passionate telling the speaking examiner about their findings. Speaking examiners enjoyed listening to their presentations too and interesting discussions developed as a result, in most cases.

Suggestions for the preparation of future candidates would be, to set out to answer a question, evaluate what has been learnt as a result of research, not to tell all in the presentation but to keep some information back for the discussion.

This new style A level speaking examination was well received by both candidates and examiners and proved to be a positive and enjoyable experience.

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**A2 Unit 4: Listening, reading and translation**

**Section A – Listening**

**Question 1**

This was well done on the whole, though number 10 sometimes proved problematic.

**Question 2**

Although there were some high scores here, candidates found this more difficult. Candidates must bear in mind that an answer is not necessarily correct solely if it makes sense grammatically. It must be based on the information included in the recording in addition to this.

**Question 3**

Although complete sentences are not always required (for example in (a) *menos de la mitad* / 50% is acceptable, *no* is not an acceptable answer for (f))

It was observed that some candidates appeared to abandon the listening comprehension questions before finishing them seeming to indicate a lack of time.

**Section B – Reading**

**Question 4**

Although there was a variation of marks, most candidates managed to pick up a reasonable score here. Numbers 4, 8 and 13 proved to be problematic

**Question 5**

Candidates did reasonably well on the whole, with the strong ones achieving full marks.

**Question 6**

The strong candidates did very well here also. The most salient point again though was that some candidates attempted very few questions. It would seem that due to lack of time they decided to go straight onto the prose.

**Question 7**

There was a very big range of marks here with weaker candidates often gaining below 5 marks. Common errors included the failure to distinguish between the imperfect and preterite tense, the difference between *el tiempo* and *la vez*, and lack of vocabulary (*el parlamento*, *reconocer*, *aprobar*, *honrar el símbolo*) Adjectival agreements were often not made,

The stronger candidates got round problems of vocabulary by using a similar word (for example *el gobierno* was accepted in the first line). The Franco era was translated as - *los años franquistas*. These candidates were also less wary of rephrasing to achieve a better flowing translation.

Some candidates either did not finish the prose or appeared to rush it suggesting that there was an issue with timing



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**A2 Unit 5: Critical and analytical response in writing**

There was a wide range of quality of essays, from essays which were free from grammatical errors, and which answered the question succinctly within the suggested 400 words, to essays which contained grammatical errors in almost every sentence. Many well written essays were far too long, some were around 700 words. Candidates need to practise writing essays which keep to the suggested length. In general, most candidates did not steer away from the question set.

***El Otro Árbol de Guernica***—Only a handful of centres chose this novel. Most candidates chose to write about Santi, referring in detail to his essential qualities.

***Como Agua para Chocolate*** – This book was the second most popular choice on this paper. The more popular essay choice was 4(a). Most candidates managed to focus on the relationship between Tita and Mamá Elena. A few candidates wrote a little too much on ‘magic realism’ (one candidate even wrote a definition of ‘magic realism’) without it being totally relevant to the characters under discussion. Some candidates dwelt too much on the Mexican revolution when a couple of sentences would have sufficed. Weak candidates tended to write a descriptive account of the book rather than analyse. The essay on the men in the novel was generally well answered, although some candidates failed to mention the revolutionaries. Whilst it is perfectly natural for a class to watch the film of the novel, some candidates wrote ‘la audiencia’ for ‘el lector’ and ‘A lo largo de la película’ for ‘A lo largo de la novela’. This must obviously be discouraged. Some candidates confused ‘dictadora’ with ‘dictadura’ e.g. ‘Mamá Elena es una dictadura’

***La Casa de Bernarda Alba***— This play was the most popular literary work chosen by centres. The more popular essay title was 4(a), which required an understanding of the character of Bernarda herself. Most candidates had a clear idea of the influence of the society in which she lived on her character. Many were able to make relevant references to the play. Many candidates wrote detailed essays which were critical, analytical and covered many points on the indicative content. Weak candidates in some instances omitted to mention Adela, which was a key point in the response. Candidates must assume that the examiner knows who the author of the set book is. e.g. ‘*La Casa de Bernarda Alba*’ es un drama escrito por Federico García Lorca, uno de los dramaturgos más conocidos del mundo’ and ‘*Federico García Lorca es uno de los poetas más reconocidos mundialmente, habiendo escrito obras como ‘Yerma’, ‘Bodas de Sangre’ y ‘La Casa de Bernarda Alba’.*’ There are excellent language skills here, but they add nothing to the quality of the essay.

***Réquiem***—Very few centres chose this novel. All the candidates chose to write about Mosén Millán and were perfectly aware of the weaknesses of his character. They also had a very good understanding of the political background which could have influenced his behaviour.



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