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# **GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS**

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

**SUMMER 2022**

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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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**WJEC SPANISH**  
**General Certificate of Education (New)**  
**Summer 2022**  
**Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced**  
**UNIT 1**

**General Comments**

Given the events of the last two years and the interruption to schooling faced by candidates, the exam was teacher conducted and shortened to just Card B and lasted 7-8 minutes. It was pleasing to hear candidates speaking clearly and confidently with authentic pronunciation and intonation. The range of vocabulary was often impressive, and a wide variety of tenses was regularly used by the candidates, who also showed a knowledge of many high-level phrases and complex structures.

Candidates were well prepared for the requirements of task B and the recordings were generally of good sound quality and the correct length. Although new to examining this unit, teachers conducting the speaking exams did so calmly and sympathetically.

The best candidates were able to support their views by providing detailed responses which were well supported by evidence and reference to the text, thereby demonstrating very good knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Spanish culture and society. Examples of this were explaining meanings of items in the texts, such as 'becas' in card B3, or expanding on references to political and economic problems in card B2.

Follow-up questions were often thoughtful and pertinent, allowing candidates to show off their knowledge of AO4 or required an explanation of vocabulary or ideas contained in the text.

There were some lovely natural conversations between candidates and teachers, and the best discussions were ones where teachers adapted their questions depending on the candidate's responses. The overall performance in this highlighted the excellent preparation that has evidently taken place in class. Teachers were able to put candidates at ease and it was fantastic to hear so many candidates who were confident and proficient enough to discuss high-level concepts in Spanish.

Some suggestions to improve performance:

- Ask the questions *exactly* as set on the card
- Avoid speaking too much and sharing too much information.
- Avoid correcting or prompting the candidate.
- Use a variety of questions.
- Adapt further questions to what the candidate has said.
- Ask questions that target AO4.
- Refer to the text in their questions.
- Candidates' notes should be in bullet points or brief headings

Moving forward, it is advisable to work on pronunciation and intonation. It continues to be essential to reinforce the pronunciation of key items of vocabulary and to ensure that candidates are proficient in their use of less familiar items of topic-specific vocabulary.

Teachers should avoid asking overlong and complicated questions that do not encourage targeted responses. To avoid disadvantaging candidates care must be taken to ask the prescribed questions in order with teacher responses to candidates' questions kept as brief as possible. Centres should be praised for their extremely hard work in such challenging circumstances and for ensuring that candidates were well-prepared for this unit.

### Comments on individual questions/sections

**Card B:** the best candidates did refer to the text and were able to provide detailed responses to the 3 questions asked with *relevant* examples, details, facts and statistics. All 3 cards were accessible, with the texts resulting in genuine and relevant discussions.

Card B1 on the family enabled candidates to talk about becoming financially independent, leaving home and comparing the situation in Spain and Wales.

Card B2 on the concerns of Spanish youngsters as shown by 2 differing surveys also gave rise to discussions about which were the real concerns and whether they were similar to the situation in Wales. However, some candidates thought that the results of both surveys were the same.

Card B3 on the opportunities arising from educational visits to Chile enabled some candidates to talk about their own experiences after a visit/exchange to a Spanish-speaking country.

As regards the language, AO3, there were some errors in pronunciation as well as grammatical accuracy. AO4 marks can be boosted by reference to *relevant* specific facts, details and information about a Spanish-speaking country

The mean marks and facility factors across the Assessment Objectives covered by the Set B cards were as follows:

	mean mark	facility factor
B AO1	3.0	75.5
B AO2	5.7	71.5
B AO3	5.3	66.2
B AO4	2.9	73.4

### Summary of key points

In preparing future candidates, it would be advisable to get them to, not only make specific reference to the text (AO2 assessment objective), but to provide further evidence or examples, facts, details, statistics of their own (AO4 assessment objective).

It would be worth reminding candidates just before the exam that time passes very quickly during the exam itself and that they may not necessarily cover all the material they have prepared because other issues raised may be discussed instead. After all, the discussion is designed to be interactive and spontaneous and so, may develop in a different direction.

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**UNIT 2**

**General Comments**

There was a reasonably wide range of overall marks here. Some candidates did well on the comprehension questions, even if their performance was weaker in the exam as a whole. The translation and essay, for the most part, continue to be the sections where there is the greatest disparity in marks between stronger and weaker candidates.

In spite of the disruption and difficulties of the past two years, there were some outstanding performances from candidates. Teachers and candidates alike are to be congratulated on their hard work and commitment to the course.

**Comments on individual questions/sections**

**Section A – Listening**

Question 1 was well done on the whole, the vast majority of candidates already being familiar with the background of La Tomatina. Question 5 sometimes proved problematic as not all candidates were aware of the meaning of *subir*. The mean mark for this question was 6.6 and the facility factor was 82.7.

In question 2, the candidates need to correct the statements which are false. If they fail to do so, a mark will not be awarded.

Whilst “lifting” whole sentences from the recording is not permitted, candidates are reminded that only minimal language manipulation is required in the correction. This could be as little as changing one word. For example, in 2(e) substituting the word *más* in the statement by *menos* in the correction: *por lo general las familias tienen **menos** hijos hoy en día*.

Grammatical errors are not penalised in the listening section as long as the answer is intelligible to a “sympathetic native speaker”. Common grammatical errors in this section included: the failure to insert the auxiliary verb in answers such as 2(a) *La familia cambiado mucho*. In question 2(j), some candidates were unaware of the meaning of *a finales de*. In 2(f), the word *primordial* also caused problems.

The mean mark for this question was 7.2 and the facility factor was 71.9.

**Section B - Reading**

Question 3 produced a varied response from the candidates, and a number failed to score on this question. It is worth mentioning again that a response is not necessarily correct if it makes grammatical sense, though this is one of the criteria. It must also reflect the meaning, or the information given in the passage. The mean mark for this question was 2.6 and the facility factor was 51.6.

Question 4 proved difficult for some candidates. With 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. Relatively few candidates scored full marks on this question. (1) was the most problematic response, with many candidates not knowing the difference between *pero* and *sino*. In (5) *flores* was often offered as a response and though grammatically, apparently made sense, failed to do so in the context of the passage. The mean mark for this question was 2.6 and the facility factor was 51.0.

### Section C Translation

There was a very wide variety of marks here, ranging from two or three on occasions to a full mark of 20.

In question 5, the translation, it must be emphasised 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.

The first misunderstanding was the word *el boom*, which was interpreted as the title of a book in some instances. *El boom* is referred to in the previous question, so it is definitely worth the effort of re reading the gap fill exercise in Question 4, as the translation is the last paragraph, and it puts it all into context.

As was the case in previous exams, candidates did not always accurately reflect the tense of the verbs in the English/Welsh translation (e.g. *fue*, *empezó*, *concluyó* must be translated by a simple past tense in English/Welsh and *ya saben ustedes* by a simple present.)

Translating from the target language into English or Welsh, there is more flexibility in the translation of vocabulary, phrases and with word order. 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. The mean mark for this question was 12.4 and the facility factor was 61.9.

### Section D Critical response in writing.

As in previous years, there was a very wide range of marks awarded in this section. Candidates are again strongly advised to make a plan before putting pen to paper- otherwise there is a clear tendency to lapse into storytelling.

Some of the weaker essays were well over the word count and contained a lot of irrelevant material which made no reference to the title. 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. With *María, llena eres de gracia*, 1(a) was a more popular choice. Some candidates used the *puntos de partida* to recount the whole storyline of the film in chronological order. These essays were very long, rambling and often riddled with very basic grammatical errors, and the title of the essay was scarcely referred to. There were some very good answers for 1(b), arguing very articulately that María both was, and was not a rebel. Common errors include *Columbia*, *los inmigrantes*, *es demuestra* and problems with *mejor* and *mayor*. Adjectives and nouns were sometimes used indiscriminately, such as *María es independencia*.

In the case of *Volver*, 1 (a) was by far the most popular choice. The less successful essays made little if any mention of *La masculinidad*. There is still a tendency to include sometimes irrelevant information about the director, though with stronger candidates reference to Almodóvar's past was used very effectively.

Very few candidates opted for 2(b).

Our old friends, morir, la muerte and el fantasma, continue to cause problems.

There were fewer candidates who chose to write about El Bola and Diarios de Motocicleta. and 2(a) and 4(b) were the most popular choices. However, there were some essays of a very high standard which were written with both clarity, accuracy and imagination. With regards to grammar, general comments must include the use of gustar which continues to cause problems. Anglicisms are commonplace in the weaker essays, as are problems with words such as la falta/ la culpa and el personaje/ el carácter.

In spite of the disruption and stress in the past two academic years, there were numerous essays of very high quality produced across all four films. The top range of the essays, in terms of both language, content, lexis and structure were remarkable at this stage of the A level course.

The mean mark for the essays was 20.8 and the facility factor was 57.9.

### **Summary of key points**

#### **Reading and Listening sections:**

- Read the question carefully. Marks are often lost when the candidates rush through or misinterpret a question.
- Keep answers concise-complete sentences are not always required. The candidates may be penalised if they include too much irrelevant information

#### **Translation**

- Look at the translation as a whole and in context.
- Check the tenses used in the English/Welsh translation reflect those used in Spanish.
- Make sure the translation into English/Welsh reads naturally. Don't be afraid to "tweak" the translation if it sounds stilted.

#### **Essay**

- Read the title carefully
- Make a plan
- Check carefully for grammatical errors and misspellings.

## WJEC SPANISH

### General Certificate of Education (New)

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### UNIT 3

#### General Comments

In this Unit, candidates are required to research a topic related to the Spanish-speaking world, give a two-minute presentation to introduce their ideas on the topic and then to offer explanations and points of view during the ensuing discussion. In this Series, the first following the Covid-19 pandemic, the discussion time was reduced to 7-8 minutes. Some tests were conducted face-to-face, but others were conducted online; both worked well.

There was a wide choice of topics, often reflecting the candidate's own personal interest. A title in the form of a question allows the candidate to respond by answering the question, which can be a successful technique. Candidates are well-advised to choose a topic with a specific focus; this allows them to research in depth and to offer more analysis and evaluation. Topics included arguments for and against *la tauromaquia*, protest groups in Argentina, the Incas in Peru, the development of *reggaetón*, the effect of the pandemic on the Spanish economy and the origin of the *tortilla* in Mexico.

Less successful tend to be topics inspired by Netflix on topics like *Pablo Escobar* and *El Chapo* and discussions about footballers or football teams; the latter could be successful but too often these topics are chosen by candidates who offer a rather too generalised view and just want to talk about football (*Elegí este tema porque me apasiona el fútbol...*). Centres seem to be giving sound advice on maintaining a narrow focus for the topic, rather than aiming too widely, and this encourages the candidate to delve more deeply into the topic.

#### Comments on individual questions/sections

The best presentations set out to answer a question, giving reasons for the choice of title and the outcomes of research. Pablo Escobar, the notorious drug baron continued to be a popular choice, but other presentations ranged from 'los ninis' to the referendum in Catalonia and many others. This year, presentations tended to be more analytical and showed evidence of research. 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). The discussions which followed were spontaneous and detailed.

Candidates who choose a topic in which they have a genuine interest perform particularly well. In the presentation, the candidate should aim to lay out the topic and their personal response in such a way that several issues arise; the examiner can then pick up on these issues in the discussion. Inevitably, there is an element of pre-learning in the presentation and candidates should be encouraged not to speak too quickly to allow their message to be clearly conveyed. Candidates should also aim to bring their research findings and sources into the presentation.



In the discussion, the candidate should attempt to develop their ideas in response to the examiner's questions and to move from the factual to adopt a more analytical approach, offering points of view and justifications. The discussions this year reflected the amount of work that the candidates had put into their research; they showed themselves to be knowledgeable about their topic and were very well-informed.

Candidates also need to be able to cope with an unseen or unexpected question; they need to be able to take a few seconds to reflect and several candidates showed the ability to do this with strategies such as, "*Es una buena pregunta – déjame pensar un momento*".

Many candidates showed an ability to manipulate the language accurately, using complex structures and a wide range of appropriate and topic-specific vocabulary, which was very pleasing.

The mean marks and facility factors across the Assessment Objectives covered by Presentation and Discussion of the IRP were as follows:

	mean mark	facility factor
P AO2	3.4	85.6
P AO3	6.4	80.2
P AO4	7.1	88.4
D AO1	9.2	76.3
D AO2	6.8	85.1
D AO3	11.2	70.0
D AO4	13.1	81.6

### **Summary of key points**

Candidates really enjoyed carrying out independent research and were quite passionate telling the examiner about their findings. Speaking examiners enjoyed listening to their presentations too. This Unit allows candidates the freedom to explore a topic linked to the Hispanic world which is not covered by the Specification. It was clear that candidates had done a lot of research into their chosen topic and is an excellent exercise in developing study skills in preparation for higher education. Discussions were well-informed and the candidates were keen to talk about something in which they had a genuine interest.

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. Candidates should be advised not to rush their presentation as this can affect pronunciation, intonation and understanding. The time will pass very quickly and there may not be time for candidates to mention all they have prepared, (but they may well have talked about something else). The bullet points listed on the proforma should be reserved for the discussion and not covered in the presentation. They should be written in English or Welsh and the list of sources used should be in Spanish.

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**UNIT 4**

**General Comments**

There was, a wide range of marks, with an impressive number of candidates scoring over 90%. The strongest candidates produced high-quality prose translations and did well on the open-ended questions in the reading comprehension section. Weaker candidates struggled in the translation and the reading comprehension section in particular. The extra time allotted to the exam had a positive impact in that fewer candidates failed to finish. There are indications, however, that the last 2 questions in particular were rushed in some cases.

**Comments on individual questions/sections**

**Section A – Listening**

Q.1 This was well done on the whole, with stronger candidates often scoring full marks. The mean mark for this question was 8.3 and the facility factor was 83.1.

Question 2 proved more difficult for candidates, Again, candidates need to bear in mind that an answer is not necessarily correct solely if it makes sense grammatically. It must also be based on the information included in the recording. The mean mark for this question was 7.6 and the facility factor was 76.2.

Question 3 proved problematic for numerous candidates because of the open-ended nature of the questions. It should be noted that complete sentences are not always required; for example, in (b) (e) español is acceptable. It was observed that this year fewer candidates appeared to abandon question 3, indicating that because of the extra 15 minutes allotted they were less pressed for time. The mean mark for this question was 5.5 and the facility factor was 55.3.

**Section B – Reading**

Question 4 Although there was a variation of marks, most candidates managed to pick up a reasonable score here. The division of the passage into 3 parts, with separate lists of vocabulary to choose from proved to be a more accessible format. The mean mark for this question was 10.6 and the facility factor was 70.6.

Question 5. In Section (a) the strong candidates often achieved full marks. Weaker candidates seemed to hazard a guess at any possible answer. Again, the information given in the text must be referred to when answering the questions. In Section 5(b) many candidates failed to give full answers to the definition question. For (a) regiones *al sur del desierto sahariano*-, **países subsaharianos** was the full answer required to gain the mark.

The mean mark for 5(a) was 3.3 and the facility factor was 66.9. The mean mark for 5(b) was 3.1 and the facility factor was 62.8. The mean mark for 5(c) was 3.8 and the facility factor was 75.2.

In Question 6 The open-ended comprehension answers seemed rushed and sometimes, candidates who performed reasonably well in other sections often scored very low marks here. There were still gaps, indicating that in spite of the extra 15 minutes added, time is still an issue for some candidates. The mean mark for this question was 12.8 and the facility factor was 64.0.

### **Section C translation**

Question 7. There was a big range of marks here with weaker candidates sometimes scoring below 5 out of 20. Common errors included the failure to distinguish between the present, imperfect and preterite tenses, the difference between ser and estar and conocer and saber, and the use of the infinitive in Spanish where a gerund would be used in English. On occasions, relatively basic vocabulary such as rubio, tener suerte, aprender and darse cuenta were not known.

In spite of these problems, there were, however, some very good answers, displaying a very high standard of grammatical knowledge and idiom. Several candidates scored top marks and the translation sounded fluent and natural. These candidates also got around any problems of vocabulary by paraphrasing (for example using determinar or explicar where definir was not known). These candidates were also less wary of rephrasing to achieve a better flowing translation. The mean mark for this question was 11.8 and the facility factor was 59.1.

### **Summary of key points**

Candidates need to pay attention to verb tenses in the translation question. Marks were often lost by failing to recognise the tense of the verb used.

- Look carefully at the vocabulary in the translation. Some words can be translated by another word or a phrase with a similar meaning.
- In comprehension questions, keep answers concise-complete sentences are not always required. Candidates may be penalised if they include too much irrelevant information.

## WJEC SPANISH

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#### UNIT 5

#### General Comments

Once again, this year, most candidates had studied either *Como agua para chocolate* or *La casa de Bernarda Alba* in almost equal numbers. Noticeably fewer candidates had studied *El otro árbol de Guernica* and *Réquiem por un campesino español*. Once again, essays ranged from the succinct, well organised and grammatically correct to the confusing and error ridden. The best candidates had planned their essays carefully and were focused on the question set but other candidates wrote what appeared to be notes on characters which they had revised with no attempt to relate their knowledge to the question set.

#### Comments on individual questions/sections

The most popular essays were 2(a) and 3(b), although candidates opted for all the essays available to them.

**El Otro Árbol de Guernica** – Candidates wrote either about the rôle of the children or about the impact of the Civil War on the Spanish children in the novel. 1(a) Candidates concentrated on Santi rather than on the other young people in the novel. Aresti, Manolín, Valentín, Eusebio, André were either not mentioned at all or were referred to in one sentence. 1(b) Once again, there was a tendency to write about the impact of the Civil War on Santi. Some candidates referred to Begoña but failed to write about the other young people.

**Como Agua para Chocolate** – This book was a very popular choice on this paper. The more popular essay choice was 2(a) An analysis of the rôle of 2 of the 3 sisters Gertrudis and Rosaura. However, many candidates opted for 2(b) on the importance of spirits and ghosts in the novel. The best candidates compared the two daughters and their relevance to the novel's themes. Weaker candidates wrote all they knew about Gertrudis followed by all they knew about Rosaura. In 2(b) there were some very good responses which mentioned Mamá Elena, Nacha and Luz del Amanecer and their importance, but, on the other hand, some essays contained very little specific detail on the impact of the ghosts and spirits in the novel, and often dwelt on one only. There was some confusion regarding the use of magic realism e.g., one candidate thought that the ghosts and spirits, rather than the author, used magic realism for effect.

**La Casa de Bernarda Alba** – Once again, this Lorca play was very popular, and studied by many centres. The more popular essay title was 3(b), which required an analysis of the extent to which Adela reflects the true message of the play. 3(a) was an analysis of the rôles of La Poncia and María Josefa. The best essays were detailed, balanced, critical, analytical and covered many points on the indicative content. The language of the best essays was almost error free. Weaker candidates wrote that La Poncia and María Josefa reflect the way that women were treated under Franco's regime, which was historically incorrect. 3(b) Again, there was evidence of historical inaccuracies and confusion e.g. the weaker candidates wrote that Bernarda represents Franco and that the breaking of Bernarda's stick represents the threat to Franco's power. One candidate wrote that Adela reflects society during the dictatorship of Franco. Candidates continue to struggle with the verb 'morir' e.g. 'Adela muerte al final de la obra'

**Réquiem para un campesino español** – Equal numbers of candidates chose to write about either 4(a) on how Mosén Millán remembers Paco or 4(b) how Paco represents the Spanish people in the novel. In 4(a) there was mention of Paco's childhood, his visit to the cave, his adult life, and the events leading up to his death. The best essays were analytical and detailed. In 4(b) candidates mentioned Paco's compassion for the cave dwellers, his quest for justice for the needy, his wish to share property and land evenly, and his politicisation. The best essays showed knowledge of the class struggle and Paco's attempts to change an unjust society.

The mean marks and facility factors across the Assessment Objectives for each essay question were as follows:

		mean mark	facility factor
Q1a	AO3	16.4	82.5
	AO4	16.0	80.0
Q1b	AO3	11.4	56.8
	AO4	10.5	52.7
Q2a	AO3	14.0	70.1
	AO4	14.1	70.6
Q2b	AO3	13.1	65.7
	AO4	12.9	64.3
Q3a	AO3	12.5	62.3
	AO4	12.5	62.5
Q3b	AO3	12.8	63.8
	AO4	12.5	62.3
Q4a	AO3	10.9	54.5
	AO4	10.8	54.1
Q4b	AO3	16.2	81.1
	AO4	16.9	84.4

### Summary of key points

In summary, the best candidates were able to analyse and refer to the texts succinctly and answer the question as set. Description, repetition, ambiguity, and irrelevance should be avoided. Simple, accurate Spanish which communicates ideas clearly is to be encouraged.

When preparing future candidates, it is worth reinforcing the fact that they should write their answer in around 400 words, answer the question as set, and analyse rather than tell the story. Use of certain phrases such as: Al principio, al final, durante, a lo largo de, para concluir, juega(n) un papel, empecemos discutiendo, no se puede negar que, analicemos, will help to structure the essay and the best candidates structured their essays in this way this year. AO3: The best responses were characterised by a wide range of language that was accurately used. This included complex language that was often characterised by sentences extended with subordinate clauses with correctly used connectives. These structures often require careful linguistic manipulation with subjunctives. The best candidates wrote in such a way that any minor errors of language did not hinder the overall clarity of what they were saying. At the lower end there were very basic problems with language such as subject-verb accord. Adjective agreements were also often missed by lower scoring candidates, but these tended to be irritating rather than the cause of ambiguous language. It was noticeable too that some candidates used some possibly memorised passages, perhaps marked and corrected by teachers, but then when they needed to express their own ideas independently the quality of the language fell. This lack of consistency also limited marks. Advice for the future would be for teachers to work actively on the basics, gender, verb forms and adjectival agreement. Most important is the development of proof-reading skills and for candidates to have a checklist in their minds to eliminate errors in simple language.

AO4: The best performing candidates showed evidence of organisation of ideas. Often these able candidates had a crossed-out plan included at the start of their answer booklet and therefore tended to do well because they maintained their focus on the question. The candidates with the best marks also tended to show an appreciation of the intentions/aims/artistic purpose of the writer with phrases like 'Aqui Esquivel nos muestra como ...', where the lower scoring candidates were often descriptive or produced responses that did not focus on the whole question.



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