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# **GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS**

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

**SUMMER 2019**

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:  
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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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**SPANISH**  
**General Certificate of Education (New)**  
**Summer 2019**  
**Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced**  
**UNIT 1**

**General Comments**

This was the third year of the new Wales WJEC AS specification. 223 candidates took unit 1 this year, slightly down on 2018. The accessibility and facility factor of Unit 1 2019 remained stable and were similar to those of 2017 and 2018, according to the Item Level data.

**Comments on individual questions/sections**

**Card A:** Most candidates chose the sub-theme of Regional culture and heritage in Spain, Spanish speaking countries and communities, although a few centres had prepared candidates for the sub theme of Literature, art, film and music in the Spanish speaking world.

Opinion A was chosen more often than Opinion B, but this was not always so, as in the case of Card A3 on *las tradiciones gastronómicas* where opinion B supporting traditional home cooking contained more scope for AO4, knowledge of the culture of Spain and Spanish-speaking countries. 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 such as 'Respeto tu opinión pero no estoy de acuerdo', and 'Puede ser que usted tenga razón, pero...'. 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, details, facts or statistics, thereby demonstrating very good knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Spanish culture and society as set out in the mark scheme under AO4. Examples of this were references to 'la sobremesa' when discussing Card A3 on 'la cocina casera,' and references to procesiones, pasos, crucifixión and resurrección when talking about Semana Santa on Card A1 on las fiestas religiosas.

**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. Card B2 on 'la diversidad y la tolerancia' proved to be challenging for some candidates, whereas Cards B1 on 'familias reconstituidas' and B4 on 'identidad personal' were well discussed.

As regards the language, AO3, across both tasks there were errors in pronunciation as well as grammatical accuracy.

## **Summary of key points**

In preparing future candidates, it would be advisable to get them to, not only to make specific reference to the text (AO2 assessment objective) in Card B, 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 argument and discussion are designed to be interactive and spontaneous and so, they may develop in a different direction.

**SPANISH**  
**General Certificate of Education (New)**  
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**UNIT 2**

**General Comments**

As with last year's paper, there was a very wide range of overall marks here. Most candidates did reasonably well on the comprehension questions, with the translation and essay, for the most part, being the sections where there is the greatest difference in marks between stronger and weaker candidates.

**Comments on individual questions/sections**

**Section A – Listening**

Question 1 displayed a wide range of marks amongst the candidates. The first question at times was misinterpreted as some candidates heard *miércoles* on the recording and simply put a cross in the response in which the word was duplicated -this was also the case with *negro* in question 2. In question 6 the word *antes* was not taken into account when reading the statement and therefore the incorrect response was again chosen.

Question 2 was well done on the whole, but candidates are reminded that they must correct the false statements or a mark will not be awarded. The use of the word *no* alone is not a satisfactory response. 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: (a) *Pablo es 28 años* and *tengo 28 años*, the misspelling of *veinte*, the use of the word *mejor* for *mayor*.

**Section B - Reading**

Question 3 was reasonably well answered on the whole also. Candidates had obviously practised this, and it paid off. It is worth mentioning again, however, 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.

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. Relatively few candidates scored full marks on this question. (1) was the most problematic response, with many candidates translating higher education as *la educación alta*.

## Section C – Translation

In question 5, the translation, a few points need to be emphasised. Firstly, as mentioned last year, 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. As was the case with last year's exam candidates did not always accurately reflect the tense of the verbs in the English/Welsh translation (e.g. *ingresaron al sistema educativo* must be translated by a simple past tense in English/Welsh and *abandonan sus carreras* by a simple present.) 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. In the top range of marks, the candidates were less wary of moving away from the word for word translation approach and their translations appeared very natural. (For example: *se dio en el siglo 21* was translated as occurred or took place rather than a literal version.) Vocabulary which caused problems included *escasa* (translated as home academic preparation on occasions) and *lo cual*. Candidates must try to avoid gaps or the insertion of English/Welsh words wherever possible. "Intelligent guessing" can sometimes be applied successfully-for example, many candidates may not have seen the adjective *estudiantiles* but they will certainly have met *estudiante* so can work out its meaning in the context.

## Section D - Essay

There was a very wide range of marks awarded in this section. As last year, there were some excellent essays which were well written, insightful and with a very high standard of accuracy, lexis and structure. They were well planned and relevant to the title set. Candidates are 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 often very long and contained a lot of irrelevant material about the director and actors (this was most often the case with *Volver*.) This tendency will impinge negatively on the AO4 mark and as mentioned last year, can result in a lower mark for AO3 also.

With *Maria, llena eres de gracia*, 1a was a more popular choice. The majority of candidates argued against the statement, emphasising that poverty robbed Maria of the chance to make the "right" decision. High scoring essays made a good analysis of the role of Maria's life in Colombia in her decision to enter the world of drug trafficking. Weaker ones again lapsed into story telling or a résumé of the film.

*Volver* is a popular choice and there were very good essays on both 2a and 2b. It is clear that candidates have done their research on the film and the importance of the use of colour and symbols in Almodóvar's work. Candidates need to ensure that the inclusion of such details are relevant to the essay title.

There were fewer candidates who chose to write about *El Bola* and *Diarios de Motocicleta*. 3a and 4a were the most popular choices. However, there were some excellent essays 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, as does *morir, muerto and la muerte*. Anglicisms are commonplace in the weaker essays, with such examples as *Maria tiene un tiempo duro con su familia, es vale la pena considerar*. There were also problems with words such as *la falta/ la culpa* and *el personaje/ el carácter*. It is worthwhile advising candidates to try and make the plan for the essay in Spanish, as doing this in English or Welsh seems to encourage literal translations into the target language.

The top range of the essays marked are of a very high quality, in terms of both language and content, and in some cases remarkable at this stage of the A level course. The weaker essays often display very poor grammatical knowledge which may be accompanied by a lack of vocabulary in relation to the most basic terms needed in the discussion of a film (e.g. *el personaje, el carácter la relación, la escena, el fin, el principio*). Exceeding the word limit often goes hand in hand with this type of essay.

It is also important to stress that it is perfectly acceptable to write in the present tense. No extra marks will be gained by the random inclusion of other tenses and it often creates many problems.

### **Summary of key points**

- 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.
- Pay great attention to the title of the film essays. The candidates must make sure what they write deals with the issues raised by the title and does not include information which may be interesting, but in this case is irrelevant.
- In the translation, the candidates must read over what they have written. It needs to read as natural English or Welsh.
- Candidates are advised to check over their work when they have finished. They may well spot grammatical errors which will cost them marks.

## SPANISH

### General Certificate of Education (New)

Summer 2019

#### Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced

### UNIT 3

#### General Comments

This was the second year of the Independent Research Project. The number of entries for this unit was almost the same as in 2018: 146 candidates in 2019, one less than 2018. The Presentation had a high facility factor according to the Item Level data, which was similar to 2018, and there was no change in the mean. This new style A level oral examination continued to be well received by both candidates and examiners, and, proved to be a positive and enjoyable experience once again this year.

#### 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 'la posidonia en Ibiza' and 'la influencia mora'. This year, presentations on Fiestas, Flamenco or Football 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.

#### Summary of key points

Candidates really enjoyed carrying out independent research and were quite passionate telling the oral examiner about their findings. Oral examiners enjoyed listening to their presentations too.

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. One candidate cleverly stated during their presentation 'podríamos hablar de esto después'. The bullet points listed on the proforma should be reserved for the discussion and not covered in the presentation.



**SPANISH**  
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**UNIT 4**

**General Comments**

There was, as last year, a very wide range of marks. The strongest candidates scored over 90% and in particular produced high-quality prose translations. Weaker candidates struggled in the sections which required more complex answers in Spanish. The time allotted to the exam was an issue for some candidates.

**Comments on individual questions/sections**

**Section A – Listening**

- Q.1 This was well done on the whole, with stronger candidates often scoring full marks.
- Q.2 This proved more difficult for candidates, especially the latter questions. They must 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.
- Q.3 Complete sentences are not always required; for example in (b) *como delincuentes* is acceptable. However, a response to (e) is more likely to require a verb: *al principio la gente las miraba raro, ahora las ve como normales*.

It was observed that some candidates appeared to abandon the listening comprehension questions before finishing them, as they were pressed for time.

**Section B – Reading**

- Q.4 Although there was a variation of marks, most candidates managed to pick up a reasonable score here. Numbers 5, 10,12 and 15 proved to be problematic for some.
- Q.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. Sections B and C were well answered overall, though questions 3 and 5 in section C proved difficult for some candidates.
- Q.6 The strong candidates did very well here also. However, candidates who performed reasonably well in other sections often scored very low marks. The most salient point again though, was that many attempted very few questions. Apparently, due to lack of time, they decided to go straight onto the prose.

- Q.7 There was a very big range of marks here with weaker candidates often scoring below 5 marks. Common errors included the failure to distinguish between the imperfect and preterite tense, the difference between *el dictador* and *la dictadura*, the distinction between the various words for time- (*la época, el tiempo, la vez*) and again, the verb *morir* in its various forms and the noun *la muerte*. On occasions, relatively basic vocabulary such as *el rey, el esfuerzo, clave* (translated as *llave* at times) and *los políticos* was not known.

Adjectival agreements were sometimes not made. There were often mistakes in the rendition of the preterite and imperfect tenses with the incorrect endings added to the verb stems or common irregular verbs not known. (*ponieron* was one example) and problems with the various tenses of the verb *haber*.

In spite of these problems, there were, however, some very good answers, displaying a very high standard of grammatical knowledge. The stronger candidates also got around problems of vocabulary by using a similar word (for example in the penultimate line *deberían ser mencionados* was accepted as an alternative to the use of *destacar*). In the last line *importantes* was an acceptable alternative to *claves*. These candidates were also less wary of rephrasing to achieve a better flowing translation.

Again, there appeared to be an issue with timing, with some candidates rushing the translation, leaving gaps, or failing to finish it.

### Summary of key points

- Candidates need to pay attention to basic grammar in the translation question. Marks were often lost by failing to make adjectival agreements, using singular subjects with plural verbs (and vice versa) and a failure to recognise the tense of the verb required.
- Look carefully at the vocabulary in the translation. Some words, or similar words may have been used in other questions. For example, the words *la aprobación, franquistas, la dictadura* appear in the text of question 6.
- In comprehension questions, keep answers concise-complete sentences are not always required. The candidates may be penalised if they include too much irrelevant information.

**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. Only a handful of candidates had studied *El otro árbol de Guernica* and *Réquiem por un campesino español*. The Item Level data suggested that this paper was less accessible this year, but that the mean was up.

**Comments on individual questions/sections**

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

*El Otro Árbol de Guernica* – Just 7 candidates had studied this novel. Candidates wrote either about how the Spanish children got on with those who were not Spanish in the novel, or how the Basque spirit was maintained during their exile.

*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 role of food in the novel. The best candidates wrote very good essays referring to the monthly recipes, the effect of some dishes on those who tasted them, *realismo mágico* and Tita's relationship with food. In 2(b) an analysis of the relationship between the 3 sisters was required.

*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(a), which required an analysis of the statement: "*No es Bernarda Alba quien domina su casa sino Pepe el Romano*". The best essays were detailed, balanced, critical, analytical and covered many points on the indicative content, focussing on the impact of Pepe el Romano rather than focussing solely on the impact of Bernarda. Essay 3(b) was an analysis of the impact of 8 years of mourning imposed on the women. Good essays mentioned the frustration, jealousy, arguments and claustrophobic atmosphere which resulted from Bernarda's imposition, which formed part of the indicative content.

*Réquiem para un campesino español* – Just 8 candidates had studied this novel. Most of the candidates chose to write about 4(b) and just a couple about 4(a). 4(a) was on Paco's tragedy resulting from his trust in Mosén Millán. Essays mentioned Paco's respect and trust in his former mentor, the fact that they are political opposites and that Mosén Millán betrays Paco by revealing his hiding place. Essay 4(b), the impact of Paco's death on Mosén Millán involved reference to the requiem mass, Paco's life and the events leading up to his death, and the symbolism of Paco's horse.

## 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.



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