

GCSE Examiners' Report

Spanish
GCSE
Summer 2025

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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

Candidates have demonstrated that they are familiar with the format of all four units for the 2025 suite of assessments. The vast majority of candidates attempted all questions on all four units and good attempts were made at all question types. On the whole, it was evident that candidates were entered for the appropriate tier. A recurring area for improvement is knowledge of theme-specific vocabulary. Gaps in knowledge affected comprehension marks on the receptive skills of Listening and Reading and on occasion limited candidates' ability to extend their responses and reach the higher mark bands for Speaking and Writing. This year, the Principal Examiners of Unit 1 (Speaking) and Unit 4 noticed problems with the recognition and formation of the past tense in Spanish.

Unit 1 - Speaking

Overall, the tests were conducted and administered in accordance with the instructions set by WJEC and we thank teacher-examiners for the smooth running of the tests. If there are any doubts about the management of speaking assessments, please follow the guidance provided on the WJEC website. Centres are asked once again to ensure an appropriate venue within the centre so that candidates can do their best in an environment free from distraction and background noise.

Candidates were well prepared for the role play section at both tiers and tended to respond well. The most challenging part for most candidates was forming a question to ask the teacher therefore practicing question formation and learning key words for formulating questions is recommended. In addition, accurate use of the past tense was a challenge for many candidates which led to a loss of marks. Practice learning core verbs in the past tense is therefore recommended. At higher tier, responses must be free of error to gain full marks and so candidates should be reminded not to provide overly long responses as this often leads to error. For the photo card section, it should be noted that some candidates at both tiers provided an overly long description of the photo which meant that there was insufficient time to complete the remaining elements of the task, teacher-examiners should aim to ensure that candidates complete all 4 questions within the allotted time. Accurate use of the past tense remained a challenge for candidates in this section at both tiers, it was pleasing to note however that candidates were generally confident when answering in the future and conditional tenses. In the conversation section, centres are reminded of the importance of adhering to the timings set out for each section. It is important for candidates to try to extend their responses in order to access higher marks for communication.

Units 2 and 3 – Listening and Reading

Candidates seemed comfortable with the style and nature of the questions. It was pleasing to see that almost all questions were attempted by most students. Many of the marks that were lost were due to lack of detail on the more challenging questions, where candidates gave very short answers. Candidates should be reminded of the importance of writing meaningful answers to avoid ambiguity which can lead to loss of marks. It also pleasing to see that only a very small minority did not follow the rubric and answered in English/Welsh in the section where responses in Spanish were needed. The translation question in unit 3 reading is an area that continues to need practice. A lack of knowledge of some basic vocabulary continues to cause problems for candidates.

Unit 4 – Writing

Candidates seemed generally well prepared for this unit overall, although there were still a minority of candidates this year at foundation tier level that did not attempt some parts of the assessment. Most candidates were able to satisfy the word count at both foundation and higher level. The question titles allowed candidates scope to produce interesting and imaginative work, particularly at the higher level. On the whole, it was evident that candidates were prepared well for the format of this unit of the assessment. To further improve, candidates should focus on acquiring a better knowledge of theme specific vocabulary and basic grammatical structures including the past tense. It was noticeable this year that many candidates found recognition and production of the past tense to be problematic.

Areas for improvement	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
<p>Question formation linked to themes for productive skills.</p> <p>Improved administration of timings (instructions guidance).</p>	<p>Unit 1 GCSE Instructions for Teacher Examiners</p>	<p>Details of what is required for each element of the assessment plus lists of theme based suggested questions that could be used for question formation and theme-based vocabulary practice.</p>
<p>Candidates should be familiar with theme-specific vocabulary and key grammar points.</p>	<p>Specification Vocabulary list – Appendix A Grammar requirements – Appendix B</p> <p>Knowledge Organisers</p>	<p>Vocabulary list in the specification. Revision sheets covering subthemes. Grammar requirements in the specification</p>
<p>Translation.</p>	<p>Past Papers Mark Schemes</p>	<p>Use past papers as teaching resources and use segments worded in the target language as translation activities.</p>

SPANISH

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UNIT 1 SPEAKING

Overview of the Unit

This unit aims to test the candidate's spoken Spanish and their ability to communicate and interact by taking part in a role play, a photo card discussion and the conversation. The three broad themes are covered in the three parts of the exam. Although the main skill being assessed is the candidate's speaking skills, the candidate's listening and comprehension skills are also assessed as candidates must respond to the questions posed by the teacher.

In general, candidates were well prepared and appropriately entered for the correct tier with a pleasing performance by a large number of candidates.

The timings of the recording were generally adhered to, but several recordings were over-long and did not adhere to the time allotted for each task, this was particularly true for Foundation Tier candidates. In addition, the quality of the recordings was also a cause for concern as background noise and poor-quality recordings meant that some candidates' voices could not be heard.

Overall, the tests were conducted and administered in accordance with the instructions set by WJEC and we thank teacher-examiners for the smooth running of the tests.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Foundation and Higher Role Play

Generally, candidates were well prepared for the Role Plays and they were completed well with candidates able to respond to most cues, even if briefly. At Foundation Tier candidates seemed aware that a brief answer containing an accurate verb was sufficient to gain top marks and over-long answers where candidates self-penalised by making verbal errors were less prominent than in previous years. This however is still an area of improvement for Higher Tier candidates as a tendency to provide a prolonged answer often led to verbal inaccuracies and a loss of marks at Higher Tier.

During the preparation time, candidates need to ensure that they read the setting and listen carefully to the teacher's cue to ensure that they are providing a relevant response that fits the context.

The most challenging part of the Role Play for most candidates was forming a question to ask the teacher therefore practicing question formation and learning key words for formulating questions such as *¿dónde?* *¿cuándo?* *¿te gusta?* *¿a qué hora?* is recommended. In addition, accurate use of the past tense was a challenge for many candidates which led to a loss of marks. Practice learning core verbs in the past tense is therefore recommended.

During the Role Play task, teacher-examiners should also ensure that they do not deviate from the script as rephrasing or reformulating the questions in any way deducts candidates' marks.

Overview of the 2025 Foundation Tier Role Play cards:

Role Play 1: Most candidates were confident responding to the first two prompts about food and drink within this Role Play. The unseen question however highlighted that only a minority of candidates recognised the verb “*cenar*” as well as “*hora*” making this a challenging unseen question for candidates. It was pleasing to note however that most candidates attempted to formulate the question and were clearly confident using the verb “*beber*”.

Role Play 2: Candidates coped well with this role play overall and were clearly well prepared with the sub-themes of travel and transport. The accurate use of the present tense and the past tense for prompts 3 and 4 were challenging for some and consequently many candidates lost marks for accuracy.

Role Play 3: Overall, candidates confidently answered these prompts but “*deberes*” proved to be challenging for many candidates.

Role Play 4: “*¿Cuál?*” and “*asignatura*” proved to be challenging for candidates and only partial answers were mostly provided. The accurate use of the past tense was again a challenge for many candidates in prompt 4.

Role Play 5: Candidates were confident discussing sport, and most candidates coped well with the first two prompts. Discussing films seemed considerably more challenging for candidates with “*películas*” often being misunderstood during the unseen question.

Role Play 6: Candidates were confident discussing holidays and gave varied responses to the three first prompts. Once again, the unseen question was the most challenging element of the Role Play for most with many candidates not recognizing the word “*ciudad*” and consequently not answering the prompt relevantly.

Overview of the 2025 Higher Tier Role Play cards:

Role Play 1: Candidates coped well with this card overall, but several candidates struggled to understand the meaning of “*¿dónde?*”

Role Play 2: The verb “*cenar*” proved challenging for higher tier candidates as well during this role play.

Role Play 3: Overall, candidates answered the prompts confidently although “*jefe/jefa*” proved to be challenging for some.

Role Play 4: Candidates at higher tier were also confident when discussing the topic of holidays and tourism. There was however some confusion with “*con quién*” in the unseen question with several candidates stating what they normally do on holiday rather than who they spend their holiday with.

Role Play 5: “*Ir andando*” was difficult for many candidates but most were able to formulate a partial answer to the question.

Role Play 6: Candidates coped well with this role play with most candidates answering confidently highlighting that candidates were confident discussing the topic of current studies.

Foundation Photo Card

It is pleasing to note that most Foundation Tier candidates attempted to describe the photo and some candidates used a variety of verbs accurately when doing so. It should be noted however that some candidates provided an overly long description of the photo which meant that there was insufficient time to complete the remaining elements of the task, teacher-examiners should aim to ensure that candidates complete all 4 questions within the allotted time.

Most candidates were able to respond to the seen questions to some extent with many giving an opinion with simple justification but only a minority attempted to develop more extended answers to the questions. Consequently, it would be beneficial with foundation tier candidates for teacher-examiners to pause before asking *¿por qué?* to allow candidates to answer the first part of the question and then prompt them to extend their answers.

Accurate use of the past tense remained a challenge for candidates. Candidates seemed unfamiliar with key time phrases which require the past tense such as “*el verano pasado*”, “*último*” and “*recientemente*”. Therefore, only a minority of candidates responded appropriately and in the appropriate tense if the unseen question was in the past tense. It is pleasing to note however that candidates were generally confident when answering in the future and conditional tenses.

Higher Photo Card

Most candidates at Higher Tier coped very well with the seen questions and some of the descriptions were very thorough, though, similarly to the Foundation Tier candidates, some candidates need to be careful as this section is time limited and there may not be time to complete all questions if their answers to the two seen questions are too long as this leads to insufficient time for the remaining two questions or very brief answers to the unseen questions in order to adhere to the time limitations. Consequently, candidates should endeavour to have a balance between all four questions and therefore give fuller responses to the final questions to give more evidence of their ability to use tenses.

Candidates were generally confident using the present tense accurately use of other tenses during the photo card did not seem a priority for some candidates with several candidates using only the present tense in their answers and not attempting any other tenses in this part of the exam. Referring successfully to a variety of tenses is key to access the top band of the mark scheme at Higher Tier, if a variety of tenses can be used appropriately and accurately in earlier answers, candidates should aim to do so.

In addition, using complex structures is also a requirement of reaching the top band of the mark scheme at Higher Tier, successful candidates used these regularly and naturally within their answers.

Foundation Conversation

The conversation consists of two topics which should be of equal length. Every effort should be made to adhere to the stipulated timing of 3-5 minutes even if other sections of the exam have overrun. It must also be noted that candidates should initiate part 1 of the conversation as stated in the teacher’s booklet.

Generally, most candidates were confident and comfortable with this element of the exam as the material is more familiar to them and teacher-examiners can adapt their questions to the candidate’s ability.

Candidates were mostly able to give brief answers in Spanish with more able candidates extending their responses with opinions and justification naturally within their answers. Some candidates also successfully varied their structures when doing so highlighting their range of vocabulary, this was pleasing to hear. When extending their answers with justification most candidates were able to do so by using simple adjectives such as “*importante*” and “*interesante*”. An area for improvement would be for candidates to use a wider variety of adjectives when giving their opinions. In addition, when using cognates within their answers, candidates should be made aware of the marks awarded for pronunciation and intonation as many candidates lost some marks due to the anglicisation of cognates.

Accurate use of tenses was again an issue for Foundation Tier candidates with many candidates resorting to using the infinitive or repeating the verb used by the teacher-examiner when attempting to answer. Candidates should learn to use key verbs in a variety of tenses successfully to have access to the top band of the mark scheme.

Higher Conversation

At Higher Tier, candidates were generally more likely and able to extend their answers without prompting required by the teacher. Stronger candidates generally had interactions where the teacher spoke minimally, and candidates had the opportunity to develop and extend their responses through justifying their opinions in detail highlighting their fluency and ability to respond naturally to the questions. Most candidates were well prepared to do this and consequently gained marks on communication and interaction.

Although candidates by and large extended their responses, their ability to do so accurately is an area for improvement as their ability to communicate clearly at all times is part of the requirement of reaching the top band of the mark scheme. Candidates should consequently be advised that they should avoid over-complicating their sentence structures and ensure that their answers are as accurate as possible. Candidates should aim to learn a variety of key verbs in a variety of tenses and be made aware that using tenses successfully is a requirement for reaching the top band for linguistic knowledge and accuracy.

Similarly to last year, the range of vocabulary was at times too narrow for what would be expected at the top of the linguistic knowledge range. Candidates would consequently benefit from using a wider variety of vocabulary and weaving complex structures naturally within their answers.

Summary of key points

To improve the administration of tests, it is advised that Centres:

- ensure the timings of the recording are adhered to for each task so as not to disadvantage candidates.
- ensure a suitable location is available in which to undertake the speaking assessment so that a good quality of recording can be produced.

To improve further in their performance, candidates are advised to:

- practice question formation and learning key words for formulating questions such as *¿dónde?* *¿cuándo?* *¿te gusta?* *¿a qué hora?*
- practice learning core verbs in the past tense.
- learn and use a wider variety of vocabulary.

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UNIT 2 LISTENING

Overview of the Unit

This unit requires learners to respond to a range of questions in English/Welsh and also in Spanish and deals with assessment objective 1.

Overall, candidates appeared comfortable with the style and nature of the questions across both tiers. It was encouraging to see that the question format did not present a barrier and that many responded with confidence. At Foundation Tier, Questions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 9 were attempted by all candidates, which demonstrates a willingness to engage with key areas of the paper. However, a noticeable number of questions were left unanswered, and rubric errors were fairly frequent, particularly where responses were provided in English rather than Spanish. This was especially evident in the sections that clearly required answers in the target language, with many candidates failing to adhere to the rubric, which inevitably led to significant loss of marks.

Responses that were attempted often lacked sufficient detail. One-word or overly brief answers limited opportunities to access higher marks. Teachers should reinforce the importance of writing clear, extended responses to avoid ambiguity and maximize scoring potential.

At Higher Tier, while the majority of candidates were able to achieve double-digit marks, the frequency of rubric errors, specifically answering in English instead of Spanish, remains a concern. The number of not attempted questions was much less than at Foundation Tier. However, only Questions 1, 3 and 7 were attempted by all candidates, indicating that certain sections of the paper may still present challenges in terms of accessibility or confidence of the candidates.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Foundation Tier

Question 1

Question 1 was an accessible start to the paper. It was set into the subtheme of *Youth Culture* and covered the aspect of *Self & Relationships*.

It involved three verbal responses and a multiple-choice question generally well attempted, although the spelling of restaurant caused some issues.

Question 2

This question was set into the subtheme of *Enterprise, Employability and Future Plans* and covered the aspect of *Employment*.

This question involved multiple choice questions and two verbal responses. Most candidates were able to answer all sections of the question correctly. The most challenging section was recognising the correct number in (b). A simple activity to practice identifying Spanish numbers is with Bingo cards, with the teachers calling out random numbers in Spanish. It adds a competitive and interactive edge while it challenges students to distinguish similar-sounding numbers like *treinta* vs *trece*.

Question 3

This question was set into the subtheme of *Global sustainability* and covered the aspect of *Environment*.

It was set in Spanish and candidates were required to match names to pictures. Overall, a very good performance.

Question 4

This question was set into the subtheme of *Lifestyle* and covered the aspect of *Entertainment and Leisure*

The question was also set in Spanish and candidates were required to tick the correct boxes. Many candidates failed to recognise *ganar sueldo* in (c), and *deportes de nieve* in (d).

Teachers could do some work on recognising free-time activities while developing listening strategies using a listening grid like the one below. The teacher reads a series of short sentences aloud in Spanish that express preferences about those activities. Students must listen carefully, identify and tick the correct box. After listening, students could compare answers in pairs, discussing what clues helped them understand each sentence (e.g. verb structure, tone, vocabulary like “no” or “también”).

Actividad en español	Me gustaría	No me gustaría
Ver la televisión		
Jugar al fútbol		
Leer libros		

Question 5

This question was linked to the subtheme of *Lifestyle*, focusing on *Entertainment and Leisure*. It proved challenging for most candidates and highlighted difficulties in understanding at sentence level.

In (a), many candidates failed to recognize “*centro comercial*,” instead offering incorrect responses such as “fruit,” having misinterpreted the word “*disfruta*” from the text. Part (b) was answered more successfully; however, in (c), most candidates misunderstood that it was the *car park* which is open 24 hours—not the shopping centre. Additionally, many failed to recognize the number *cien* in reference to the number of shops available. The response “shops” alone was insufficient to score the mark; a quantifier (e.g. “many” or “lots of”) was needed.

Most candidates did manage to score one mark in (c), as they were able to identify the word “Internet.”

Teachers could help students develop skills to understand complete spoken sentences especially focusing on distinguishing key details like locations, time expressions, quantities, and preferences. Teachers could use a set of simple recorded or teacher-read sentences in Spanish e.g. *Me gusta ir al centro comercial porque hay muchas tiendas. / El aparcamiento está abierto las veinticuatro horas* and cards containing fragments of these sentences. Students listen to each sentence once or twice, and in pairs or small groups, they try to reconstruct the full sentence using the sentence fragments and vocabulary cards. This activity can help students reinforce sentence-level comprehension through reconstruction and develops attention to detail, such as quantities and negation.

Question 6

This question was set into the subtheme of *Youth Culture* and covered the aspect of *Self & Relationships*.

Question 6 proved to be challenging. In Section 1, (a) and (c) were generally well answered, whereas part (b) was more problematic. Many candidates focused on the word *amigos* and failed to understand the full meaning of the sentence, which referred to speaking to everyone, not just friends.

In Section 2, responses to (d) were weaker, as candidates did not recognize the word *equipo*, and instead gave vague answers such as “when they need it.” By contrast, responses to (e) and (f) were generally more accurate.

Question 6 once again highlighted candidates’ limited understanding at sentence level, with many relying heavily on word spotting rather than interpreting full sentences in context. Teachers could use the revision strategy suggested in Question 5.

Foundation and Higher Tier Questions

Question 7(FT) and 1 (HT).

This question was set into the subtheme of *The Wider World* and covered the aspect of *Holiday and Tourism*.

This task required verbal responses, and many Foundation Tier candidates struggled to achieve high marks, particularly in (a), (b), and (d).

In (a), most candidates failed to understand the phrase *no sé nada del país*, frequently misinterpreting *país* as ‘Paris’, which led to unrelated responses—often about swimming. In (b), there was a widespread failure to recognize the past tense *nació*, with some candidates giving confused answers such as ‘his mother swims in the capital’. Similarly, in (d), the past tense *era* was not understood. Candidates tended to focus on the word *niño*, resulting in inaccurate interpretations like ‘he went to the country with his children’.

Question 7 (c) received the most successful responses, with candidates demonstrating a clearer understanding of the full sentences related to weather and food.

Performance overall was better at higher tier than at foundation where most of the candidates showed better understanding at sentence level and were able to recognise past tenses.

Question 8 (FT) and 2 (HT)

This question was set into the subtheme of *Current Study* and covered the aspect of *School/College Studies*.

This question required a verbal response with brief answers.

Overall, performance was stronger at the higher tier than at the foundation level.

At foundation level, the first question posed difficulties; candidates often understood only the words *familias en México*, leading them to conclude that the text was about families in Mexico.

Performance improved in (b), where cognates such as *estrés* and *control* helped guide candidates to the correct response.

In Section 2(c), most candidates scored one point, aided by another cognate, *interacción*. However, only a small minority recognised the words *horario* and *libros*, mainly those at the higher tier, who also responded more successfully to part (a).

Question 9 (FT) and 3 (HT).

This question was set into the subtheme of *Youth Culture* and covered the aspect of *Technology*.

The overwhelming majority of candidates at foundation tier scored at least one mark in (a), which did not present much difficulty. Expressions such as *escuchar música*, *trabajar*, and *leer* were well recognised. The subject matter of the question was also very familiar to candidates, which contributed to their strong performance on (a).

Most candidates at foundation level scored more highly in question 9 than in question 8. The expression *antes de dormir* was not always recognised, and responses to part (c) were often based on prior knowledge or assumptions about what seemed obvious. For (d), the word *luz* and the cognate *notificaciones* aided many candidates in providing correct answers at both tiers.

At higher tier, candidates generally performed better overall and were able to score between 4 and 5 marks.

Generally speaking, candidates at both tiers achieved more marks on this question than on the previous one. The topic proved to be very familiar to most candidates.

Higher Tier

Question 4

This question was set within the subtheme *Enterprise, Employability and Future Plans*, focusing specifically on the topic of *Employment*.

Most candidates responded well overall, although part (c) proved challenging. Many failed to grasp that the reference to food and drink indicated what was *not* included. This highlights a weakness in sentence-level comprehension, where students often latch onto familiar vocabulary—such as *comida* and *bebida*—and mistakenly assume these items are provided. In reality, the sentence states: *Los candidatos solo tendrán que pagar por la comida y la bebida* (“Candidates will only have to pay for food and drink”), indicating these are *not* included.

To help students improve sentence-level listening skills, teachers can use transcripts from past papers alongside GCSE-style audio recordings. Here's a suggested approach:

- Select 8–10 sentences from authentic audio materials.
- Remove the final phrase or clause from each sentence.
- Provide students with printed worksheets featuring these partial sentences.
- Play the audio clips; students must listen carefully and complete each sentence based on what they hear.
- For added challenge, ask students to write their own predicted endings before hearing the audio, then compare their versions with the recording.

Question 5

This question was set within the subtheme *Enterprise, Employability and Future Plans*, focusing specifically on the topic of *Career plans*.

The question was presented in the target language and required candidates to tick the correct box.

Candidates performed well overall, with the majority achieving the highest mark. The vocabulary and grammatical structures used were familiar to most and therefore did not present significant difficulty.

This was in Spanish; candidates were required to complete a table with the missing information. The question was answered reasonably well by many candidates who also showed good spelling in Spanish, with *lluvia* being the most challenging word. In Q5 (c) the word *clima* proved problematic; the most common incorrect answers were *major época*, *primavera o en verano*, which the candidates lifted from the script, after hearing *clima*. Only a minority of candidates did not recognise the word *norte* in (a) from the transcript and were unable to receive a mark. Occasionally, candidates answered in English. Candidates should be reminded always to check rubric instructions before answering questions to avoid losing marks.

Question 6

This question was set within the subtheme *Wider World* and focused on *Local and Regional Features and Characteristics of Spain and Spanish-speaking Countries*. It was presented in the target language, Spanish.

Candidates were required to complete a table with missing information. Surprisingly, a considerable number of candidates failed to respond in the target language, which resulted in a loss of marks.

Aside from this issue, most candidates performed well and achieved top marks, with no major difficulties related to spelling Spanish words.

Question 7

This question was set into the subtheme of *Current Study* and covered the aspect of *School/college life*.

This question was generally well answered. The most challenging part was 7 (b), where many students struggled to recognise key vocabulary such as *cuadernos reciclados*. As a result, some interpreted the phrase as referring to 'recyclable books' instead of 'recycled books', demonstrating a misunderstanding of the meaning.

Additionally, the sentence *dar las clases al aire libre para usar la luz natural* was often only partially understood. Many candidates focused solely on the phrase *luz natural* and provided incomplete responses, such as 'using natural light', without addressing the full idea of conducting lessons outdoors to make use of natural light.

Question 8

This question was set into the subtheme of *Lifestyle* and covered the aspect of *Entertainment and Leisure*.

This question assessed candidates' ability to recognise and understand the past tense in Spanish.

Question 8 (a) was generally well answered, demonstrating sound comprehension. However, (b) and (c) posed greater difficulty for many candidates. In (b), the term *dibujos animados* was frequently misinterpreted as drawing, rather than cartoons. In (c), the phrase *bailando sobre hielo* was often simplified to just dancing, with *sobre hielo* (on ice) omitted, which significantly altered the intended meaning. Additionally, the verb *trabajaba* was sometimes overlooked, leading candidates to write answers such as 'he is an instructor', ignoring both the tense and the specific phrase *de patinaje* (skating).

Responses that used the past tense but did not mention skating instructor explicitly, referring only to instructor, were deemed insufficient, as they lacked key elements of meaning conveyed in the original Spanish.

Question 9

This question was set into the subtheme of *Lifestyle* and covered the aspect of *Entertainment and leisure*.

The final question posed significant challenges for the majority of candidates.

In (a), many candidates failed to recognise the word *robar*, instead fixating on *museo*. This led to responses such as 'they visited a museum', which appeared to be the obvious answer based on familiar vocabulary, but missed the actual meaning conveyed in the text.

Question 9(b) also caused difficulty, as candidates frequently misheard the number *cincuenta*, often interpreting it as six or five. Even when the number was correctly identified, many failed to understand the phrase *más de cincuenta* (more than fifty), which affected the accuracy of their responses.

For (c), which asked 'What did they do during these visits?' some candidates were able to gain one mark, aided by the cognate *fotos*. However, many struggled to interpret the full context of *identificar las cosas más caras* and *observar las medidas de seguridad*. Responses ranged from 'they stole two million euros' (based on *valor de unos dos millones de euros*) to 'they took photos of the museum. The term *medidas* was often not recognised, and answers like 'they observed security at the museum' were insufficient, lacking the detail and accuracy required.

Question 9(d) continued to prove problematic. Many answers focused on the number of visitors or reduced staff, indicating a misunderstanding of the phrase *número reducido de empleados de seguridad*. Candidates tended to concentrate only on *número reducido*, missing the key word *seguridad*, which impacted the relevance of their answers.

In contrast, (e) was generally well understood, with the majority of candidates successfully scoring one mark. Only a small number responded incorrectly, often due to failing to recognise the word *pequeños*.

Summary of key points

At both tiers, the papers showed effective differentiation, with little evidence of candidates being entered inappropriately.

To further support students' development of listening skills, particularly at sentence level, teachers are encouraged to work closely with transcripts of exam materials. This approach can help learners move beyond surface-level word-spotting and avoid drawing premature conclusions based on partial comprehension. Such habits can foster overconfidence, leading some candidates to commit to an answer after the first listening and disengage during the second playback.

It remains important to remind candidates that answers are rarely obvious and must be derived from a careful interpretation of the full transcript in order to gain marks.

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UNIT 3 READING

Overview of the Unit

This unit requires learners to respond to a range of questions in English/Welsh and also in Spanish at higher tier. At Foundation Tier, questions 1-4 required non-verbal responses; questions 5-9 short verbal answers in English / Welsh and question 10 is a short translation from Spanish into English / Welsh. At Higher Tier, questions 1 and 2 were overlap questions with the Foundation Tier questions 8 & 9. Question 3 and 4 required non-verbal answers; question 5 required answers in Spanish; questions 6-8 were to be answered in English and question 9 was a short translation from Spanish into English / Welsh.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Foundation Tier

- Q.1** The first question required non-verbal answers on a text about TV programmes from the sub-theme Lifestyle. Candidates found this question accessible with all attempting it. It had the highest facility factor on the paper of 88.9 with a mean mark of 5.3 out of 6.
- Q.2** This question again required non-verbal answers and treated the topic of Environment from the Global Sustainability sub theme. Candidates were given short statements to read and match them with pictures. The majority of candidates performed well on this question. Quite a few candidates answered 8 instead of 1, it seems they may not have understood *bolsa* in *bolsa de plástico* and selected the image with different plastic objects. 100% of candidates attempted question 2 and the mean mark was 4.8 out of 6.
- Q.3** This was an exercise to tick boxes. Candidates were required to read short statements of two students about school subjects and match them up with positive, negative or positive and negative opinions. This came from the third broad sub theme of current and future study and employability. This question proved to be a little more challenging. All candidates attempted this question and the mean mark was 4.1 out of 6.
- Q.4** This was a grammar gap-fill exercise on the topic of Holidays and Tourism falling under the Wider World sub theme. Unfortunately, at this level, many candidates were unable to use knowledge of grammar rules to fill the correct boxes. With just a basic application of grammar, i.e. with the knowledge that feminine nouns end in 'a', masculine nouns end in 'o' and plural nouns end in 's' valuable extra marks could have been attained, and this can sometimes be the difference between two grades. This question was challenging, including the *los turistas* which does not comply with the general grammar rules. 100% candidates attempted question 4. The mean mark was 2 out of 6 and so this proved to be one of the questions that candidates found less accessible with a facility factor of 33.3.

- Q.5** A longer text with two paragraphs requiring responses in English. The text referred to post -16 study within current and future study and employment
- (a) some candidates gave the answer required in (c) here.
 - (e) here we had *trabajar mucho* which was interpreted rather often as work more hours or work a lot. All candidates attempted this question and the mean mark was 2.4 out of 6.
- Q.6** This was the first literary extract from the sub-theme of health and fitness. There were three short paragraphs. A good attempt was made on the questions (e) chocolate tart was sometimes the answer given which was not awarded. 100% of candidates attempted question 6 and the mean mark was 3.7 out of 6.
- Q.7** Here we had a summer job advert at Aqualandia Aventura aquapark.
- (a) the word *acuático* created some confusion and some candidates answered 'aquatic park'
 - (b) the word *entre* was not always understood and quite a few answers were 'June and September' which was not awarded. 'Summer' was accepted.
 - (d) some candidates answered 'curriculum' which was not awarded, others answered 'phone number' which made sense in the context, however it did not appear in the text. Some candidates mixed 'education' with the name of the school where they study. All candidates attempted this question and the mean mark was 2.8 out of 6.
- Q.8** This was the first overlap question with the Higher Tier, on the subject of fast food in Mexican schools
- (a) posed few problems; 'fast / unhealthy food' were also awarded
 - (b) here some candidates missed the fact that the text says 'pensando que no es peligrosa' simply answering 'because it is not dangerous' and so lost the mark
 - (c) well answered in general, with some candidates answering 'obesity' which was not awarded. 'Diseases' was accepted.
 - (d) candidate needed to specify that it was 'parent (of family)' not 'families' or 'parents and family'.
 - (e) well answered in general
 - (f) here candidates had to specify 'about their health' or 'keeping in shape'. As would be expected, this was one of the more challenging questions for foundation tier candidates. 99% of candidates attempted question 8 and the mean mark was 2 out of 6 proving to be a question that candidates found less accessible.

Q.9 A longer literary text with several examples of direct speech on the theme of Current and future study and employment from the sub-theme Current study. It posed problems at both levels.

- (a) 'las zapatillas rojas' from the title was sometimes confused with Marta's shoes which caused some issues with colour and type of shoe
- (c) here some candidates gave plausible answers such as 'she will get detention', showing that terms like 'resfriado' and 'enferma' were not understood
- (d) many read 'vestido' as 'vest' losing the mark
- (e) many candidates did not know the English / Welsh version of 'Alemania'. A few 'Albania' were answered. 99% of candidates attempted question 9 and the mean mark was 2.2 out of 6 proving to be a question that candidates found less accessible.

Q.10 This was the translation question from Spanish into English / Welsh on the topic of Travel and Transport.

- (i) A good attempt by most candidates
- (ii) Issues with the term 'metro'; some candidates translate 'viajar = travelling' as 'going' and 'muy rápido' as 'faster'
- (iii) Many misunderstood 'stadium'
- (iv) Issues with the use of the past 'fui' and 'llegué tarde' was often translated as 'I was late'
- (v) Issues with the use of future immediate.
- (vi) The use of the future tense proved to be a challenge for many.

All candidates attempted the translation question. The mean mark was 1.7 this year.

Higher Tier

For Questions 1 & 2, see questions 8 & 9 from the foundation tier. As would be expected, these overlap questions had generally better responses at higher tier. 100% of candidates attempted these questions and the mean marks for both were 4 out of 6.

Q.3 From the holidays and tourism sub-theme of the wider world, this is a blog with three paragraphs about a student's plans for the summer. The question required non-verbal responses with the rubric in Spanish, where the candidates match the beginning with the end of sentences. All candidates attempted this question and with a mean mark of 5.1 out of 6, it had the highest facility factor of 84.7 on the paper.

Q.4 From the environment sub theme, this was another non-verbal response question. The rubric was in Spanish and this was a gap-fill exercise. 100% of candidates attempted question 4 and the mean mark was 4.2 out of 6.

- Q.5** On the topic of travel and tourism this exercise was well answered in general. All candidates attempted this question and the mean mark was 4.9 out of 6, with the second highest facility factor on the paper.
- Q.6** This was the first 8-mark question, it was a longer text in Spanish about the schools in Spain on the topic of current study. This question was accessible to most students with many making good attempts at these questions and scoring marks.
- (d) Some issues to understand the focus on 'individual needs' and 'respect for differences'. 100% of candidates attempted question 6 and the mean mark was 4.6 out of 6.
- Q.7** This was another 8-mark question: Travel reviews in a platform with six descriptive paragraphs on holiday accommodation. All candidates attempted this question and the mean mark was 4.7 out of 6.
- Q.8** This was the third and last 8-mark question: A literary text with five paragraphs and dialogue about two classmates at the dentist talking about a birthday party. 99.4% of candidates attempted question 8 and the mean mark was 4.3 out of 6.
- Q.9** The translation was on the subject of current and future study and employment. Candidates found some vocabulary challenging such as, *equipo*, a term that has been a constant in past reading papers; however, candidates still translate it as 'equipment'. *algo nuevo cada día* proved to be challenging and *diría* the conditional form was often mistranslated. 99.7% of candidates attempted the translation and the mean mark was 2.6 out of 6.

SPANISH
GCSE
Summer 2025
UNIT 4 WRITING

Overview of the Unit

In the 2025 series of the examination, the overall performance and accessibility of the Unit 4 papers was very pleasing, producing the data and outcomes in line with expectations. Candidates seemed generally well prepared for this unit overall, although there were still a minority of candidates this year at foundation tier level that did not attempt some parts of the assessment.

Most candidates were able to satisfy the word count at both foundation and higher level. The question titles allowed candidates scope to produce interesting and imaginative work, particularly at the higher level. On the whole, it was evident that candidates were prepared well for the format of this unit of the assessment again this year.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Foundation Tier – Question 1

This question was set from the broad theme of ‘Wales and the World’ and tested knowledge and understanding of the sub theme of ‘Areas of Interest’. Candidates appeared to be much better prepared for this question overall, with most producing a full sentence with a secure verb to gain 2 points. Very few self-penalised by writing too much. For some reason this year, a significant number of candidates thought that this was a translating exercise, purely rendering a transfer of meaning of the prompts rather than writing a sentence about them. On this particular question, the following difficulties among a significant number of candidates were encountered:

- many were unable to write *me gustaría* + infinitive which was also a common mistake across the different questions e.g. *me gustaría vivo* was often produced
- the word *tienda* for shop was poorly produced
- the prompt ‘what you do in your local area’ proved difficult to produce a correct verb in the present tense
- poor use of definite and indefinite articles
- ‘Your favourite shop’ also led to the production of stand-alone proper nouns.

Foundation Tier – Question 2

This question was set from the broad theme of ‘Identity and Culture’ and tested knowledge and understanding of the sub theme of ‘Technology and Social Media’. There were some good answers with full coverage of the compulsory bullet points, but overall, the question was quite poorly answered with many instances of mother-tongue interference and made – up words. Many found it difficult to comment on technology used at home, somewhat over-thinking the information required of them to satisfy the 3 bullet points. The main shortcomings among a few were as follows:

- the main issue was the second bullet point, some resorting to extending their response to the first bullet point
- a shortfall in words was quite common
- opinions were managed quite well, but many not justifying in response to *lo que*
- some candidates only answered one out of the three bullet points, with *los ordenadores* poorly recognised.

Foundation Tier – Question 3

This question was set from the broad theme of ‘Current and future study and employment’ and tested knowledge and understanding of the sub theme of ‘School and college life’. Overall, a very pleasing response to this question with most being able to satisfy the word count and covering the three compulsory bullet points. Candidates are much better prepared for this question now with many ticking to show coverage of the three compulsory bullet points. The big issue with this question was the failure to understand the requirement of the second bullet point which only needed a reference to any activity that could feasibly be done during a school lunch-hour. Despite some good answers, tenses which are prescribed in the prompts, were poorly rendered. The following issues were common in this question:

- some failed to write 100 words
- the use of the past tense was too challenging for a significant number of candidates, not recognising *hiciste* at all and just repeating the verb in the wrong person in the response
- some did not understand that extra-curricular activities should refer to things other than school subjects studied
- lack of opinion in sentence starters to address the first bullet point
- *la hora de comer* prompted many to give lengthy opinions of food on offer in the school canteen.

Foundation Tier – Question 4

This question was set from the broad theme of ‘Identity and culture’ and tested knowledge and understanding of the sub theme of ‘Food and drink’.

At foundation level, this question poses a particular problem when it comes to sustaining grammatical accuracy and conveying meaning. Most of the problems encountered this year were with verbs being in the incorrect form and the sheer lack of knowledge of basic topic-specific vocabulary. Please refer to the common issues below:

Item 1: difficulty in rendering *me gusta mucho* and getting the adjectival agreement correct. *Español/España* often confused.

Item 2: poor spelling of *fruta*.

Item 3: past tense here posed a problem, plus having to say ‘a un’.

Item 4: generally well rendered, in particular *es muy importante* but *bien* caused a problem

Item 5: A very poor response here overall with poor recognition of *me gustaría* + infinitive. *Más* was also very poorly recognised.

The performance on the higher tier paper was consistent with that of previous years in terms of accessibility, satisfying the word count and the three bullet points on question one. As always, there were some very creative, imaginative responses full of complex, idiomatic language with good tense competence, excellent opinion work and justification of ideas.

Higher Tier – Question 1 (overlap question)

As per my comments on the foundation tier, overall, candidates are being well prepared for this question. As to be expected, the responses to this question on the higher tier paper are of a better quality generally due to the ability of candidates entered for the higher paper.

It was clear that many candidates had learnt idiomatic language to include in their writing, this year again with some interesting idioms but it is worthy of note that they need to suit the context of the question. Many candidates included the same idioms right across the two essay questions regardless of the context. The majority of candidates in the higher tier recognised and understood the requirement to be able to use the different time frames prescribed in the rubric.

It is worthy of mention here that a significant number of candidates are writing way in excess of the word count, resulting in irrelevant content being included. The following points were noted and were specific to the performance in this question at higher tier:

- some selective disregard of the bullet points completely
- poor use of the past tense
- over-use of idioms alongside poor use of basic verbs
- lack of understanding of adjectival agreements
- mis-spelling of *aburrido*
- mis-use of *aunque*.

Higher Tier – Question 2

This question was set from the broad theme of 'Identity and Culture' and tested knowledge and understanding of the sub themes of 'Festivals and celebrations' and 'Free Time'.

There were some very inventive, original responses to this question and most candidates managed to satisfy the word count. More candidates opted for the question on free time and generally rendered very good responses with lots of idiomatic use of language and a range of tenses. Candidates that chose to write about festivals and celebrations had good cultural knowledge of Spain and Spanish-speaking countries. The following shortcomings were evidenced:

- incorrect usage of *me gusta* and *me encanta*
- inability to show competence in a variety of time frames
- too many basic errors impacting on communication
- straying from the question title too much e.g. talking about holidays
- it was not uncommon to see an infinitive used with no conjugations at all
- misuse or no use at all of the written accent on words, often leading to miscommunication of sentences
- an over-reliance on pre-learnt idioms alongside poorly conjugated, basic verbs
- confusion with *es/son*

Higher Tier – Question 3

This question was set from the broad theme of ‘Wales and the world’ and tested knowledge and understanding of the sub theme of ‘environment’.

This question was a real discriminator on the higher paper with the main issue appearing to be that of poor vocabulary production. Very few candidates were able to translate the words ‘to separate ‘ and ‘eco-friendly’ successfully, with the verb ‘to consider’ and ‘to cause’ surprisingly causing difficulty. The modal verb ‘should’ also caused a significant number of problems again this year. The sentence requiring the use of the past tense was impossible for many. The following items posed particular difficulty:

- Item 1: ‘considerar’ poorly rendered, with ‘if’ proving too much for some
- Item 2: producing the past tense was very difficult for the majority who lost marks here
- Item 3: *separar* led to the incorrect production of ‘seperar’
- Item 4: ‘eco-friendly’ was practically impossible
- Item 5: the conditional tense/modal expression was very poorly recognised. The word order in ‘fast-food restaurants’ also caused difficulty. The verb *ayudar* again this year produced many versions such as ‘ayundar’.

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