



GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GCSE (NEW)
SPANISH**

SUMMER 2018

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Unit	Page
Unit 1	1
Unit 2	6
Unit 3	10
Unit 4	16

SPANISH
GCSE (NEW)
Summer 2018
UNIT 1: SPEAKING

General Comments

The new specification and new exam format provided candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate their subject and linguistic knowledge effectively. Many candidates accessed the higher marks across the three tasks at both the Foundation and Higher tiers. A number of Foundation candidates were of an extremely high standard and would have coped easily with the higher tier, and had the opportunity to access the higher grades. Likewise, being entered for the higher tier disadvantaged candidates with a more limited linguistic knowledge. This requires a significantly more profound level of range of language and accuracy.

Role Plays

To provide the candidate with an understanding of the theme of the role play and the requirements expected of them, an introduction in the form of a script outlining the 'SETTING' is provided. It is not a requirement of WJEC for teachers to read this setting out, however, when centres did provide this information, the candidates appeared to have a better understanding of the requirements of the task and there were no misunderstandings. On a number of occasions, it appeared that the candidates had no idea of the concept of the task and the purpose of the conversation, thus showing that not providing the setting to the candidates can be detrimental to the number of marks they are able to access.

The time guide for the role play task is 2 minutes for both the Foundation and Higher tiers. This is an approximation of the time required to complete the dialogue. If the task is completed within that time it is not necessary to ask additional questions until the 2 minutes has elapsed. Furthermore, it is not an option to carry over the unused time to extend a subsequent task.

Candidates were on occasion disadvantaged when the teacher missed out a bullet point or strayed from the given script. The candidates need to be encouraged to communicate the information required in each bullet point focusing on the facts, timescales, and tense required. Additional information is not credited and often only provides more of an opportunity to make unnecessary errors. Many Higher tier candidates lost marks due to providing lengthy responses, which led to them including inaccuracies.

Communication is the key factor in the role plays. The candidates must convey the required message and where appropriate use the relevant tense. To achieve full marks at both Foundation and Higher tier, the response must include a relevant verb.

- TENSE question – pupils need to be encouraged to recognise the purpose of the question e.g. to elicit the use of the preterite. Many responses were given using the present tense.
- It was apparent that candidates prefer providing information and are not as comfortable with forming questions.

Foundation Tier

Maximum marks can be achieved in the Foundation tier despite minor errors.

SET 1:

It was good to see that candidates were able to use the third person appropriately when talking about their best friend, a topic that most candidates could talk about with ease.

- Point one - a description was required such as a physical aspect 'es + adjective' although many just provided the name of the friend.
- 'Es + character adjective' some candidates disadvantaged themselves by including this information in point 1 as they had nothing else to say.
- A good variety of responses. A verb was needed for maximum marks.

SET 2:

- Candidates need to ensure that they avoid creating confusion by stating the facts for each bullet point separately. Candidates referring to plans for further study in September in point one and specific career aspirations in point 2 with an explanation as to why in point 3 accessed higher marks. Confusion was created when candidates tried to give a detailed life plan in point one.

SET 3:

- Most candidates managed to provide the necessary information on this topic.
- The focus of point two was to elicit an opinion. Responses stating that they don't eat junk food still require an opinion to explain why.

SET 4:

- Points one and two caused a great deal of confusion. Point one clearly asks for a description of the town requiring a response with 'es' for example 'es grande'. Point two was specific detailed as to what there is there 'hay....' Simply stating where the candidate lives is not a description of the town e.g. 'vivo en' does not answer the question.
- There was a low success rate in responding well to the unseen question on weather in summer, point 3. Candidates either failed to respond or picked up on 'verano' and listed the activities they do in summer.
- Point 5 caused difficulty as it required asking + what the friend likes + to do + in their town. This was misconstrued as asking if they liked their town on a number of occasions.

SET 5:

- As mentioned earlier in this report, reading the setting can provide clarity as to where the conversation is taking place. The candidates, who completed this set successfully, were those who were clearly reminded of the context at the start of the exam. They were aware that they were in Malaga in Spain.
- Point one - requests were made for maps of towns outside of Spain.
- Point three - a large proportion stated they wanted to see monuments or places of interest in countries other than Spain e.g. the Millennium Stadium was used frequently.
- Point 4 – Lots of ambiguity in many responses as candidates failed to state where they were from. Lots of responses stating where they live, which is not exactly what was required.
- Point 5 – A low success rate in providing a past tense response. Times in the future were given, also a specific hour, day or month. Students need to be encouraged to respond in full sentences especially when the focus is to provide a tense.

SET 6:

- On the whole this set was completed to a pleasing standard showing a good knowledge of the topic.

SET 7:

- Point 1 required name and nationality. On occasion the name only was included and the name of the town not nationality was provided.
- Point three - despite being in the present tense i.e. 'tiene' for what experience do you have, the focus was to elicit a past tense response which many failed to notice.
- Once again by not focussing on the information provided in the setting, candidates failed to realise that they were actually already in Spain. Therefore there was ambiguity with the unseen question point 4, when they responded with a time in the future e.g. 'el año que viene'.

SET 8:

- A familiar topic that led to good responses generally
- Point 3 – questions again caused difficulty as the requirement was ask 'where' they eat not 'what'

SET 9:

- On the whole this set was completed to a pleasing standard

Higher Tier

Maximum marks can only be achieved in the higher tier where the vocabulary and grammatical structures are accurate. The concept of less is more is a useful guide with the higher tier. Many students provided accurate responses including all the necessary facts but then went on to elaborate and provide additional information. This often resulted in errors occurring and marks being reduced. Students need to be trained on the skill of providing accurate and concise responses.

The main errors with the higher tier were the incorrect use of tenses. It is essential that the students recognise the purpose of the statement they are required to say both in terms of factual information and grammatical structure.

SET 1:

- Answered well but for point 2, unseen question, the response needed to reflect healthy food options available

SET 2:

- Point three the unseen question was answered more successfully by the students who had the setting read out to them as they were more aware that the course would be starting in the future.
- A very low success rate in asking about accommodation.

SET 3:

- A good level of knowledge of this topic was shown.
- Point 4 caused the biggest challenge as students asked what their friend 'will do' but not what they will 'do to help'.

SET 4:

- As expected the candidates were very confident talking about the topic of friends and family.

SET 5:

- Many failed to recognise the future tense reference required in point one.
- Point 4 – the term ‘anoche’ was not familiar to a large number of candidates and affected the quality of the responses.
- Point 5 – able candidates missed marks by asking their friend what they studied as opposed to what they liked to study. The focus was to elicit an opinion.

SET 6:

- Many failed to recognise ‘invierno’ in point 4 which made it difficult to respond.

SET 7:

- A challenging set for most. The candidates did not appear to be at ease with discussing music festivals. A lack of confidence and knowledge of actual concerts both in Spain and in UK was apparent.

SET 8:

- Answered well overall.

SET 9:

- As with Foundation set 4 a number of candidates failed to provide a description of their town in point 1 and simply stated where they live.
- As with Foundation set 5 some expressed a wish to see a place of interest not in Spain.

Photocard

The time for the Photocard task is 2 minutes for Foundation and 3 minutes for Higher. This is a guide and if the candidate completes the task effectively within that time there is no requirement to ask a number of additional questions to increase the time of the task unnecessarily. There are 4 questions in total including the 2 unseen questions. It was confusing to a number of candidates to be asked questions that differed from those on the question paper. Additional questioning is only advised to elicit the required information from candidates if this was not provided sufficiently in their original response.

As expected with a new specification and exam format there will be areas that need to be developed. A lack of experience on this task greatly impacted the marks achieved by the candidates.

At both tiers it is imperative that the candidates are aware of the focus of each response. To access the higher marks the candidate must include:

- detailed extended responses
- opinions with justification
- a range of structures including some complexity
- references to the past, present and future

The questions individually don't address all the points, but those accessing higher marks created opportunities in their responses to include all the required elements.

Conversation Tasks

Overall the conversation tasks were completed to a high standard. Candidates were on the whole encouraged to provide detailed responses. Timings varied but on the whole Foundation tasks were approximately 5 minutes as required and Higher 7 minutes. The time was on the whole evenly split between the two topics. To access the higher marks candidates need to be encouraged and given the opportunity to use a variety of tenses and express opinions. Marks can often be restricted when the questions put to the candidates do not provide the opportunities they need.

Areas for improvement

Administration - The new administrative system lead to a number of challenges and administrative errors.

- Recordings were not uploaded correctly
- Recordings only partially uploaded
- The teacher's declaration was missing
- The candidates' declaration was missing
- Signatures of candidates were missing
- The list of task set numbers missing
- Foundation administration was uploaded with higher recordings and vice versa (this causes difficulties as the foundation and higher tiers of one centre are not marked by the same examiner, therefore they cannot access the administration)
- The exam for foundation candidates was conducted as higher (& vice versa)
- Candidates were given a different set than listed. The candidate must be given the allocated set unless agreed with the WJEC as a result of extenuating circumstances.

It would also be helpful to examiners if explanations were provided when candidates' names appear on a list but no recording is provided e.g. candidate was absent or changed to another tier.

Conclusion

In summary, it was a pleasure to listen to so many natural, interesting and varied responses. Examiners were heartened to see that many teachers had recognised the importance of instilling confidence in their candidates and encouraging them to complete the exam to the best of their ability without causing any undue stress.

SPANISH
GCSE (NEW)
Summer 2018
UNIT 2: LISTENING

The new GCSE offers a rigorous test of the candidates' abilities and competence in Spanish. However, it was pleasing to see that the vast majority of candidates had been well prepared for the new style papers and the overall results were very encouraging.

General comments affecting both tiers:

- Candidates often penalized themselves when ticking more boxes than required or not ticking sufficient boxes.
- Candidates should always write concisely and avoid adding extra information as this often leads to losing marks. As a rule, they should not need to write more information than can fit in the space.
- Candidates should read the requirements of the question correctly to ensure they give the correct amount of details. Giving three details in a 2-mark question can cause marks to be lost if one of the details is incorrect. In addition, some candidates fail to read the rubric or misunderstand what the question requires of them. For example, a question asking: 'Where...?' might be answered by someone by giving an answer as to 'when' instead, etc. It was disappointing to see that many candidates did not read the English questions properly and gave answers with partially correct information that did not answer the question itself.
- 'New' style questions requiring candidates to give a general understanding of the text proved problematic with many candidates unable to identify the overall subject matter succinctly.
- Some candidates occasionally answered in Spanish despite the fact that the rubric indicated that it should be written in English (and vice versa) which led to a loss of marks.

Foundation Tier

Questions 1-4 on the Foundation paper involved multiple choice questions or ticking the correct number of boxes. These questions generally had a good response although as already mentioned, some candidates lost marks by ticking too many boxes or not ticking enough. In all questions of this type, candidates should read the rubrics carefully to ensure they comply with the demands of the question.

Questions 3&4 were assessed language questions with Spanish rubrics and questions. These were well attempted in general, and candidates coped well with the additional challenge.

Question 5

- (a) Many candidates were fooled by the false friend 'suspender' and wrote that he was suspended. In the Welsh-medium papers a few candidates struggled to convey the right meaning and wrote 'Ddim wedi gwneud yn dda' instead.
- (b) Some candidates were confused by 'padres' and wrote 'father' rather than 'parents'. Again 'suspender' caused problems in this question as well.

- (c) Most candidates opted for 'disappointed' rather than 'angry'.
- (d) This proved to be a challenging question for many students. Very few were able to respond to 'Era muy buen alumno en el pasado' and many misinterpreted 'sacaba buenas notas' as 'he took good notes'.
- (e) Although 'repetir' was generally understood, 'el curso' proved more problematic which led to answers such as 'repeat the course'.

Question 6

- (a) Despite 'repetitivo' and 'aburrido' being common items of vocabulary, very few candidates were able to answer this question correctly.
- (b) This was a box ticking question. See comments for Questions 1-4.
- (c) Very few candidates identified 'antes' and most answers said 'after university'.
- (d) This was a box ticking question. See comments for Questions 1-4.

Question 7/Higher Tier Question 1

This 'new' style question identifying key information proved to be challenging for many candidates. Although many candidates were able to identify the type of event, writing two things you can do there was the hardest part of the question. This saw a wide range of responses with very few students understanding 'curriculum', 'formación' and 'empresas'. The cost of entry was well answered, and most candidates opted to answer 'you can win a tablet' for the last question.

Question 8/Higher Tier Question 2

This question saw a wide variety of answers for Alejandra's job, with a surprising number of candidates not identifying the cognate 'model'. Most candidates were able to answer how long she had been working, although a minority answered 'since she was 7' rather than '7 years'. Identifying a positive aspect of the job was well-answered in general with most candidates referring to the fact that the job involved international travel. The vast majority of candidates answered that she missed her family or did not see her family much for the negative aspect of her job, with only a few candidates giving the alternative answer that it was a solitary/lonely job. Although most candidates identified 'university', only a minority recognised 'volver' in order to give the correct answer that she wanted to go back/return to university.

Question 9/Higher Tier Question 3

There was a wide variety of answers for this question and only the very best candidates scored full marks.

- (a) In general, this question was well-attempted.
- (b) Very few candidates understood 'artículos ilegales' and many wrote 'illegal drugs' instead. Many candidates were confused by 'nacionalidad española' and there were several responses to questions (a) and (b) that suggested problems as a result of racism or different nationalities clashing.
- (c) The word 'comportamiento' was not widely understood and very few candidates answered this question correctly. There were also some confused responses due to 'los asistentes'.
- (d) Many candidates identified 'los problemas de ruido' but mistranslated 'ruido' as rudeness. Very few candidates scored 2 marks on this question and only the most able understood 'el número de detenciones'. The phrase 'respecto a los años

anteriores' meant that some students gave answers relating to respect and even respect for the older generation.

Higher Tier

Question 4

Generally well answered although a few candidates confused 'doce' with 'dos'. The type of event and type of charity did not cause many problems although for the amount of money raised, many candidates omitted 'more than' or mentioned pounds instead of euros.

Question 5

This was an assessed language multiple choice question. See comments for Foundation Tier Questions 1-4.

Question 6

The responses to this assessed language question were very positive, although a small minority of candidates lost marks by answering in English. The vast majority of candidates understood 'lugar' and correctly answered 'Madrid', although a few candidates failed to understand 'lengua de la visita' and instead gave some other details about the visit in the second part. There was also a range of misspellings for 'inglés' in the second question, such as 'angles', 'anglais' and 'englais'. 'La duración de la visita' and 'Tema del vídeo' were well answered, and most candidates were able to identify 'taquilla' as where to buy the tickets although 'tacilla' was a very common misspelling.

Question 7

The first section of this question did not pose too many problems and most candidates were able to answer (a) and (b) correctly.

(c) Many candidates wrote 'cancellations' but they did not say what would be cancelled and 'instalaciones' was regularly mistranslated as 'installations'.

(d) This was generally well understood.

Question 8

Despite being a longer text, it was pleasing to see how well this question was answered in general, with many candidates scoring highly.

- (a) Well answered with some candidates giving very full responses.
- (b) There was a variety of correct responses that expressed the idea of a perfect image, although some candidates added additional incorrect information such as 'body image'.
- (c) Again, well answered. Most candidates opted to say that the image was unrealistic although several gave the alternative correct answer that the image presented did not reflect that celebrities also work, cry and suffer.
- (d) As 'comportamiento' had already been targeted in Question 3 (c), the answer 'young people' on its own was accepted in addition to 'young people's behaviour'. Many candidates incorrectly translated 'jóvenes' as 'kids' or 'children'.
- (e) Most candidates identified 'style' with only a few answering 'bad habits'.
- (f) This was the most challenging question which saw a wide variety of answers.

Question 9

As the final question on the paper, it was anticipated that this would be more demanding for candidates. There were many excellent answers which demonstrated sound understanding of the text. However, exam technique and a general misunderstanding of the type of answer the questions required let down many candidates.

Section 1 - This seemed to be the hardest section with many candidates failing to give two clear details. The question itself seemed to pose a problem as many candidates mistook the question to be asking 'What types of school do teenagers go to?' and often simply answered 'public' and 'private'.

Section 2 - This section was generally the best attempted. Welsh medium candidates often wrote 'ffisegol' for 'physical' instead of 'corfforol', although they weren't penalised for this. Some candidates were confused by the concept of 'physical distraction' and gave answers such as 'they can be distracted' etc. Some were confused by 'fijarse en los aspectos positivos de la situación' and added incorrect information to their answer or merged their answers incorrectly, for example 'they are positive when playing sport', 'they stay positive when they are losing'.

Section 3 – This section saw significant misinterpretation. A surprisingly common error was confusing 'apoyo' with 'pollo' and many candidates made reference to 'spiritual chickens!' 'Estar con amigos' was often misinterpreted as 'talk to friends' or 'make friends' and the word 'ayuda' was often overlooked.

At both levels, there was good differentiation towards the end of each paper and as the questions became more demanding; the better candidates were able to score higher marks. The answers required were well within the parameters of the new curriculum, although individual responses varied according to how proficient candidates were in their acquisition and learning of vocabulary and their general understanding of the language. It is clear that many students at both levels were held back by a limited knowledge of topic-specific vocabulary. Furthermore, a sound grammatical understanding was essential in order to identify key points, details and opinions and recognise the relationship between past, present and future events. Deducing meaning, extracting information, evaluating and drawing conclusions are all skills that need to be developed in order to be fully prepared for this unit.

SPANISH
GCSE (NEW)
Summer 2018
UNIT 3: READING

The new GCSE offers an increased level of challenge in all units. However, it was pleasing to see that the vast majority of candidates had been well prepared for the new style papers and had been entered for the most appropriate tier.

The papers catered well for the spread of candidate ability across both tiers and there were many discriminators where the vast majority of candidates lost marks, especially in the overlap questions at Foundation Tier and the last few questions at Higher Tier.

There were many common problems which cost candidates valuable marks at both levels:

- Evidence of a lack of topic-specific vocabulary.
- Candidates producing too much information and self-penalising as a result.
- Poor recognition of key words and poor grammatical understanding.
- Candidates not reading the entire text and only focusing on finding the answers.
- Candidates answering in Spanish despite the fact that the rubric indicated that it should be written in English or Welsh (and vice versa).
- Candidates not reading the English/Welsh questions properly and giving answers with partially correct information that did not answer the question itself.
- Poor exam technique and a general misunderstanding of the type of answer the questions required.
- Single word or very brief answers did not always convey a full answer.
- Omitting verbs in answers sometimes affected meaning and led to marks being lost.
- Not being able to search for an answer when it was not obviously signposted in the text.
- Candidates not recognising common verbs in different tenses and forms.

Foundation Tier

Questions 1-4 on the Foundation paper involved choosing the correct day, ticking the correct answer and writing the correct number. These questions generally had a good response although in Question 1 some candidates lost marks by writing the days in Spanish and many did not understand 'juegos de mesa'. In all questions where non-verbal or minimal responses are required, candidates should read the rubrics carefully to ensure they comply with the demands of the question.

Questions 3&4 were assessed language questions with Spanish rubrics and questions. These were well attempted in general, and candidates coped well with the requirements of the tasks, although 'Nochevieja' in Question 3 was not widely recognised.

Question 5

- (a) This question posed no problems and most candidates were able to answer correctly.

- (b) Very few candidates were able to identify two correct details. There were several possible responses but the use of the preterite in the text confused candidates and those who answered 'he teaches children' instead of 'he taught children' were not awarded a mark. The verbs 'cuidar' and 'enseñar' were not well recognised and many incorrectly answered 'he worked with children' or 'he learned English' by focusing on the key words and not considering the verbs.
- (c) Hardly any candidates acknowledged 'aprendí' and many answered 'it was interesting' rather than the correct answer that the people were interesting.
- (d) Although 'la vida' was recognised and many answers mentioned life, many candidates failed to grasp what the question was asking.
- (e) The future tense in the text confused many candidates and the vast majority did not know the meaning of 'las personas sin hogar'.

Question 6

This was the first literary text question on the paper and many candidates found it hard to search for the answers within the text. It was clear that candidates just picked out key words without reading the text as a whole.

- (a) This did not present too many problems.
- (b) This question was answered by very few candidates as 'no llevo mucho tiempo trabajando aquí' was not understood and the sentence structure caused confusion with candidates assuming that the reason must come after 'no hablo mucho con ellos'. Many saw the word 'historias' and assumed this was part of the answer.
- (c) Very few candidates gave three correct details. This was in many cases due to poor exam technique: candidates saw the word 'secretaria' and assumed that was the answer without reading the whole sentence. Similarly, the word 'teléfono' led to answers such as 'she uses the phone with the verb 'contestar' being ignored. The false friend 'reuniones' also caught out several candidates.
- (d) The order of possession in Spanish meant that only the more able Foundation candidates arrived at a correct answer, although those who identified that she got the job as a result of her mother's help or through a family friend were awarded a mark.

Question 7

This 'new' style question identifying the overall gist of a text proved difficult for many candidates who wanted to give detailed or specific answers whereas a simple response such as 'cinema' would have earned a mark. Many candidates did not seem able to search for an answer when it was not obviously signposted, and words such as 'colas', 'espectadores' and 'ruido' led to some strange responses. Many candidates saw the word 'móviles' and gave answers involving mobile phones.

Question 8/Question 1 Higher Tier

As the difficulty level increased, fewer Foundation candidates were able to attempt all questions.

- (a) The word 'empleo' confused many candidates and answers often incorrectly referred to 'employees' or 'employers' as a result.
- (b) This was well answered and it was encouraging that the word 'abierto' was recognised by the majority of candidates.
- (c) The false friend 'carrera' was a real problem here with many answers referring to a career.

- (d) Many candidates were able to answer this question correctly although the word 'ocupación' confused some who did not realise that an occupation was a job.
- (e) The verbs 'trabajar' and 'formarse' being in the gerund meant that many candidates could not identify an answer, with the word 'training' being poorly recognised in general.
- (f) The words 'realmente' and 'distintos' here led to some very confused answers with many candidates trying to translate the sentence word for word.

Question 9/Question 2 Higher Tier

There was a wide variety of answers for this second literary text question and only the very best candidates scored full marks.

- (a) The majority of candidates knew 'nerviosa' rather than 'inquieta', but some saw the word 'impacientes' in the following sentence and assumed that this was the answer.
- (b) The verb 'ocupar' (even when translated into English) and the word 'asiento' led to some confused answers such as 'the assistants were occupied'.
- (c) Candidates needed to recognise 'fumar', 'ir al baño' or 'leyeron'. The third person plural 'leyeron' meant that this answer was unrecognisable for weaker candidates, but despite the infinitives being clear, there were many guessed answers.
- (d) Most candidates answered that she was next to a window with very few opting for the alternative answer that there was a free seat beside her. Many again seized upon familiar vocabulary and answered that she watched a film or slept which was from the following sentence and not part of the answer. In any case, candidates should take care to read their answers as 'she watched a film' is not an appropriate answer in English for the question 'Write one detail about her seat'.
- (e) This answer saw a wide variety of answers. A simple response of 'there was a problem with the control' would have been sufficient but candidates felt the need to add additional incorrect information such as border, air-traffic, passport or even drugs control.

Question 10 (Translation)

The translation saw an extremely mixed response. To get full marks, candidates had to always identify the correct person and tense and ensure that key details were accurately conveyed. Although the verb 'entrenar' was not an issue, many candidates wrote 'I train' and therefore lost a mark. Similarly, 'jugué' led to a variety of responses in different tenses. Many wrote 'last weekend' for 'la semana pasada' and 'un partido' was not widely recognised. In the next sentence, 'ganamos' was often ignored and incomplete sentences such as 'it was fantastic because we went to a restaurant to celebrate' were common. In general, a significant number of candidates failed to recognise the use of the preterite. Conveying the future in the last sentence was also problematic: 'el mes próximo' was often mistranslated and many were unable to recognise the *nosotros* form of 'ir'.

Higher Tier

See **Questions 8 & 9** above for Questions **1 & 2**.

As expected these overlap questions had significantly better responses at Higher Tier.

Questions 3, 4 & 5

These questions involved writing the correct letter, ticking the correct answer and choosing the correct person. These questions were well answered, and candidates coped well with

the assessed language rubrics and questions for 3 & 4. See also the comments for Questions 1-4 on Foundation Tier.

Question 6

- a) Very few candidates got this question wrong, but some candidates seemed to be looking for more complicated answers about her suffering and made mistakes as a result.
- b) Most candidates were able to identify that she felt useless, depressed or angry, but some candidates did not realise that the text says that going to school was horrible, not that she felt horrible.
- c) Some candidates were not able to read ahead to find the correct answer which followed on from 'la semana que viene'. Many saw the easy cognate 'investigación' and assumed that must be the answer. The word 'carrera' was again misunderstood in this text.
- d) A surprising number of candidates overlooked the time frames mentioned. The signpost here was 'ahora quiere ...'. Some candidates mistranslated 'compartir su experiencia' as 'compare her experience'.
- e) Many candidates unable to identify the answer as they were expecting to see 'porque' and did not recognise *para + infinitive* as an alternative in this instance. Rather than simply answering 'help people', some candidates who did not understand 'perdidos' wrote incorrect or made up information about who she wanted to help.
- f) 'Alguien' was not recognised by many and there were some incorrect answers as a result. Some candidates did not want to write the more general answer 'talk to someone' and named specific categories e.g. other students, teachers etc. which invalidated their answer.
- g) This was well answered although a few candidates misinterpreted the time frame resulting in incorrect answers e.g. 'boys and girls will contact her'.

Question 7

This was the question that seemed to cause the most problems for candidates. Many found it hard to identify key points from the text and write clear and concise answers. There were many examples of candidates self-penalising by writing too much or writing deliberately vague answers to cover a variety of possible answers. In many cases, omitting a verb led to ambiguity and also cost marks.

- Candidates had to be very careful to avoid ambiguity in their answers and needed to clearly indicate that the shows were aimed at young people but starred young people with problems.
- Most candidates gave the alternative answer that contestants learned to resolve conflicts and very few gave the alternative that candidates learned healthy habits. This was an example of a question where omitting a verb cost marks, for example simply writing 'resolve conflicts' or 'healthy habits' on its own did not convey enough information to earn a mark.
- The majority of candidates were able to answer this question.
- It was a challenge to give two correct details for this question as words like 'reto' and the verbs 'comportarse' and 'convertirse' confused many candidates, as well as the subjunctive of 'saber'. The words 'educados' and 'sociedad' were also to blame for many misconstrued answers. Candidates who simply wrote 'glamour school' needed to include a verb to get a mark as that answer on its own did not respond adequately to the question.

- The majority of candidates did not understand the word 'internado' and incorrect answers often referred to international or internal education systems. There was also a lot of confusion about the time frame. Many talked about 70 years ago or 70 year-old discipline.

Question 8

As the final reading question on the paper, it was anticipated that this would be demanding for many candidates. It was encouraging to see that there were many excellent answers which demonstrated sound understanding of the literary text.

- (a) This was generally well answered although some candidates wrote 'divorced' rather than 'separated' which was incorrect. Some Welsh-medium candidates wrote 'gwahaniaethu/gwasgaru' instead of gwahanu.
- (b) Candidates needed to make the distinction that holidays were divided into two rather than that she went on two separate holidays.
- (c) This question was accessible to the majority of candidates although some who were unable to follow the literary text made reference to the food from the second paragraph.
- (d) It was encouraging to see that many candidates were able to identify the correct answer but as with (c), some made reference to the food.
- (e) See (d).
- (f) Although 'sirenas' did not cause a problem and many candidates recognised 'bomberos', some candidates did not understand 'fuegos artificiales'.
- (g) This was generally well answered.

Question 9 (Translation)

As with Foundation Tier, the translation saw an extremely mixed response. To get full marks, candidates had to always identify the correct person and tense and ensure that key details were accurately conveyed. The biggest issue from both English and Welsh-medium candidates was recognising and translating the past, present and future. Candidates should always expect to see a mix of tenses in the translation and should be aware that a response only in one tense is unlikely to be awarded many marks. Indeed, conveying a past tense in the first sentence was essential for a mark. Many candidates translated 'dicen' as 'decided' and some ignored it altogether and often only included one verb in the whole sentence e.g. 'My parents think that...'. 'Sacar buenas notas' was often mistranslated as 'taking good notes' and 'lo más importante' was regularly overlooked with the vast majority of candidates writing 'more important'. Identifying the imperfect tense 'ayudaba' was challenging for some although the present tense part of the sentence was usually clearly conveyed. The last sentence was also challenging for those candidates who could not recognise the future tense.

Conclusion

At both tiers, there was significant differentiation towards the end of each paper and as the texts and questions became more demanding, more candidates left out questions and sections. Many of the same issues and common errors were noted from both English and Welsh-medium candidates, although as with Unit 2, many Welsh-medium candidates chose to answer in English or a combination of Welsh and English, particularly in the translation. It is clear that many students at both levels were held back not only by a limited knowledge of topic-specific vocabulary but also by a lack of knowledge of verbs and tenses. In this paper it is essential to read the text as a whole and not focus only on key items of

vocabulary or cognates. Candidates need to learn that the answers may not always be obvious at first glance and they may need to reread the text several times to find the answer.

It is essential in this unit to recognise the relationship between past, present and future events and candidates, particularly at Foundation tier, need to increase their receptive knowledge of grammar. It is advisable that centres ensure that schemes of work cover all the grammar points from the list in the specification. As with Unit 2, deducing meaning, extracting information, evaluating and drawing conclusions are all skills that need to be developed for this unit. Centres need to prepare their candidates to read texts of different lengths and registers with a wide range of different tasks so that they learn to tackle the variety of question styles with confidence.

SPANISH
GCSE (NEW)
Summer 2018
UNIT 4 WRITING

General Comments

Given the fact that this was the first year of a new specification, the overall outcomes and general accessibility of the unit 4 paper was very pleasing. Overall, candidates seemed to be entered for the correct tier, although at foundation level there were many exceptional performances, which suggests some candidates should have been given the opportunity at higher level. There were few problems satisfying the word count. In general, candidates were well prepared for this unit.

Foundation Tier

Question 1:

This question was generally dealt with very well, although the prompt “How you get on with your family” most certainly caused the most problems. Very few candidates were able to answer with “me llevo/me entiendo bien/mal.....”, but some were able to find a way around this.

Characteristics of successful responses on this question were short, succinct responses with secure use of verbs/tenses.

Areas for improvement are to encourage candidates to write less and just communicate the main message for each prompt. Single words are not enough to be able to score the full 2 points for the prompt. There were too many utterances containing English words.

Question 2:

Again, generally well-answered by most with the majority managing to reach the recommended number of 50 words.

Characteristics of successful responses on this question were full sentences with secure use of verbs/tenses. All bullet points in the question needed to be covered and indeed in the majority of candidates this was the case.

Areas for improvement are to encourage candidates to write less and just communicate the main message for each prompt with possibly a little elaboration. There were too many utterances containing English words. Many failed at attempts to describe the exams as stressful, so candidates should be encouraged to find alternative modes of expression where vocabulary is not known. General, basic grammar needs improving and at this level, verbs and tenses were generally poorly rendered. Very often, “la semana que viene” was confused with “la semana pasada”. Candidates should be discouraged from writing the sentence part in Spanish and part in English.

Question 3:

This question most certainly challenged the weaker candidates as they were required to write more. In many foundation papers, the answer was too short whereas in many higher papers, the opposite was true. Some candidates were unable to reach top bands for communication as they didn't understand some of the prompts. Yet again, many verb errors impeded communication.

Characteristics of successful responses on this question were fuller answers, providing the recommended number of words with a bit of adventure in tense usage and complex/idiomatic language.

Areas for improvement would be to ensure coverage of the prompts, increase grammatical accuracy and use correct verb endings and tenses.

Question 4:

On the whole, this question was well rendered with most candidates attempting it. Characteristics of successful responses were those that wrote full sentences, paid close attention to the detail in the English sentences and were secure in their use of verb endings and tenses. The structure "me gustaria + infinitive" was well drilled.

Areas for improvement; Candidates struggled to find the verb "ganar" in question (c) and spelling at times was poor with "professor" being one of the most common errors. The careless omission of "mucho" in (e) sometimes cost candidates an easy mark. Candidates' use of verbs and tenses must be secure to access full marks.

Higher Tier

Overall, at Higher tier candidates had been well prepared for the examination. There were numerous examples of excellent essays characterized by sound grammatical structures, clear terms of expression, adventurous use of language and a variety of tenses which naturally fitted the context.

Question 1:

Although this is an overlap question, the performance was much fuller and more pleasing at the higher level than at the foundation level. Characteristics of successful responses on this question were responses that satisfied the recommended number of words, covered all 3 bullet points, were able to express different time frames and fully communicate their message. Many successful candidates had ticked off the criteria in the bullet points and evidently cross-checked with what they had written. Areas for improvement would be agreement of adjectives, use of accents, use of irregular verbs, especially 'tener' in preterite tense and knowing the difference between 'estresado' and 'estresante'. Spelling in Spanish is an issue and too much guesswork is taking place.

Question 2:

This question was well-answered on the whole with Spain and Tourism by far the most popular choice of essay. Many candidates had evidently pre-learned responses, but the most successful were able to adapt what they had learnt to suit the essay title. Essays on this question were very varied as candidates were not restricted to using/covering the bullet points. They are a guide only.

Characteristics of successful responses were adventurous essays with a high degree of accuracy using complex language and secure use of tenses. Areas for improvement are to use the correct part of speech (turismo/turistico/turista often interchanged), the correct use of 'mi/me', confusion with 'nuestro/nos', mixing up 1st and 3rd person.

Question 3:

This task really differentiated between the more conscientious learners who had pre-learned essays and the true linguists who were able to deal with language on a more sophisticated level. With many candidates, the performance tailed off towards the end of the translation with the last two sentences proving impossible for some. Characteristics of successful responses were candidates who produced full sentences, recognizing when to use infinitives, the correct pronouns and the correct intensifier 'demasiado'. Areas for improvement are to recognize detail such as too much/several and less common verbs such as lose/find, preposition usage and pronouns.

Conclusion

All in all, candidates were well prepared for this examination and had been well drilled by teachers into the 'dos' and 'don'ts' of the assessment. It was a valiant performance in the first year of a new specification.



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