



GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**SPANISH
GCSE
SUMMER 2023**

Introduction

Our Principal examiners' reports offer valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. They are written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and detail how candidates have performed.

This report offers an overall 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 goes on to look in detail at each question/section of each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.ⁱ

The information found in this report can provide invaluable 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 annual 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 6 months after the examination.	www.wjecservices.co.uk or on the WJEC subject page
Grade boundary information	<p>Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the overall subject, rather than for each unit that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.</p>	For unitised specifications click here: Results, Grade Boundaries and PRS (wjec.co.uk)

Exam Results Analysis	WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	www.wjecservices.co.uk
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.	www.wjecservices.co.uk 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 invaluable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	Become an Examiner WJEC

Executive summary	Page
Unit	
Unit 1	5
Unit 2	12
Unit 3	16
Unit 4	21
Supporting you – useful contacts and links	28

Subject Officer's Executive Summary

Overall, candidates were well prepared for the 2023 suite of examinations.

For Unit 1, examiners found it rewarding to hear candidates showing confidence when responding to questions and using a wide range of vocabulary, tenses and more complex structures. Most centres demonstrated very good use of questioning, giving candidates the opportunity to show their understanding of the themes studied. Some centres maybe needed more guidance about the administrative elements of the test as well as the conduct of the tests. The photo card element of the assessment could benefit from using activities recommended by the Principal Examiner in her report.

The Principal Examiners of Units 2 and 3 have seen an improvement in vocabulary knowledge this year when compared to last year, with fewer basic items missing. This is a positive sign that the impact of lost learning is being overcome. However, some areas of basic vocabulary were not well known. Examples of useful techniques to focus on certain elements of vocabulary have been included in the body of the report.

The responses from candidates for Unit 4 were overall very pleasing to read for examiners, with nearly all candidates successfully addressing the given questions. Candidates should be reminded to carefully read the rubric and ensure that they address exactly what the question or bullet point is asking and adherence to word limits is key as longer responses that exceed the word limit often result in additional grammatical errors.

Areas for improvement	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
Unit 1 – conduct of the examination.	Guidance on conducting assessments for teacher examiners.	A website guide for teacher examiners conducting the assessments.
	OER (Online Exam Review) CPD material	Exemplar material.
Units 2 and 3 – vocabulary and rubrics.	Vocabulary list (Appendix A of the Specification).	A non-exhaustive list of guided vocabulary for candidates and teachers to refer to as well as instructions that may be used in listening and reading assessments.
	Rubrics and instructions (Appendix C of the Specification).	
Unit 4 – accuracy when producing Spanish.	Past Papers Mark Schemes OER (Online Exam Review) CPD material Exam Walkthroughs	Previous responses from candidates / mark schemes.
	Grammar requirements (Appendix B of the Specification).	List of grammatical structures that candidates will be expected to have knowledge and understanding of.
	Past Papers Mark Schemes OER (Online Exam Review) CPD material Exam Walkthroughs	Previous responses from candidates / mark schemes.

SPANISH

GCSE

Summer 2023

UNIT 1

Overview of the Unit

This unit requires learners to communicate orally in Spanish by participating in a role play, a photo card discussion and a conversation. Assessment of this unit will also take account of knowledge of, and accurate application of, grammar and structures. The three broad themes are covered across all of the tasks.

At foundation tier, this unit assesses mainly speaking but also listening skills in terms of answering the questions posed. At higher tier, candidates are expected to be able to respond in more detail and show a greater knowledge of grammar and vocabulary with a wider range of language used. Questions in each section are more complex and, for the photocard and conversation sections, more questions are asked/should be asked so the examination is slightly longer than at foundation level.

This is the first year since the pandemic in which candidates were sitting a complete speaking test as last summer the photocard discussion section was removed which made the examination shorter for candidates.

In comparison to previous years, performance was of a similar standard although many candidates found the photocard description a challenge.

Timings were generally adhered to although some were over-length, and it is important also to ensure that a quiet classroom with no background noise is found.

The tests were generally well conducted and administered by centres. We recognise the hard work of all teachers in ensuring that the process has run smoothly

Comments on individual questions/sections

Foundation Role Play

Candidates appeared to be well prepared for this section. Most candidates were able to respond to the majority of questions asked and appeared to have prepared suitable answers even if not entirely accurate or pronounced correctly. Candidates did appear to understand the need to answer with a verb in a full sentence and attempted to do so when possible. This year, more candidates stated that they couldn't answer a particular task and indicated this to the teacher. Generally, this was a good idea as lingering for too long on a difficult question can demoralise candidates which does on occasions affect performance. However, teachers need to also realise that it is possible to repeat a question if a candidate has not yet responded and more use needs to be made of this, although the question must not be rephrased. Repetition by the teacher is particularly beneficial for the unseen question. Once again it must be reiterated that candidates should be discouraged from producing long answers in this section as this can lead to error. A brief response in the correct verb form and tense is fine and more likely to achieve full marks.

Candidates found the task where they asked the teacher a question very difficult and candidates would benefit from teachers spending longer on this skill rather than just responding to questions from the teacher. Practice of different question forms would be very beneficial as this can also be brought into the conversation section as will be mentioned later. It is important to remember that all sentences must contain a conjugated verb in this section and answers such as sí/no or responses in English or Welsh cannot be awarded any marks. Also marks are deducted for rephrased answers.

Common role play card issues for candidates:

In general, most candidates found the role play 1 on social issues more challenging and centres would benefit from spending longer on this topic. The role play 4 on future study and employment was challenging when it discussed work experience although in comparison to last summer, more students had either done work experience or were working in a part time job since the pandemic so had more to say.

Overview of the 2023 foundation role play cards:

- Role Play 1 As mentioned, the topic of social issues needs to be covered in more depth. Many candidates discussed environmental issues rather than social ones although there were some good answers. Often task 2 was answered in the task 1 as they gave an opinion and then were confused that they would be repeating information which highlights the need to say less in the answers. Task 5 caused issues as it was often answered with an English context such as 'mufti day challenge' which can't be awarded as they would not be understood by a native speaker. The question task here was challenging due to many candidates not knowing the verb *ayudar*.
- Role Play 2 This was generally well done and most candidates could answer all questions. For task 1 it is important to remember not to give a film name in English as it should be a film type. For task 2 some did omit the verb and just stated *la semana pasada*.
- Role Play 3 Generally well done by many candidates. There was some repetition in task 2 and 3 of recycling this but was allowed if grammar was mostly correct. Candidates need to remember that the question does not need to be literally translated in task 4 so an answer such as *¿hay mucha basura?* would suffice.
- Role Play 4 The only issues here were for candidates who have not done any work but to state this is valid for full marks. For task 2 the response needed to be relevant to that particular job and not a general statement. Some candidates found task 5 challenging but answers such as what they studied are fine i.e *quiero ser médico...estudié la química*.
- Role Play 5 As a general rule, many candidates omitted the article with school subjects so this needs further practice as well as remembering plural verb forms for *gustar* with more than one subject. This was mostly missed. Adjectival agreements for subjects was also often missed but not needed at this level. Pronunciation errors were an issue for certain subjects such as *geografía* and *biología*. Many candidates did express opinions on studying online very well.
- Role Play 6 This was generally very well done and many candidates showed some knowledge of food and drink vocabulary. The hardest task was task 3 as some did not know any fruit at all so this could do with further practice and a wider range of language rather than mostly fast foods.

Foundation Photo Card

As a general rule, many candidates struggled particularly with the photocard description. The descriptions were often very brief and not linked closely to the picture, for example *hay un hombre*. As a rule, it would help candidates to focus on *who, where and what* as a basis for scaffolding their responses. Stronger candidates adhered more closely to the photo itself and some brought in the weather and a clothes description which was good and should be encouraged.

It may help to revisit some of the KS3 work of describing people such as physical description and basic clothes that are common. This would give the weakest candidates something to say and build confidence so that they can respond with straight forward utterances such as *Hay un hombre. Tiene el pelo negro. Lleva un pantalón negro*. Revisiting this area would be very useful before the speaking exam especially at foundation level. In addition, some basic opinion of the photo/people would be helpful *parece triste/content / es una foto interesante* or simple weather items such as *hace sol*. It would be helpful to look across previous photo sets and build up some stock phrases which could help candidates to feel they had something to say.

In the question section of the photocard discussion, it appeared that some candidates panicked and did not attempt the questions assuming they would not know the answers. Centres are reminded that repetition of questions is valid and important. Centres must also remember not to avoid questions and to also read out the *¿por qué?* at the end of many questions as, without this, there is little extension. It is important to also develop a discussion rather than a question/answer approach. Candidates generally found sets 1 and 2 more challenging. For set 1 scenarios, it would help for teachers to spend longer on work-based vocabulary such as *una empresa / una oficina*. Set 2 was challenging as some candidates did not have the vocabulary knowledge on this topic. It may help for candidates to be trained to ask for repetition more when it is not offered directly by the teacher.

As described in the mark scheme but to reiterate, to score highly for communication in this section, the information in the description and discussion needs to be relevant and there also needs to be some extension rather than just a short, brief answer. Also, towards the top of the linguistic knowledge and accuracy band, some complex language needs to be included, and this can often be subordinate clauses, which were well used by some such as *ya que / así que*.

Foundation Conversation

On the whole, this summer, there was a better balance in level between conversation 1 and 2. Conversation 1 sounded less rehearsed and more natural than last year. At foundation level, many conversations were too long and this disadvantaged weaker candidates as performance often dipped towards the end of an overly long conversation. Asking open ended questions such as *háblame de tu colegio* often produces better conversations than a series of short questions such as *¿cómo se llama tu colegio?, ¿dónde está tu colegio?, ¿cuántos profesores hay?*. Candidates would benefit from learning a few sequences of languages on each topic and then responding to fewer but more open questions. Some teachers spoke too much and on occasions, interrupted or cut the candidates answers short. A good example of a well-prepared assessment would be mostly the candidate speaking throughout.

Candidates generally coped well in terms of answering questions but a greater range of verbs in the past tense rather than just *fui* and also a better ability to switch to *voy a plus infinitive* to the future as this often required much repetition.

It is better if candidates are trained to more readily give an opinion unprompted by the teacher as this does affect the communication mark as it shows some extension like in the following example, *me gusta jugar al tenis porque es interesante* rather than the teacher having to ask why. Language such as *creo que / en mi opinión* were used naturally by some and where candidates asked the teacher a question this was often quite natural and a good feature, even if not essential.

Candidates did struggle to differentiate between *muy / más / mucho* in both tiers and the range of adjectives needs greater extension as *interesante / aburrido / divertido* were used repeatedly.

It is essential that teachers do ask past and future questions and to make sure that candidates are equipped with knowledge of a few verbs in each tense such as *visité / bebí / comí* and *voy a visitar / ir / comer / hacer*.

Candidates must initiate the first conversation in Spanish and it is recommended that the transitions between the conversations topics should also be in Spanish. In some centres, English and/or Welsh were used.

It is important that teachers do not ask a set of pre-prepared questions for every candidate as it is important to deviate from this and respond to what is being said so that it is a conversation. If the candidate is struggling, it is not advisable to extend the time of the exam by asking more questions, as this is often counter-productive.

For future series, it would be beneficial if candidates were to prepare some basic descriptions on topics which could be of use in the speaking and writing assessments. A brief description on holidays could be useful for both assessments. At foundation level, this could be a few phrases linked together such as *el año pasado fui a España, fui en avión, comí paella, tomé el sol* this would be useful for both assessments and could save teaching and revision time. Past tense descriptions would be very beneficial as candidates struggled more in the past tenses than the future or conditional.

Higher Role Play

Many of the general points about this section are covered in the foundation level information but as an important differentiator for higher tier, the sentence produced must be free of error for a mark of 3 to be awarded and this does include accurate pronunciation of language. This highlights the need not to give overly long responses as this may lead to errors. With the example of the role plays on social issues and the environment, candidates who kept to straight forward, brief responses using simple ideas such as *la basura / la contaminación* did better. With overly long responses, teachers need to interject sooner if a correct response has already been given. It is important for centres to try to repeat questions when there has been no response but not to rephrase questions as this penalises candidates. Candidates generally need more practice of producing accurate verbs in any form other than the first person and also formulation of correct questions needs greater practice rather than just practice of responding to questions.

Overview of the 2023 foundation role play cards:

- Role Play 1 More vocabulary knowledge was needed for this topic. Task 1 and 2 were often answered together as the opinion was given in task 1 so hence the need for shorter, accurate responses. Task 3 was often expressed in English. Task 4 was challenging in terms of thinking of an idea but there were some good responses such as *voy a limpiar las playas/la calle / voy a dar dinero a*. For task 5, candidates need to be aware that the question can be more widely addressed such as *¿hay mucha basura?* rather than a direct translation of the rubric.
- Role Play 2 This topic was often well done. There were some issues with task 5 as candidates did not know how to express organic food. There was some misunderstanding of task 1 to mean why is it important to lead a healthy life.
- Role Play 3 This topic was generally well done and candidates had plenty to say on this topic. There were issues with the term video games as often the English term was used with Spanish pronunciation rather than the term *videojuegos*. In task 4 the plural verb was often missed; candidates need more awareness of the *me gustan/me encantan* plural verb form as this should be sound at higher tier.
- Role Play 4 Although this role play was to talk about places of interest in Wales such as cities or a castle, wider interpretation was acceptable and many spoke about visiting a shopping centre or cinema. Task 4 was often misunderstood as do you like Wales, as *me gusta Gales* was not a complete answer, candidates were not awarded points for this. Some candidates gave yes/no answers were given which cannot be awarded as verbs are needed. For task 5 some candidates interpreted the prompt more widely and asked questions such as *¿vas a visitar Cardiff?*, rather than directly translating the rubric.
- Role Play 5 Some candidates found this role play difficult. In task 1 candidates needed to talk about this particular job rather than a general statement about a job. In task 2 personal qualities need to be practised more and candidates need a wider range of adjectives such as *eficaz / inteligente / trabajador/a*. For task 4 many candidates translated directly from English asking *¿cuáles idiomas necesito?*, marks were not awarded for such utterances.
- Role Play 6 Some candidates did not understand the unseen question or answered with yes or no. A few candidates did not understand task 3, where it was understood, good answers included *hablé con mis padres / busqué información en internet*. Task 4 was often well done by candidates using many different question forms. In task 5 again some candidates gave long answers which led to errors.

Photo Card Higher

As with the role play section, some general observations have been covered in the foundation tier information. As this was the first year of re-instating this section, candidates did find it challenging to describe the photo. Stronger candidates used the *who, where, what* scaffolding tool for the photo description, but top candidates incorporated opinion, adding statements such as *creo que la mujer...porque...* and also gave some direction pointers to the photo description such as *a la derecha / en el centro / en el fondo*. Strong candidates incorporated some understanding of the present continuous and this was done well with phrases such as *está trabajando en una oficina / está haciendo deporte / está comiendo*.

It would be beneficial to bring in some adverbs if possible and also some adjectives to describe how people appear to be feeling, such as *parece contento/a / triste*. Also, as recommended a physical description of a person with what they are wearing/what they look like would be helpful for some candidates.

Reviewing sets of photos from previous series would be a good classroom activity. Centres could analyse common features and use them in classroom activities which would build confidence for many candidates.

Candidates ought to be encouraged to give longer responses which are needed to attain the top bands for communication. Equally more complexity is needed for top bands for linguistic knowledge and accuracy and in particular, a wider range of structures and vocabulary rather than just accurate language. Subordinate clauses are a good example of natural extension and used by some candidates. At the very top end, answers need detail and this must be encouraged by teachers who should not step in too soon to move on to the next question. The unseen questions should be repeated, if needed, without this being requested necessarily.

Higher Conversation

Some of the more general points have been expressed in the foundation tier information. It is important that centres do not record the speaking tests near to noisy classrooms as this can negatively affect the performance. It is also important to note that all of this section should be conducted in Spanish with the candidate starting the first conversation. As expressed at foundation tier, this year the performance across both topics was more evenly matched. More centres also adhered to timings although quite a few were still over-length. This was a pity for some strong candidates who got tired towards the end and their performance noticeably dropped.

It is important that the conversations do not sound over-rehearsed as a natural performance is needed for the top communication band and there were some good examples of natural language when candidates asked a question for the teacher to respond. Ideally to start the first conversation, the candidate should give a little bit of information in Spanish on the topic unprompted rather than simply stating the topic area in Spanish.

It is very important that candidates are asked open questions where the candidate can give a long, detailed answer without any interjection. Stronger performances were often categorized by the teacher speaking very little and allowing the candidate to fully develop answers to questions such as *háblame de... / ¿cómo es tu colegio?*

Popular areas for candidates were holidays and tourism, self and relationships and food and drink. Career plans and the environment were less popular, however, when attempted at higher tier, they achieved a good level of success.

In order to achieve top pronunciation marks, it is important to remember that pronunciation needs to sound natural and be accurate but does not need to be at native speaker level. Equally for the linguistic knowledge and accuracy band, excellent language comprises of a wide range of structures and vocabulary, variation of tense i.e not always using the preterite but spontaneously using the perfect or imperfect, possibly a subjunctive. Subordinate clauses help to achieve longer sequences of language. When using complex features, some errors are expected but what matters is that they are attempted.

I do think candidates would benefit from having a few stock phrases which could be slotted into many sentences such as *algo que es muy importante para mí es... or acabo de...*, as this extends the sentence, but the information would be relayed in the same way. Some centres encouraged the use of phrases such as *es pan comido / mi madre siempre dice que / es una buena manera de*, but a word of caution, do not over use the phrases as the language can sound unnatural as happened in some cases

For both foundation and higher tier, it would be a good exercise to practise manipulating question forms from the second person to the first person and could be employed as a starter or any other stye activity:

Verb	Tu form question	Yo form response
Comer	¿Qué comiste?	Comí
Jugar	¿Qué jugaste?	Jugué
Beber		
Vivir		

This type of activity would also benefit the writing paper and would avoid candidates repeating the question form in their answer rather than manipulating the verb.

As mentioned at foundation tier, centres could benefit from preparing a few descriptions on certain topics to be used in the speaking and writing assessments as the link between these two units could be developed more.

We, once again, offer our thanks to teachers for all their hard work during the 2023 summer series.

SPANISH
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UNIT 2

Overview of the Unit

This unit requires candidates to respond to a range of questions in English/Welsh and also in Spanish.

There are a variety of question types including multiple choice with non-verbal and written responses; gap-fill one-word answers; selecting correct/false statements; and short answer responses.

Candidates are assessed on a variety of different types of spoken language during the assessment and can include monologues, conversations and discussions, interviews, announcements and messages.

The spoken extracts increase in complexity as the paper progresses. All questions target specific aspects of the subject content.

Overall, candidates found the paper accessible. Most candidates seemed comfortable with the style and nature of the questions. They knew what was required of them and were able to demonstrate a good command of topic-specific vocabulary in order to be able to deduce meaning, evaluate and draw conclusions from the Spanish listening texts. It was pleasing to see that many candidates understood a good deal of what they had heard and were able to respond well to the questions that were set.

Almost all questions were attempted by the majority of students. Many of the marks that were lost were due to lack of detail on the more challenging questions. Occasionally, candidates answered in English/Welsh in the section where responses in Spanish were needed.

Candidates should be reminded to always write clearly in English/Welsh.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Foundation Tier

Question 1 was an accessible start to the paper. It was set into the subtheme of *The Wider World* and covered the aspect of *Holidays and tourism*.

It involved multiple-choice questions and was generally well attempted with only a minority failing to tick two correct boxes in (d).

Question 2 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. Again, many candidates scored very well on this question.

The majority were able to answer all sections of the question correctly, but surprisingly a number of candidates were unable to identify *supermercado* in (a).

Question 3 was set into the subtheme of *Lifestyle* and covered the aspect of *Health and fitness*.

It was set in Spanish and candidates were required to match names to pictures. Overall a good performance, although a surprising number of candidates were unable to identify *fruta y verduras* and *desayunar*

Teachers could usefully do some work on recognition strategies with nouns and verbs. Like in the example below as a lesson starter task to embed this ability.

For example:

noun	Verb
<i>desayuno</i>	<i>desayunar</i>
<i>almuerzo</i>	...
<i>cena</i>

Question 4 was set into the subtheme of Home and Locality and covered the aspect of Local areas of interest.

The question was set in Spanish, candidates were required to tick the correct box and utterances were longer. Many candidates failed to recognise *barco* in (a), *oficina de correos* in (c) and *pasteles* in (d). It was pleasing to note that most candidates were able to recognise the time in (e).

Teachers could help students develop strategies to revise vocabulary. A good idea is to divide words up into *families* or groups, such as holidays (*vacaciones*) and write down as many Spanish words as they can relating to this (e.g. *playa, calor, viajar, verano*). By making associations between words candidates will be able to remember more.

Question 5 was set into the subtheme of *Current Study* and covered the aspect of *School/college life*.

It proved to be a hard one for most candidates. Apart from Q.5 (a) generally successful, many candidates failed to recognise school vocabulary such as *dibujo, teatro, Equipo deportivo*, mainly rendered as sports in (b). The most common error was in (c) where the candidates answered by giving their own opinion on what can improve as a result, which seems to suggest that the candidates misinterpreted the question, failing to refer to the text for their answer. Teachers are advised to remind their candidates that answers to the questions must be sourced from the script.

Question 6 was set into the subtheme of *Current Study* and covered the aspect of *School/college studies*.

Question 6 proved to be challenging. In this task candidates needed to deal with tenses other than the present. In (a) many gave answers such as *after the exams* or *before the exams*, after hearing *exámenes finales*. Section 2 was also problematic; in (d) many candidates answered with getting into a good university after hearing *buena universidad*, which seems to suggest that the candidates were unable to understand at sentence level and relied mainly on word-spotting for their answers. In (e) many candidates were unable to recognise two cognates, *experiencia* and *reputación* and gave guessed answers such as *it's fun*. In (b) candidates coped better and the majority were able to score a mark. It would be a good idea for centres to work on the transcript of this task to show students how to process complete utterances, rather than rely on word-spotting.

Foundation and higher tier overlap questions.

Q.1 (HT) and 7 (FT)

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

This involved verbal responses, with many foundation Tier candidates failing to score a high mark mainly in (a), where the majority were only able to lift the word *teléfono* from the script but were unable to understand at level sentence. Often candidates answered products/what you buy in (b), which suggested that they did not fully understand the context of the script. In section 2, the majority scored only one mark, with the most popular answer *shopping*. Performance overall was better at higher tier than at foundation where most of the candidates showed better understanding at sentence level, although at both tiers, *navegar en Internet* proved challenging. Teachers could use the revision strategy suggested in Question 4 to help with this.

Q.2 (HT) and 8 (FT)

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

This question involved a verbal response with brief answers. Performance overall was better at higher tier than at foundation.

At foundation level, apart from the first question, candidates struggled to lift the correct information from the script, which suggested a lack of theme-based knowledge – many candidates failed to recognise *árboles* – or translated *suelo* as floor, which in this context is not acceptable. The most problematic section for both tiers was Section 2 where many candidates gave some guessed answers, such as recycle/protect the environment, how to protect the environment/how to recycle. Teachers could use the transcript of this task to help their students identify information at sentence level.

Q.3 (HT) and 9 (FT)

This question was set into the subtheme of *Customs and Traditions* and covered the aspect of *Festivals and celebrations*.

Most candidates performed better in this question than in Question 8. The majority coped well especially in (c) and (d); in (a) many failed to understand that the text does not refer to Fede but to what the dance represents and the answer *his passion* was very common but rejected. In (b), although the majority scored at least one mark with their answer love from the text *amor*, many failed to recognise *alegría* – often translated as anger – and *tristeza*. *Sentimental* was another common (wrong) answer.

Higher Tier

Question 4 was set into the subtheme of *Enterprise, Employability and Future Plans* and covered the aspect of *Personal qualities*.

Most candidates coped well with this question which tested their understanding of the past and present relationship and were able to answer all sections of the table correctly.

Question 5 was set into the subtheme of *Home and Locality* and covered the aspect of *Local areas of interest*.

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 recording, after hearing *clima*. Only a minority of candidates did not recognise the word *norte* in (a) 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 was set into the subtheme of *Enterprise, Employability and Future Plans* and covered the aspect of *Post-16 study* and it was set in Spanish. Section 1 was a multiple-choice question which was generally well answered. In Section 2 candidates were required to complete a table in Spanish. (c) and (e) were generally well answered whereas (d) proved to be more problematic as many of the candidates seemed not to know the meaning of the word *Edad* and gave answers such as *Costa Rica/Proyecto*.

Question 7 was set into the subtheme of *Current Study* and covered the aspect of *School/college life*.

The question required free responses in English.

(a) and (b) were generally well answered. 7(c) proved more problematic as many candidates were only able to identify *estudiante* and *más* from the transcript but failed to recognise the word *costoso* and gave answers such as there will be more schools/students. (d) also proved problematic. Most candidates were unable to gain two marks as they failed to recognise most of the transcript and instead of saying students will have to earn their own money, they answered students will have/earn more money; there was no mention to conventional times, which seems to suggest that candidates were not familiar with the word *horario* from the transcript. The majority scored one point only by referring to lessons at weekend, thus identifying only the last few words of the transcript. Teachers could use the transcript of this task to work on theme-based vocabulary and understanding at sentence level.

Question 8 was set into the subtheme of *The Wider World* and covered the aspect of *Holidays and Tourism*

Candidates were required to give free answer in English. Overall, candidates performed better than in Q7.

Question 8 (a), (c) and (d) were generally well answered. For (b), many candidates gave answers which lacked enough detail to be credited and simply wrote *fake pictures*, which suggested that they were unable to understand at sentence level and tried to work out the answer from the clue in the question and the word *fotos* in the script. Q.8(e) proved problematic, as many candidates failed to recognise *han bajado los precios* from the transcript and were unable to answer correctly, in many cases giving answers such as they have cleaned the beach/allowed tourist to use the swimming pool, even they don't let the tourist out of the hotel.

Question 9 was set into the subtheme of *Lifestyle* and covered the aspect of *Entertainment and leisure*.

Despite being the last question on the paper, it was encouraging to see many candidates accessing marks here, often more than in the previous questions. The majority scored two marks in (b) and (c) each; only a minority answered incorrectly in (a) failing to link the answer to the runners rather than the sport. Only higher scoring candidates usually answered (d) correctly by giving a specific answer that would earn them the mark.

Summary of key points

At both tiers, there was good differentiation across the papers and there was little evidence that candidates had been inappropriately entered.

Teachers are advised to make use of the transcripts of the paper to help students develop their listening skills at sentence level rather than relying on word-spotting for their answers and/or jumping too easily to conclusions based on partial understanding.

This can lead to over-confidence and candidates finalise their answers after the first playing of the recording and then hardly listen the second time. Candidates still need to be reminded that answers are unlikely to be obvious and that they need to source the answers from the transcript to score points.

SPANISH
GCSE
Summer 2023
UNIT 3

Overview of the Unit

This unit requires learners to respond to a range of questions in English/Welsh and also in Spanish.

Candidates were required to respond to a range of questions in English/Welsh and in Spanish at higher tier. At foundation tier, questions 1-4 required non-verbal responses; question 5 a mixture of non-verbal and verbal responses; questions 6-9 short verbal answers in English/Welsh and a short translation for question 10.

At higher tier, questions 1 and 2 were overlap questions with foundation tier 8 and 9. Question 3 required non-verbal answers; question 4 required an answer in Spanish for (a); question 5 required answers in Spanish; questions 6-8 answers in English and question 9 a short translation.

In general candidates coped better with the papers than in previous years, and only a few had been entered at the wrong tier.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Foundation Tier

- Q.1** The first question required non-verbal answers on a text about charities falling under the Social Issues topic. The question was tackled by all candidates with a mean mark of 4.9. This would make a good revision text for pupils for the future as it contains the important vocabulary for the topic.
- Q.2** This question again required non-verbal answers and treated the topic of festivals from Identity and Culture. Candidates were given short statements to read. Although attempted by all candidates, this question proved more of a challenge and the mean mark was 3.9.
- Q.3** This was a short paragraph about family relationships from the topic Self and Relationships and was attempted by most candidates. This topic was more familiar to the candidates and the mean mark here was 4.9.
- Q.4** This was a grammar gap-fill exercise on the topic of Holidays and Tourism – few candidates did well here. At this level, candidates were unable to use knowledge of grammar rules to fill the correct boxes. The mean mark was 2.3. It is unfortunate that with just a basic application of grammar, i.e. with the knowledge that a plural noun follows the word *mis*, or that a masculine noun follows the word *e/*, valuable extra marks could have been attained, and this can sometimes be the difference between one grade and another.

Q.5 A longer text with two paragraphs requiring responses in English. The text referred to an open day in a school from the topic Current Study. Although attempted by most, the mean mark was 3.3.

- c) very few got the 'guided visits' or 'see the facilities'. We accepted 'visit the school', but we had to have 'the school'
- d) was well answered
- e) most pupils opted for the 'maximum 15 in a class' but many did not know the number 'quince' and put for example 50 as the answer. Some candidates wrote down the number without any justification and this was not awarded. Candidates should be reminded that their answer must make sense and answer the question set.

Q.6 This was the first literary extract on the subject of Travel and Transport. There were three short paragraphs and a selection of possible answers for the candidates to secure a mark. Attempted by most, the mean mark was 3.

- a) well answered
- b) we also accepted 'put the suitcase between legs' but was also well answered
- c) we also accepted 'what was really important' for this question but we did not accept flight ticket. Many candidates knew the Spanish word *caramelos* for sweets.

Q.7 Here we had the opinions of two people on what would make a good teacher taken from the Skills and Personal Qualities topic. The mean mark here was 3.

For Ada: The word *materia* was not well known and some wrote an answer containing the word 'material' which was not awarded. Digital skills was acceptable as was good communication.

For Mateo: We targeted the word *demasiado* and only 'too strict' was awarded. We accepted 'control' on its own not just 'classroom control'.

Q.8 This was the first overlap question with the higher tier and posed problems at both tiers. It tackled the topic of School Life and was about the new school uniform policy in a school in Mexico. The mean at foundation level for this question was 1.5, and at Higher Level, 3.6.

- a) no issues here
- b) we also accepted short trousers or short pants
- c) the word *director* – headteacher was targeted here. Many lost marks for writing 'director'. We accepted the American 'principal'. Because this was an overlap question with the higher tier we only awarded 'wrote to' and 'called/phoned' (not spoke)
- d) candidates needed two parts to the answer, that it was uncomfortable *in summer*.
- e) because *niños* means boys and children, this was added to the mark scheme. Many pupils did not know the English term 'gender neutral'. Candidates should be made aware that the answer has to make sense and just writing 'gender neutral' as an answer is not enough. For example, the question asks: What did Rodrigo Alavés say to the parents? Answer should say: that the school is gender neutral (not just 'gender neutral').

Q.9 This was a long literary text which was also an overlap question with the higher tier. It discussed running a marathon and came from the topic Health and Fitness. The mean mark at foundation tier was 2.6 and at Higher tier, 4.4.

- a) few candidates knew the verb *unir* although some guessed it as being 'unite'. The verb *olvidar* was targeted and we accepted 'help with problems' as well as 'forget problems'.
- b) well answered
- c) most put 'nervous' as an answer. Some put 'as if it was his first' and this was awarded.
- d) well answered
- e) many missed the part that he crossed the line *smiling*. As this was an overlap question we decided this was necessary for the mark to be awarded. Some candidates guessed 'cruzar' to mean 'cruise' over the line.
- f) some candidates wrote 'a history book', 'a biography'. We did accept 'history of his life'.

Q.10 This was the translation question from Spanish into English/Welsh on the topic of Holidays and Tourism. There is lots of scope for marks here but sadly the marking scheme dictates 0 or 1 mark so a lot of information was needed by the candidate to score marks. Most candidates attempted some parts of the translation and the mean mark was 3.

- i. we accepted town for village – but candidate needed this part for the mark
- ii. well answered in general
- iii. well answered
- iv. we accepted went as well as visited
- v. we accepted any verb i.e. and we saw/there were
- vi. well answered and we accepted 'the history' not just 'its history'.

Higher Tier

See **Question 8 & 9** above for **Questions 1 & 2**. As would be expected, these overlap questions had generally better responses at higher tier.

Q.3 This question required candidates to read statements about life in Aberystwyth from the topic Home and Locality: local areas of interest.

This question required non-verbal responses with the rubric in Spanish. This was a challenging test for the candidates with many finding it difficult to match the statements i)-vi) with the vocabulary a-h. The mean mark was 3.

Q.4 From the Wider World and the topic of Local and regional characteristics of Spain and Spanish speaking countries.

Another challenging question with the rubric in Spanish. Candidates need to show an understanding of topic-based vocabulary to succeed in this question and different words that convey the same meaning. Many candidates did not recognise what the question was asking. The mean mark was 3.1.

- a) most candidates wrote *mayo* in Spanish, as instructed but not all understood the question. We accepted *primeros de mayo*, but not *primero de mayo*: the beginning of May versus the first of May. Some wrote May in English.
- b)-e) many lost marks here.

Q.5 This question, about a restaurant in Valencia – from the topic Food and Drink required answers in Spanish. All candidates attempted most of the question and the mean mark was 4.5.

It was a copy and paste exercise from the text and did not post too many problems. Because of this the examiners were quite strict that the Spanish had to be correct. Despite this there was evidence of lazy copying e.g. *es muy ruido*. There was no need for it as it was easy to score marks here.

Some candidates wrote their answers in English and unfortunately gained no marks. There were some amendments to the mark scheme. For example, we accepted *servicio rápido* in the first box and *nada que criticar* in the second.

Q.6 This was an article about post-16 students from the topic Post-16 study. This time the question was out of 8 marks. Most candidates were able to access some of the question and the mean mark was 4.8.

Most got the first answer regarding their future but for b) some translated *eligen* as eligible which was not awarded.

Most managed to get the answers to c) although the word *título* is still not widely known. Not all got the *no creen* – they don't think (they're intelligent enough)

Many lost marks in d) for omitting 'online'

For e) we allowed 'allows students to work' but some candidates had written 'you don't have to travel' and there is no reference to this in the text.

Q.7 This was another 8-mark question; a literary extract from the topic of Employment.

This longer text posed more of a challenge for candidates with some struggling to get any marks after the first question. The mean mark was 3.2.

a) we also allowed, 'put on her uniform' and 'went down for breakfast'

b) we targeted the words 'other' and 'new'

c) this one did not score highly with most candidates mistaking '*firmar*' for 'firm' and putting, 'she still didn't have a firm contract' as an answer, which was not awarded.

d) quite well answered

e) the word '*alojamiento*' was targeted, but was not well known. 'A free stay/a new place to live' was not awarded although 'free housing' was accepted.

f) not well answered. We did not accept 'five-star hotel'

g) we targeted the word 'signal'

Q.8 This question targeted knowledge of the topic of Lifestyle and discussed shopping addiction. In general, most candidates were able to attempt some of this 8-mark question although a large number of candidates mistakenly thought that the text referred to alcohol and drug addiction. The mean mark was 3.6.

a) was well answered

b) many thought the text referred to alcohol and drug addiction. We accepted 'buying' as well as the 'shopping' which was in the mark scheme.

c) candidates lost marks here by omitting the word 'card' and just putting 'being without credit'

d) many candidates answered 'going shopping when bored'. Very few knew '*ocultar*' and also '*mentir*'

e) although most candidates attempted to answer this question, many lacked the detail required to get full marks. The verb '*gastar*' appeared twice and was therefore an important verb to know. We added 'their pay' to the mark scheme i.e. limit their pay.

Q.9 Translation on the subject of charity work from the topic Social Issues. Candidates seemed more familiar with the topic of social issues this year and recognized some of the key vocabulary necessary for this question. Tenses and pronouns were necessary for the mark to be awarded. As with the foundation tier, the mark scheme dictates 0 or 1 marks. Although many candidates made an attempt at this question, the mean was just 2.1.

i) *organización benéfica* posed a problem for some candidates with some writing 'benefits agency'

ii). Many candidates put 'soap' for '*sopa*'. Examiners accepted 'food'

iii) the best candidates understood and scored points for '*haremos*'

iv) the word '*abrigo*' has been taught and was understood by many. Jackets was accepted, but clothes not.

v) again '*diría*' was known by many of the best candidates

vi) most scored a mark for this last section and 'help' was awarded as an alternative to 'support'

SPANISH

GCSE

Summer 2023

UNIT 4

Overview of the Unit

This unit requires candidates to respond in Spanish to a range of written tasks. Assessment in this unit will also take account of knowledge of, and accurate application of, grammar and structures.

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 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.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Foundation Tier – Question 1

This question was set from the broad theme of 'Identity and Culture' and tested knowledge and understanding of the sub-sub theme of 'Technology and Social Media'. 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. On this particular question, the following difficulties among a significant number of candidates were encountered:

- the mis-spelling of '*móvil*'
- using the word '*utiliza*' for '*util*'
- several variations on the spelling of '*tecnología*'
- providing a cost on the final item proved particularly difficulty when it came to using a verb to support the sentence.
- Poor use of definite and indefinite articles

Advice to teachers:

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage pupils to write short sentences and keep it simple• A full sentence with a secure verb is required for 2 marks• Candidates must respond to the prompt |
|---|

Foundation Tier – Question 2

Comments on individual questions/sections

This question was set from the broad theme of 'Current and Future Study and Employment' and tested knowledge and understanding of the sub-sub theme of 'Employment'.

A relatively good response here in most cases with the majority of candidates attempting this response and reaching the required word count. The main shortcomings among a few were as follows:

- some interpreted the question as being about school work
- the word '*jefe*' in the rubric seemed to cause a problem and was poorly recognised
- candidates understood the rubric '*lo que te gusta/no te gusta*' but interpreted it as a general likes/dislikes rather than relating it to the theme of work
- some candidates ignored the more challenging bullet points and took the opportunity to write what they knew which produced responses relating to ideal job and ideal boss

Advice to teachers:

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Candidates MUST address all 3 bullet points to have access to the top bands• Candidates need to be able to manipulate the language to convert from the 2nd person in the prompt to the 1st person in the response• Verbs need to be secure and candidates do need to show use of topic-specific vocabulary |
|--|

Foundation Tier – Question 3

This question was set from the broad theme of 'Wales and the World – Areas of Interest' and tested knowledge and understanding of the sub-sub theme of 'Holidays and Tourism'.

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 conditional tense in the 3rd rubric was well recognised with many including very good examples of more complex language with expressions such as '*si tuviera la oportunidad...*' or '*si fuera rico/a*'. The following issues were common in this question:

- too much copying of sentence stems from the rubric with the verbs, ie not changing '*hiciste*' and using '*hiciste*' in the response. This was the same with '*te gustaría*'
- the use of the past tense was too challenging for a significant number of candidates
- many resorted to a past time marker, but then used present tense with it
- confused words such as *mucho/muy/más* (especially in Welsh-medium centres), *en/es and nuevo/nueva*
- the difference between '*ser*' and '*estar*' was not evidenced
- prepositions caused problems with many writing '*fui de España*' for '*fui a España*'

Advice to teachers:

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All 3 bullet points must be referenced• Encourage candidates to look out for the different time frames elicited by the prompts• Candidates will need to give extra detail surrounding the prompts in order to satisfy the word count |
|--|

Foundation Tier – Question 4

This question was set from the broad theme of ‘Current and Future Study and Employment’ and tested knowledge and understanding of the sub-sub theme of ‘School and College Studies’.

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 correct form. Please refer the common issues below:

Item 1 Many problems with rendering ‘*me gustan*’ and with the use of ‘*mucho*’

Item 2 The use of ‘*está*’ with ‘*cerca*’ was poorly recognised

Item 3 ‘*español*’ very often given as ‘*España*’

Item 4 The vocabulary items for lessons and breaks were poorly recognised with inventive alternatives such as ‘*brekos/relaxo and reste*’ used instead of ‘*recreo*’.

Item 5 ‘*me gustaría*’ was well covered but too many variations of ‘*idiomas*’ or ‘*lenguas*’ and the word ‘*futuro*’ were seen.

Advice to teachers:

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage candidates to know their verb formations• Know how to give opinions with reasons• Know subject-specific vocabulary |
|--|

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, but it is worthy of note that it needs to suit the context of the question. Many candidates included the same idioms right across the two essay questions regardless of the context.

Higher Tier – Question 2

This question was set from the broad theme of ‘Identity and Culture’ and tested knowledge and understanding of the sub-sub themes of ‘Technology and Social Media’ and ‘Entertainment and Leisure’.

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 technology and generally rendered very good responses with lots of idiomatic use of language and a range of tenses. Candidates that chose to write about free time were sometimes thrown by the word ‘*ocio*’ and consequently wrote far too much about their region. The following shortcomings were evidenced:

- sticking too rigidly to bullet points rather than using them as a guide only
- inability to show competence in a variety of time frames
- too many basic errors impacting on communication
- straying from the question title.

Advice to teachers:

- Candidates' written response MUST be relevant to the title of the task
- Candidates need to show use of adventurous vocabulary and grammar
- Tense/idiom usage should be appropriate to the task

Higher 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-sub theme of 'Employment'.

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 'government' and 'to create' successfully, with the verb '*limpiar*' and '*voluntario*' also proving to be too difficult. '*Cualidades*' was often mis-spelt as '*qualidades*'. The modal verb '*debería*' also caused a significant number of problems along with '*lugares*'.

Advice to teachers:

- Discourage candidates from leaving blanks in the translation
- Encourage candidates to use words with a similar meaning if the vocabulary is unknown to them
- Intensifiers and quantifiers need to be recognised by candidates.

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WJEC
245 Western Avenue
Cardiff CF5 2YX
Tel No 029 2026 5000
Fax 029 2057 5994
E-mail: exams@wjec.co.uk
website: www.wjec.co.uk

ⁱ *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.*