



GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GCSE (NEW)
SPANISH**

SUMMER 2019

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Annual Statistical Report

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

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SPANISH
GCSE (NEW)
Summer 2019
UNIT 1

General Comments

The tests were generally well conducted and administered by centres, and so we begin by recognising the evident hard work of teachers in ensuring that the process was run and managed well, as well as ensuring that candidates were well prepared. The later part of this report gives some suggested guidance in terms of best practice in the conduct of tests for the future, which we hope teachers will find useful.

All parts of the test differentiated as expected and there was no discernible difference in performance of candidates of similar ability in one or other of the role play or photo card tasks.

Limiting factors for *Higher Tier* candidates:

- Adding more than the necessary amount of information in response to the bullet points in the role play and introducing errors, which reduced the mark from 3 to 2. Teachers are advised to train candidates to do just what the bullet point asks and then stop.
- In the photo card and conversations, in order to reach the top two boxes for communication and interaction and linguistic knowledge and accuracy candidates need to present a good range of coherent ideas, but often the Spanish was correct, but the ideas lacked coherence, for example 'los museos son históricos y buenos para el medio ambiente'. Able candidates should be encouraged to think about what they say, as well as the use of Spanish.
- A further limiting factor is the limited range of vocabulary employed by some otherwise able candidates. Replacing some common and overused words could be helpful, for example 'fuimos al cine y vimos una película' could be replaced with 'fuimos a la bolera y gané dos partidos'. Simple strategies like this can lift a candidate's overall performance.

Limiting factors for *Foundation Tier* candidates:

- In the role plays, the inability to formulate questions. Here teachers could give useful regular practice by offering students a set of 'answers' and asking students to formulate as many questions as they can which would elicit that response. Whilst the marking scheme allows for partial messages, an incorrect interrogative often renders the whole question void, because in assessing the formation of questions examiners need to consider if that question would elicit the correct response.
- In the photo card and conversation, it was often a lack of range of grammatical knowledge that held candidates back.
- Occasionally in the conversations teacher question sequences were unhelpful and sometimes questioning was not differentiated effectively. Good practice is to ask open questions at the start of a sequence and then ask for details and opinions.

Conduct of the tests

A number of issues arose with the conduct of the test, and so the following guidance is provided to assist teachers in future series. Teachers may use alternative wording, but it is hoped that this will be helpful in training students ahead of mock exams, as well as in the live assessments next summer.

The timings of the test are all recommended maximums, with the exception of the conversations, which must happen within the time-window prescribed. Teachers must also observe the overall maximum timing for the test.

The following sequence is meant as a useful guide, but is not prescriptive, so centres may devise their own, similar approaches. Centres must have in place mechanisms to ensure consistent practice, where more than one teacher is involved.

Comments on individual questions/sections

The Test – what to say and what to do

In Welsh or English, at the start of each candidate recording announce:
Centre number - Candidate number - Candidate name - Set number

Role-play

- ✓ In Spanish use any phrase to cue the candidate that you are going to begin; e.g. ***‘Vamos a empezar con el juego de roles’***.
- ✓ Read the teacher prompts exactly as they are printed.
- ✓ You can repeat the prompt, but **only** if the candidate requests you to do so.
- ✗ Do **not** announce the setting.
- ✗ Do **not** add in any extra questions.
- ✗ Do **not** rephrase the prompts.

Photo card discussion

- ✓ In Spanish use any phrase to cue the candidate that you are going to begin; e.g. ***‘Ahora, la foto’***.
- ✓ Ask the **four questions** in the order that they appear. You may slightly rephrase, if necessary, to make sure the candidate understands, but you must **not** do so in a way that changes what the question is asking the candidate to do.
- ✓ It is acceptable to press the candidate for more information or an opinion using very simple prompts, but do **not** suggest information to them, such as by offering alternatives.
- ✗ Do **not** add in any extra questions or extend the discussion.

Conversations

- ✓ In **Spanish** use any phrase to cue the candidate that you are going to begin; e.g. **'Ahora, la conversación'**.
 - ✓ Ask the candidate in Spanish which topic they have chosen for the first part of the conversation – use simple words or near cognates that they can connect with the booklet; eg **'¿Prefieres 'relaciones' o 'salud'?**
 - ✓ Allow the candidate answer: e.g. **'salud, por favor'**
 - ✓ Then cue the candidate to initiate conversation 1, for example by saying: **'Muy bien, te escucho.'**
 - ✓ Ask a range of questions on the first topic for the correct time.
 - ✓ Ask the candidate in Spanish which topic they have chosen for the second part of the conversation; eg **'Ahora, ¿Prefieres 'colegio' o 'planes profesionales'?**
 - ✓ Allow the candidate answer, and then **you** can begin to ask questions for the correct time. This time they do not need to initiate.
 - ✓ At the end of this time, signal the end of the test to the candidate with a phrase such as **'Bueno gracias (name), tenemos que terminar aquí'**.
- × **Do not** exceed the total times for the conversations.

Role-plays

Foundation Tier

The overarching difficulty was that candidates were not able to form a question, so this is flagged as an action point for teachers over the coming year, as it often resulted in a score of 0 for that part of the role play. Teachers are reminded too, that the use of questions can also be a nice feature in writing.

Many candidates were also shaky with tense formation and would benefit from practice in changing the second person singular to the first person, because often a useful verb is supplied in what the teacher says and could be reused by the candidate. In the past tense interaction, it is can also be helpful for candidates to try to include a time-marker, such as 'ayer' or 'la semana pasada', because this can sometimes close the communication gap generated by a misrendered past tense.

All of the foundation role plays differentiated as expected and there was no evidence of candidate performance being affected by misinterpretation of prompts.

Higher Tier

As previously mentioned, many candidates again this year lost the full 3 marks because they added in unnecessary additional information. If they are asked to say where they want to go on holiday next year, for example, it is sufficient to say 'Voy a ir a Grecia'. This would attract the full 3 marks, because it is complete in terms of the requirement of the prompt. 'Voy a ir a Grecia, porque el tiempo es calor' reduces the mark to 2, because inaccuracy has been introduced.

It is natural for able candidates to want to show a range of skills and language, but they should be advised against this in the role play. The role play is not designed to differentiate at a level where complex language is required, so these candidates should save that for use in the photo card discussion and, in particular, the conversation.

Some candidates at higher tier also struggled to produce questions effectively.

Photo cards

Teachers should note that the top two boxes of the marking scheme for foundation tier, and the first two boxes for higher tier contain the same descriptors and so are assessed to the same standard. This notion can be helpful to teachers in carrying over the standard from foundation to higher tier and in making decisions about tiers of entry.

The format of the test is now familiar, but a major issue in some centres was that teachers added in extra questions to fill the time they saw available. It is a requirement of the specification that the questions asked are only those supplied. The effect of these additional questions is often to tire candidates and also make them doubt if they can use the same language again in the conversation. Extraneous questions are disregarded by examiners in assessing communication and interaction and linguistic knowledge and accuracy.

Teachers are reminded that some rephrasing of the questions is allowed, but this must not materially change the question. There are two main reasons why teachers may rephrase, and these are because a particular item of vocabulary included in the question has been taught most often and is most recognisable by candidates in a particular centre in a synonymous form, for example changing 'empezar' to 'comenzar', and secondly because the candidate is struggling to understand one of the unprepared questions. Here, the teacher should ask the printed question first, allow the candidate to seek clarification and then slightly rephrase, changing words as needed, for example in foundation set 5, substituting 'lenguas' for 'idiomas' or saying 'idiomas – el italiano, por ejemplo'. Always the aim of rephrasing is to allow the candidate to access the question, and this then allows them to produce an answer.

In common with the role plays, there was no evidence that performance for similarly able candidates varied between one photo and another.

Conversation

At each tier the approach to examining the conversation parts of the test needs to be differentiated by teachers to enable candidates to reach a ceiling of performance. It was pleasing to see that many teachers had approached this in exactly the right way by asking open questions first, that allowed candidates to get going, and then moving on to ask for details, opinions, ideas and points of view.

The most able Higher Tier candidates spoke clearly and, despite occasional linguistic errors, what they said was cogent and coherent in terms of the content and wide ranging in terms of the grammar, for example using conceptually challenging tenses such as the conditional perfect ('Sin la ayuda de mis profes, no habría podido) in neat formulae that did not necessarily require a past subjunctive. They also used wide ranging and less common vocabulary instead of always eating pizza, going to the park, playing football etcetera. With able candidates, this is a useful strategy for teachers to stress.

Teachers used a range of strategies too, in order to support weaker candidates at foundation tier, and these included offering alternatives, suggesting ideas and supplying some key vocabulary in their questions.

In a few centres teachers did not adhere to the prescribed conversation topics, and centres are reminded that this could be deemed to constitute malpractice.

Summary of key points

- Centres are advised to review this report as a departmental team and devise an action plan to implement any recommendations they believe apply to them. Centres are further advised to schedule and run a departmental training meeting, again referencing this report, shortly before the oral window for the 2020 session.
- These measures should ensure that practice is as standardised as it can possibly be across all centres, because it is in the interests of all candidates that there is a fair and level playing field for assessment.
- We, once again, offer our thanks to teachers for all their hard work, and would also remind you the OER material will be available on the WJEC website, which will provide commentaries and live examples of student performance.

SPANISH
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Summer 2019
UNIT 2

General Comments

Overall this year, candidates at both tiers seemed well prepared by centres for the demands of the Listening exam and were able to demonstrate a good command of more common topic-specific vocabulary. With the benefit of last year's experience to build on, it was encouraging to see that candidates' general abilities to deduce meaning, extract information, evaluate and draw conclusions had improved across both tiers.

Comments on individual questions/sections

As a point of focus, candidates should always write clearly and concisely in English/Welsh and avoid adding extra information as this often leads to losing marks. As with last year, candidates should read the requirements of the question correctly to ensure they give the correct amount of details. It was disappointing to see that a significant number of candidates did not read the English questions properly and gave answers with partially correct information that did not answer the question itself or they answered in the wrong language which meant that they could not access any marks.

Foundation Tier

Q.1 – Q.4 This involved multiple choice questions and/or ticking the correct number of boxes.

Q.1 & Q.2 These were well attempted, although 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.

Q.3 & Q.4 These were assessed language questions with Spanish rubrics and questions. The majority of candidates coped well although surprisingly few identified *la batería* in Question 3 (c). For Question 4, the most problematic were (d) and (e), with many students not understanding *responsabilidad* in the transcript and *el horario* on the question paper.

Q.5 Section 1 – This was well answered in general

Section 2 – The majority of candidates opted to give the cost of the menu, although a few wrote 'pounds' instead of 'euros'. There did not seem to be an issue with identifying *transporte* or *baile* but surprisingly few candidates correctly translated *café*, instead answering 'café' or 'caffi' in Welsh.

Q.6 (a) Although many students understood the transcript, they found it difficult to convey the concept of 'tourist office' and there were many different responses such as 'tourism office' or 'office am twristiaid'.

- (b) The majority correctly identified that it was located in the town/city centre, with very few candidates giving the alternative answer that it was next to the museum.
- (c) Many candidates lost marks on this question by simply answering that it was modern, without realising that the question was asking what was different and they needed to answer 'more modern' to get the mark.

The multiple-choice questions in Section 2 were well attempted and did not seem to cause any issues for candidates.

- Q.7**
- (a) Although many candidates scored one or two marks on this question, very few scored full marks. The most common answers were 'you have to be fast', 'you have to be strong' and 'you need mental control'. Many candidates heard *disciplina* but were unable to identify the full answer which is that you have to be disciplined in your diet or in your behaviour.
 - (b) Many candidates recognised *yoga* in the transcript but *gimnasio* was often mis-translated as 'gymnastics'. The training time of *treinta y cinco horas* caused some problems, with answers ranging from '35 minutes' to '3-5 hours'.
- Q.8**
- (a) Although almost all candidates recognised that the information was about a school, very few correctly identified that it was a boarding/private school with many taking *internado* to mean 'international'.
 - (b) The majority of candidates were able to access at least one mark on this question, although there was some confusion caused by *actividades de ocio* which resulted in some candidates unnecessarily adding extra adjectives, when 'activities' on its own would have sufficed. A small minority also wrote 'complete pension' for *pensión completa*.
 - (c) Most candidates recognised *personalizar* or *decorar* but many did not realise that you could decorate your room and just wrote 'personal decoration', whereas others wrote about decorating a house or getting your own house.
 - (d) This seemed to be the least accessible question with many candidates confusing *regulares* with *reglas*, leading to many answers relating to school rules. The word *pruebas* also did not appear to be widely known.
- Q.9**
- Although the majority of candidates appeared to understand the gist of the news report, many found it difficult to express clear responses to the questions in English/Welsh.
- (a) Candidates seemed able to access the vocabulary, but some struggled with the verb *concentrar la atención*. Most candidates correctly understood that *las especies en peligro* meant endangered species, but many did not think this through and wrote answers such as 'mae nhw'n peryglus' or 'some animals are dangerous'.
 - (b) This saw a range of answers that did not always make sense or did not quite convey the correct meaning e.g. 'ethical towards the animals', 'make people not hurt animals', 'er mwyn safio'r anifeiliaid'.

- (c) This was well answered on the whole with most candidates able to identify one or two reasons.
- (d) This saw a range of answers that did not always correctly convey the meaning. Rather than picking up litter or cleaning the countryside/beaches, many candidates misinterpreted this as don't drop litter. Some candidates were confused by *el campo* and wrote answers that mentioned camps or campsites.

Higher Tier

See **Questions 7, 8 & 9** above for Questions **1, 2 & 3**.

- Q.4** This was well answered in general, although a minority of candidates did not seem to read the wording of (c) and answered 'restaurant' or 'tourism' when they were clearly asked for a job.
- Q.5** This was an assessed-language multiple choice question and was well answered.
- Q.6** The responses to this assessed language question were very positive in general, although some candidates lost marks by answering in English or Welsh. Section 1 proved to be harder than Section 2, with *alto en inglés* not always being understood. Many candidates heard the introduction about the company (*Somos un equipo joven con un ambiente moderno y dinámico*) and gave answers such as *joven*, *moderno* and *dinámico* instead. The best candidates were able to give answers in their own words in Spanish e.g. 'habla inglés'. For section 2, *creativo and proactivo* were accessed by the majority of candidates, although many candidates found it hard to spell *no tener miedo*.
- Q.7** As with Foundation Question 9/ Higher Question 3, the majority of candidates appeared to understand most of the information but were unable to express their answers clearly in English or Welsh.
 - (a) The most common answer was that dogs are allowed, which did not correctly convey the meaning that this was the first beach adapted specifically for dogs
 - (b) Most candidates were able to understand that the café served dog food or products for dogs, but *productos alimenticios* was sometimes conveyed as products for ailments.
 - (c) The words *mascotas* and *dueños* were not widely known which caused some issues with this question.
 - (d) The word *zona* in the transcript was sometimes translated as 'sauna', and *aparcamiento* often became 'park'. Many candidates were also confused by the words *juegos* and *limpieza*.
- Q.8** Despite being a longer transcript, this was well attempted on the whole, although some candidates lost marks by writing the correct answers in the wrong places. Questions (a) and (b) were well answered and the majority were able to identify *tormenta* as the problem for (c), although there were a few responses referring to passengers being tormented! Responses for Section 2 were encouraging, and the majority of candidates were able to access marks.

Q.9 For Section 1, it was pleasing to see that many candidates understood the subject matter, although to score maximum marks, candidates must ensure that their answers respond directly to the question and are not vague or ambiguous e.g. an answer such as ‘with his friends on the internet’ would be given in response to (a) How did he start?, which clearly ignores the question word ‘How?’. The key verb *probar* was often ignored in (b) with candidates simply focusing on *cosas nuevas* instead. The adjective *entretenido* was not widely known in (c).

In Section 2, candidates often took their answers from the wrong part of the transcript. Many heard *podría seguir con mi vida normal* and *creo que a veces es esencial desconectar* and gave answers such as ‘to live a normal life’ or ‘to disconnect’ for (d). For (e), *ansioso* was often misinterpreted as ‘antisocial’ and many candidates heard *cabeza* and wrote ‘headache’. In longer questions such as these, it is essential to listen to the entire transcript and not simply focus on familiar items of vocabulary.

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. It was pleasing to see that centres have invested time and effort in preparing their candidates for this unit, although candidates could be helped by continued development of their topic-specific vocabulary and rigorous practice of the higher-order skills of inference, evaluation and deduction. As was also the case last year, many candidates struggled to process longer sequences of language, and seized upon a cognate or simple word they recognised and disregarded the rest of what was said in the transcript. On the whole, however, there were many strong performances at the top end of both papers, and it was extremely encouraging to see that the majority of candidates attempted all questions.

SPANISH
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UNIT 3

General Comments

As this was the second series of the new specification, it was clear to see that the vast majority of centres had prepared candidates well for the demands of the Reading paper and had entered them for the most appropriate tier. Despite the ramped demand of the exam, it was encouraging to note that most candidates attempted all questions and there were few blank answers overall.

As with last year, it is still an issue that many candidates are not paying enough attention to the rubrics and questions, as many lost marks needlessly by giving more answers than required or answering in the wrong language. Candidates should aim to offer only one piece of information for each mark available and they should ensure that their answers in English/Welsh are a direct response to the question. Although full sentences are not required, omitting verbs in answers sometimes can affect the meaning and lead to marks being lost. As with the Listening paper, candidates should always write clearly and concisely in English/Welsh and avoid adding extra information. Candidates must be mindful, however, that single words or very brief answers do not always convey a full response to the question set.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Foundation Tier

Q.1 & Q.2

These involved multiple-choice questions and/or ticking the correct number of boxes. These were well attempted, although some candidates lost marks by ticking too many boxes or not ticking enough for Question 1(d).

Q.3 & Q.4

These were assessed language questions with Spanish rubrics and questions. Non-verbal responses were required, and the majority of candidates were able to access marks, although many did not understand that they needed to write the correct letter in the spaces in Question 4.

Q.5 Many candidates continue to struggle with the summary-style questions and were unable to explain concisely the subject of the leaflet. A simple response such as 'language courses' would have earned a mark here. Many saw the adjectives *universitarios* and gave answers relating to universities. Although most candidates were able to pinpoint the correct details in the text, one-word answers such as 'family' or 'friends' did not convey enough information for a mark. The word *pruebas* was not widely recognised for the last section, and many students were able to deduce the correct meaning of *tutorías* and wrote 'grammar tutors'.

A few candidates mixed two pieces of information together and gave answers along the lines of 'conversations about grammar'. It would be beneficial to practise note-taking and identifying key points as many candidates seem unable to identify the correct answer in the text and give answers containing superfluous or incorrect information.

- Q.6**
- (a) This was well-answered on the whole, although *se vistió* was sometimes misinterpreted as 'visited'.
 - (b) Most candidates were able to answer this question although *emocionado* was, somewhat predictably, translated as 'emotional'.
 - (c) This question did not pose any issues.
 - (d) Although the vast majority of candidates accessed at least one mark in this question, many focused on key words such as *regalos* and then invented some extra information which was incorrect e.g. 'he is going to open his presents with his parents'. Many candidates saw the word *delicioso* and answered 'he is going to have delicious food' or even 'he is going to a restaurant'. There were also lots of interesting translations of *pastel*, such as pastry, pasty and pasta!
- Q.7**
- (a) As with Question 5, many candidates struggled to convey concisely the subject of the article. The word *turismo* seems to cause lots of problems and very few candidates were able to spell 'tourism' correctly. Common answers were along the lines of 'adventures for tourists' or 'tourists having adventures'.
 - (b) It is a repeated problem that candidates seem able to understand the meaning of the text as a whole but are unable to identify the exact answer, instead answering different questions. Many seemed to mix up their answers for (b) and (c).
 - (c) Many candidates seize on easily recognised words, such as *nuevas experiencias*, and assume this is the answer. Very few here saw that the answer to this question started with *Lo que buscan es ...* and they focused on the wrong part of the text instead. It is essential that candidates read the whole text and do not simply concentrate on cognates or familiar items of vocabulary.
 - (d) This question proved problematic for many candidates. Many simply answered 'agency' and did not look for sufficient information in the text to answer fully.
- Q.8**
- Many candidates seized upon familiar or easily recognisable words such as *conectar*, *visitarse* and *reales* and made up answers that were not in the text. For the first question, many identified *intereses similares* and wrote 'similar interests' which does not give a correct response to the question. It is frustrating that candidates do not check to see if their English/Welsh answers respond directly to the question itself. In this case, for example, checking 'similar interests' against the question (Write **two** ways technology can help with friendships) would indicate that the response is not valid, and candidates would then need to go back to the text to ensure they found more information. Many were confused by *visitarse en caso de enfermedad* and mistook *caso* for *casa*, writing answers like 'go to their house' or 'visit them at home'. The word *reales* led to many incorrect answers such as 'they are not real' and a significant number of students wrote 'paedophiles' for *perfiles*.

Q.9 With the benefit of last years' experience, the majority of candidates were able to cope with the challenge of this literary text. As already mentioned, however, many candidates continued to focus on familiar or easily recognised words and they did not look for the correct information in the text.

- (a) Most candidates were able to convey a suitable answer here.
- (b) Understanding the verb *comportarse* was key to this question, and it was clear that many candidates did not recognise the verb. Having said that, many candidates were able to access a mark with some creative answers based on the vocabulary that they did recognise.
- (c) The question asked for a detail about break time, but a significant number of candidates ignored the information relating to *el recreo* and instead seized upon some other part of the text such as talking to his imaginary friend or sharing his sandwich.
- (d) Many candidates did not realise that *historias* can also mean stories and there were many answers relating to 'history' as a result e.g. 'she helps him with his history homework' or 'she sits by him in history', even 'she tells him stories about history'.
- (e) This was generally well answered, and most candidates were able to access at least one mark.

Q.10 Translation

As with last year, 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. A surprising number of candidates were not able to translate *generoso* and the word *siempre* was often ignored. *Mañana* was often mistranslated, with the knock-on effect that *voy a visitar* was then conveyed in the wrong tense. *Vamos a salir juntos* saw a wide variety of incorrect responses, often in the wrong person and tense, and *juntos* was largely ignored. The last sentence was well-attempted in general although candidates who ignored the verb *tener* and wrote 'friends are very important' did not get the mark.

Higher Tier

See **Q.8 & Q.9** above for **Q.1 & Q.2**. As expected, these overlap questions had significantly better responses at Higher Tier.

Q.3 This was an assessed-language question which required candidates to write down the correct name. This was generally successful although many candidates were not able to make the link between *tareas* and *deberes*.

Q.4 This assessed-language question required a response in Spanish. It was well attempted on the whole, although some candidates could not find the correct duration of the journey, with many adding together the two times in the text. The word *instalaciones* in the question confused some candidates, and although the vast majority were able to identify *cafetería* and *terraza*, *aula* was often ignored and answers such as 'las maravillosas vistas' or 'el paisaje de Gower' were not uncommon. A number of candidates answered in English/Welsh and were unable to access any marks.

- Q.5** This was an assessed language question that required candidates to tick the six correct boxes. There seemed to be no major issues with comprehension of the text and statements, but as is always the case, some candidates ticked too many or not enough boxes.
- Q.6**
- (a)** The majority of candidates were able to access a mark here, although some wrote only 'pollution' which was not sufficient for a mark. A few also mistook *país* for Paris!
 - (b)** This caused no major issues.
 - (c)** This was well answered in general.
 - (d)** Although candidates understood the subject matter, the lack of a verb in English often prevented them from accessing any marks, e.g. 'climate change' or 'clean fuels' on its own did not actually answer the question. Similarly, partial responses such as 'breathe clean air' did not score any marks. 'Reduce circulation' was a common response as many candidates did not know the word *circulación*, and many wrote 'respire' instead of 'breathe' due to the verb *respirar* in the text.
- Q.7** The responses to this longer text were encouraging, although there were many instances of candidates giving otherwise correct answers in the wrong place.
- (a)** It was pleasing that many students recognised *etapa* and were able to refer to a new stage in your life, although a minority gave answers such as 'having a new life' which didn't correctly convey the meaning.
 - (b)** Many candidates correctly interpreted *Aprovecha las actividades que ofrece tu colegio* although there were occasionally some unusual renderings of 'extra-curricular activities'.
 - (c)** As previously mentioned in other questions, many candidates clearly understood the text, but only gave partial answers, such as 'meet new people' which did not answer the question in English/Welsh. Answers were often without a verb e.g. 'sociable' or 'new people' which reflected an understanding of vocabulary but not of the demands of the question.
 - (d)** This was well answered in general.
 - (e)** It was encouraging to see many candidates achieving full marks on this question, although the key to this was writing concisely and without ambiguity.
 - (f)** There was more than one option here, and many candidates were able to avail themselves of a mark, although the word *carerra* continued to confuse many.
- Q.8** The literary text itself seemed to be accessible, although candidates were struggling to select the correct answers for the questions, with many giving answers for (b) in (a) and vice versa.
- (a)** The words *alcalde* and *inversión* confused many candidates, even though it was possible to get two marks without even mentioning 'mayor' or 'investment'.

- (b) *Miles de casas* was often interpreted as ‘miles of houses’ or ‘millions of houses’. A common mistake was to translate *la rehabilitación de las casas más antiguas* as ‘rehabilitation of houses’ or ‘houses were rehabilitated’, which did not make sense in English.
- (c) Not many candidates answered this question correctly, with *los años cincuenta* commonly translated as ‘fifty years ago’.
- (d) Many candidates appeared to guess this question, although those who recognised *confianza* and who were able to deduce the meaning of *delincuencia* did well.

Q.9 Translation

As with the Foundation tier, the translation saw an extremely mixed response. The requirement to identify the correct person and tense meant that many candidates lost marks due to carelessness. The first and second sentences were generally well translated, although a number of candidates ignored *vamos* and wrote ‘I go’. *La última vez* did not seem to be widely known and many candidates did not recognise that this sentence required the preterite. *El postre de arroz* caused many problems, but candidates who did not know all the vocabulary were nevertheless able to score a mark by conveying the meaning, e.g. ‘a rice dish’, ‘a typical dessert’. The main issue in the next sentence was *pasamos una noche increíble* and this was often conveyed as ‘it was an incredible night’ or ‘I had an incredible time’. Although *riquísimo* did not appear to be widely recognised, the majority of candidates were able to offer suitable valid alternatives. Many candidates lost marks in the last sentence by not conveying the future tense for *volveré* nor the idea of returning or going back to the restaurant. There was often a tendency to guess at words and give an incorrect translation, rather than trying to convey the meaning in a different way, for *el pastel cubierto con leche* and candidates would have been wiser to simply write ‘milk cake’ or ‘cake with milk’ rather than guessing and rendering the sentence incorrect e.g. ‘cube cake’, ‘Cuban cake’ and even ‘carrot cake’.

Summary of key points

- As was also the case with the Listening paper this year, it was encouraging to see that many centres had clearly dedicated time to working on the skills of deducing meaning, extracting information, evaluating and drawing conclusions. Nevertheless, the biggest issue was that many students at both tiers were focusing only on familiar items of vocabulary and often ignoring the verbs and structures that would have given meaning to their answers. As was noted after last year’s exam, it is essential to read the text as a whole and not focus only on key items of vocabulary or cognates. Answers are unlikely to be obvious at first glance and candidates should expect to reread the text several times to find the correct response.

- Many of the same issues and common errors were noted from both English and Welsh-medium candidates, and a number of Welsh-medium candidates chose to answer in English or a combination of Welsh and English, particularly in the translation. As already mentioned, the majority of candidates were entered for the most suitable tier, although in both Listening and Reading this year, there were a few centres who had entered entire cohorts for the Higher paper when a combination of both tiers would have been more suitable for the ability range of the candidates. For future reference, it is very useful for teachers to be aware that the pattern and layout of the papers is very similar to the Eduqas equivalents, and so the Eduqas papers are very useful for additional practice.

SPANISH
GCSE (NEW)
Summer 2019
UNIT 4

General Comments

Foundation Tier

Given this was the second series of the specification, the overall outcomes and general accessibility of the unit 4 paper was very pleasing, with the majority of candidates well prepared. Overall, candidates seemed to be entered for the correct tier, although at Foundation Tier there were many exceptional performances again which left one wondering if candidates should have been given the opportunity at Higher Tier. There were few problems satisfying the word count. The question titles allowed candidates scope to produce interesting work with many imaginative pieces of writing.

Higher Tier

There were some excellent, imaginative responses to the questions on this paper and candidates were clearly entered at the right level. There were numerous examples of excellent writing characterised by sound grammatical structures, clear terms of expression, adventurous use of language and a variety of tenses which naturally fitted the context.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Foundation Tier

- Q.1** This question was generally answered well, with some parts being more successful than others. Out of all six parts, 4 and 5 seemed to be those which were attempted least. The below prompts displayed the following strengths and weaknesses:
- Description of your town/village: the majority of candidates were able to score the full marks by utilising sentences, such as 'mi pueblo es' 'grande', 'pequeño', 'feo', 'antiguo' or 'moderno'. Some candidates were not able to create full sentences, and solely listed adjectives.
 - What is there in your town/village – most candidates were able to create full sentences listing facilities in their town, e.g. 'en mi pueblo, hay' – typical places included 'parque', 'supermercado', 'playa' and 'restaurantes'. A number of candidates often used the incorrect verb, often utilising 'es' instead of 'hay'.
 - What do you like or dislike about your town/village – successful candidates were able to write full sentences about what they liked or disliked, utilising 'me gusta', 'me encanta', 'no me gusta' or 'odio'. Self-penalising occurred with a lack of verb agreement when talking about plural concepts, i.e. 'me gusta' instead of 'me gustan'. Some candidates also followed this up with a justification, though this was not necessary to gain access to the two marks.

- Where your house is – only a few students were able to access the two marks by correctly using ‘está’. Some candidates were able to be creative and provide sentences such as ‘vivo en _____ en Galés’. Too often, candidates solely included the town or street name and therefore, deemed to be proper nouns scoring 0 points.
- How do you travel in your town/village – most students in this question were only able to produce sentences without ‘viajo’ e.g. ‘en bus’, ‘en avión’, ‘en autobús’.
- Your favourite place in your town/village – a number of candidates simply wrote proper nouns, e.g. Nando’s, JD Sports etc. which did not provide any marks. Successful candidates were able to put these into a full sentence. A number of candidates left gaps or wrote ‘place’, not knowing the Spanish for place; some were able to change the sentence structure to ‘en mi pueblo prefiero ...’ to get around this issue.

Generally speaking, the most successful candidates wrote grammatically accurate, short and succinct answers without running the risk of self-penalising. Some candidates were clearly confident in their abilities, but often scored 1 mark due to attempting to use complex language, thus leading into issues with grammatical accuracy. Areas for improvement are recommending students to not use proper nouns (e.g. restaurant or shop names) but to use ‘restaurante’ or ‘centro comercial’ to allow them to score marks. Too many answers also utilised English. Encourage candidates to get the verb correct in the sentence.

- Q.2** Most candidates were able to meet or exceed the 50 word requirement, though a surprisingly large proportion of students wrote approximately 30-35 words, thus not meeting the requirement. Successful attempts at this question were written in full answers to meet all of the bullet points listed with secure verbs, tenses, and gender/number agreements. Almost all students who attempted the question provided both information and opinions.

There were too many examples of utilising English in the middle of the sentences where students were unable to recall the Spanish during the exam – writing part in English and part in Spanish should be discouraged. An area for improvement here would be to think about the full sentence before committing to it and not knowing how to continue through in Spanish. Some candidates misinterpreted the question to talk solely about sport; others wrote generally about their hobbies and a minority misinterpreted ‘escribe un correo electrónico’ as an essay about social media and technology but these were few and far between.

- Q.3** This was most certainly challenging for the weaker foundation candidates, but a number seemed to thrive in this question and were able to reach the higher mark bands. In fact, a number of students appeared to have been entered for Foundation Tier when they showed evidence in this question that they could have attempted the Higher Tier paper. However, some issues arose whereby it was clear that an answer on ‘education’ had been pre-learnt, meaning that it did not meet all mandatory bullet points. For example, students often wrote about what they studied last year and what they plan to study next year, not meeting the requirements of ‘yesterday’ and ‘tomorrow’. Therefore, whilst they may have used tenses correctly, they would not have met the requirements of the task.

A surprisingly high number of students misinterpreted ‘mañana’ for in the morning, not tomorrow, and therefore, if they wrote ‘por la mañana’, it was clear that they were not talking about tomorrow.

A number of students also simply lifted the bullet points to include in their writing, leading to ambiguities when writing in the second person within a first person perspective article.

A surprisingly high number of students were unable to spell 'profesor', with variants such as professor/ proffesor / proffessor appearing frequently. Likewise, when talking about favourite subjects, students often confused 'me' and 'mi', e.g. 'mi gusta' and 'me asignatura favorito'. Too many students used anglicised words, such as 'subjecto', 'chemica', 'physica'.

Tenses and correct verb endings continue to be an area for improvement, with many students simply lifting 'ayer estudiaste' and 'mañana vas a estudiar', with others confusing estudié for the first person future tense and estudió for the first person present.

Since this question appeared to have been well-prepared in advance, many students also spoke about school uniform, school rules and their plans for university. Whilst some students were able to handle these topics well, for other students it hindered the communication and accuracy elements of their answers. Therefore, best responses were those which met the three mandatory elements, providing good detail and justifications for their opinions.

- Q.4**
- (a)** A number of candidates wrote 'me gusta las vacaciones con mi familia', leaving out the verb. Some students were creative and utilised 'viajar' in place of 'ir de vacaciones'.
 - (b)** Most candidates were able to say 'es importante', but others could not translate 'travel'. Only a small number of candidates were successful in translating 'abroad' – anglicised versions, including abroado were found, though others were more creative in saying 'a países diferentes'
 - (c)** This question was a high score for a large proportion of candidates, though some did confuse 'el año pasado' with 'el año próximo' or 'el año que viene'. Also, there was much confusion between fui and fue. Some students said 'español' instead of 'España'; fewer students often wrote 'pesado' for 'pasado'.
 - (d)** Only a very small number of students were able to translate winter correctly; most inaccuracies came from 'verano', 'hiver' (French) – some students tried to be creative saying 'en el frío'. Some students struggled to translate 'especially', and thus this sentence often scored 1 mark only across a majority of candidates.

This answer was fully correct for a large proportion of students, who had clearly understood 'me gustaría + infinitive'. Some inaccuracies included 'mi gustaría', 'me gusta' and 'visito' or 'visita'.

Higher Tier

- Q.1** This was an overlap question with the Foundation tier. Most candidates who sat this question provided fuller answers which warranted higher marks. Characteristics of the more successful responses met the word requirements, covered all three mandatory bullet points and had been proof-read prior to the end of the exam. Accents continued to be an oversight, which often led to ambiguities, especially within tense endings.

Clearly, this answer had been well-prepared for, similarly to those in Foundation but this was often at the detriment of accessing the higher bands, due to self-penalising, or not meeting the mandatory bullet points. Even if they had covered future and past tenses, if they used a different and specific time marker, e.g. el año pasado, this was deemed to not meet the requirement of the question.

Areas for improvement would be learning irregular verbs in the preterite tense, especially tener (tuve) and hacer (hice). Moreover, students need to be able to use 'ser' and 'estar' in the right contexts, with 'es' and 'está' appearing in too many circumstances where it was not appropriate. Likewise, students often confused 'ahora' with 'ahorra' and 'pero' with 'perro'.

- Q.2** This question was generally well-answered, but evidently more challenging. More students opted to choose question 2b) on world problems. It seemed as if a number of students had pre-learnt essays to write on this, but given the flexible scope of the questions, this was not an issue. Successful characteristics of high-scoring answers included secure usage of past, present, future and/or conditional tenses, with reasons and justifications and attempts and complex language, including a wide range of idioms.

In some centres, it seemed as if this topic had not been covered, as there were patterns of a lack of understanding, even amongst students who scored highly on questions 1 and 3. Some poor responses which gained minimal marks included students writing about the weather in Spain, where they went to Spain last summer – therefore, missing the expectations of the question.

Areas for improvement would be to encourage the learner to circle or write down which question they are attempting. This year, there could have been some cross-over with answers covering the environment being relevant for both a) and b), with one focusing on Spain specifically and the other, the world. Moreover, a number of students included interference with other languages, including French (émissions) and Welsh (sbwriel).

- Q.3** The translation task really differentiated students between those that had repeated pre-learnt answers to those who could spontaneously use and manipulate language to convey meaning. Performance in this translation was fairly uniform, with a minority of candidates scoring full marks. Some wrote part in Spanish, part in English, and others simply did not attempt the question.

- (a) Most candidates were able to confidently translate, with variations on sano, sana, sanamente, saludable and saludablemente. Generally, this sentence scored full marks.
- (b) Few knew how to translate 'apart from' – most students either fully ignored this clause or sentence, or were able to confidently translate to 'además de', or 'es importante ... pero también es esencial...'
- (c) Most were able to translate I went to 'fui' but others said 'fue' or 'voy'. A very small minority were able to accurately say the times (de... a... / desde... hasta...) with a surprising number of candidates saying (a... de... / a... a... / de... de...) leading to ambiguities. Others simply said 2-4 or 'dos – cuatro'. A lot of candidates also confused the afternoon for 'la noche'.

- (d) Verbal agreement was a confusing issue – if candidates had said ‘los deportes’, only a small minority were able to provide ‘me gustan’. A pleasing number were able to recall ‘cansado’ but the majority of these utilised ‘soy’, ‘fui’ or ‘era’ instead of ‘estaba’ or ‘estuve’. Some candidates displayed interference from other languages, e.g. fatigué, fatigado. Some displayed creativity in effectively saying ‘tuve/tenía sueño’.

Most candidates scored full marks in this section, though some often included ‘mucho’ instead of ‘más’.

Summary of key points

- All in all, I felt that candidates were well prepared for this examination and had been well drilled by teachers into the ‘dos’ and ‘don’ts’ of the assessment. The overall feeling was that candidates seemed more confident with the assessment this year.



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