



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
January 2013**

Spanish

SPAN1

(Specification 2695)

Unit 1: Listening, Reading and Writing

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

It was pleasing to note that there was increase in student numbers for SPAN1 paper again this year. The mean mark for the paper was 78.1.

Section A

Listening Section

Question 1 Los mejicanos requieren tallas grandes

The rubric instructs students to answer in English. Some students answered in Spanish and therefore were unable to score any marks.

Question 1 (a) was answered well. (b) caused a few problems as some students, on hearing “*fabricar*” translated it as “factories” or “fabric”. “*Epidemia de enfermedades*” also proved to be challenging with replies such as “epidemic illness”, which was incorrect. Some found a correct synonym, “pandemic”, but others spoke of “increase or rise of sickness”, which was incorrect. (c) was well-answered, although there were a few students who answered that “the government has not done anything”. In (d) some students did not include any reference to the health system or service of the country and simply answered ‘the country’s health’ which was not accepted. Item (e) was answered well. In (f) the majority of students answered well. Incorrect answers included “Mexican population” or “clothes builders”. (g) was considered to be an accessible question, but many students incorrectly answered with the numbers 16, 15 and 50. In (h) the majority of students scored one of the two marks with the answer “lack of exercise”, but students gave many incorrect answers for “*hábitos alimenticios*” such as “food, diet, unhealthy, snacking habits” or even “alimentation habits”.

Question 2 ¡La “chica de moda” es un hombre!

Overall, this passage about a male model in the female world of fashion was well understood and accurately answered.

Question 3 La nutrición para los hombres

Marks were high for this question, with all seven parts being answered correctly by the majority of students. The only re-occurring issue was students answering ‘a’ instead of ‘m’.

Question 4 Censura en el mundo de las películas

All of the questions were, in the most part, accessible to students and there were no obvious difficult questions. This question was answered well by those who ‘lifted’ concisely. For many students the desire to develop their own answer is understandable, but inaccurate manipulation of the text and grammar can all too easily invalidate the response. Regrettably, a small number of students answered in English and scored no marks.

(a) was well answered. The only issue here was the spelling of ‘*proteger*’ spelt as “*protejer*”. In (b) students often missed the word “*casi*”, which meant an incorrect reply. Furthermore, being a question with answers in Spanish, English spellings which made the answer void were not accepted, eg “Europe, o países European”. (c) was generally well answered. Item (d) brought some surprising answers. The required answer was the letter “X”. Nevertheless, there were many incorrect answers like “k, q or y”. In (e) although the question required two answers many students wrote all three. In general, the question was well-answered. The only common problem was the mis-spelling of ‘direction’ for ‘*dirección*’. Again (f) was generally well-answered. Some students did not give the letter, giving the answer “*restringido*” instead, which did not answer the

question. In item (g) as expected, the word “*palabrotas*” gave a variety of spellings: “*para brotas*, *palabarotas*, *malas brotas*” and even “*pallabritas*” all of which were not credited. In (h) the numbers “17” and “16” were surprisingly confused and many students omitted ‘*menores de*’ in the answer. In (i) the more able students lifted the answer correctly: “*son un elemento fundamental*”, whilst others copied the sentence in full. Surprisingly many students wrote “*un alimento fundamental*” as the answer which is incorrect.

Reading Section

Question 5 Seguridad personal para los jóvenes en el ordenador

This question caused little difficulty with a lot of the vocabulary being accessible to all students. The most challenging vocabulary items proved to be ‘*dañar*’, ‘*pagar*’ and ‘*contraseñas*’.

Question 6 Rosaura se va a los premios Goya

Overall students were able to spot the correct options that had to be chosen. The most difficult element arising when students did not understand the word ‘*abogada*’ and therefore not relating it to (a) ‘*derecho*’.

Question 7 ¿De dónde viene ese mal olor?

This gap-fill exercise was not well answered with many students unable to spot the grammatical clues in the text. The first item proved to be the most challenging ‘*poner fin*’ being the correct answer which was confused with another infinitive in the list ‘*evitar*’. In this case, students did not spot the use of the preposition ‘*a*’. The other difficulty was students not understanding ‘*selva*’ as the answer to the third box. Students are reminded to always make an attempt to answer in this question type, rather than leave a blank box.

Question 8 Un buen comienzo para el matrimonio de William y Catherine

Generally, this question was well answered with the main stumbling block occurring when students copied too much from the text. As always, it was important to know just how much information to give in order to answer the question satisfactorily. In (b) some students correctly manipulated the language giving the answer “*más cercana o cerca*”. In (c) some students misunderstood the job and put, “*ama de casa*”, instead of ‘*piloto*’ or ‘*el futuro rey*’. In (d) a few students did not copy all the required text writing “*son jóvenes, guapos y ricos*”, and leaving out “*lo tienen todo*”. Others gave a totally incorrect answer of “*los invitados a la boda*” but these only occurred in a small number of cases. Items (e) (g) and (h) were well answered by the majority of students. Although (f) brought a series of unexpected answers such as “*la sociedad zoológica*, *los invitados de la boda*, *una página web*” and even “*los novios*”. Some students interpreted “*vacas*” in (i) as a shortened form of “*vacaciones*” and so incorrectly offered “*vacaciones en Sudáfrica*” as a reply.

Question 9 Grammar

As this question is grammatical, it is important for students to provide a totally accurate answer in order to score the mark – this includes the accurate use of accents. (a) “*Mañana*”, at the beginning of the sentence required a future tense and a surprisingly high number of students answered using the present tense “*encuentras*” whilst others used the stem-changing form and added a future ending. The accent here at the end of the word was important. (b) was generally well answered though again the accent caused a problem. In (c) the ‘*se*’ was important and some students omitted it and did not gain the mark. A variety of correct answers were accepted in item (d). Question (e) highlighted a poor understanding of the use of ‘*gustar*’ and many students once again omitted the accent. Item (f) saw a high number of students responding with

'veamos' indicating that students had recognised the use of the present subjunctive. Question (g) needed a past participle '*hecho*' but unfortunately many students did not recognise it as an irregular participle and incorrectly answered '*hacido*'.

There is still work to be done with some students who do not have the required grammatical understanding, for example, providing answers '*anunciarsen*' and '*viemos*'.

Section B

Writing Section

Question 10

The essay on television was the most popular of the three available to students. Crucially, it was not well answered as many students failed to justify their opinions of the television programmes. The essay was not about obesity but about specific, named programmes. Almost invariably, soap operas, 'reality' shows and competitions were judged to be "*basura*" but little justification for such statements/viewpoints were made. Lots of students mentioned 'Coronation St', 'Eastenders' and 'Hollyoaks' and there was some useful comment on them regarding their content but it was rarely of any real depth. 'Africa' was chosen by many as a good example of a documentary; a sensible choice that could be described as an example of good TV. 'Miranda' was stated to be a good comedy programme but few/none could explain why. There appeared to be lack of thinking and planning before essay writing began and so many students could only be awarded 'Limited' or 'Sufficient' for Content.

The main issue is that students are unable to manipulate the language and ideas that have been learnt in lessons and use it to answer the question posed and not to simply list all the positive and negative aspects of television today. The important thing is for students to read the question carefully and to respond to it directly.

Question 11

Students and teachers should be aware that writing about music can often be more difficult than at first appears and essays were often not well done. Insufficient knowledge of a range of artists was on show here. Some of the world's most popular programmes such as X Factor were described as "rubbish" but few students could justify their opinion. To answer the question well, students needed to exemplify and justify their thoughts on good and bad singers.

For a better Content based answer, far greater thought and planning was required. There was little historical perspective given and the majority of students seemed to base their essay mainly on 'artists' of 2012/2013. Some students talked of the lack of talent and use of technology to improve a singer's voice and there was some worthwhile mention of controversial lyrics and more importance on image and selling records rather the emphasis on the voice.

Question 12

This question was the least popular but by far the most accessible of the three to answer. Content marks were easy to find. There were many very good essays. A large majority of students who attempted this question were awarded Good or Very Good for Content.

Some students decided that rather than talking about the quality of a good parent they would focus on the qualities of the child. The general consensus was that the main characteristics were: respect, being able to listen, be strict when appropriate and love.

Guidance for Writing Section

Question Paper and Answer Booklet

Students must write using single line spacing when writing their answer for this section. Double line spacing (i.e. writing on alternate lines) must not be used. Only those students who cannot complete their answer in the answer booklet must use additional answer sheets; they must not use the Essay Planning Sheet for this purpose as it is not sent for marking.

Essay Planning Sheet

The Essay Planning Sheet must be used for the plan only and will not be assessed. Essay Planning Sheets, together with any inserts, must not be enclosed with the question paper and answer booklets when they are despatched for marking.

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| ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR RESPONDING TO THE WRITING QUESTION |
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Are students expected to include an introduction and conclusion in their essay? If so, how many words approximately?

Students are not expected to include an introduction or conclusion, but it enhances the structure if there is a brief introduction and a concluding short paragraph, possibly including a personal response. One of the criteria is for a logical structure and this would enhance the overall structure of the essay.

Is a personal opinion valid as a point in the argument?

Yes, we give ticks for personal opinions as we consider them valid as developments.

Should each point/opinion be backed up with an example?

Generally, yes. There must be plenty of justification of points/opinions in order to gain marks in the higher bands.

Are the examiners looking for a certain number of points/opinions plus examples, eg 3 arguments for one point of view with evidence and 3 against with evidence?

This would be sensible but we have no hard and fast rule on this since a limited number of points very well illustrated and developed would also be considered for the higher mark bands.

How does the marking scheme work in practice? Is there a list of relevant points, some of which the examiners are expecting to be included? If so, how many represents poor versus sufficient/very good?

There is a list of suggested content points for the guidance of examiners but these are by no means prescriptive and students will get credit for well-argued points not in the list. Examiners tick every relevant, clearly expressed point and give further ticks for development/ examples/ opinions etc. Thus a list of bullet point type arguments with no development cannot access the highest mark band. In order to access the highest mark band, students must also ensure that they meet all the other criteria, eg their ideas are clearly expressed, there is a logical structure to the essay and they have answered fully the question set.

Is it just an instinctive overall rating of logical sequence and therefore individual points are not counted up?

There is no mathematical guide to Content marks - examiners have to make a decision based on the descriptors in the assessment criteria.

Web Pages

Centres are reminded that a wealth of support documents can be found on our web pages (http://web.aqa.org.uk/qual/gce/languages/spanish_materials.php?id=09&prev=09).

These include the latest version of the specification, past papers, Reports on the Examination and the Teacher Resource Bank (TRB). For SPAN1 the TRB includes for the Writing Section additional specimen questions (to supplement past papers from previous series) and student exemplar work; this is an invaluable resource for preparing students for future examinations

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the **Results statistics** page of the AQA Website.

Converting Marks into UMS marks

Convert raw or scaled marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below.

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion.