

# A-level

# **SPANISH**

Unit 2 Speaking  
Report on the Examination

---

SPA2T/V  
June 2013

---

Version: 1.0

---

---

Further copies of this Report are available from [aqa.org.uk](http://aqa.org.uk)

Copyright © 2013 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

## Administration

Detailed guidelines for the administration and conduct of the Speaking tests can be found in the *Instructions for the Conduct of the Examinations*, pages 7-15. The majority of schools and colleges are familiar with these instructions which can be downloaded from <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/spanish/a-level/spanish-2695/teaching-and-learning-resources>.

However, this series again witnessed a number of administrative problems resulting from a failure to study these instructions thoroughly. STMS forms were inadequately filled in, or not enclosed at all. Sound files and CDs were poorly labelled. There were discrepancies in the candidate numbers as they appeared on the Attendance Record and the STMS and as they were announced on the recording. The sound quality of some recordings was poor so that it was difficult to hear what the student was saying and in a few cases, blank CDs were submitted. Occasionally, CDs were sent without any form of protective packaging and risked being damaged in the post.

Schools are reminded that in future tests recorded on audio cassettes will no longer be accepted. Tests must be recorded digitally and saved as .mp3 files. They can be submitted on memory sticks or CDs, but it is essential that individual students' tests be clearly labelled, according to the convention described on pages 7-8 of the *Instructions for the Conduct of the Examinations*. It is also in the students' interest that the sound quality is checked to ensure that they are clearly audible.

## Part 1

Students again showed that they are well-prepared for this part of the test and the majority have practised answering the printed questions in 2½ minutes, leaving a further 2½ minutes for the discussion. In a minority of cases, too long was spent on the printed questions, leaving insufficient time for the discussion and thereby depriving students of marks. Where tests are properly timed, it is not unusual for students to score 9 or 10 marks for this section.

Examiners frequently commented that responses to the first question were often superficial. Some students simply read out the title and the text on the card, with no attempt to summarise the specific message in their own words. It was disappointing to hear a number of students beginning their test with *Esta tarjeta es trata de...* Answers to the printed questions need to be relevant to the specific card, not merely related to the general topic area. They should be developed in some way that indicates understanding of the issue, namely through exemplification or elaboration of the initial answer.

**NB** Although students choose which of two cards to discuss in Part 1, they may still be asked questions in Part 2 on the subtopic of the card they did not choose. However, the questions should not be identical to the ones on the card.

## Tarjeta A ¿Dónde conocer a nuevos amigos?

This was a popular card and was generally well done. Not all students could answer question 2 with a variety of other situations in which one can meet new friends and only repeated the ones illustrated on the card. Many were able to mention making friends through playing sports, part-time jobs, through existing friends and via the Internet. Many able students were able to go into considerable depth regarding the value of holiday friendships and the reasons why it is often difficult to maintain the relationship at a distance. It was interesting that students often confessed to being influenced by first impressions and acknowledged that they did not find it easy to make friends. The best discussions followed up on the points made by the students, but some teacher-examiners resorted to GCSE-type questions which elicited answers that were "simplistic and underdeveloped".

**Tarjeta B Las vacaciones, ¿causan estrés?**

This was perhaps the most popular card and was often well done. Many said that they had not had experience of organising holidays but that it was a stressful experience for their parents, especially their mothers. Answers to question 3 included: planning well in advance, making sure that you have enough money and using a travel agent/internet booking site. Question 4 elicited some interesting accounts of horrible holidays, but there was a surprisingly large number of students who encountered difficulties narrating past events and made errors in the choice of past tense as well as its formation. Weather expressions, in any tense, were frequently incorrect. The last question was sometimes misinterpreted as meaning staying in the UK as opposed to going abroad, but this by no means prevented them from gaining credit for making relevant and interesting points. Again there was a tendency to rely on GCSE material in the wider discussion, but there were some mature exchanges about ways of relaxing on holiday, the impact of tourism on the environment and *turismo sostenible*.

**Tarjeta C ¿Cómo pueden los padres ayudar a sus hijos?**

In response to the first question, less able students tended to read out the captions. Very few took the opportunity to use expressions such as *se aconseja que...* and show off their knowledge of the subjunctive. Examiners' comments on responses to questions 2, 3 and 4 ranged from "thoughtful and mature" to "banal". The best answers came from students who had some abstract vocabulary to describe relationships. It was not uncommon to hear that parents should *soportar los niños* but possibly not with the Spanish meaning. Most students thought that it was more difficult to be a parent than in the past due to pressures of work, financial worries and a more liberal social environment. One student interpreted the final question, not necessarily wrongly, as meaning "Is it difficult to father a child these days?" and went on to talk about the medical advances that have taken place in recent years. In the subsequent discussion, many students talked about their own relationship with their parents and the kind of parents they would like to be themselves in the future.

**Tarjeta D Los animales en los anuncios**

This was not as frequently chosen as other cards, but it was usually very well done. Generally it was felt that animals were cute and added a humorous element to the adverts. Most felt that it was fine to use animals in adverts provided that they are well treated. Not many were able to point out the difference between using live animals for advertising purposes and using computer animations. It was clear that the question of what makes a good advert has been studied in detail and vocabulary such as *pegadiza* and *llamativo* were used to good effect. Various opinions were expressed about the function of publicity and there were some good discussions about the quantity of advertising we see, the cost of producing it and its influence on young people.

**Tarjeta E Los niños y la música**

This was a fairly popular card on a familiar topic – very many of the students who chose it were among the 90% of children who had given up the piano. Most of the instruments, (except the trumpet) were considered suitable for a child for a variety of reasons: the drums because children like to make a lot of noise; the guitar because it was modern; the flute (often pronounced *fluta* or *flota*) because it was small and the piano because it was big and therefore impossible to lose. There were some irrelevant answers to question 3 from students who did not know *dejar*. A surprisingly high number of students did not attach much importance to musical education. Of those who did, many said it looked good on a university application form. Discussions were fairly unoriginal and dealt with the student's own musical tastes, live concerts and the impact on the music industry of illegal downloads.

### Tarjeta F Consejos para escribir contraseñas seguras

This was, surprisingly, the least popular card. It was chosen however by some very able students who showed a good knowledge of relevant vocabulary such as *cuenta bancaria*, *estafa*, *fraude*, *identidad* and *pedófilo*. Answers to Question 5 included fraud, pornography, paedophilia and cyber-addiction, all of which were explored in the subsequent discussions about the Internet.

## Part 2

### Nominated topic

In general, students prepared appropriate cue cards and performed well on their nominated topic. A few points need to be noted however:

- the nominated topic is not a “presentation” but a discussion
- the cue card must not consist of prepared questions
- the topic must be taken from one of the prescribed AS topic areas
- the nominated topic does not need to cover all three subtopics
- students’ responses must be explored by the examiner to encourage spontaneity
- discussion of the nominated topic should occupy approximately 3½ minutes

### Timing

In some cases the nominated topic went on for five minutes, leaving insufficient time for the remaining two topics. Teacher examiners should be aware that a 2 mark deduction is applied when less than two minutes is spent on one of the four prescribed topics. No allowance is made for tests that go on longer than 15 minutes from the first question *¿De qué trata esta tarjeta?* It is essential therefore that examiners time their tests accurately.

### Interaction

Visiting examiners commented positively on the ability of many students to develop their answers and to respond spontaneously and meaningfully. There were still examples of students wanting to deliver long, pre-rehearsed answers, often recognisable because of the inappropriate register of the language and the over-complicated structures employed. This was more apparent in Centre-conducted tests where teachers are reluctant to interrupt their students. It needs to be stressed yet again that in the Mark Scheme some measure of “spontaneity” is required for a mark in the top two bands. Students are advised that, simple language that conveys information and opinions clearly and directly will tend to attract higher marks for Interaction without losing marks for Knowledge of Grammar.

It is also apparent that many teacher-examiners are basing their tests not just on AQAs suggested questions but on a set of questions that appear on the Internet. Examiners are very familiar with these questions and teachers are advised to use them judiciously. There is no advantage to be gained from asking *¿Qué género cinematográfico...?* instead of the more straightforward *¿Qué tipo de película...?* The best results are achieved by listening to what the student says and responding with interest, not merely working through a list of prepared questions and denying the student the opportunity to “sustain a meaningful exchange.”

### Pronunciation/Intonation

While most students scored 4 or 5 for Pronunciation, examiners felt that in some schools/colleges insufficient attention was paid to producing accurate and convincingly Hispanic sounds. Those going on to do A2 need to be aware that to score 5 in Unit 4 pronunciation has to be Very Good and the habit of careful pronunciation should be acquired as early as possible. Examiners commented frequently on the mispronunciation of common words such as *difícil*, *fácil*, *país*, *muy*, *leer* and “false friends” such as *acceptar*, *respecto* and *accento*.

**Grammar**

Generally speaking the standard of linguistic competence remained the same as in previous years with the same areas of weakness:

Radical changing verbs

Subjunctive after common expressions such as *es importante que...*

Formation and usage of past tenses

*Ser/estar*

*Ser* used to form the present continuous

*Gustar*

Gender

Agreement of adjectives

Confusion of adjective/adverb: *demasiadas caras, tanto importante*

Position of pronouns and prepositions: *la persona que hablo con..., podemos les ver*

More **anglicisms** were noted this year:

*tener un buen tiempo*

*tener divertido*

*pasar tiempo de calidad*

*no es sobre*

*porque de*

*atraer*

*expectar*

*remover*

*ahora y entonces*

Words frequently confused:

*mejor/mayor*

*buscar/encontrar*

*saber/conocer*

*fomentar/animar*

*más/muy*

*peligros/peligrosos*

*contento/contenido*

Verbs wrongly formed:

*sabo, pono, jugo*

*hacido, ponido, vido*

*hacería, deciría*

On the positive side, examiners commented on the range of tenses employed by more able students, conditional sentences using the imperfect subjunctive, sophisticated vocabulary such as *ajetreado, trajín*. It is refreshing to hear alternatives to *no me gusta* such as *me hierva la sangre* or *no aguanto*, when used appropriately. There is plenty of evidence of students learning idiomatic phrases but they are advised to use them sparingly and only when they add meaning. The over-use of expressions such as *que yo sepa, vaya pregunta, sea como sea, and pase lo que pase* does not attract a higher mark for grammar.

**Web Pages**

Centres are reminded that a wealth of support documents can be found on our web pages <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/spanish/a-level/spanish-2695>. These include the latest version of

the specification, past papers, Reports on the Examination, Instructions for the Conduct of the Examinations and Teaching and learning resources. For SPA2 the resources include advice to teachers conducting your own tests and the materials from the Teacher Support Meetings for the Conduct of the Speaking Tests; this is an invaluable resource for preparing students for future examinations. The Secure Key Materials (SKM) section of our website also includes helpful information; Examinations Officers can give teachers access to this invaluable resource.

### **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** [aqa.org.uk/umsconversion](http://aqa.org.uk/umsconversion).