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Examiners' Report June 2010

Spanish 6SP02 Unit 2

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Introduction

Candidates are required to read and listen to authentic Spanish material and to retrieve and convey information given in the material by responding to a range of mainly Spanish questions. In the last question, they are required to write 200 - 220 words in Spanish (in this case an informal letter) based on a short printed Spanish stimulus, involving the development of specific points from Spanish instructions.

Comments on Individual Questions

This report will provide exemplification of candidates' work, together with tips and/or comments, for a selection of questions. The exemplification will come mainly from questions which required more complex responses from candidates.

Question 1

This was a listening text about a book on tapas. Candidates had a choice of three endings from which to select to complete a sentence. Many candidates scored 2 or 3 out of four. Very few scored all 4.



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Examiner Tip

Beware of the 'distractors': answers which echo a word from the text, but in the wrong context. In 1d, for example, the text contains: 'un público más amplio', and one of the possible statements is: 'las raciones son más amplias'. As long as you know the two words 'público' and 'raciones', it will be obvious that this answer cannot be right.

Question 2

This was a podcast by a lady who had played a computer football game. Candidates were required to find four correct statements from a choice of eight. Many candidates scored 2 out of 4 marks.



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Examiner Tip

Although it is useful to use your general knowledge to help you make guesses, it is important to remember that you must find your answers from the text. In this example, 2e says that it is expensive to watch football in this way. You may well feel that computer games are expensive to buy, but it does not mention this in the text. The only relevant comment is 'sin gastar un euro', in other words, it costs nothing to watch football this way.

Question 3

In this listening passage, candidates were asked to find the 4 correct words (out of a possible 8) to complete a summary of a text about travelling by plane. Many candidates scored full marks, although 'pagar' was wrongly given for 3d in some instances.

Question 4

This text is always an interview, this time it was an interview with Cristina Sánchez, a retired bull-fighter. The answers have to be written in Spanish. Answers can be accepted as long as the correct information is understandable even if there are grammar and spelling mistakes.

Texto 4 – Cristina Sánchez

4 Escucha esta entrevista con Cristina Sánchez, ex-torera. Contesta las siguientes preguntas **en español**.

(a) ¿A qué se dedica ahora?

(1)

Trabaja como una comentarista taurina en la tele.

(b) ¿En qué tipo de programa le gustaría trabajar en el futuro?

(1)

Nada, porque le gusta trabajar con los toros.

(c) ¿Cómo se comportaba cuando era la única mujer en su profesión?

(1)

(d) ¿Qué no le gustaba de su profesión anterior?

(1)

No había otras mujeres en el deporte. es lejado de la familia.

(e) ¿Cómo se sabe que su hijo mayor tiene una actitud positiva hacia las corridas de toros?

• su hijo lleva un capote ~~torero~~ ~~torero~~ ~~torero~~ y su hijo hace que ⁽²⁾ ~~torero~~ ~~torero~~ ~~torero~~
 • su hijo quiera ser un torero.

(f) ¿Qué opina Cristina sobre la posibilidad de que sus hijos sean toreros? ¿Por qué?

(2)

• lo no le gusta porque hay tantas dificultades.

(Total for Question 4 = 8 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 20 MARKS

Transcribing the text can sometimes be rewarded, but in question 4c some candidates made a mistake while copying the answer from what they heard. Some suggested that Cristina used to act 'no sólo como una mujer', which suggests that she did act like a woman, while others said she acted 'no como una mujer, no como una profesional' and 'sino' was often written as 'si no' or 'sí no', clearly affecting the meaning of the answer. Question 4e was often answered correctly with words from the text, but good candidates always made an attempt to use their own words.



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Examiner Comments

Incorrect spelling of 'taurina' was often seen. Here it is clear that the candidate has understood the recording so the mark is given.



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Examiner Tip

Listening is a skill you can improve with practise because your ears gradually get used to hearing the foreign language. Also, it can be helpful to remember that all answers come in order through the text. If you have found the first and third answers, for example, the answer to the second question will be found between them.

(c) ¿Cómo se comportaba cuando era la única mujer en su profesión?

(1)

ella es un profesional, no sentó como un mujer
en su profesión.

In this question it is listening skills that are being assessed. Accuracy is not important here as writing is assessed in Q8, the essay. As long as the candidate has written an answer which is understandable and unambiguous, credit can be given.



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Examiner Comments

In this example the candidate has used the wrong gender and a mixture of tenses. 'Sentó' has an incorrect ending. In spite of this it is easy to understand what the candidate means and so a mark is awarded.

Question 5

In the first of the reading questions, which featured advice about work, candidates had to decide which statement applied to which person. This question was not answered as easily as in previous series. Statements a, b, and c in particular caused problems for candidates of all levels of ability. This could be because 5d and 5e included near synonyms ('decisivo/decisión' and 'pierde el tiempo/pérdidas de tiempo'), whereas the other questions included less well-known synonyms and paraphrases: 'formación/entrenamiento', 'conseguir un nuevo empleo/futuro profesional muy exitoso', 'por su propia cuenta/de forma independiente'.



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Examiner Tip

Synonyms are crucial. Questions almost never include the same wording as the text, so you need to train yourself to spot the synonyms and remember that they could be nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs etc. Make yourself a list and add to it as you find new ones. Here are a few to start you off: cada día/ cotidiano, un examen/ una prueba, descansar/ relajarse, lentamente/ despacio.

Question 6

This text included the results of an ecological competition for young people. The questions and answers were in English. The answers to 6a and 6c were generally correct, although some candidates incorrectly stated in 6a that those who took part were "All the students of secondary education" rather than that all the participants were from secondary education; a subtle but important difference. There were many varied, but acceptable, spellings of 'vertical' in 6c. The main difficulties came from interpreting the meaning of the false friends 'elaborar' and 'asistir'. Some candidates also found it hard to convey the meaning of 'favorecen la biodiversidad', even though translating this directly into the cognate English words 'they favour biodiversity' would have been completely acceptable.

(c) What type of gardens won a prize?

(1)

Verticle gardens, where ivy plants cover buildings won a prize.



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Examiner Comments

The rule for spelling applies equally to the answers in English. Here 'verticle' is an incorrect spelling but it is clear to see that the candidate understood the recording. Where 'prices' was given instead of 'prizes' in the last question, though, a mark could not be given as the incorrect spelling created a different word, which could lead to ambiguity in the transfer of meaning from one language to the other.

Question 7

In this text we read a report about young people who are addicted to their mobile phone. This is the most challenging of the reading questions as it has questions and answers in Spanish. This question proved more accessible to candidates than question 7 in the two previous series, however, so higher marks were obtained overall. There were some difficulties, though. The answer to the first question should have been 'veinte', but was sometimes given as 'dos', '20,000' or 20%. Question 7b may have been another stumbling block if the candidate failed to mention that it was all the pocket money that was spent on the phone. The phrase 'cinco o seis horas diarias' was sometimes used as an answer in 7c, 7d and 7e. Sadly, it was not the answer to any of them! The most difficult part to score in was 7g where the candidates often confused the fact that the addicts were 'más jóvenes' with 'hay más adictos'.

Although it was possible to score in some questions by lifting sections from the text, the best candidates showed that they could successfully give answers in their own words.

(d) Cita **dos** factores que ponen a los jóvenes a riesgo de la adicción, según los médicos.

libre.

(2)

No hay bastante cuidado de los padres y no son
estricto. También, muchos jóvenes ~~que~~ tienen
un móvil bajo de edad de 16 años.



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Examiner Comments

This candidate has used his/her own words to convey 'control parental'. There are spelling and grammar errors here, but we are not testing writing skills in this part of the paper and it is clear that the text and question have been understood. This candidate scored 2 marks for this response.

(e) ¿Cuáles son los síntomas de usar excesivamente el móvil?

(2)

+ Ellos no son pueden a dormir bien.
+ Ellos son nerviosos y tienen malas notas en escuela.



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Examiner Comments

The first answer is slightly garbled, but understandable. In the second half, the candidate has obviously attempted to find an alternative for 'estresados'. 'Nerviosos' is too far from the original meaning to be acceptable, however. The 'malas notas' is not related to the text.



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Examiner Tip

Try to use your own words whenever you can, but do not be afraid of using some of the vocabulary from the text. The questions are usually written in a way that requires some changes to be made to the original, but sometimes this could mean that you need only change a first person verb into the third person. Do take care with the verb endings though, as 'intentó', for example is 's/he tried' (in the preterite), but without the accent it becomes 'intento' which is I try. As first person verbs cannot be accepted, the missing accent could mean the difference between scoring and not.

Question 8

As always, the essay in Q8 gave all candidates the chance to perform at their own level. They had to imagine they were working in a noisy restaurant and write a letter about it to a friend. It was pleasing to see most candidates using a correct letter format, although the closing was sometimes omitted. The examining team enjoyed reading in particular the many imaginative descriptions of incidents that had affected the noise level. These ranged from fiestas in the street, car crashes right outside, demonstrations going past and drunken football fans making a lot of noise, to broken traffic signals causing empty streets and complete silence. Some candidates did not score on this point, though, because they mentioned an incident that was the result of the noise level (e.g. complaining customers) rather than an incident that was the cause of the rise or fall in noise level. Most candidates mentioned all the bullet-points and so scored well on content. There were still some candidates, however, who took no notice of the rubric and wrote well beyond the word limit, thus penalising themselves because some points were beyond 220 words. There were also some who did not fully exploit the bullet points, focussing more on the causes of noise pollution, for example, than then the disadvantages of it. Many were determined to bring in their set-phrases from the World Around Us topic, calling on the government to save the planet from cars and pollution. Although there was no penalty for this, nor was there any credit.

The language seemed on the whole slightly better than in earlier series. There were many successful attempts to use the subjunctive, although some candidates had obviously memorised phrases and were determined to squeeze these in. These sometimes seemed out of place and so did not help the candidate create a convincing letter. The candidates who adapted their pre-learned phrases to say that the restaurant owner should buy a restaurant in a quieter neighbourhood, for example, were often more successful than those who called on the government to change the law. There were fewer examples of poor use of the preterite than previously (perhaps because candidates could avoid some of the trickier verbs in this context), although 'ó' was often used as a first person ending. The conditional first person was also often given as 'recomendarío'. 'Ser' was frequently used to describe the location of the restaurant and 'ruido' and 'ruidoso' were spelled wrongly and mixed up, even though they appear in the stimulus. There were difficulties with 'había/habría', 'mes/mesa' and 'cocina/cocinera', which lead to some rather funny places to work! Candidates variously used 'grande/alto/fuerte' to mean loud and obviously were unfamiliar with the words for 'order' and 'fumes'. 'Lo' was often used as a subject pronoun ('lo es situado') and it cropped up a lot in expressions with 'gustar' ('no me gusta lo', 'lo me gusta', 'lo no te gustaría'). Few candidates could use 'desde hace' with the correct tense or remembered to use a personal 'a'.

~~Desafortunadamente,~~ Desafortunadamente, ~~la parte mal es que el restaurante está~~ La parte mal es que el restaurante está situado en La Calle Mayor, lo que es la calle que permite la cantidad más grande de tráfico. Que irritante es, siempre hay atascos, y los conductores son tan ruidosos como un grupo de elefantes. 110



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Examiner Comments

This example also covers the second bullet point about disadvantages. The only disadvantage given, though, is 'es irritante'. As this point is not developed, the candidate will only be able to score up to 12 out of 15. A more developed answer could have explained how the noise is irritating: not hearing the customers, having to shout etc.

adieron y mis clientes también. Me da que tanto vehículos ^{tengan la habilidad que} ~~podrían~~ ^{podrían} ~~anunciar~~ un restaurante como eso, ningún pagaría. 159
 A pesar de todo esto, todavía tengo que recomendar mi trabajo, al fin y al cabo me encanta. Ya le tenido una aumento en 187 el nivel de que soy pagado. Es lamentable que haya tanto ruido, además le leído que puede provocar el estrés, pero no creo que vaya a morir.

Hasta la vista, Tom.



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Examiner Comments

This example is better: the candidate has used some nice expressions and it is very easy to follow. However there are some mistakes, including basic agreement errors, so overall it was judged to be about half right and therefore scored 8 for Language.

Sin embargo, las desventajas son que tenían muchos ruidosa en una de la calle al lado del restaurante. Por ejemplo, cada días las personas han haciendo fiestas en la calles. También habían mucho trenes, coches y otros transportes que causado ruidos.



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Examiner Comments

This paragraph is all about the second bullet point about disadvantages. Although it goes into some detail, it only mentions the causes of the noise, not any disadvantages. This candidate has therefore not covered this bullet-point and cannot score more than 9 out of 15 for content.

A pesar de esto, me gusta España mucho, y mi experiencia del restaurante es muy beneficiosa. Si ^{venas} vas a España, visitamos el restaurante, sin embargo, no creo que te gustaría trabajar en ~~este~~ un restaurante tanto ruido!

Muchas besos, Olivia

con el público ~~y~~ también gana mucho dinero. ^{Así que} ~~recreo~~
 que recomendaría este trabajo porque tiene
 mucho ventajas y es muy interesante. ²⁹⁸



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Examiner Comments

This example deals with the first bullet-point: a description of the job. It is a very thorough and well-developed description including as it does, details of the working hours, the tasks done, the food served and how popular the restaurant is. This candidate continued in a similar way throughout and scored 14 out of 15 for Content.

¿Qué tal? Estoy muy bien. Estoy pasando las
 vacaciones de verano en España trabajando en un restaurante.
 Me gusta mucho mi trabajo. Me llevo bien con mi jefe y
 recibo un sueldo bien. Suelo trabajar cinco días cada semana.
 Tengo que limpiar los platos, servir la gente y quitar los mesos.
 Además, a veces ayudo en la cocina. Sin embargo, el
 restaurante está situada en una calle ruidosa. No creo que
 sea una situación ~~bueno~~ ^{idealista} adecuada.



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Examiner Comments

This example is better still. The candidate scored 11 for language. The descriptor from the marking grid says that scripts at this level should display "Good communication; good level of accuracy; generally successful use of a variety of lexis and structures." Here we can certainly say that there is good communication, the accuracy is not perfect, but then it only needs to be "good" to qualify for this mark band. There is a variety of lexis and structures: present tense, present continuous, present subjunctive, connectives (Además, Sin embargo), idiomatic language ('soler' + infinitive, 'llevarse bien', 'tener que'), and these structures are generally successfully used.

Actualmente, muchas veces la ~~gente~~^{gente} están viniendo a la restaurante recientemente y quejando sobre ~~la~~^{la} ruidosa no ~~puedo~~^{puedo} que hacer a ayudar la restaurante, ¿quizas hable la jefe mover al restaurante a una locación diferente?
Es una pena para la restaurante, es verdadero porque la comida es lleno de sabores y ~~tradicionalmente~~^{tradicionalmente} español.

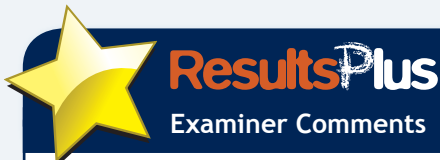
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Examiner Comments

It is possible to understand some of the ideas in this example, but at times communication breaks down. More of it is wrong than right: verb/subject agreement, adjective agreement, gender, spelling etc. It falls into the 4-6 box: "Some communication; language often inaccurate; limited variety of lexis and structures".

Lo que fue el colmo es cuando decidieron construir unas nuevas vías: los constructores empezaban a las ocho de la mañana y terminaban a las seis, ¡justo cuando me toca^{ba} trabajar...! Y lo más horrible es que resulta que ahora pasarán todavía más trenes, ¡qué mala suerte!

No es que no me siento agradecida de trabajar aquí, de verdad, te encantaría: unas tapas deliciosas, gratis, un buen ambiente y unas propinas maravillosas: te lo recomiendo. Sin embargo, no te encuentres sorprendido si sales de aquí medio loco...



This example is in excellent Spanish, it is full of idiomatic language, it uses several tenses, there are object pronouns, inverted verb and subject and importantly, no mistakes. This is worthy of the top box for Language: "Excellent communication; high level of accuracy' language almost always fluent, varied and appropriate". This answer really sounds like a genuine letter to a friend.

While some candidates found parts of this paper challenging, there were few who hardly scored and many who did very well indeed. Although, as always, there were some essay questions (Q8) that exceeded the specified word length, and some candidates in Question 5 who put crosses in more boxes than allowed, on the whole, candidates followed the instructions and it was clear that teachers had prepared their students thoroughly.

Grade Boundaries

Grade	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E	N	U
Raw mark boundary	70	54	48	42	36	31	26	0
Uniform mark scale boundary	140	112	98	84	70	56	42	0

a* is only used in conversion from raw to uniform marks. It is not a published unit grade.

The modern foreign languages specifications share a common design, but the assessments in different languages are not identical. Grade boundaries at unit level reflect these differences in assessments, ensuring that candidate outcomes across these specifications are comparable at specification level.

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