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## Examiners' Report January 2011

### GCE Spanish 6SP02 01

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## Introduction

Candidates are required to read and listen to authentic Spanish material and to retrieve and convey information given in this material by responding to a range of (predominantly) Spanish questions. In the last question, they are required to write 200-220 words in Spanish (a letter, report or article) based on a short printed Spanish stimulus, involving the development of specific points from Spanish instructions. In this introduction I will comment briefly on the questions requiring non-verbal responses, namely Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q5. The remainder of the reports deals with Q4, Q6, Q7 and Q8 in more detail.

Q1 was a listening text about tattoos. Candidates had to select the correct ending for four sentence starters. This question was answered a little better than in the summer, with most candidates scoring 3 out of 4.

Q2 was a listening passage based on saving energy in the home. Four correct statements have to be chosen from eight possibilities. Many candidates scored 3 out of 4, again a little better than last summer.

In Q3, candidates had to listen to a hotel manager talking about a surfing competition in Costa Rica. Overall it was answered well, with many candidates gaining at least 3 marks out of 4. Some candidates perhaps relied on their intuition rather than careful listening to the passage, as they suggested that foreigners might be damaging the beaches, rather than just seeing the beaches in the press.

Q5 consisted of four music reviews. Five statements had to be matched to the reviews. Results were similar to those from last January with candidates performing very well, the majority achieving 4 out of 5 marks.

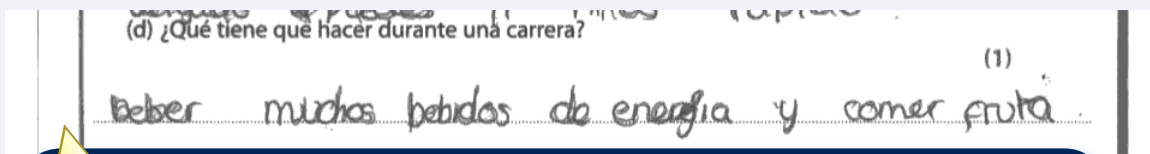
## Question 4

This was a longer reading text in the form of an interview. Questions were put to the cyclist, Alberto Contador.

The first question required the number '6' as the answer. Most got this right, although we did see wrong answers ranging from 0 - 600 and some without a number at all. Q4b asked about Contador's motivation for taking up cycling and many candidates answered this well, although some lost a mark by suggesting he was looking for something different in athletics, rather than different from athletics. Poor transcription of the text, with little evident understanding, lead some candidates to miss out on marks. "medio libertad" was often seen as a reason because candidates had not recognised "me dio libertad"; this would have needed to be changed to "le dio" to gain credit.

In Q4c candidates needed to infer from the text to give the qualities Contador has himself. Those who repeated the text's description of what is needed to be a good cyclist did not score, i.e. "hay que tener piernas fuertes" could not be given credit. What was required was "tiene piernas fuertes". Q4d caused very few problems, although there were a few candidates who misheard 'bollos' and stated that Contador has to eat chicken during a race. Almost all candidates were able to convey the link between cycling and drugs to get a mark in Q4e and many candidates scored in Q4f even if their answers were a little convoluted.

Every answer (or part of an answer) will be right, wrong or neutral. Neutral may be something that is true but not required. In a 1 mark question, candidates have one attempt at giving an answer. If the right answer is given after a wrong answer, then it cannot be accepted. If it is given after a neutral answer, then it can.



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Examiner Comments

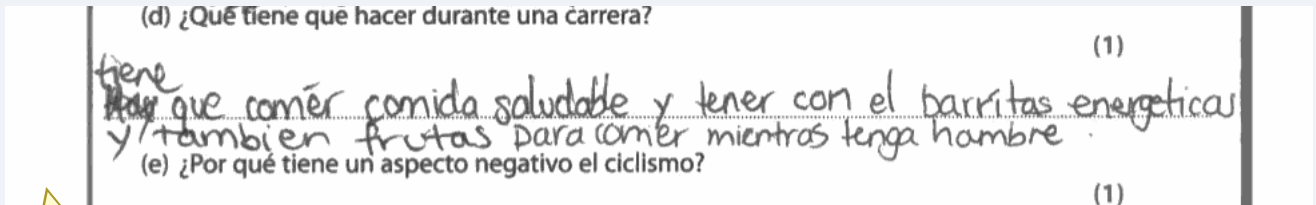
In this example, the correct answer: "comer fruta" is given after the incorrect answer "beber muchas bebidas de energía". No mark can be awarded.



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Examiner Tip

If you have two ideas for a one mark question, always put your strongest idea first. Similarly in a two mark question, give two answers you are confident about before an answer which you are not so sure of.

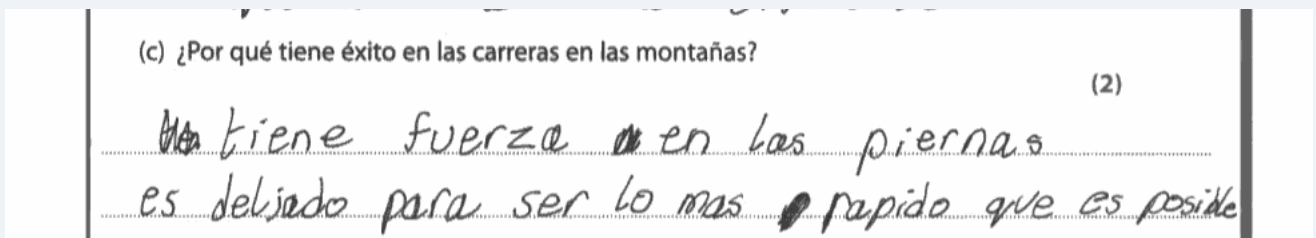


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Examiner Comments

In another example of the same question, the correct answer: "tener con el barritas energeticas", is also given second. This question was awarded a mark because the part that comes first: "tiene que comer comida saludable" was judged to be neutral. It is true, but not quite what was required.

Misspellings and grammar errors can be tolerated if the answer is unambiguous and the candidate has clearly understood.



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Examiner Comments

In this question, the correct answer "es deljado" contains a spelling mistake. However, as the word could not be mistaken for anything else, the candidate has conveyed understanding unambiguously. Similarly, candidates who offered "instincto" instead of "instinto" were rewarded. Where "delgado" was written as "delegado", however, no mark was given as this has now turned into a different word, so the message is not clear.



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Examiner Tip

Be aware of words that are spelled in a similar fashion: "caballo/cabello", "muerte/muerto", "traje/trajo" etc. It would be a good idea to compile a list, adding more whenever you come across them.

## Question 6

Q6 was a Spanish text with English questions and answers about the new phenomenon of fast-fashion. Most students scored at least 3 out of 5. The first four questions were, on the whole, well-handled, although some candidates did not mention the speed with which new collections are released in Q6b. In Q6d, a number of candidates used a passive form that led to an incorrect answer: instead of “they do not sell well”, they put “they are not sold well”. Q6e was the hardest mark to get. The correct answer was to say that many people dress the same, but there were many instances of “everyone looks the same”. This could not be accepted for two reasons: dressing the same and looking the same are not, in fact, the same and also as the text mentions “decenas de personas”, it is not true to say that this means “everyone”.

## Question 7

Q7 is the most difficult of the reading tasks as the text is longer and the answers have to be written in Spanish. Candidates did not score quite as highly, on average, this year as in the two previous series, with most candidates scoring 4 marks out of 10. The text was about proposed changes to school holidays in Cataluña.

Q7b asked about the reasons for the change to the name of the Christmas and Easter holidays. “Inmigración” and “multiculturalidad” were treated as two different concepts, but they were only enough to score one mark. The second point, about the names of the holidays being religious was rarely given. Similarly in Q7d, where candidates had to explain the problems that would be caused if the timing of holidays were changed, it was quite easy to score 1 mark by saying that parents and children would have holidays at different times. Not many candidates scored 2 marks by explaining the problem faced by businesses, which will have to change their holiday procedures. Q7e, which required two facts about why some activities are only possible during the summer holidays caused more problems than anticipated, with many candidates simply transcribing “por falta de tiempo” and not adding that that referred to the rest of the year. There were a lot of rather confusing answers referring to “tiempo” as both time and weather.

cuando los chicos están.

(e) ¿Por qué hay actividades que sólo se pueden hacer durante las vacaciones de verano?

(2)

Porque solo en verano tienen mucho tiempo libre y el clima

es mucho mejor entonces pueden hacer cosas que en tiempo de clases no pueden.



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Examiner Comments

In this example the candidate has clearly expressed the two reasons why the summer holidays are the only time for some activities.

(e) ¿Por qué hay actividades que sólo se pueden hacer durante las vacaciones de verano?

(2)

debido a las razones climatológicas y hay una falta de tiempo.



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Examiner Comments

In this example, the candidate has lifted directly from the text. This has resulted in an answer that does not refer specifically enough to the summer holidays. This answer did not score any marks.



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Examiner Tip

Although the rules about lifting from the text are less strict than they were in the past, you still need to handle lifts with caution. Most questions have been written in a way that means the information from the text has to be changed in some way to result in a correct answer. You do not need to be afraid to use some words from the passage, but try to use them alongside your own words and always ask yourself whether what you have written really answers the question.

## Question 8

In Q8, candidates had to write an informal letter to an unemployed friend suggesting working from home as a career option. Candidates had to explain the advantages of working from home, give the example of someone who had worked this way and the feelings of the family about it. Finally, they had to offer suggestions on how to organise it.

On the whole this question was answered well, and examiners saw many imaginative responses. An average score of just under 20 out of 30 was in line with scores from previous exam series. Reasons why this way of working would be suitable ranged from being able to look after small children at the same time, to saving money on transport, overcoming broken legs and other disabilities and even how the friend's laziness would be catered for! Generally the first two bullet points were developed well. The third point about the feelings of the family was sometimes less convincingly covered; statements about how the friend would spend more time with the family are not the same as a description of the family's feelings. For the final bullet point, there were suggestions about buying new equipment, setting aside regular hours and places to work and ways of finding customers.

Most essays had a suitable letter format and most adhered to the word limit. The quality of language ranged from poor to excellent.

A frequent grammar error was the familiar misuse of 'gustar': "Mis padres le gustaron la idea", "mi padre se gustaría tener este trabajo". Another problem was the pronoun 'ti' which was most frequently given as 'tu' (not even 'tú'): "la opcion mejor para tu". The possessives "tu" and "su" were also mixed up a lot within the same paragraph. The English love of the gerund led to many mistakes also: "sin teniendo que salir", "le gusta trabajando" etc.

Mi tió Juan usaba lo. y le encantas.  
 No es un tiempo empizar o terminar.  
 Segun él e fue un cambio bueno. Cada  
 día ~~se~~ levantarse a las nuevo y la  
 mesa es en su casa. Pero necesito ser



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Examiner Comments

This essay is a good example of how content can be rewarded even when the language is poor. The point about a family member who has worked from home is made and developed: Uncle Juan loves it, he has no fixed time to start or stop, it was a good change, his desk is in his home. There are four decent points here. This candidate scored much more for content (11 out of 15: "Task understood and developed successfully") than for language (4 out of 15: "Some communication. Language often inaccurate").





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### Examiner Tip

There are 15 possible marks for content. To get them you must cover all the bullet points within the word limit. Try to write several ideas for each point, so that it can be called 'developed'. Avoid losing marks for missing a bullet point (maximum of only 9 marks for only 3 bullet points) and remember the format. There is a penalty of 1 mark if there is no letter format when it is required.

Está claro de que este empleo te permite ver tu familia si ha ocurrido una urgencia, o si simplemente querías tomar algunos días para ir al extranjero con ellos. Sea que sea, es imprescindible que no olvides tu familia a causa de tu trabajo. Sé que quieres pasar lo mas tiempo posible con tu marido y tu niño.



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### Examiner Comments

This candidate has clearly produced language of a much higher quality than the previous one, however, the content is not as good. This paragraph is supposed to give the family's feelings about working from home. The family's feelings are not touched on, even though the family is mentioned frequently. This candidate scored only 9 for content (as one bullet point is not covered) but 13 for language.

Generalmente mis hermanos y yo ~~les~~ le gustaron cuando  
 en mi madre trabajaba desde la casa porque tuvo más  
 tiempo. ~~Y~~ sin embargo mi madre dice que a veces habían  
 demasiado muchas distracciones <sup>al hogar</sup> tal como la televisión, y  
 los niños. ~~sin embargo mi recomendación~~



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### Examiner Comments

This candidate has covered the third bullet point about the family's feelings on working from home, but has failed to develop the point. The second half of the paragraph, from "sin embargo" is not about the family's feelings at all. It is more information about the second bullet-point (a family member's experience of home working). The candidate will have been given the credit of this additional sentence about point 2, but would have gained more marks if s/he had followed up the first statement on the feelings of the siblings with something relevant. S/he could have gone on to explain the father's feelings or to say, perhaps, that the brothers and sisters did not like it when mother was on the phone all the time.



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### Examiner Tip

Make sure that you say several things about each point. It is fine to say more about one point than another, but the examiners are looking for essays where each bullet-point has not just been mentioned, but has been developed. You must take care to stay within the word-limit, however, as a bullet-point after 220 words will not count.

The candidates sitting this exam produced numerous examples of excellent Spanish understanding and writing this January.

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