

Examiners' Report
June 2014

GCE Spanish 6SP02 01

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Introduction

The Understanding and Written Response paper tests candidates' listening, reading and writing skills. There are four listening comprehension tasks, two of which require the candidate to cross the correct answer in a box, one which asks candidates to select words from a list and one longer audio with questions and answers in Spanish. There are three reading comprehension tasks; one requires candidates to select the correct answers and cross a box, one which has questions and answers in English and a longer text that has questions and answers in Spanish. The final task is an essay. Candidates read a short stimulus passage with four bullet points and are asked to write between 200 and 220 words in Spanish.

Overall this year, students performed well. The examining team found many impressive responses to the essay question, where both the content and the language scored highly. There were fewer essays that exceeded the word limit this year, which was pleasing to see. There were very few essays that scored particularly low marks (for being irrelevant or incomprehensible). Many students 'borrowed' ideas from other parts of the paper to use in their essay (e.g. the friend was in hospital due to an accident with a 'monopatín' from Question 3 or an 'alergia' from Question 2 which is perfectly acceptable).

Question 2

Question 1

The first text was about reading as a way to learn a new language. Students need to find the appropriate ending for four sentence starters summarising the content. An average mark of 3 or 4 out of 4 was recorded for this question. The final part proved to be the hardest, where a lot of students selected 'hacerse regularmente' as the ending to the sentence: 'La lectura debería...', when the answer was 'ser divertida'. The answer came from the part of the audio text that said you should not look up too many words in a dictionary or else reading becomes a chore instead of being 'algo entretenido'. 'Entretenido' and 'divertido' are, of course, synonyms and practice in locating pairs of synonyms is an important element of exam preparation.

Question 2

The second listening text was about allergies. Students had to identify four correct statements out of a list of eight. The average mark on this question was 3 out of 4, with statement 2(g) being the hardest one to identify. In the text we are told that developing an allergy 'suele tener una base hereditaria', and then from this students had to identify that 'La propensión a sufrir alergias normalmente viene de los padres'. Here there are two synonyms: 'suele' and 'normalmente' and also 'hereditaria' and 'de los padres'.

Question 3 (a)

Question 3 was an audio text about skateboarding. Four summary statements were given and students had to select words from a list to complete the sentences appropriately. Many students were able to score full marks on this question, although some suggested that the sport is more and more fun rather than popular, which was the correct answer. It was good to see, though, that a word that was grammatically possible was selected in most cases. It would be helpful for students to identify which words can grammatically fit in the gaps before listening to the audio, that way they will cut down the number of options they have to select from. For example, to follow 'Este deporte es cada vez más...', only 'popular', 'divertido' or 'caro' can fit; 'ganar dinero' or 'morir' could not possibly be correct.

Question 4

Question 4 was a long audio of an interview with an IT expert about an 'app' that analyses the content of television adverts. There were six questions carrying a total of eight possible marks. An average score of 5 or 6 out of 8 was achieved, although more able students scored the full 8 marks.

Candidates should do as much listening practice as possible as many students failed to recognise the different syntactical units in the sentences. For example, in 4(b) when asked to state what basic information is presented, students frequently gave the answer 'Quienes esta organizacion' (sic). They did not succeed to realise that this sentence is incorrect, but instead they should answer 'quien es esta organizacion' (sic). Similarly in 4(f), many students wrote an answer that included the word 'ambalorado'. What they had actually heard (and mis-transcribed) was 'cuántas personas han valorado un anuncio'.

Question 4(a) was mostly answered correctly, although some students ignored the question word 'Cómo' and instead latched on to the reference to *Shazam* and suggested that the app identifies music but did not give any information on *how* it is used. Questions 4(c) and 4(d) were sometimes answered incorrectly (i.e. the answer to 4(c) was given in 4(d) etc), again showing that little attention had been paid to the question words 'Por qué' in 4(c) and 'qué' in 4(d).

A variety of answers were given in 4(e), which was about how users can respond to the information. Acceptable answers included references to using buttons and also just to evaluating the information. The English spelling of 'buttons' could not be accepted. Question 4(g), about the future, was largely answered well, although a number of students had misheard 'diez veces mejor' and instead wrote about the next 'diez meses'.

It is important to focus on the question wording, e.g. who, what, where etc and to ensure that your answer gives the appropriate type of information.

Texto 4: La 'app' de la verdad

4 Escucha esta entrevista sobre una 'app' que verifica si los anuncios dicen la verdad. Contesta las siguientes preguntas **en español**:

(a) ¿Cómo se usa esta aplicación? (1)

Para identificar la música con tu teléfono



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Examiner Comments

This student has not given an answer to 'how' the app is used. The correct answer should have been along the lines of saying that you have to put your phone near the television.

Spelling and grammar mistakes can be tolerated in the comprehension questions, as it is the understanding of the text that is being tested.

Texto 4: La 'app' de la verdad

4 Escucha esta entrevista sobre una 'app' que verifica si los anuncios dicen la verdad. Contesta las siguientes preguntas **en español**:

(a) ¿Cómo se usa esta aplicación?

*organización estar
cuesta*

*pones tu teléfono cerca de la televisión
Para conseguir información sobre un anuncio.*

(b) ¿Qué información básica presenta la aplicación? **Da 2 ideas.** (2)

(i) *Cuanto costó el anuncio*

(ii) *el nombre de la organización*



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Examiner Comments

This student has clearly understood the text, and has scored full marks on 4(a) and 4(b), even though there are a few spelling mistakes.



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Examiner Tip

Read over what you have written and check it against the question: have you given relevant information and is it understandable?

Question 6

Question 5

The first of the reading texts was about forest fires. Students had to match statements with four paragraphs about fires in different regions of Spain. Most students were able to score 4 or 5 marks out of 5.

In this question, synonyms are most important, e.g. in statement 5(a), 'Algunos incendios no son accidentales', matches with 'los incendios habrían sido provocados a propósito'. Statement 5(c) seemed to be the hardest to pair up with the text. 'Se va a gastar menos dinero en evitar los incendios' was a match for 'las autoridades han bajado el presupuesto en materia de prevención'. Although 'presupuesto' is a relatively uncommon word, it should still have been possible to see that 'evitar' and 'prevención' were a good match.

Question 6

This text was about the growing popularity and commercialisation of Mount Everest. There were five questions in English to be answered in English. Answers do not have to be full sentences and, as with Spanish answers, spelling and grammar errors can be tolerated as long as the meaning is clear and understanding of the text has been demonstrated. This question proved more challenging than in some previous series, with an average score of 3 out of 5. In 6(a), no mark was given where the phrase 'benefic' or 'beneficial' organisation had been given. 'Charities' or 'NGOs' were acceptable, but 'ONGs' was not as this is the Spanish acronym. Where 'to benefit organisations' was the answer, did not score a mark.

In 6(b), 'beautiful views' was often incorrectly suggested, presumably from a misunderstanding of 'hubiera visto'. If 'multitude' was given without reference to people or climbers, it could not be credited. Question 6(c) was mainly answered well, with most students giving 'oxygen' as an answer, rather than the alternative answer of a 'fixed rope'. Sometimes 'fixed path' was given, but this was not acceptable, nor was 'fixed string', although 'fixed cord' or 'fixed wire' were fine.

Questions 6(d) and 6(e) were often answered from general knowledge, rather than from the information presented in the text. In 6(d), examiners often found answers as 'trapped in a cave/ crevasse/ avalanche' rather than in a queue. Other incorrect answers commonly seen were 'there was only one guide' and 'running out of oxygen'. In 6(e) it was essential to state that the weather might change, so answers that simply referred to 'bad weather' did not score. The alternative answer that a fixed rope might break, was sometimes given as 'a bone might break'.

Some spelling mistakes are acceptable as they do not change the meaning of the answer, however where a mistake causes ambiguity, a mark will not be awarded.

(c) What has made the summit more accessible?
A fixed rode to follow a straight direction to the top and a cilindric bag plenty of oxigen that reduce the high effects (1)



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In this example, a spelling error has resulted in the word 'rode', which is closer to 'road' than 'rope' and therefore cannot score a mark. As this is the first answer given and it is wrong, there is no chance of scoring even with the second part of the answer (in a one mark question, students have only one chance to score). In this case, even the second part is too flawed to have scored a mark, regardless if it was first or not.



Check your spelling and always make your first answer the one you are most confident about.

Question 7

The longest of the reading comprehension texts, text 7, was about the legalisation of marijuana in Uruguay. This year, the average score out of 10 was 6 or 7 marks.

There was some inadvisable 'lifting' from the text. Direct quotes can be acceptable, but they need to be properly targeted (not too long and not incomplete). Although the students' own words or full sentences are not always required in the answers, it will often be necessary to edit the information from the text, rather than to copy directly. It is a good idea to practise this by summarising the key points of lengthy texts.

Question 7(a) was usually answered correctly, although where 'uruguayo' was given as an answer, it was not accepted. Occasionally, 'España' was given incorrectly as an answer. In 7(b), students were often able to score 1 or 2 marks, but some candidates ignored the 'Quiénes' of the question and focussed on the taxes, rather than stating a group of people. Some students struggled with 7(c), which asked why France and Scotland were mentioned. Correct answers focussed on their production of alcohol or the parallel between alcohol and drugs. Incorrect answers often suggested there was a lot of alcoholism in those countries, but ignored alcohol production.

In 7(d), there were many examples of untargeted lifting. The relevance of the reference to Colombia and Mexico was the problems caused as a result of drugs. If students mentioned war or death without reference to drugs, there was no mark awarded. Many students got half way to a mark in 7(e) by saying that 72 grammes is the legal limit of drugs that can be bought, but unless there was a timescale ('al mes', 'mensualmente', 'cada mes'), the mark was not earned. Question 7(f) was mostly answered correctly, although there were quite a number of general comments about taking money away from traffickers, rather than the 1.3 million euros and the new jobs (only one of which was necessary for a mark).

Question 7(g) was not answered well by a large number of candidates. Perhaps they did not recognise that 'EE.UU' is 'los Estados Unidos'. Sometimes a mark was withheld because the answer stated that 'drugs and guns are legal', when drugs are not. In 7(h), there were many correct answers referring to doctors, medical staff, the 'Servicio de Salud Pública' etc. Incorrect answers included 'los uruguayos', 'nosotros', 'todo el mundo'.

Answers should be as simply expressed as possible.

(b) ¿Quiénes obtendrán beneficio económico de la legalización? Da dos ideas.	(2)
(i) El estado, con la recaudación de impuestos.	
(ii) Los campesinos que cultivarían marihuana de forma legal.	
(c) ¿Por qué se mencionan Francia y Escocia?	(1)
Porque también son ^{países} es asociados a una droga (aunque legal), el alcohol.	
(d) Según el artículo, ¿qué tienen en común Colombia y México?	(1)
La corrupción por parte de los traficantes de drogas.	
(e) ¿Por qué se mencionan 72 gramos?	(1)
Es ^{la} la máxima cantidad considerada legal que se puede consumir en un mes.	
(f) ¿Qué beneficio obtendría una comunidad de la creación de una asociación de consumidores?	(1)
Crearían ^{empleos y} puestos de el ayuntamiento sería remunerado.	



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Examiner Comments

This candidate has used beautiful Spanish, but the answers are still simple and convey all the relevant information. In 7(b), the answers could be even shorter as the first part of each answer is enough for a mark.

(b) ¿Quiénes obtendrán beneficio económico de la legalización? Da **dos** ideas.

(2)

(i) los campesinos

(ii) al estado

(c) ¿Por qué se mencionan Francia y Escocia?

(1)

Se ~~producen~~ ganan dinero traves alcohol

(d) Según el artículo, ¿qué tienen en común Colombia y México?

(1)

Dos tienen problemas ~~endémicos~~ con las drogas

(e) ¿Por qué se mencionan 72 gramos?

(1)

Es el legal cantidad se puede comprar ^{per} ~~en~~ mes en Cataluña

(f) ¿Qué beneficio obtendría una comunidad de la creación de una asociación de consumidores?

(1)

hacerla
lo ~~crearía~~ 40 puestos de trabajo



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Examiner Comments

The level of language used by this candidate is not particularly high, however, the answers contain the correct information and are still simple and clear enough to earn full marks.

Many students wrote answers that were too long for the space provided. With average sized writing it should be possible to fit all the necessary information onto one line. The more that is written, the more chance there is for mistakes to happen or contradictions to appear.

(d) Según el artículo, ¿qué tienen en común Colombia y México? ^{actividades perjudiciales.} (1)
En ambos países el consumo tráfico de drogas está asociado al dinero y a las armas y esto genera muchos problemas dando lugar a la violencia, ^{causando muertes.}

(e) ¿Por qué se mencionan 72 gramos?
Por que es el máximo consumo legal de droga permiti- (1)
do, y esa cantidad que asociaciones como las de Cataluña permiten consumir a sus socios.



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Examiner Comments

This student has packed every answer space with several lines of writing. In 7(d), the mark was earned, but even with all that explanation in 7(e), the key information was missed and no mark was given.



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Examiner Tip

Less is often more. Before writing an answer, think about the simplest way you can give the information. The answer must be clear and unambiguous, it needs to be neither lengthy nor flawless.

Question 8

Question 8 was a 220 word letter to a friend who was unable to go to school due to having suffered an accident. There was a short stimulus passage that described some of the difficulties of completing schoolwork when unwell, from which students could take vocabulary and ideas if they chose to. Students needed to respond to four bullet points asking for: their reaction to the friend's accident, a description of a time when they were unable to go to school, ideas about how to manage schoolwork alongside treatment and finally, what help friends could offer. There was a higher number of excellent pieces of work than usual demonstrating imagination and an impressive linguistic ability. The average mark for the question was almost 22 marks out of 30. There were few pieces that exceeded the word limit and very few that were irrelevant.

For the first bullet point there was at times too much recounting of the accident itself, rather than a reaction to it. A large number of students misunderstood the 'ante' in the bullet point ('tu reacción ante su accidente'), writing instead about what they were doing before (antes) the accident. Some students wrote about themselves or directed their letter to the friend's parents. Some wrote a report rather than a letter. There were, though, some colourful reactions (crying, lost appetite, wishing things were different) and imaginative accidents, some taken from other questions in the paper, like skateboarding accidents or allergic reactions, many car and skiing accidents and even an injury sustained when putting the hand into a cage full of monkeys.

The second bullet point was generally handled well, with descriptions of illnesses, injuries, time spent stuck abroad due to transport problems and more uncomfortably, a large number describing the symptoms of depression. The third and fourth bullet points were covered by just about everyone, but answers were sometimes rather unambitious, just describing doing homework in the hospital and friends taking the homework to the hospital. Some students suggested that the friend could learn about biology and anatomy from the doctors and nurses and the best answers gave a whole list of ways that friends could help, including skyping lessons, giving presents and going out for coffee.

Although there many excellent examples of well-manipulated language, even some of the best writing included inconsistencies with 'su' and 'tu'. Podía and podría were frequently mixed up and 'roto' seemed to be almost completely unknown.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- practise looking for pairs or groups of synonyms, as often a question will use the synonym of a word in the text
- do as much listening practice as possible, including listening while also reading the text so that you get used to identifying where one word stops and another starts
- give your best answer first, as in an one mark question you have only one chance to score
- try to be accurate in your spelling (in Spanish and English)
- in question 3, look for the words that will fit grammatically before listening
- practise writing a précis of passages in Spanish
- in the essay, put each bullet-point into its own paragraph

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