

Examiners' Report  
June 2018

GCE Spanish 8SP0 01

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## Introduction

This is the second session for Paper 8SP01 and the candidate entry was considerably lower than in 2017. A general trend in the candidates' performance this year, as compared with the previous session, is that most candidates finished the paper, regardless of their ability. Time management during the assessment was commented upon last session, and it is pleasing to see an improvement in the candidates' ability to manage this aspect of exam technique. The paper worked as planned and differentiated appropriately across the ability range.

In line with the requirements of the specification, all the questions linked strongly to either Theme 1 or Theme 2. There is no specific testing of A04 - Knowledge of Culture and Society -in this paper. However the texts could in future sessions provide useful examples for candidates in papers 8SP03 or 9SP03, so teachers could usefully encourage candidates to harvest the factual information from them and also to use the texts as a possible basis for further research to deepen and widen their knowledge.

There are tips and guidance provided with regard to individual questions, but in reading this report all the comments are appropriate to apply across the paper as a whole, so guidance for Question 2 can equally apply to Question 7. In order not to repeat the same advice each time, the guidance has been spread across the paper and exemplified in each case.

## **Question 2**

This question linked to Theme 2 - Music. The format was that of an interview with a radio producer about the expected trends for the following year. The vocabulary was generally accessible, but a common issue was misreading question 1(a), where many candidates wrote answers such as 'música alternativa' or 'oyentes alternativos'. This question requires candidates to identify a category, and so they had to say something like 'los que quieren música alternativa'. 1(c) was generally answered well. Candidates in future sessions might like to find out more about the group Izal.

Candidates need to read questions carefully and also to ensure that what they produce as an answer is a coherent fit with the question. Occasionally they can answer with a targeted lift from the text, but more often they need to slightly manipulate the language, using part of the question and part of the text, perhaps with a different verb form.

## **Question 3**

This question is set in Theme 2 - Media. The recording takes the format of an interview with soap-actor Ander Azumendi, who is a real life soap star who may be of interest to candidates as they prepare for future sessions. This is a longer text with 8 marks and 6 questions. It is worth noting, that as stated in the general principles of marking, where candidates offer more than one feasible answer to a question, only their first answer is considered for a mark. In this question, some items could be answered simply by lifting from and transcribing the recording. For example 3(a) 'nervioso' would gain a mark. A larger proportion required candidates to manipulate some aspect of grammar to answer the question. For example 3(c) where they needed to make the switch from first person in the recording to third person in the answer. This was also the case in 3(f). Given that many candidates had studied film for paper 8SP02, several still mistook 'rodar' for 'robar', indicating a lack of some technical topic specific vocabulary.

Candidates need to look out for first person speakers in listening and be prepared to manipulate the verbs into their equivalent third person forms in order to answer the question. If they do not know the verb ending, infinitives often work, and if in doubt always make sure to use a subject to add clarity to the response. This helps the examiner know if you mean 'he' or 'I' etc.

## Question 4

This question is set in Theme 1 - the world of work: gender equality. Text 4 is a two part question. In (a) candidates answered three comprehension questions and (i) and (iii) were much better answered than (ii). In common with all the questions there is in-built differentiation at the setting stage, and part (ii) required candidates both to draw and inference and manipulate the language to answer. Nevertheless, part (a), being in line with the pattern of the other free response questions, caused no real issues for candidates.

Part (b) is a summary task. It was noted last session that candidates had often written far too much and, in so doing, had mixed their messages to examiners and failed to gain marks, despite showing comprehension. This issue was present also this year, but to a lesser degree. It is advised that teachers train their candidates to signpost their answers, for example using bullet points, following the lay out of the question and reformulating the language of the question to begin their answer. For example, in 4(b)(i) the first bullet point says 'where Spain does well', so a bullet point and 'Spain does well in...' is a useful way to ensure rubric compliance. The rubric, and the markscheme, require only one point made to gain the mark, but always there will be several options to choose from. Candidates should be trained to choose one that they confidently understand to complete the reformulated bullet point from the question and then stop, because there is then a danger that they go on to invalidate the point they have made by adding extraneous detail. For example: '- Spain does well in education'. This is all that is needed.

Tip: in 4(b) Reformulate the language of the question, add one point only and then **STOP!**

## **Question 6**

This question is set in Theme 1 - world of work. The topic is the inequality in rights to maternity and paternity leave for new parents. The language used is that of comments on a blog-post, hence it tests candidates' ability to deal with authentic, informal language. It is useful for teachers to ensure that, in preparing their candidates, they have given them opportunities to deal with this kind of language, as well as more formal language. Following some key figures on Twitter, for example, during their course, could allow this to happen naturally. Candidates also had to deal with different perspectives and points of view about an issue. There is, in some cases, emotion and humour in the comments and it is expected that candidates will be able to pick up on the pointers and draw inferences appropriately. Each of the options has some element of distraction too, so it is important that candidates process the whole text and think about the implications of each of the possible options. Candidates need to understand that the options do not necessarily come in the order that the information appears in the texts.

It is useful for candidates to find the distractors in the options, and learn to spot them. This will help them work out why the wrong answers are wrong, as well as to find the correct ones.

## **Question 7**

This question is set in Theme 2 - festivals and traditions. The topic is a cultural figure from the Basque country, a kind of alternative to Father Christmas. As mentioned earlier, examples such as this could be used in the speaking cards for 8SP03 and indeed 9SP03, so the text could be used as a springboard to further research in order to widen out the range of examples that candidates use, and to make the A04 in that paper richer and more perceptive.

This question was generally well answered by candidates, with only some candidates confusing the time sequences in (c) and missing the sense of what Olentzero represents today. This may be owing to these candidates not recognising 'actualmente' in the text and consequently not connecting it with 'hoy' in the question. Candidates would benefit from working on the 'flag-words' in questions ie the words that are intended to preclude answers taken from another part of the text. These may include time-markers such as 'after', 'before', tenses and excluding phrases such as 'apart from'.



## Question 8

This question is set in Theme 2 - Media. This is a literary text. Teachers should note that even the literary texts chosen for the paper sit solidly inside the theme and sub-themes of the specification. In preparing candidates to deal with literary texts it is useful for them to focus firstly on ensuring that they have a working knowledge of literary features, such as the layout of dialogue, the possible use of metaphor, the effect of narration, and so on. Had the text been from a play, this could also include noting the basics of stage directions, such as 'entra' and 'sale'. As many AS candidates opt for film, instead of literature, this is a particularly important point, as compared with A Level, where they will all have read some literature.

In this particular text we see a press conference to report the killing of a President. Questions (a) and (f) were well answered by most candidates. The design of the question is such that it should allow even the lower-scoring candidates to confidently answer some of the questions and these two were targeted as low-demand. The question that caused the most difficulty was (c), which was targeted as higher demand, because it required candidates to draw an inference and manipulate language. This meant that candidates had to think themselves into the environment of this noisy, smoky press conference, process what we are told about the formality of the Minister and the seriousness of the occasion and add this to the fact that Jaime was not wearing a jacket and was chewing gum.

A particular issue with answers in this question was ambiguity generated by candidates who did not use verbs in the correct form, and so made the subject of the verb hard for examiners to determine. So for (c) answers such as 'comes chicle' did not score a mark. Had the candidate written (grammatically incorrectly, but nevertheless understandable) 'Jaime *comes* chicle', in the context of the third person, clearly implied in the question itself, this would have gained a mark. The benefit of doubt will be given if there is reasonable evidence that the candidate has understood.

Candidates need to chart the thought process that leads to an answer, especially when there is an expectation that an inference is required, as is often the case when a question asks 'how do we know that...'

## Question 9

This question is set in Theme 1 - world of work; attitudes to work. Here again the topic content - productivity in Spanish working practices, as well as the experts and studies cited, could form a useful basis for further research for A04 content in Paper 8SP03 and 9SP03. The article is wide-ranging and covers a number of pertinent issues within this theme.

Questions (a), (e) and (f), which were targeted at the lower end of the scales of demand, tended, as expected, to be the best answered. Questions (c) and (d) were targeted higher and, consequently, were less well answered. In (c) the figurative use of language 'horario religioso', which whilst explained by the speaker added demand. It is also worth noting that this text mixes direct and reported speech, so that the grammatical demand is higher.

Candidates need to look out for and learn to process these kinds of complex textual features that add to the demand of certain questions. In common with the whole of the paper, questions are pitched at the point of setting as low, medium and high demand and these are spread evenly through the paper. Candidates coming from GCSE may be used to a steady upward incline of difficulty, but this is not a feature of GCE. This means that even the lowest-scoring candidates should find accessible parts across the whole paper.

A particular issue with this question was lack of precision in the use of language leading to ambiguous answers. Candidates need to develop their knowledge of basic vocabulary, such as the difference between 'creer' and 'crear', even using 'pensar' and avoid 'creer' altogether in their answers.

Candidates should be clear which answer the examiner needs to mark. If there is more than one response given, the examiner will always mark the first one. Only give multiple answers if the question specifically says 'Da dos ideas'.

It is a good idea for candidates to practise working out the level of demand of each of the questions by looking in detail at the grammar, vocabulary and, most importantly, the complexity of the thought process needed to apply to reach an answer. This mental exercise can help candidates avoid the assumption that all questions are the same or are just a matter of knowing vocabulary.

## Question 10

Question 10 is a translation from Spanish into English, but with the emphasis on 'transfer of meaning' rather than on the accuracy of the English. This means that errors in the English that do not impede clarity of communication are tolerated (eg spelling mistakes), but what is not tolerated is usage that is not natural English. This would be what an English speaker with no knowledge of Spanish would not immediately understand. A good example in this passage was the phrase 'en su manera de ser' where the mark scheme rejects 'their way to be' or 'their way of being', because this is not good English usage. We need 'the way they are', instead.

This year the mark scheme has been extended to include improved advice on what is and what is not acceptable. The text is divided into 12 one-mark segments, and in common with the rest of the paper, each segment is targeted as low, medium or high demand. In this way the translation is aimed at differentiating for candidates across the whole ability range. The mark scheme gives a correct example of what we would consider transfer with good English usage, as a set of acceptable alternatives and a reject column. These can be used with candidates to show them, firstly that there are different routes to a mark, secondly that it is important for the English to sound natural, and thirdly look at why the words or phrases in the reject column are there. In practising translation in class, candidates could go through a passage in Spanish and using a partly completed mark scheme along the lines of the one for this examination, but with one blank (Answer/Acceptable Alternative/Reject) and for them to fill in what might fit in that box. Candidates would benefit by practising this type of exercise regularly rather than just a piece of Spanish and a blank piece of paper.

## Paper Summary

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

Overall, and in general, reading was the strongest skill area, listening being weaker, and translation the area where candidates struggled most. High-scoring candidates tended to have a better balance of marks between reading and listening.

This indicates that across all candidates, but especially those more likely to have a lower grade at the end of their course, the development of listening skills is recommended.

It is also recommended that basic core vocabulary of the GCSE vocabulary list, should be developed and this will help candidates' to draw inferences based on the clues in the recordings.

In common with last year, candidates would benefit by reading questions carefully in order to give coherent responses to the questions asked. For example when a question asks 'what kind of...?' candidates need to understand that they are looking for a category.

Developmental work on translation skills would be beneficial to improve the sense in English. For example, items such as 'realizar' rendered as 'realise' instead of 'carry out'/'undertake'. It is also important for candidates to proof-read their final translation to make sure it reads as a piece of coherent English.

This report does not comment on the multiple choice and multiple completion questions (Q1, Q5, Q6), but teachers could usefully train their candidates to look for distractors (these are words or phrases included in the incorrect options, but related to what they hear or read), in practising multiple choice questions, a useful exercise can be to work out why the wrong answers are wrong, not just find the right answer. There is some evidence of candidates jumping to conclusions too soon, where they have heard a word and linked it to a similar word in an answer option.

## Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

