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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International Advanced
Level in Spanish (WSP04) Paper 1

Research, Understanding and Written
Response.

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International A Level Spanish

WSP04 Paper 4

Research, Understanding and Written Response

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Candidates had been well prepared for this paper and were clearly familiar with the topic areas covered. Very few candidates were unable to attempt all parts of the paper, with only a few omitting some more challenging questions. The vast majority fared well with the comprehension questions in Sections A and B, some items in the sentence reconstructions proved difficult and the critical analysis within Section C provided more of a challenge.

Section A – Listening

The opening multiple-choice questions were accessible to most with a very high percentage of this January's cohort identifying the correct answer in the first two questions. Even the more challenging parts such as 2(c) and 2(d) could be deduced by elimination of wrong answers. It is vital that candidates do not rush into committing themselves to an answer. At this level, they should listen for the gist of the whole passage: a word which is mentioned in the recording does not necessarily lead them to the answer in the question paper.

The majority of candidates were able to insert a word in the gaps which was grammatically suitable; weaker candidates inserted *en paro* instead of *de prisa* in 3(a) and a small number of candidates inserted *calidad* instead of *cantidad* in 3(b). A successful question on the whole!

The final question of this section, Question 4 was particularly well answered. Most candidates were able to convey that *hay demasiados niños sin hogar* as one of the correct answers to (a) and slightly fewer identified the second point that *el proceso es complicado* or *no hay mejoría*. On the whole, (b) was successfully answered with many writing that the other countries *garantizan contacto mantenido con los países de origen*. The vast majority correctly answered (c) with *los niños migrantes no acompañados/que vienen solos* and especially (d) with the fact that these adoptive parents *cumplen su sueño (de ser padres)*.

A good deal of candidates were successful in the two-mark question (e) and most candidates identified that the reform *debe encontrar más familias* yet slightly fewer realised that it also needs *cursos para tener personal especializado* and a handful wrote an alternative correct answer of *debe hacer una campaña*. The final part (f) in this question was correctly pinpointed by almost all of the candidates as they wrote that there was *una falta de fondos* or *no puede haber un aumento del gasto público*. By simply writing *por la actual legislación* was not detailed enough for the mark to be awarded.

Section B – Reading and Grammar

Again, candidates made a confident start to this section, most gaining full marks for Question 5. However, 5(c) proved to be ever so slightly more challenging, with a few not successfully scoring by identifying A as the correct answer, understanding that *los gigantes sólo participarán en dos eventos más*.

Answers to Question 6 were often very clearly expressed, but a handful of candidates failed to score in 6(a) as the text stated that Costa Rica *planea convertirse en el primer país en sustituir los plásticos de un solo uso*. The inclusion of the single-use plastics was essential for the mark. 6(b) was highly successful as candidates recognised that *plásticos biodegradables* were needed. 6(c) was an interesting question to mark as candidates correctly answered this with a variety of points. The targeted answer was *habría un impacto en los seres humanos* and/or *las especies de animales* yet we awarded the mark for those who wrote *causa contaminación* and *habrá más plásticos que peces* as these points are of course correct! 6(d) proved to be one of the more challenging questions of the paper. The targeted answer for the purpose of the online platform was *compartir/mostrar iniciativas/ideas para eliminar el plástico no biodegradable* or something similar. Both elements, with an idea of getting together to share initiatives with the aim of conquering the plastic problem, were required. A good number of candidates wrote *para compartir nuevos procesos* OR *para eliminar el plástico* yet fewer included the two elements in order to gain the mark.

A few candidates were tempted to write too much in their answers. Reference to the published mark scheme will show the essence of each answer. Longer answers can often miss the point or may start with a wrong detail before

eventually giving the correct answer which is therefore negated by what has come first.

In Question 7, specific understanding of the text was necessary to gain the marks. Whilst most managed a very good overall score on this entire question, (a), (c) and (e) occasionally caused a few issues. The targeted response for (a) required the candidate to refer to both of the typical characteristics of a digit nomad, the fact they are *viajeros sin hogar permanente* and *trabajan con la tecnología (con acceso a Internet)*. We also accepted answers that hinted that these people *tienen equipaje mínimo*. Some incorrect answers for their characteristics included *pueden usar la tecnología para viajes o alojamiento baratos* which was in fact the correct answer for (b) for which many candidates were able to pinpoint in this part. Question 7(c) also proved to be one of the more difficult to answer. The targeted points for the purpose of Carlos's blog were *explicar la realidad de su trabajo como nómada digital* and also *animar a otros a realizar su sueño de hacer este trabajo también*. More candidates correctly answered with the fact that Carlos wanted to share the realities of this job but with the intention of persuading those who've already shown an interest in this line of work and who are not yet totally convinced. The idea of attracting new people to this role was not specific enough for the mark. 7(d) was almost always answered correctly with the fact that these people *pierden pertenencia a su lugar de origen*. Almost all candidates correctly wrote that these workers *pueden integrarse mejor en la comunidad que visiten* in 7(e) yet fewer identified that Carlos *aprecie/aprende más de la cultura/del lugar* in this way. Several candidates failed to score this second mark by vaguely writing *puede conocer o hacer cosas diferentes*. 7(f) and (g) were almost always answered correctly with the fact that Carlos recommends the Canary Islands due to *la banda ancha* and these islands stand out due to *la tranquilidad*.

Due to the order of elements, the first answer was assessed.

Some of Question 8 was a challenge even for some clearly fluent speakers of Spanish. The idea is to reformulate the sentences, without adding any unnecessary words and not changing its meaning. The inclusion of accents on verbs is crucial.

8(a): the objective of using the present subjunctive to express possibility was sometimes successful, although some candidates incorrectly wrote using the future tense and instead of *tenga* wrote *pronto el mar tendrá...*

8(b): the aim for this question was for the candidate to remain in the present tense, not the near future with such answers as *si vamos a seguir igual*. The targeted answer was *al seguir igual*. The following correct transformations were also accepted as they are grammatically correct: *si pensamos/decidimos/conseguimos igual* as they also fitted in well from the text, in the first-person plural.

8(c): a good number of candidates managed to reformulate this sentence to include the subjunctive mood, using *para que el uso de plástico sea/quede/termine eliminado*.

8(d): a good number of candidates managed to reformulate this sentence to include the preterite tense, using the *se creó* however we could not accept those answers with a missing accent here. We also accepted *que se ha creado*.

8(e): this was a very successful question and most candidates correctly used the subjunctive and wrote *a condición de que estén conectados*. Several candidates omitted that vital accent and therefore did not gain the mark and a few candidates incorrectly used the present indicative *están*.

8(f): This question discriminated well and appeared to be the more challenging of the sentence transformations. A very small amount of candidates correctly used the conditional tense with *sería capaz de* here. The vast majority wrote in the present tense and used *es capaz*.

8(g): the use of the present perfect here was sometimes accomplished, several candidates transforming the sentence to *un blog de viaje ha sido escrito por Carlos*. To name a few incorrect answers that change the meaning: *un blog escrito por, ha escrito un blog por viajar, Carlos optó por escribir*.

8(h): the use of the relative pronoun was effective by many candidates. Some unfortunately omitted the *en* or wrote *en la cual* despite the masculine noun of *un blog*.

8(i): The targeted answer here, using the present perfect, was *la primera española que ha aparecido en la lista*. The insertion of the word *que* was imperative. This question proved somewhat challenging for a number of the candidates.

8(j): Almost all of the candidates were able to manipulate the sentence to produce a paraphrase of *gracias/debido a las características*.

Section C

It is crucial that candidates understand the nature of what is expected in the final essay. Since marks are awarded for Content and Communication (out of 15) and Critical analysis, Organisation and development (out of 20) as well as for Quality of language (out of 5), it is crucial that some examination time is spent planning the response to the specific question asked. Many candidates who wrote fluent essays in Spanish of a very high quality often scored low marks for the other two categories because their response lacked relevance or were simply a regurgitated version of everything they knew about the topic or work.

Most importantly, candidates should realise that the thrust of the questions set is mostly in the second part. The descriptive first part is simply a *springboard* to allow them to show relevant knowledge resulting from their reading or research. To access the higher mark bands, they must engage in an analysis of the issues. Essays which relied too much on description and less on evaluation fared poorly.

Geografía

There were interesting and well-informed submissions on, for example, coastal regions in Spain, the capital city and occasionally south American countries or regions. The best candidates were able to support broad statements with recent statistics or information. Some candidates were able to give good information of a region's climate in 9(a), but not necessarily analyse how it changes the daily lives of the inhabitants. A fair balance of pros and cons of the impact of tourism in 9(b) was favourable.

The geographical area must be in a Spanish-speaking country. Similarly, essays which did not mention a specific Spanish-speaking area and merely referred to environmental issues in general were irrelevant.

Historia

Many of the essays on historical subjects were full of relevant information and managed to present facts to support general ideas and to draw conclusions

required by the questions set. Some very interesting pieces! The historical era or figure needs to be related to a Spanish-speaking nation.

The predominant area of study was Franco and Francoism, the Spanish civil war and the discovery of the New World. The higher scoring essays include some excellent factual knowledge and dates, as well as in depth analysis on the various impacts or relevance at the time and on the present day.

Literatura

It is not necessary to introduce the essay with general information about the genesis of the work. In fact, this produced a poor start when it appeared. Better candidates provided an opening paragraph which identified the issues to be addressed in the essay with direct reference to the essay question set.

The most common texts studied were *Como agua para chocolate*, *Las bicicletas son para el verano* and *Laberinto del Fauno*. Most candidates chose 11(a) to discuss the character of Tita and how the title of the novel reflects her and her life. The more popular choice was also 14 (b) over 14 (a), candidates preferring to analyse the protagonists over the significance of hope.

Películas

The most popular choices were *El Laberinto del Fauno*, especially 16 (a) and the relationship of the fantasy world and the real world, as well as both options for *Ocho apellidos vascos*.

Careful planning may well avoid an over-reliance on the plot. The best essays were in clear paragraph form with a main sentence to introduce the paragraph, followed by several examples. A final evaluative sentence then often referred back to the essay title in some way.

Overall this was a paper which discriminated well. Centres had clearly prepared candidates well for the varying demands of the paper. Candidates showed real understanding of complex Spanish in a variety of contexts and were often able to produce Spanish of an impressive standard.