



## **General Certificate of Education**

# **Spanish 1696** *Specification*

**SPAN1      Listening, Reading and Writing**

## **Report on the Examination** *2010 examination - January series*

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## General Comments

This third edition of SPAN1 proved to be a test that discriminated very effectively between the less able and more able candidates. Just one new type of exercise was included, as Question 8. Centres need to be aware that the examination will not always have the same type of tests in the reading and listening comprehension exercises and it is likely that at least one new exercise will be introduced in a session.

Online marking was introduced for the first time for this unit and it is worth stating that candidates do need to ensure more than ever that they write their answers in the spaces designated for them.

## Listening Section (Questions 1-4)

### Question 1 El matrimonio es la receta contra el estrés

A number of candidates answered the whole of the question in Spanish and scored zero due to rubric infringement. As always, practice of all question types in class will help to eradicate this kind of mistake that could prove costly in the final outcome.

- (a) This opening section for three marks differentiated well; those with very good breadth of vocabulary coped well but many struggled. Virtually everyone was able to get an easy first mark with *personas divorciadas*; *solteras* was more challenging, with many incorrectly offering 'alone' or 'lonely'; *viudas* caused most difficulty.
- (b) This followed the pattern of a) by offering one easy element in *visitas a las tiendas* and two more difficult ones where full comprehension of *baños relajantes* and *tratamientos de belleza* was essential for the mark.
- (c) Very few candidates knew *azafatas*; many tried to work out something logical from the context of the passage by offering “married couples” or “people in a relationship” and there was no shortage of attempts based on 'those lacking something' (perhaps from hearing *faltas*).
- (d) This was straightforward; a few erroneously suggested 'How are you?'
- (e) This proved difficult with *enfermería* being translated as 'nurses', 'doctors', 'medicine' and 'health care' in almost equal measure; *enseñanza* was problematic for many.

### Question 2 ¿Menos visitas a Machu Picchu?

There was a fair amount to read as well as to listen to in this exercise, but the seven multiple-choice questions caused few problems. Many candidates did answer (b) incorrectly, but otherwise there was a good response with (a) (c) and (d) being the most accessible.

### Question 3 El Real Madrid

This 8-part question caused few problems. The years 2008 and 1956 were answered well as were the questions requiring the figures 9, 15, 16 and 38. The number of seats in the Real Madrid football stadium ranged from 3 to 800,000,000 and it is worth checking that students do know how many zeros are needed for hundreds, thousands and millions.

### Question 4 Cabinas telefónicas en peligro de extinción

It is worth repeating that all answers in this written comprehension style of exercise can be 'lifted' from what is heard on the recording: no manipulation of Spanish is required. Brief, concise answers are normally all that is required. Most candidates are fully aware of this and the question was answered well.

- (a) This enabled most to get off to a very strong start with the easily recognisable *falta de sol* and *autobuses de dos pisos*.
- (b) This required candidates to remember that 'ph' does not exist in Spanish and we would not expect to see 'photographiar' at this level.
- (c) This question required the word *mitad* for the mark; those who attempted to work out the maths of  $60,000 \div 2$  sometimes often caused unnecessary self-inflicted damage. There were inevitably those who attempted to do so on the basis of 70,000.
- (d) A few struggled with the very accessible 'liftable' answers of *todos tenemos móvil* and *no dan dinero*. Some offered *no van dinero* and no doubt wondered to themselves what it could mean.
- (e) This question was more demanding; most managed the idea of one's mobile being *sin batería* but the notion of being caught out by the rain was far more testing and there were many variations on *la lluvia te sorprende, desorprende* being the most common misspelling.
- (f) This option was pleasingly well-handled by the majority for whom *víctimas del vandalismo* and *mal negocio* were not difficult to hear. There were, however, many misspellings of *vandalismo*, often with 'b' replacing the 'v' and 'e' replacing the second 'a'. *Mal negocio* was frequently written as a single word.

## Reading Section (Questions 5-9)

### Question 5 La boda perfecta

This start to the Reading section of the examination was designed to be answered quickly and well and that proved to be the case. It proved very accessible to those who have by now built up a solid language base. Sections (a), (d), (e) and (h) were answered correctly by almost all candidates. There was less certainty over (c), (f) and (g). Only (b) caused any real concern, the distinction between printers and publications.

### Question 6 'Un poco de consuelo'

All the answers to this type of questions are contained as 'liftable' words or phrases in the passage and so this should be a fairly simple exercise. Most candidates found it so, but it is important to read the questions carefully in order to guarantee the marks, and the answers do need to be fairly precise

In (a) the answer *del servicio secreto británico* was incorrect, needless to say, because the answer must be a direct response to the question asked. The answer to (b) was perhaps the most difficult one to find on the basis of a straight 'lift' as it had to come in part from lines 1 and 2 of the text. In question (d) candidates who failed to notice that at least two elements would be necessary for the mark suffered as a result. Questions (e), (f), (g) and (h) were all straightforward answers but i) caused problems because many chose to add in *y el robo de recursos naturales* as part of their description of a *derrumbamiento político*.

### Question 7 Caminar produce suficiente energía para tu móvil

This question caused few problems. The easiest sections were (e) and (b) with an almost 100% correct response from candidates; (g), (d), (f) and (a) were answered well. Only (c) with its more challenging 'body' vocabulary caused almost half of the candidates to select an incorrect answer.

### Question 8 Amy en Madrid

This was a new style of exercise and, in addition to the explanation in the rubric, an example was offered to show how it worked. The finding of synonyms is a well-established exercise for linguists at this level and was challenging but accessible to most candidates. The words from the passage should fit exactly with the phrase or clause that forms the question and many copied out too much, in the hope that the answer would be contained within their lengthy transcription and that it would be accepted. The answers were in chronological order and most candidates quickly understood what they had to do.

- (a) This was straightforward and was the most accurately answered of the seven sections.
- (b) This question was trickier as the vocabulary in both the text and the question was more challenging.
- (c) Candidates were required to skip past the third paragraph in order to find *desistió de sus altos tacones* but most found the clause without difficulty.

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- (d) This was an example of candidates' failure to select with precision; many began their answer with *una guitarra*, others went back to *aferrada*. The correct answer was simpler and shorter.
  - (e) This question differentiated well; the only word required to explain *llegó al aeropuerto* was, of course, *aterrizó* but many offered *ya que aterrizó*, others opted for *aterrizó sólo*. The most able candidates kept their answers brief and to the point.
  - (f) This was the most demanding of all because a clause had to be replaced by a phrase, and many sought a verb to tie in with *dirigieron*.
  - (g) This question caused some difficulty; rather than *huesudo cuerpo*, some candidates chose *dimensiones enormes*, some opted for *Escenario Mundo* and many selected *su tatuado y huesudo cuerpo*.

### Question 9

This exercise on verbs and adjectives was not to all candidates' taste but this is a direct grammar test for which candidates need to prepare fully.

- (a) This was meant to be a simple start to the test, but it caused problems because many students have not learnt the simple yet crucial piece of grammar that if a verb follows a preposition, that verb must be in the infinitive.
  - (b) This was meant to be a simple follow-up question that tested the preterite tense of a regular 'ar' verb. However, it did not allow for candidates' varied interpretations of *anoche* and so present and future tense answers mingled in with the accurate preterites offered by those who do know their time clause vocabulary. The 3rd person preterite accent was, of course, essential.
  - (c) This question required candidates to recognise the need for a present subjunctive and to cope with a radical-changing verb.
  - (d) This involved the manipulation of the adjective *cuyo* a word which some candidates had not encountered previously and those who clearly did not recognise the word decided to conjugate it into *cuyan* or *cuyen*. Those who did recognise it were unsure with which noun to make it agree.
  - (e) This question was answered well by those who have a sound understanding of tenses and of their formation; they quickly recognised this as a standard imperfect/preterite sentence.
  - (f) This caused problems only for those who refuse to distinguish in writing between an 'o' and an 'a'; most were aware of the gender of *calle* and answered correctly.
  - (g) This question was found to be very challenging by the majority of candidates.
  - (h) The most able candidates immediately spotted the 'z' to 'c' orthographical change for plurals and answered correctly.
  - (i) A good proportion of candidates pleasingly scored the mark by knowing the irregular *tú* form imperative or by realising that the second person present tense was an equally plausible answer.
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## Writing Section (Questions 10-12)

### Question 10 ¿Qué opinas de lo que dicen estas personas?

This question on the value of newspapers, television, the internet and mobile phones was the most popular of the three essays and it elicited many excellent answers. The majority seemed to think that newspapers were becoming ever more irrelevant. Others spent most of their time analysing the benefits and drawbacks of the modern media.

In order to defend the newspaper, most candidates were of the view that you can relax with a newspaper and acquire a more in-depth knowledge of news stories; most seemed to be of the view that newspaper-reading is a serious business with real depth of coverage that will enable you to learn lots of vocabulary and become very intelligent; few compared how broadsheets and tabloids have very different audiences, priorities and word counts. The production of millions of pages of newsprint every day was seen by many as disastrous for the environment. Few candidates said that they read newspapers and most referred to the speed, convenience and choice available to everyone who logs on to the internet, not only to acquire news but any other information they might be looking for.

The internet was seen as a powerful tool for education, entertainment and fun. In contrast, there was no shortage of sound analysis of cyber-bullying, criminality and the breadth of unpleasant websites that can be accessed by people of all ages.

Mobiles were generally perceived to be essential for chatting to friends, being in contact with parents, taking photographs, getting help in an emergency and logging on to the internet. Disadvantages proposed were the cost of buying up-to-date devices, the fact that people overuse their mobiles, make intrusive phone calls while travelling, and some candidates spoke of theft.

Television was considered to be an excellent source of news information but viewers have to tolerate too many celebrities and trite reality TV shows in the process – just occasionally candidates thought that switching off the TV might be a useful remedy to deal with this.

The best essays not only expressed the well-rehearsed ideas above but also offered a range of website and programme examples to justify the views expressed. Excellent content allied to impressive written Spanish enabled many candidates to score very high marks.

### Question 11 En tu opinión, ¿son necesarios el maquillaje y otros productos de belleza?

This was the least popular of the three Writing options but there were some splendid essays, full of depth, insight and personal experience, many expressing strongly held views in excellent Spanish. Central to the arguments was the impact on people's lives of having to conform to peer pressure, whilst recognising that conformity is weak or wrong. Girls were often depicted or depicted themselves as the victims of modern-day advertising, although a majority of answers expressed the view that friendship was nevertheless more significant in personal relationships than appearances. A full answer required candidates to start their planning with an analysis of the words *maquillaje* and *productos de belleza* and to think of examples of both. Those who did this mentioned hair colours, mascaras, lipsticks, sunbeds, clothes, shoes, etc. Many went further, regarding cosmetic surgery procedures as a logical extension of the topic. There was much talk of daily routine, amounts of time spent at the mirror, and many spoke of feeling unready for the day without their make-up.

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**Question 12 ¿Estás de acuerdo con la opinión de este director?**

This question was almost as popular as Question 10. Here, candidates were asked to consider the relative importance of sport in the school curriculum. The majority of answers offered a balanced argument, and suggested that sport was essential to the life of anyone at school because it offers variety and a chance to 'let off steam' away from the pressures of academic work or exams; furthermore, many saw it as a way of educating for life, and by encouraging people to take up physical activity at a young age it would have long-term health and lifestyle benefits. The counter-argument emphasised the fact that school is primarily a tool for the teaching of academic subjects, such as English, maths and modern languages, which will have a direct effect on a person's life and employment opportunities. As such, to promote sport over the acquisition of these key skills was seen as misguided. Happily, only in a few cases did candidates use the stimulus as a means to talk in general terms about how to improve lifestyle with healthy eating and exercise outside the context of the education system. It was heartening to see some very original work which tackled the issue in a mature and insightful manner; the majority, however, replicated a sensible series of ideas relating to sport being fun, a way of making friends and encouraging team work, a way of preventing illness etc.



## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

### **Listening Section**

From the January 2010 series onwards all centres have been supplied with two types of CD. One is a single CD which is not tracked and which is suitable for downloading onto mp3 players, language laboratories etc. One CD of this type is supplied per centre. The other CD has individual tracks recorded so that candidates using individual CD players are able to rewind and fast forward, using these tracks. Sufficient numbers of this CD are supplied for all candidates entered at the centre. Centres can then choose which type of CD best meets their needs.

For each question in the Listening section, both the duration of the heard material and the track numbers from the tracked CD which correspond to that material are printed in the Question and Answer booklet and on the transcript, eg

Length of passage: 55 seconds

Tracks: 10-18

### **Listening/Reading Sections**

It should be pointed out that there is no longer a requirement for candidates to manipulate language in the Listening/Reading sections of this paper as the marks are awarded for comprehension only.

### **Writing Section**

#### **Question Paper and Answer Booklet**

Candidates must write using single line spacing when writing their answer for this section. Double line spacing (i.e. writing on alternate lines) must not be used. Those candidates who cannot complete their answer in the answer booklet must use additional answer sheets; they must not use the essay planning sheet for this purpose as it is not sent for marking.

#### **Essay Planning Sheet**

The Essay Planning Sheet must be used for the plan only and will not be assessed. Essay Planning Sheets, together with any questions on inserts, must not be enclosed with the question paper and answer booklets when they are despatched for marking.

## Annotation of Scripts

The following conventions are used by examiners on scripts when assessing Content.

✓	Point made
Irr	Irrelevant material
Rep	Repeated point
?	Lack of clarity

## Additional Guidance for Responding to the Writing Section

### **Are candidates expected to include an introduction and conclusion in their essay? If so, how many words approximately?**

Candidates are not expected to include an introduction or conclusion, but it enhances the structure if there is a brief introduction and a concluding short paragraph, possibly including a personal response. One of the criteria is for a logical structure and this would enhance the overall structure of the essay.

### **Is a personal opinion valid as a point in the argument?**

Yes, we give ticks for personal opinions as we consider them valid as developments.

### **Should each point/opinion be backed up with an example?**

Generally, yes. There must be plenty of justification of points/opinions in order to gain marks in the higher bands.

### **Are the examiners looking for a certain number of points/opinions plus examples, eg 3 arguments for one point of view with evidence and 3 against with evidence?**

This would be sensible but we have no hard and fast rule on this since a limited number of points very well illustrated and developed would also be considered for the higher mark bands.

### **How does the marking scheme work in practice? Is there a list of relevant points, some of which the examiners are expecting to be included? If so, how many represents poor versus sufficient/very good?**

There is a list of relevant points for the guidance of examiners but these are by no means prescriptive and candidates will get credit for well-argued points not in the list. Examiners tick every relevant, clearly expressed point and give further ticks for development/examples/opinions etc. Thus a list of bullet point type arguments with no development cannot access the highest mark band. In order to access the highest mark band, candidates must also ensure that they meet all the other criteria, eg their ideas are clearly expressed, there is logical structure and they have answered fully the question set.

### **Is it just an instinctive overall rating of logical sequence and therefore individual points are not counted up?**

There is no mathematical guide to Content marks - examiners have to make a decision based on the descriptors in the assessment criteria.

**Are there any other questions which teachers should be asking to get a better understanding of how candidates are to be assessed in the essay question?**

Yes, there are sets of exemplar materials for the Writing section of Unit 1 as part of the Teacher Resource Bank. The Teacher Resource Bank materials are available on the AQA website.

**Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.