



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
January 2013**

Spanish

SPA2T

(Specification 2695)

Unit 2: Speaking Test

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

Examiners commented favourably on the level of performance of the majority of students and the competence of teacher-examiners. This was especially apparent in Part 2, where discussions on the nominated topic were often of a quality and depth worthy of SPA4.

Most tests were recorded digitally and submitted on CD, with a few on memory sticks. Usually the sound quality was very good, but in some cases background noise intruded or the student was not close enough to the microphone. The small number of tests submitted on audio cassettes were not so easily audible by comparison. Schools and colleges are reminded that Summer 2013 will be the last time that cassette recordings will be accepted. It should also be noted that the Instructions for the Conduct of the Examinations, page 8, require that tests be saved as .mp3 files and named with the component code, centre number and candidate number. Care should be taken to fill in the appropriate sections of the STMS and ensure that the name of the teacher conducting the tests is legible so that feedback can be addressed to the person concerned.

Part 1 Discussion of the Stimulus Card

5 minutes (approximate split 2½ for printed questions and 2½ minutes for discussion)

Part 2 Conversation

- Discussion of student's nominated topic: 3 minutes 20 seconds
- Discussion of second topic: 3 minutes 20 seconds
- Discussion of third topic: 3 minutes 20 seconds.

Part 1: Discussion of the Stimulus Card

Most students have been well-prepared to answer the 5 printed questions in 2 to 2½ minutes, leaving roughly the same length of time for the "more general discussion". Sometimes the time was mismanaged and students who were allowed to spend too long answering the printed questions failed to access full marks in the second part of Part 1. It should be noted that in the Mark Scheme 5 marks are available for developing the ideas and opinions raised by the issue on the card. These marks can be lost if insufficient time is spent on the more general discussion or questions are asked about the general topic area and do not follow on naturally from the specific issue on the card.

Tarjeta A - El deporte competitivo

This was a popular card and the printed questions often elicited interesting and intelligent responses about self-esteem, discipline, motivation and aggression. These issues were sometimes skilfully developed by teachers who went on to discuss the effect of competitive sport on a young person's development. Some students were let down by teachers who asked *¿Qué deportes practicas tú?* and failed to encourage a conversation beyond GCSE level. Most discussions were kept within the sub-topic, but occasionally questions were asked on *la dieta sana*, which properly belongs to the sub-topic Health and well-being. *Competitividad* was often mispronounced, and not just by students.

Tarjeta B - Las noticias en la television

This card was also popular, but not all students fully understood that it dealt specifically with news programmes, and took *telediarios* to mean any kind of programme. This led to some unsatisfactory answers to the first two questions. Some students gave detailed answers to question 2 without giving a clear indication of whether the information came as a surprise to

them or not. Most students felt that it was important to be aware of *lo que está ocurriendo en el mundo*, but with many admitting that they generally found the news boring and depressing. The conversations that followed were mainly concerned with viewing habits and the negative effects on young children of watching too much television. Again, it was disappointing to hear questions such as *¿Cuál es tu programa favorito?* which limit the students' scope for "developing ideas".

Tarjeta C - Las tribus urbanas

This was the least chosen card, but was usually done well by students who could successfully manipulate verbs such as *identificarse con* and *pertenecer a*. Most felt that it was important to be different while appreciating the advantages of being a member of a group. Subsequent discussions centred mainly on shopping habits, tattoos and piercings. Fashion/trends appears to be a sub-topic that has not been widely explored in class.

Tarjeta D - ¿Cómo prefieres ver las películas?

This was perhaps the most popular card and students had plenty to say about their preferred ways of seeing films. Pirated films were generally deplored because of their poor quality and the damage done to the film industry although many admitted to having downloaded films from the internet. The general opinion was that the advantages of seeing a film at the cinema – big screen, special effects, sound quality – were outweighed by the cost of a ticket and the nuisance caused by other cinema-goers. It is still seen, however, as a social activity to be shared with friends. It is surprising to hear teachers ask questions about *el género cinematográfico* when *el tipo de película* sounds more natural and is easier to pronounce. Again, discussions about favourite films and favourite actors tended to remain at a GCSE level and did not attract a high mark.

Tarjeta E - ¿Es el alcohol más dañino para la sociedad que la heroína?

It is disappointing that stimulus cards featuring graphs attract relatively few students. Those who did chose this one explained that alcohol is potentially more damaging to society because it is legal and freely available. In general, the caption listing the consequences of alcohol consumption could have been exploited in more detail. Reasons given for drinking too much included stress, exams and family problems. Most felt that it was the responsibility of the individual to control their alcohol consumption and that to make it illegal would be unfair to those who drink in moderation.

Tarjeta F - El matrimonio ¿está pasado de moda?

This card elicited a wide variety of opinions on the role of marriage. Many felt that marriage did offer a guarantee of commitment and stability for the children but at the same time were relaxed about the fact that their own parents were not married. Many said that the cost of marriage was a disincentive, but they seemed to be confusing the state of marriage with the wedding ceremony. In the discussion, almost all teachers raised the issue of gay marriage. When asked about their own plans for the future, many admitted to wanting a traditional wedding in church despite a lack of religious belief and others dismissed the question altogether, saying they were too young to even think about it.

Part 2: Conversation

It is to be expected that the nominated conversation topic will be well-prepared. However, some performances were over-prepared in that students recited pre-learnt answers to rehearsed questions, with no attempt by the examiner to develop their responses. In a few cases, students were allowed to deliver a monologue with no input from the examiner, which had an adverse effect on the Interaction mark. Teachers are reminded that the nominated

topic should be given the same time as the final two topics, that is 3 - 3½ minutes, and not allowed to exceed this at the expense of the remaining topics.

There was no problem this series with the coverage of the four topics as teachers are now very familiar with the topics and sub-topics. Only in a minority of cases were students penalised for spending less than two minutes on a topic. Usually this occurred where too long had been spent on the first three, leaving insufficient time for the final one. Markers will award their mark after 15 minutes and any continuation of the test beyond the allocated time will not attract any marks.

Many students demonstrated their ability to develop their answers spontaneously when given the opportunity to do so, and there were fewer instances of rehearsed exchanges than in previous series. However, some teachers failed to raise their students' level much above GCSE, especially when discussing family and holidays. Conversations judged to be of this quality will tend to attract the descriptor "generally dependent on the examiner" where there is no indication of progression to the appropriate AS standard. In general, questions eliciting only personal information should be kept to a minimum and replaced by questions inviting ideas and opinions relating to aspects of society as a whole.

Most students spoke fluently and with good pronunciation. In some cases a little more effort was needed to produce clear, accurate vowel sounds and to stress words correctly.

Grammar

The majority of students achieved a mark in the top two bands for their Knowledge of Grammar. Positive points noted were:

- The ability to use a range of tenses
- The use of object pronouns
- The present subjunctive after *no creo que*
- Appropriate topic-specific vocabulary

There were the usual errors committed by less able students:

- Poor conjugation of regular –ar verbs and common radical-changing verbs
- Confusion of *ser/estar* especially with marital status, position and character
- *Gustar* in any person other than first
- Future and Conditional tenses confused
- Lack of adjectival agreements
- Gender of common words e.g. *la padre, el noche*

The overall standard of the entry this series was high and it was pleasing to hear so many confident and well-prepared students expressing mature and thoughtful ideas in correct Spanish.

Web Pages

Centres are reminded that a wealth of support documents can be found on our web pages (http://web.aqa.org.uk/qual/gce/languages/spanish_materials.php?id=09&prev=09). These include the latest version of the specification, past papers, Reports on the Examination, Instructions for the Conduct of the Examinations and the Teacher Resource Bank (TRB). For SPA2 the TRB includes advice to teachers conducting your own tests and the materials from the most recent set of Teacher Support Meetings for the Conduct of the Speaking Tests; this is an invaluable resource for preparing students for future examinations. The Secure Key Materials section of our website also includes helpful information; Examinations officers can give teachers access to this invaluable resource.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the

[Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

Converting Marks into UMS marks

Convert raw or scaled marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below.

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion.