

Examiners' Report January 2009

GCE 2008

GCE Spanish 2008 (6SP01/1A)

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AS UNIT 1 (6SP01) SPOKEN EXPRESSION AND RESPONSE IN SPANISH

The assessment for this unit is divided into two sections - A and B, and lasts between 8-10 minutes. In section A candidates are required to respond to four Edexcel-set questions on a stimulus related to a student's chosen general topic area. The first two questions will relate directly to the content of the stimulus and the second two questions will invite the candidate to give opinions or react to the topic of the stimulus. In section B the teacher-examiner should engage the candidate in a discussion that, although relates to the same general topic area and its linked sub-topics, moves away from the main focus of the stimulus.

Assessment Principles

The test is assessed out of 50 using the grid printed in the specification (p. 24 and p. 25). Quality of language (Accuracy) 8 marks, Quality of language (Range of lexis) 8 marks, Response 20 marks, Understanding (stimulus specific) 4 marks, Understanding (General topic area) 10 marks. The application of marking is as follows:

Test that are too short

Drop down one mark band to the corresponding mark across the following assessment grids:

- 'Quality of Language - Accuracy'
- 'Quality of Language - Range of lexis'
- 'Response'

e.g.

4-5	Accuracy variable but errors rarely impede communication; pronunciation and intonation inconsistent but comprehensible.
6-7	Generally accurate but some errors in more complex language; pronunciation and intonation generally good.
8	Highly accurate with perhaps some very minor errors; pronunciation and intonation authentic.

If a candidate would have scored 7, they are given 5, if they would have scored 6, they are given 4. The penalty is not be applied to 'Understanding - Stimulus specific' or 'Understanding - General Topic Area'

Test that are too long

Once the 10 minute mark has passed, the examiner stopped listening at the end of the next sentence.

Tests that do not move away from initial input

Candidates were limited in the amount of marks they could score.

- 'Quality of Language - Range of lexis' - cannot score more than 3
- 'Response' - cannot score more than 8
- 'Understanding - General topic area' - cannot score more than 0

The application of marking for Unit 1, is the same for all GCE 2008 languages.

Candidates' Responses

The majority of candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the requirements of the unit and had clearly been well prepared by their centres for the examination. The majority of centres conducted the examinations professionally making the job of the examiners much easier. In most cases the accompanying OR1 oral forms were sent correctly completed. Centres should be reminded that the OR1 form is essential and can be downloaded from the Edexcel web site and the completed forms should

be sent along with the recordings. Attendance registers were received from most centres and the recordings were on the whole well packaged and arrived undamaged. The quality of recording was, for most candidates, very clear and it is obvious that centres are now using external microphones which help with this. It is worth investing in multi-directional external microphones for the purpose of recording oral examinations. Whilst it is difficult to avoid external noises and interruptions in the corridors which did come through on some of the recordings, the sound of mobile phones in the examination room is unnecessary and all mobiles should be switched off.

All candidates had clearly prepared the stimulus well and demonstrated a clear understanding of the content of the oral stimulus in their answers to the first two questions in Section A. Most candidates had prepared some good ideas for questions 3 and 4 during their 15 minutes preparation time and answered all four Edexcel-set questions with a fair degree of detail. Success in this section is dependent on the candidate's understanding of the stimulus and his/her ability to manipulate the language, rather than lift the words from the text, and express the ideas in his/her own words. Points are rewarded for the level of understanding and the detail given in answering the questions, therefore students should be encouraged to expand, develop and explain their points of view to obtain the top marks for Understanding (stimulus specific).

In a minority of cases the teacher-examiner was unable to keep to the four prescribed questions in Section A and, in one case, the narrow focus of the conversation in Section B made it very difficult to ascertain how much the examiner had managed to cover of the other General Topic Area sub-topics that was not based on the original stimulus. The timing of the oral examinations was, in almost all cases, accurate. It was pleasing to hear the use of stopwatches on the recordings by most centres and for the few centres whose recordings were too long the use of a good stopwatch for the examinations is highly recommended to improve the accuracy of timing of the oral examination.

It is important to remember that reciting pre-learnt responses to questions in Section B should be avoided will not be positively rewarded with the highest marks for Response as spontaneity is an important criterion. This was not an issue in this series.

Most centres had correctly followed the sequence of oral tests stipulated in the teacher-examiner booklet and it would be helpful if centres could, wherever possible, conduct the orals in order of candidate number or number the oral forms in order for the sequencing to be verified.

Success in Section B is partly the responsibility of the teacher-examiner and his/her choice of follow-up questions. Section B is a good opportunity for the teacher-examiner to allow the candidates to show that they have prepared for this unit and to demonstrate what they know and how they can express themselves both in terms of vocabulary, ideas and opinions on a wider set of sub-topics and some excellent examining was heard from most centres. In these cases the teacher-examiner listened very carefully to the responses of the candidate, asking open rather than closed questions and he/she led the conversation naturally through to other areas rather than rigidly using a set of pre-prepared questions, the same for each candidate. It is also advisable to prepare a good transitional question that can lead the candidate onto a sub-topic that moves gradually away from the main focus of the stimulus. In one case the use of the same questions for all candidates was clearly

not suitable and resulted in an artificial questions and answer session in which little attention was paid to the responses and there was no development of a natural conversation.

The thoughtful candidate will want to use some of their 15 minute preparation time to make bullet points/brief notes/mind maps on other aspects of the General Topic Area that they may assume will be discussed and these notes (no more than one side of A4) can be brought into the examination room. The vast majority of candidates chose the General Topic Area of Youth Culture and Concerns which is understandable for the January series owing to the number of topics that it would be reasonable to cover in the first term. However it is highly recommended that candidates are encouraged to choose the General Topic Area of their choice which suits their own personal areas of interest to do well.

Centres are reminded that this is the first examination for this new specification, therefore the grade boundaries set for 6SP01 1A may change in the following exam series.

Advice and Guidance

- Teacher/Examiners should adhere strictly to the timings for the examinations. Please note that oral examinations that are too short will be penalised according to the mark scheme and examiners are asked to stop assessing candidates as soon as 10 minutes passes. The use of a stopwatch is highly recommended.
- The cassette tapes and CDs must be properly labelled with the name and number of the centre and sent with attendance registers and OR1 forms for all candidates. At the start of each tape the name and number of the centre must be recorded and at the start of each candidate his/her name and candidate number along with their chosen general topic area and the number of their stimulus must also be recorded.
- It is essential that care is taken with the recording of the tests. It is important that both the examiner and the candidate are audible and that interference from external noise is prevented. Teacher-examiners must ensure that the tape does not run out before the test is concluded. Recordings must be checked before being sent and if a candidate has not been recorded, where possible, the examination must be conducted again with a different stimulus card.
- In Section A Teacher-Examiners **must** ask the four Edexcel-set questions exactly as they appear on the stimulus card and must not ask any supplementary questions or rephrase them in any way as this will result in the candidate being penalised for any responses they will then produce. Please refer to the oral training guide for more information.
- Teacher-Examiners should avoid the rigid use of a set of questions in Section B and should try to conduct as natural a conversation as possible, listening to the candidate and moving naturally away from the main focus of the stimulus in Section A allowing the candidate to develop their responses.
- Open questions should be used wherever possible to avoid answers that require only brief answers or in some cases simply "sí" or "no".

- Although it is more important that candidates are prepared to offer opinions and express their reactions to situations it is important that they are aware that they will be assessed also on the accuracy of their Spanish (8/50) and the range of their language (8/50) which means that points are awarded positively for candidates who are able to include some complexity in their responses. Clearly their ability to use complex language will depend to a large extent on the Teacher-Examiner providing them with the opportunity to do so.
- A large number of points (20/50) are awarded for the candidate's ability to respond to the examiner's questions and candidates should be encouraged to answer spontaneously, not learn a set of pre-learnt responses, and to develop their responses and sustain the conversation as much as they are able.
- For further guidance about conducting the oral examination Teacher-examiners should refer to the oral training guide: <http://www.edexcel.com/notices/Pages/otg-spanish.aspx> and/or use the 'Ask the Expert' email service for clarification.

6SP01/1A STATISTICS

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw Boundary Mark	50	38	33	28	23	18
Uniform Boundary Mark	60	48	42	36	30	24
Candidates who do not achieve the standard required for a Grade E will receive a uniform mark in the range 0-23.						

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