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Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2021

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced
Subsidiary Level

In Spanish (WSP02/01)

Unit 2: Understanding and Written Response

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Principal Examiner's report WSP02 January 2021.

Introduction

WSP02 01 is assessed in a written examination available in January and June of each year. The assessment lasts 2 hours 30 minutes and is made up of 90 marks. It can contribute to either the International Advanced Subsidiary or the International Advanced Level qualifications.

The assessment for this unit has three sections which total 90 marks.

Section A: Listening (20 marks) Candidates will be required to listen to a range of authentic recorded material and to retrieve and convey information given in the recording by responding to a range of Spanish-language questions. Candidates will need to show understanding of both the general sense and specific details conveyed. The questions will elicit non-verbal responses and short answers in Spanish.

Section B: Reading and Grammar (30 marks) Candidates will be required to read authentic Spanish-language materials and to retrieve and convey information by responding to a range of question types in Spanish. The questions will elicit non-verbal responses and Spanish-language answers. Questions are linked to a range of reading comprehension exercises. Candidates will also be required to understand and manipulate grammatical structures in Spanish by selecting the most appropriate word form to fit a gap, and by supplying the correct form of a word within a sentence which forms part of a short text.

Section C: Essay (40 marks) Candidates will write a 240–280 word essay, in Spanish, in response to a short Spanish language stimulus and four related bullet points. The assessment rewards candidates for communicating relevant information effectively as well as for the quality of the language produced.

Comments relating to individual questions from the January 2021 series

Section A: Listening

Q1. Multiple Choice

Candidates were provided with four options A, B, C, or D for each item within the question comprising the correct response, and three distractors. Question 1 was taken from the subtopic of urban and rural life. There was a good rate of success with questions 1a and 1c. 1d was the most challenging part of the question where the candidates sometimes did not connect *artesano* with *hacen artículos de madera que venden*.

Q2. Multiple Choice

Candidates were provided with four options A, B, C, or D for each item within the question comprising the correct response and three distractors. Question 2 was taken from the subtopic of natural disasters and weather. There was a good rate of success with questions 2a and 2b. 2d was the most challenging part of the question where candidates sometimes did not connect *La recuperación completa del lago es incierta* with *No saben si seguirá aumentando su nivel*.

Q3. Summary completion

Question 3 was a listening summary task from the subtopic of peer pressure and role models. There was a mixture of word types in a pool of 8 and the correct response had to be inserted into sentences, summarising the recorded text.

The most challenging part of this question was 3(d) where some candidates did not pick up that the skills mentioned *hacer cosas concretas como vestirse y alimentarse* were practical as opposed to emotional.

Q4. Short Answer Question

This question required responses using a single word, a phrase or a short sentence. Each item was worth 1 or 2 marks. Question 4 was taken from the subtopic of pupil /student life and is the most challenging of the listening tasks, both in length and the linguistic knowledge assessed. Although full sentence answers are not required, it is necessary to manipulate language from the recording to give an appropriate answer to the question.

There were several instances in question 4 where candidates made grammatical errors whilst still securing the available marks. The responses are awarded marks based on communication, rather than accuracy of language.

Most candidates were awarded between 5 and 7 marks.

Q4(b) in this question, often candidates were not awarded the mark because they accepted the first piece of information that they heard and did not listen to all of the information. The question was, *¿qué alumnos tienen más miedo de empezar el nuevo año escolar?* Candidates often wrote that the answer was *los alumnos jóvenes o reservados*. If they had considered all of the available information, they would have decided that *los que se han trasladado de otro colegio* was the correct answer. The expression, *te afectará en mayor medida* was the crucial element to understand here.

Q4(d) sometimes candidates were awarded only one of the two available marks for this question. Candidates wrote *Si eres tímido* as an answer. This was not a sufficient response to the question as the text states that the reason to look for support is if you have trouble relating to other students due to shyness. Shyness alone is not the reason to look for support.

Section B: Reading and Grammar

Q5. Multiple Choice

Candidates were provided with four options A, B, C, or D for each item within the question comprising the correct response and three distractors. Question 5 was taken from the subtopic of jobs and unemployment.

Q5(b) proved to be a challenge for some as candidates failed to connect the idea, *Es mejor dirigirse en persona a una compañía para encontrar un empleo pagado with, pero deberán conseguirla por su cuenta si quieren ser remunerados*.

Other parts of question 5 were managed well by most candidates with 5(a) being the most accessible part of the question.

Q6. Short Answer Question

This question required responses using a single word, a phrase, or a short sentence. Each item was worth 1 or 2 marks. Most candidates were awarded either 3 or 4 marks. Question 6 was taken from the subtopic of health issues.

Candidates are asked to respond using their own words as much as possible. Whereas most candidates offered concise responses, there were cases where responses comprised large sections of language lifted from the text. Most candidates however were mindful to ensure that they were addressing the question.

Q6(c) sometimes candidates missed the second mark in this 2 mark question. They missed the crucial reference to *beneficios inmediatos* in the question and gave the incorrect answer of *hace que descienda la tensión arterial* which is incorrect due to the phrase *conforme pasa el tiempo*.

Q6(c) Candidates did not give a complete response to this question. They sometimes missed out the idea of sessions of less than an hour which is what surprised the scientists. *Otro efecto positivo sorprendente se reveló en pruebas en las que se usó fisioterapia con pacientes diabéticos. Estas personas se beneficiaron incluso de sesiones de menos de una hora al día.*

Q6(a) and Q6(b) were both handled successfully by the vast majority of candidates.

Q7. Short Answer Question

This was the most challenging of the comprehension questions, both in length and complexity. Most candidates were awarded between 7 and 10 marks for this question. The question required responses using a single word, a phrase, or a short sentence. Each item was worth 1 or 2 marks. Candidates were asked to express their response by using their own words as much as possible. There was no need to use unnecessarily ambitious structures. Long answers often contained irrelevant material and did not directly answer the question. Question 7 was taken from the subtopic of tourism, travel, and transport.

In Q7(b) many candidates were not awarded a mark on this question as there were no references made to *agricultura* or *sembrar y cosechar la tierra. En los hebreos* or *en la ocupación hebrea* were frequently given as answers.

In Q7(d) in this 2 mark question candidates failed to achieve the second mark when they did not mention that Carlos disliked his journey to and from work. Quite often candidates lifted directly from the text, *ir de casa al trabajo y viceversa*, which was not an appropriate answer to the question, *¿Por qué Carlos dejó su empleo para viajar?*

Q8. Sentence Transformations

Candidates were required to write out the correct form of each targeted word. Question 8 was taken from the subtopic of tourism, travel, and transport. Most candidates were awarded between 7 and 9 marks on this question.

Q8(a) Most candidates gave the correct form of this radical changing verb.

Q8(b) Many candidates did not add the accent on *algún*, however this was acceptable because the missing accent did not change the meaning of the word.

Q8(c) Many candidates failed to add the accent to *esté* and so were unable to be awarded a mark. The accent was crucial because without it, *este* has another meaning.

Q8(d) Most candidates gave the correct agreement of the adjective as *fantástica* here.

Q8(e) Candidates were asked to manipulate the reflexive verb *acabarse* into the 3rd person singular of the future tense. Many candidates managed the future tense correctly, but unfortunately, they failed to keep the verb in the reflexive form and missed out the pronoun. Some candidates also missed the accent on *acabara* thus changing the meaning of the word.

Q8(f) Many candidates correctly identified *dependiendo*.

Q8(g) This was generally very well done, but there were a couple of examples where the candidate had substituted a completely different word, in these cases *fácil*. Candidates are reminded of the rubric where they are told that changes to the words are not always required and substituting one word for another is never required.

Q8(h) Many candidates correctly expressed this verb using the present subjunctive.

Q8(i) Most candidates were able to correctly produce *inspiradores* with the just the occasional *inspirados*.

Q8(j) The majority of candidates selected an appropriate form of *querer*.

Section C Writing Question 9

This section requires candidates to write an essay in response to a short stimulus. The recommended length is 240–280 words, although this is only a guide and candidates should not be concerned by the exact length of their response. The bullet points allow candidates to offer opinions and to use a range of tenses. It was essential that candidates fixed their response firmly on these bullet points. If one point was missed out, the maximum Content and Communication mark was 16. If 2 were missed, the maximum was 12 marks and if 3 were missed the maximum mark was 8. Question 9 was taken from the subtopic of food and diet. The candidates who planned their answers before starting to write their responses tended to do very well in terms of Content and Communication marks. Examiners reported that they had the impression that some candidates just began to write their response immediately without giving much thought to the actual rubric and bullet points. Most candidates were awarded between 32 and 40 marks for question 9.

Comments relating to the four bullet points:

Bullet point 1 – la importancia de la dieta en tu vida.

Candidates had plenty of ideas around this bullet point. Unfortunately, some candidates did not answer the bullet point correctly as there was a lot of information conveyed about the importance of diet in general terms, rather than the importance of diet to the candidate. The bullet point clearly asks "... en tu vida". Candidates are reminded that they must answer the bullet point and that their response must be clear to a reader as if the latter had not previously seen the bullet points.

Bullet point 2 – lo que comías cuando eras más joven.

This was generally successful. However, some candidates did not write about what they used to eat when they were young, but rather about what young people tend to eat when they are young, using the present tense. These candidates missed an opportunity to use the imperfect tense as suggested by the bullet point. Marks for Content and Communication would have been affected as the given bullet point was not addressed.

Bullet point 3 – si crees que la comida es la mejor medicina para tener buena salud.

Candidates regularly wrote at length about their opinions on this subject. Many candidates concluded that a balance of good diet and exercise was the best approach for good health. Candidates often demonstrated a knowledge of a wide variety of lexis related to disease and illnesses connected to poor diet.

Bullet point 4 – cómo cambiarán nuestros hábitos alimenticios en el futuro.

On some occasions, this bullet point was answered very briefly, possibly due to a lack of time at the end of the exam. Sometimes candidates did not offer concrete ideas on how eating habits will change in the future, but those that did, wrote about the growth of veganism, vegetarianism, and the general movement towards reducing the consumption of red meat due to its environmental impact. Overall, there were many good ideas expressed about this bullet point.

Quality of Language

Most candidates were able to express a range of opinions and views eloquently and using a wide range of language. They successfully used complex language and more advanced vocabulary. Some candidates had very good ideas, but they tended to write very long sentences, which resulted in a loss of focus upon or digression from the points that they were making. In these cases, it would have been better to write shorter sentences with connectives in order to improve the structure of their ideas.

Common errors in terms of grammar were missing pronouns especially with reflexives, lots of errors with missing accents and common spelling mistakes eg *ze* for *ce* and *a* for *ha*.

Some candidates missed opportunities to use the subjunctive or it was used in a contrived way.

There were occasionally lapses with vocabulary and grammar due to interference from the candidate's mother tongue. Overall, the standard was very high and there were lots of impressive, detailed, and coherent responses which used an extensive range of vocabulary and grammar.

Common errors:

Q9 What candidates did well

- Most essays addressed all four bullet points.
- Used one paragraph per bullet point for clarity.
- Responses were typically between 240 and 280 words.
- Most candidates attempted to develop the bullet points.
- Many essays offered a wide range of complex structures and lexis.
- Structured the response to contain only relevant material.

Q9 How candidates could improve upon performance

- Be sure to address all four bullet points fully.
- Avoid digression from the required content.
- Planning can help to ensure that ideas are well organised and developed.
- Consider making the essay plan early on during the exam, to avoid rushing this very significant part of the exam paper at the end.
- Always give several ideas for each bullet point.

General points

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

- Ensure that handwriting is clearly legible.

- Address all elements of each question, especially in question 9 where your marks for Communication and content will be limited if you do not fully address a bullet point.
- Read the question or the bullet point again after you have answered it to check that what you write is a direct response to it.
- Consider alternative ways of wording your answer; clear and concise is best.
- Where two pieces of information are required by the question, you should clearly demarcate the separate ideas or points that you are making.
- Avoid the use of untargeted lifts from texts and use your own words as much as possible.
- Base all comprehension responses upon evidence from the text or the recording.