Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level
In Spanish (WSP04)
Paper 01: Research, understanding, and written
response

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Introduction

This paper is worth 90 marks. It is a mixed-skill unit that consists of three sections.

Section A - Listening (20 marks)

Candidates listen to four recorded extracts in Spanish. They retrieve and convey information given in the recordings by responding to questions of different types.

Question 1 - El español en el mundo de los negocios

A multiple-choice question worth four marks. The mark most frequently missed was 1(d). The question was accessible to a majority of candidates.

Question 2 - Los agricultores salen a protestar

A multiple-choice question worth four marks. The mark most frequently missed was 2(d). This question also proved accessible to the majority of candidates.

Question 3 - Envases interactivos en Perú

A cloze test question worth four marks. Candidates had to choose the correct answers from a pool of 8 possible words. Although a majority of candidates schieved full marks, 3(b) was sometimes incorrectly answered.

Question 4 - Mujeres en la ciencia a todas las edades

Candidates listened to an interview and gave short answers in Spanish. This question is worth eight marks.

The majority of candidates scored close to full marks. Some candidates omitted 'insipradora' in (a). In (b), some answers focused on the 'targeta inteligente' and information storage, without explaining how it helps to identify and accompany refugee children separated from their parents. In (e), some answers mentioned 'visibilidad' and 'participación,' but did not say for whom. (f) was generally well done, and candidates found various ways to convey the correct idea.

Section B - Reading and Grammar (30 marks)

Candidates read texts written in Spanish. They retrieve and convey information in the texts by responding to questions in Spanish. Candidates also manipulate grammatical structures by reformulating a selection of phrases taken from the reading texts.

Question 5 - Un recorrido por La Habana, la capital cubana

A multiple-choice question worth five marks. This question is the most accessible of the reading tasks, and a majority of candidate achieved full marks. 5(d) and 5(e) proved to be the most challenging questions.

Question 6 - Construir una casa sostenible en Argentina

A reading comprehension text worth five marks with short answer questions in Spanish.

This question produced a spread of marks. In (a), some answers talked about starting from zero without mentioning the intention of building a sustainable house. A few answers referred to 'empresas especializadas.' In (c), answers which correctly described the environment inside the building were accepted. However, those that mentioned features of the building did not, for example, 'tiene mejor aislamiento térmico y acústico.'

Question 7 - Courage Adams: estrella en ascenso del BMX

A longer reading comprehension text with short answer questions in Spanish is worth 10 marks. A majority of candidates performed well on this question.

In (a), the lift 'Más dura que la española' without the inclusion of 'una vida,' did not score. For (b), there were frequent untargeted lifts that did not capture the idea of being physically well-suited to the sport. In (c), some candidates mentioned the streets in Madrid without explaining the training advantages. For (e), several answers did not manipulate the language of the text correctly; for example, 'Le impide competir viajar a Estados Unidos,' were not able to express the idea that the problem was <u>not</u> having Spanish nationality. A majority of candidates answered (h) with the lift 'a caer sin hacerse daño,' therefore failing to spot that the question asked for mental qualities rather than physical ones.

Question 8 - Manipulation of grammatical structures

The emboldened phrases within questions in reading texts in Section B were to assist candidates in reformulating the phrases. Candidates reformulated phrases from the reading comprehension texts in Questions 5, 6, and 7. They had to include the given structures in each question. They had to produce a correct phrase without altering the meaning of the original.

(a)   'Indicados' and 'precisos' were frequently omitted.

(b) A some candidates wrote, 'en un 15%'. Some offered 'reducido,' without the correct agreement.

(c) The most common mistake was to make 'compensan' singular. Some answers left out 'se.'.

(d) Mostly well done apart from some who tried to turn the noun 'retención' into a verb. Some omitted 'la' before 'lluvia.'

(e) A majority of responses gave 'Ya se deja.' Some gave 'se deja' in the singular.

(f) A majority got this correct, although some omitted the accent on 'llegó.'

(g) A limited number of candidates achieved this mark. The most common mistake was to render 'boquiabierto' without the correct agreement.   A significant number of candidates wrote 'se cruzan' or changed the tense to 'se crubazan.'

(h) A majority all candidates answered correctly.

(i) Omission of 'hacer' after 'intento' was common, and similarly, 'hace' was sometimes omitted after 'desde.'

(j) Some candidates offered two subjunctives in the sentence, for example, 'cuando haga falta.'

Section C - Writing (40 marks)

Candidates write one essay on a topic chosen from the list prescribed in the Specification for the unit.

This series's most popular essay choices were the history questions and the works, *Cómo agua para chocolate, Ocho apellidos vascos, El laberinto del fauno*, and Yerma.

Some essays did not have clear introductions and conclusions. Some candidates wrote a general introduction about the topic or work that did neither relate to the question nor added anything to the essay's overall argument. In general, essays were well written, and candidates were able to show a good level of engagement with their chosen topic or work.

In some cases, candidates had an excellent level of knowledge of their chosen work or topic but were not able focus sufficiently on addressing the question.

Essays achieving the highest marks contained an excellent level of relevant detail in response to the question's 'Describe…' or 'Explica…' part. They also demonstrated a clear and coherent argument in response to the question's 'Analiza…' element.

The following comments summarise the examiners' observations on the most popular essay choices:

Question 9b Geography

The effects of climate change on Madrid and measures being taken to address the problems produced successful responses. Lower scoring examples gave only a superficial account of the causes and effects of climate change without mentioning the measures being taken to deal with it.

A majority of essays included contextual information about the characteristics of the region. Facts and statistics were given but often inconsistently, with more examples needed. Some essays talked about global climate change more generally rather than specifically in Spain. Several essays demonstrated some analysis but without a great deal of depth. Conclusions tended to be brief and lacking in depth.

Question 10a History

This was one of the most popular essay choices. In general, there was good factual information, although the analysis was not always focused on answering the question. Azaña was a popular choice of a powerful figure. Essays charted his rise to power through the elections of 1931 and the reforms he introduced. The best essays gave factual detail about the land reforms, the education reforms, and the widening of the franchise. The less successful essays mentioned the reforms but gave little factual information. Several essays were about Franco and dealt with his rise to power after his military successes in Asturias

and North Africa. There was a tendency to focus on what the powerful figure did with some essays describing the person in detail. Several essays dealt more with how the powerful figure maintained power than how they came to power. This approach was accepted.

Question 10b History

The majority of candidates who chose this option wrote about the radical reforms of the Catholic Church introduced by Azaña's government during the period of the Second Republic of 1931 – 1936 and the subsequent effect they had on both the republicans and the nationalists, fuelling the increasing hostility that led to the outbreak of the Civil War. The best essays provided specific and detailed information about the reforms and gave factual evidence concerning the consequent rise in violence and hostility among the populace. The less strong essays simply relied on generalisations and provided little or no historical evidence to support the assertions. Some essays discussed the role of the Church during the period of the Reconquista or Franco's dictatorship.

Question 11a *Como agua para chocolate*

This question was the most popular of the questions on written works. A majority of the essays were well organised, and several candidates devoted each paragraph to the sequence of deaths that occur in the course of the novel. The best candidates closely analysed the effect that each of these deaths had upon Tita and drew conclusions about how the author presented the idea of death.   The less strong essays resorted to storytelling with little attempt to analyse. Some essays took the opportunity to discuss the use of magic realism in analysing how death is presented in the novel.

Question 11b *Como agua para chocolate*

A limited number of candidates chose this question. Those who did showed detailed knowledge of the novel, with candidates again drawing on a wide variety of relevant textual evidence. Some essays simply narrated the chronological events in the novel, which relate to the Mexican Revolution without analysing the parallels between life on the ranch and the events of the period.

Question 15b *Yerma*

The majority of essays on *Yerma* tackled question 15b. A majority began by explaining the significance of the title in relation to the main character's infertility but tended to tell the story rather than address the demands of the question. As a result, some essays became rather superficial and lacking in relevant analysis. Some candidates made a rather tenuous link between Yerma and Lorca, neither conforming to social norms of the period. Reference to the symbolism of life and fertility in the natural landscape would have helped address the second part of the question in more depth, but some candidates made this link.

Question 16b *El laberinto del fauno*

There were some good analytical essays on the significance of the 'cena' and how the scene exemplified and demonstrated some of the central themes of the film. Candidates

used a range of relevant examples from the film in response to the question, particularly the contrast between food shortages and the gluttony of Vidal's meal. A majority referred to Vidal's relationship with Carmen, using the example of how he addresses her at the meal, although some managed to develop and explain this point in more depth. Some candidates referred to the parallel scene later in the film in which 'el hombre pálido' represents Vidal in the fantasy world.

Question 17a Ocho apellidos vascos

A majority of the essays on this question were less successful than 17b. Candidates tended to write about stereotypes and tell the story of the wedding scene rather than focusing on the demands of the question. There was frequently a lack of evidence of specific and relevant detail. A number of the essays were superficial and contained much irrelevance.

Question 17b Ocho apellidos vascos

This question was attempted with greater success by the majority of the candidates. The best essays were full of relevant detail describing the settings and locations and, together with reference to the dress and behavior of the characters, drawing conclusions about regional stereotypes. The less strong essays simply concentrated on the characters and omitted any reference to locations and atmosphere.

A majority of candidates were able to give examples of regional stereotypes from the film, particularly the contrast between the jovial atmosphere of the Sevillian bar and the hostile surroundings in the Basque country. Some essays lacked analysis. For example, the idea about how weather and landscape are used to reflect regional character stereotypes could have been more developed.

General advice

Based on the performance in this examination, candidates are offered the following advice:

- In Sections A and B, read the questions carefully. Ensure the answer follows logically from the question and provides all the relevant information.

- In Question 8, find the emboldened question phrase in the articles in Section B. Ensure the reformulated phrase is not only grammatically correct but also works in the context of the article.

- Read essay questions carefully. Bear in mind that the first part of the question asks for an explanation or description, and relevant detail is important here. The second part of the question asks for analysis. Here, candidates should ensure they draw conclusions and give opinions based on their knowledge of the work or topic.

- Avoid launching into the first point of the essay without an introduction. Include a clear introduction that sets out how the essay will address the question.

- Include a wide range of different types of relevant factual evidence to support points of view, for example:

  - History and Geography: specific examples, figures, dates, events for history and geography essays.

- Film and literature: specific examples, quotations, director's or author's technique.

- End with a conclusion that summarises the arguments in the essay and gives a personal response to the question.

- Always write clearly and legibly.