
GCSE

SPANISH

Unit 2 Reading
Report on the Examination

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General Comments

Students taking the Foundation Reading examination in general find questions requiring an answer in English the most demanding. In terms of vocabulary they understand single nouns better than adjectives and find verbs the most difficult. Consequently any question requiring a combination of these lexical items is quite challenging. Most students follow the patterns laid out in the examples but, regrettably, some still do not.

In terms of question styles, students are familiar with the P+N type question and show evidence of being able to recognise opinions (which is one of the requirements of the grade descriptor for C). They can read a variety of written texts in a range of contexts and identify main points and extract details. It helps that the texts are broken down into manageable chunks to facilitate comprehension.

At the other end of the ability range students show some understanding of main points and can extract some details from shorter texts, (some of which are only one sentence long) when they relate to familiar contexts.

Foundation Tier

Question 1

This was understood by almost all of the students.

Question 2

Personal descriptions and common hobbies were well known. The more demanding vocabulary tested here, *al lado de un parque* and *todos los días*, was not so well known as might have been expected. Prepositions and frequency words are important parts of the specification and help to identify more able students.

Question 3

Most students were able to identify at least two of the answers. The context of 'home and local area' and, in this question in particular, 'special occasions celebrated in the home' was quite well known.

Question 4

Students found this question demanding. Option 'A' was a popular answer because many students focused on the second part of the first sentence, *el conejo es la mascota más popular en Inglaterra*, when in fact this was preceded by the key information, *después del perro y del gato*. The verb *perder* was not well known and many students therefore thought that option E was a correct answer. This text required careful reading and only the most able Foundation students were able to do so.

Question 5

Students needed to understand three infinitives: *seguir*, *preparar* and *cambiar*. Of the three only *preparar* was well known. Many had seen *seguir* in the context of *seguir estudiando* and thought that the information was to find out how to carry on a diet. There were in fact quite a lot of references to dieting rather than following a healthy diet. In part (b) the difficulty was in understanding *platos* and some students wrote about preparing plates. Students should have seen in the example that three elements were required for the answer and many failed to include this

level of detail, especially in part (c), which ended up being the most poorly answered question on the paper because students did not know the verb *cambiar*.

Question 6

'Social issues and equality' is an interesting part of the relationships and choices topic in the context of lifestyle and yet the idea of 'poverty' was not well known in this question. Many students fell back onto their own experiences of charity events and fundraising initiatives and wrote about everything from fun runs to cake sales, but mostly about concerts through misunderstanding *concurros*. Students found the adjective *trabajador* the most accessible part of this question.

Question 7

This question proved to be more challenging than expected. In (a) many students understood *correo electrónico*, but (b) proved to be more challenging with many opting for A rather than the correct answer B. Even more students failed to understand *medio ambiente* in part (c).

Question 8

This question required understanding of small but important words which can totally change the opinions expressed. Negatives such as *nadie* and *nunca* caused problems for some students, along with less common adjectives *hartos* and *decepcionados*. However, on the whole, the holiday topic in the context of leisure is well known.

Question 9

Students who followed the example and included a noun and an adjective in this question were in the minority. Many gave one word answers such as 'the food', 'the library' and 'the rules' or 'it's strict' without mentioning the rules. Students should follow language patterns in the example so that they include the required amount of detail.

Question 10

Although this was in the imperfect tense, students did not need to understand it to be able to answer the question since it was single nouns and infinitives that were tested. These individual items of vocabulary were very well known.

Question 11

This question tested the topic of future plans and was very well done. Students are very familiar with this vocabulary and this may well be because they have used it in controlled assessments in speaking and writing.

Higher Tier

General Comments

At the very least, at Higher Tier students should be able to understand different types of written texts that contain a variety of structures relating to a range of contexts. They should be able to identify main points, extract details and recognise opinions. Many students have these skills and are therefore entered at the right level.

At the other end of the scale the Higher Reading examination does test students' ability to extract meaning from more complex language and extended texts (although these are broken down into more manageable paragraphs to facilitate comprehension). It is in writing answers with the correct amount of detail that students find difficult and only the most able are able to manage this.

Question 1

This was on the Foundation paper as well and, as expected, Higher students found this question more accessible than the Foundation students.

Question 2

Students' ability to identify details was tested in this question and many were unable to pick out the correct answer from the distractors since the short text referred to history, tour guiding and the USA. Students should practise this sort of question in class. Part (b) also contained reference in the text to all of the options in the answer boxes but it seems that students found it more accessible. Perhaps this was because they found it easier to tell the difference between what Guillermo was going to do as opposed to what his brother was going to do, whereas in part (a) all of the information in the text referred to Soledad. In part (b) students were able to identify the different parts of the verbs correctly.

Question 3

Higher students coped better with Question 3 than Foundation students, but even the Higher students did not know the verb *cambiar* in part (c) and this turned out to be one of the most poorly answered questions on the paper.

Question 4

It was pleasing to see that students understood the text about the importance of languages at work. Certainly this area of the specification is well known.

Question 5

Students have seen this question style for a few years now. They will know from previous reports that they need to understand vocabulary from the questions and the answers in order to get the mark. This requires very careful reading and fine detail in the answer. Once again, knowing the small but important words such as *un poco* and frequency words is very useful.

Some students did not understand *hace* in part (a) and in part (b) some wrote about eating quickly. In part (c) the answers were wide and varied and mainly incorrect: many students wrote about having to wear a bit of make-up. *Perder peso* was not well known at all.

Question 6

The majority of students were able to pick out the correct answers in this question. This topic area is well known.

Question 7

Students at Higher Tier were familiar with the topic of social issues with many answering this question successfully. However, some students did not seem to read the whole question and failed to give a place when the question asked *where*. Although no example answer was given, it was expected that students would give a short answer as neither exact nor full details were elicited in the rubric and only a short answer line was provided for each answer. In part (b) some students wrote a great deal of detail, often translating the whole paragraph, although this was not marked wrong.

Question 8

Students understood the relationships and choices topic really well. This is very similar in style to the P/N/P+N type question and students are familiar with this type of question and they did well here.

Question 9

This had a clear **one** word answer in the example. Students were expected to read and draw simple conclusions. In (a) some students were not able to decide whether Bárbara was writing or reading because they were distracted by the word *escritores*. Others failed to gain marks because they wrote too much. For example, in (c), some wrote about preparing things such as green strawberries.

Question 10

This question was expected to be demanding and designed to test students' ability to identify details and in this case two details in each part. Either the topic area or the question style were familiar as students performed quite well, especially in part (c) which was well answered.

Question 11

The environment is a challenging topic even for Higher students. These texts, although short, included a variety of tenses which intensified their challenge. Many students rose to the challenge and performed well, particularly in part (b).

Question 12

This demanded a high level of detail as outlined in the example answer. *Recargar pilas* was not well known. *Crear* was not well known. *Apuntes and aprender* were not well known. Consequently this question was answered correctly by a very small proportion of students and only the most able scored full marks. Those who can do this type of question show an ability to extract *all* details clearly and are to be congratulated.

Question 13

Students like the topic of home town but part (c) was answered incorrectly by many students. This was probably due to the fact that the word *violencia* was in the text and in answer option A the word 'violent' was there, so students made the mistake of answering with option A instead of C. It is true to say that *paro* is not well known.

Question 14

Hopefully students finished the exam feeling pleased with themselves because this question was on one of their favourite topic areas; holidays! Higher students did well on this question as predicted.

Advice to teachers

- Higher Tier students can expect to have to identify and include more details than Foundation students. Advise students to practise reading comprehensions in class and at home.
- Encourage students to highlight the key question words in English.
- Advise students to read the whole sequence of language before answering the question so that they can see if there is a distracter.
- Make a bank of small but important words, especially negatives and intensifiers and test them regularly.
- Practise texts which elicit opinions, (P/N/P+N), especially expressions which may lead to a negative meaning eg, *demasiado* and *poco* + an adjective. There are many examples of this question style in past examination papers.
- If a question asks for the **most** important thing, there are likely to be a few options to choose from in the text. Train students to look for several options and then pick out the right answer.

Advice to students

- Write **one** letter in the answer box e.g.

A

- Ensure your writing is clear and legible. Do not use stylised or unusual letter formation in the examination as examiners may not be able to read your answers.
- Always answer in English if the question requires you do so.
- Read the questions first as they will give you an idea of what the text is about.
- Read the question carefully. Underline the key question word.
- **Always** follow the example – if the example is a one word answer, **ONLY** write one word.
- If an answer asks for **two** points, only include two points. You will not gain any extra marks by writing more because the examiner will only mark the first two.
- If a word is written in bold in the question it means that you must focus on that word and take account of it when giving your answer.
- If a question has **exact** or **exactly** in it this means that you must give full details or give a longer answer to be awarded the mark.
- The questions normally relate to the order that the information is given in a text, especially if the questions relate to a longer text and you are required to answer in English. This means that the first questions will most probably relate to the first part of the text.

- **Never** leave a gap. Have a guess – you may be right!
- Don't forget to cover areas of the specification not covered for controlled assessments.
- Regularly test vocabulary, not forgetting verbs and the small but important words such as negatives, prepositions and frequency words.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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

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