



General Certificate of Secondary Education

Spanish 4695

Specification

46952 **Reading**

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - June series

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Foundation Tier

General Comments

Although this was a new examination many of the question types remain the same as in legacy papers and the layout is also familiar to candidates who have seen previous AQA papers. New this year was the fact that all questions and answers were in English together with the new topics in the specification. Overall the candidates appear to have found the examination very accessible showing that centres had prepared their candidates very well for the new examination.

Question 1

As expected, candidates found the opening question very accessible and the majority got off to a positive start which is one of the purposes of the first question.

Question 2

This was another successfully answered question. Candidates know the vocabulary relating to relationships with family very well.

Question 3

Candidates began to find the examination more challenging from this point on. This question differentiated well. A common mistake in part (a) was the answer 'four years'. Candidates need to get into the habit of reading the whole sentence/paragraph/text to be able to pick out exact details at this level. The answer to part (b) was not immediately obvious. The verb *compartir* was not widely known and many candidates based guesses around the two younger sisters. Some candidates were not able to pick out the detail required for the answer in part (c). Many candidates wrote about there being a lot of traffic but only the more able managed to identify the correct answer after the phrase *es peor todavía*. Unfortunately, some candidates thought that the *partidos* were parties.

Question 4

This question was well done and candidates were able to distinguish between what they did and did not need to bring to Barcelona. Both the vocabulary relating to leisure and the more complicated structures used to convey need were well known. Simple negatives were also well spotted.

Question 5

Simple vocabulary relating the world of work and education continues to be well known by the majority of candidates. This question was well done, including the more demanding opinion part (d) showing that simple opinions were well known. The fact that the verb *charlar* was supported by the noun *conversaciones* also made part (e) very accessible to candidates. Candidates were not dealing with distracters in this question which also accounts for its accessibility.

Question 6

The examination is designed to peak and trough in difficulty and Questions 4, 5 and 6 gave less able candidates a chance to score highly before the demands of Questions 7 and 8 and later 10. Candidates scored highly on this question once again based in the context of work and education, which is a familiar and comforting topic for the majority of the candidates.

Question 7

Although Foundation candidates found this question more demanding than Higher candidates, success at Higher Tier was also low. The question differentiated well between those who based very generalised answers around the word *foto* and those who read the text fully. Many continue to draw on their own experiences as is often the danger when candidates are very familiar with the context. A common answer was the over-generalised 'she met him on the internet' in (b).

Question 8

Part (a) was not very well answered. Perhaps candidates recognised the list of energy saving and recycling activities in both Fátima and Raúl's texts and assumed that they both helped the environment. Closer reading and understanding of the key words *olvido* and *es poco* would have given them the correct answer.

Parts (b) and (c) were well done but part (d) again differentiated well. Understanding of the small but important words, such as *más que nada*, is clearly very important.

Question 9

In keeping with the peaks and troughs concept of setting an examination in which candidates can continue to access the paper, this question allowed candidates who had found the previous questions very demanding, a chance to regain their confidence. The vocabulary relating to free-time activities was well known.

Question 10

This question differentiated well. Those who correctly identified two correct answers showed an ability to understand detail and understand main points; the criteria required for the higher grades on this paper. Many failed to gain marks because of a lack of attention to detail. Those who made the link between the verb *cenar* and 'having a meal out' showed good deduction skills. Too many misread the verb as *cine* and offered answers such as 'they went to the cinema'. A large number of candidates wrote what the other members of the family had done for Ana's mum's birthday showing that they had either not read the question carefully enough or that the pronouns *yo* and *la* in *yo la invité a cenar* were not well known.

Question 11

In part (a) as in Question 8, the key idea came after the distracter and was introduced by *lo que más me gusta*. This is another example of the importance of small but important words and phrases. The decision to include both words *graciosos* and *divertidos* was to give candidates support in understanding. However, candidates tried to translate them both differently. The mark scheme was generous to those who made some reference to 'fun' even if they added, 'and gracious', which was commonly the case.

In (b) the verb *fumar* was well known but many candidates tried to make an additional activity out of *lo detesto*. This resulted in many answers such as 'they smoke and drink'. A similar marking principal was adopted here so that as long as candidates mentioned the fact that the grandparents smoked they were awarded the mark. However, those candidates who wrote 'They hate smoking' had clearly misunderstood the verb ending in *lo detesto* and therefore failed to gain the mark.

Part (c) differentiated well as understanding questions is difficult for candidates in all skill areas. The most common incorrect answers were 'What are your grandparents like?' and 'Do you like your grandparents?'

Higher Tier

General Comments

Candidates responded well to the new style GCSE examination at Higher Tier, both in terms of being able to access all questions in English, and being able to show understanding of a range of texts relating to a range of contexts some of them new this year. Candidates were able to understand some unfamiliar language and extract meaning from some quite complicated language. They were able to identify main points, extract detail, recognise points of view, attitudes and emotions and draw simple conclusions. Answers to Question 13 were interesting in that many candidates gave quite grammatical reasons for their decisions. As at Foundation Tier, there were a number of candidates who misread the question even though it was in English. This was particularly apparent in Question 3(b). Candidates found the new concepts of problems and pressures at school and what school is like (Questions 8 and 12), future plans regarding marriage (Question 6), the consequences of unhealthy lifestyles (Question 10a) and social issues and equality (Question 13) demanding and perhaps need further practice on vocabulary relating to these new areas of the specification.

Question 1

Candidates performed better at Higher than at Foundation in parts (a) and (b). However, some did not see the emboldened word '**most**' in the question and once again there were many references to the traffic. Attention to detail is crucial at Higher Tier even from the start of the paper.

Question 2

Again Higher candidates found this question much more accessible than the Foundation candidates.

Question 3

This was also well done in parts (a), (b) and (c), but part (d) continued to be a barrier to some Higher candidates. Those small but important words and phrases such as *más que nada* will appear at Higher as well as at Foundation, underlying their importance to being able to show detailed comprehension.

Question 4

This tested healthy and unhealthy lifestyles in the context of school dinners. This question was very well done showing a really good understanding of vocabulary related to this topic area as well as comparatives, negatives and intensifiers. These texts were short but quite complex and candidates did well to understand them and do so well on this question.

Question 5

Although candidates at Higher found part (a) more accessible than the Foundation candidates, part (b) was still difficult for more than half of the candidate entry. Candidates offered the same generalised answers as they had done at Foundation.

Question 6

This tested new vocabulary and structures relating to future plans regarding marriage. Some candidates did not recognise the key verb *casarse* and a common misunderstanding in part (a) was 'it was where her parents **lived**'. Those who did understand the verb unfortunately wrote 'it

is where **his** parents got married', mistaking Antonia's gender, or 'where 'Ana got married', misunderstanding the context of the letter.

Part (b) was quite well done but linking *al aire libre* to 'a garden' was beyond some.

Part (c) was particularly well done.

In part (d) there were several wild guesses including 'being a bridesmaid' but the most common error was 'making a speech'. The verb *leer* in this context was quite difficult.

Question 7

This question was very well done by Higher candidates.

Question 8

Examiners accepted the single word answer 'Spanish' which meant that the majority of candidates got a mark for this question. The mark scheme was also generous in part (b) where allowances were made for any candidate who understood either *extranjeros* or the verb *aprender* as long as they were learning Spanish and no other language. In part (c) candidates did have to understand *cada vez mayor* and include references to an **increasing** number of students who **do not** know how to speak Spanish to be awarded the mark and this part of the question differentiated better than the previous two parts.

Question 9

This was well done.

Question 10 (a)

This question was particularly difficult for the majority of candidates who could not make the link between *fatal para el bolsillo* and 'Don't waste your money on cigarettes'. E was the most popular option for part (a). Other than that, parts (b) and (c) were well done showing good understanding of some healthy living vocabulary relating to smoking especially in (c).

Question 11

Being able to pick out the word *problemas* is not enough for a mark at this level and consequently those who answered Olga in part (b) were wrong. Candidates need to be aware of not making this type of mistake. Part (b) differentiated well.

Question 12

This was quite a complicated text in the past tense including references to a range of feelings pertinent to the subject of bullying in school. Candidates struggled very much with part (c) where only the most able were able to identify the items of vocabulary **and** the verb constructions surrounding them.

Question 13

The stimulus was a piece of real graffiti. Very surprisingly some tried to justify their answer grammatically, picking out references to masculine and feminine forms. Some forgot to give a reason for their choice of letter and failed to gain the mark.

Question 14

This was a long text and although the questions were in chronological order, Question 14(d) required information from the start and the end of the text which was too much for the majority of the candidates, even at this level. As in Question 11, linking *emocionó* in the text with 'emotional' in one of the option boxes in part (b) would be too easy and obvious at this level. Candidates need to be made aware that this sort of word matching will almost always lead to a wrong answer.

Question 15

The options boxes A, B and C were demanding and this question differentiated well.

Question 16 Part (a)

This was very accessible to the majority of candidates showing good knowledge of vocabulary relating to saving energy. Candidates found the link between *lo que les queda pequeño* and 'saving clothes' very difficult despite the added support of *o que no quieren ponerse* in the text. Vocabulary relating to drought, thirst, water shortages in (c) was not well known at all.

Advice to teachers

- Encourage candidates to highlight the key question words in English.
- Train candidates to spot the distracters in a text.
- Advise candidates to read the whole sentence 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.
- If a question asks for the **most** important thing, there are likely to be a few options to choose from in the text. Train candidates to look for several options and then pick out the right answer.

Advice to candidates

- Read the question carefully. Underline the key question word.
- Practise spotting the distracters in a text. Perhaps write your own short texts with them in so that you can get used to them.
- Keep a list of small but important words such as *más que nada*, *nunca*, *siempre* and learn them regularly.
- **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 regardless of which line you write them on.
- 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.
- **Never** leave a gap. Have a guess – you may be right!

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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