



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2011**

Spanish

46952

(Specification 4695)

Unit 2: Reading

Report on the Examination

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Foundation Tier

General Comments

Students found this paper quite challenging this year with Questions 8 (a) and 8 (c) and 10 (a) and 10 (b) being particularly testing. There were, however, plenty of questions where students could show what they had learnt. Students need to be familiar with the vocabulary in the topic areas new to the specification. Questions 3 and 7 tested relationships, Question 2, technology and Question 8, the environment.

Question 1

This question was very well done by the majority of students. The link between ‘shopping’ and *tiendas* being the most challenging part of the question.

Question 2

This question tested some ideas around new technology and students did well here both on understanding individual items of vocabulary and on understanding the longer text about how shopping by mobile could be easy.

Question 3

This question differentiated well. Although we see *estoy harta* here it is supported by *me fastidia* and *me molesta* and yet the less able students were too easily distracted by the word *buen* and gave ‘P’ as an answer. Understanding small but key words such as *siempre* and *nunca*, *de vez en cuando* and *sólo* is essential for good performances on this type of question. Students should also note that all three options will be used, ie there will always be at least one P, one N and one P+N in the answers. Only one of the options will be repeated. Those who answer with P throughout can only guarantee a mark of 1, so it is a practice best avoided.

Question 4

Part (a) was well done. Part (b) was less well done since the word *mochila* was not well known and students were unable to discount *bolso de viaje*. Many probably answered A because *mochila* reminded them of the word *maleta*. In part (c) many students gave C as an answer, probably because the word *tarjetas* comes after the *equipaje de mano*. Sometimes students have to read what comes before the key words, as opposed to what comes after, and not all of them are able to do this.

Question 5

This question was well done – students were able to make the mental jump from *mandar mensajes con mi móvil* to ‘text’ and were not too distracted by the phone call option in B.

Question 6

This question was challenging but almost three quarters of the student population got full marks here. Certainly options E and F were well done.

Question 7

This question tested relationships with a view towards marriage and future plans. Parts (a) and (b) were well done but students found parts (c) and (d) more challenging.

Question 8

Students did try to follow the example (which is advice given in previous Reports on the Examination) and give a verb plus a noun in their answer. In part (a) many students did not understand the verb *matar* and some did not know *peces* either so there were lots of references to ‘plastic pieces on the beach’. Spelling of ‘contaminates’ in part (b) was very poor at times and became so ambiguous that many failed to gain the mark. In (c) the majority of students guessed and wrote ‘it causes cancer’ despite there being no references to cancer in the text. *Fuegos* was not widely known and led to many cases of ‘fumes’ or ‘fog’ or ‘smoke’.

Question 9

Students should be reminded that where the question asks for **two** answers they should **only give two** answers. The use of an oblique in an answer is **strongly discouraged** as it leads to ambiguity. Answers such as ‘she eats sweets/pastels/pasta/cake/pastries’ are in effect asking the examiner to choose the correct answer on the student’s behalf and will be marked wrong. The mark scheme was generous in allowing ‘open presents’ as an alternative to ‘receive presents.’ A surprising number of students mistranslated *me encanta* for *canta* and offered ‘she likes singing’ as an answer.

Question 10

Part (a) was answered correctly by a very small number of students. It was generously marked by examiners but students tried to translate the distracter and got into difficulties with *padres médicos* offering a range of answers from ‘paramedics’ to ‘nurse’. The problem in part (b) was students either not knowing the expression *estar en paro* or not including the reference to ‘three months’ of doing nothing which was required for the mark. Many students thought that *ella* and *está* were girls’ names and thought that Patricio had gone to live with them. *Meses* was not well known and some students made very inventive references to tables or more commonly mistranslated it for ‘messy’. The majority of students read ‘Patricia’ for Patricio and wrote as if he were a girl, ie ‘she is unemployed’, which the mark scheme allowed. The remainder of Question 10 was not well answered. Only a third of the student population could work out what job Esperanza wanted. Too many were distracted by the ‘director’ and implied that she was going for the manager’s job rather than being interviewed by him. ‘Working in the kitchen’ was not considered detailed enough to merit the mark – students had to add that she was going for the job as a cook or a chef. Many thought that she wanted to be a waitress.

Students continue to find the verb *enseñar* difficult to understand. In previous years students have confused it with *aprender* but it seems that this year many thought it was the name of a girl.

Question 11

This question was well done and the students finished on a high note.

Higher Tier

General Comments

Students coped well with this paper. The questions which differentiated well were the A* questions, particularly Question 9 (a) and (c), Question 10 and, to a lesser extent, Question 11. Question 10 was a new style question and worked very well as a way of testing A* students' ability to identify details.

Question 1

This question was very well done by the majority of students, showing good understanding of the vocabulary relating to relationships. At Higher students are able to understand the use of a negative like *nunca* to mean something positive as in part (d) where Manuel said *Nunca me insulta*. Foundation students would have been distracted by the word *problemas* in the same text, but this was not the case for the Higher students this year.

Question 2

Students coped very well with this question and most were able to give three correct answers.

Question 3

Part (a) gave most problems and students gave a variety of wrong answers through thinking that *compartirlo* meant that it provided her with company or through focussing on the word *fácil* and saying that it was easy to use. Overall, the verb *compartir* was not well known. Although *más* and *menos* in part (b) were quite well known, students failed to gain the mark in this section because they thought that the lap top had many memories – something quite different to having 'more memory.' In part (c) some were unable to identify the activity she used the laptop for **most** – knowledge of the small but important words would have paid off here. Had students been able to understand *a veces* and *todos los días* they would have been able to identify the correct answer. In part (d) since many students were inventing a range of answers around understanding the word 'web' the final mark scheme insisted on understanding the verb *diseñar* as well for the mark. All sorts of meanings were accepted, however, such as make/design/create/build, so in fact the mark scheme was quite generous as long as students had included a verb.

Question 4 (a)

This question mirrored a technique used in the listening where students have to decide whether things have got better/worse/stayed the same. Vocabulary such as *bajar*, *subir*, *aumentar*, *disminuir*, *quedar igual*, *no cambiar* as well as *mayor*, *mejor*, *peor*, *mismo*, are all useful to know for this question type. Students are often asked to identify the **best** thing and in part (c) knowing *más beneficioso todavía* was crucial. Other expressions used to identify the **most important** part of the text are *sobre todo* or *más que nada* and students should make themselves familiar with these expressions. No doubt some saw *lo ideal* and stopped reading, whereas the most able read on to *más beneficioso todavía* and found the correct answer.

Question 5 (a)

This question was testing even for Higher students who continued to be distracted by the *padres médicos* in the opening line of the text. In parts (b) and (c) students made similar mistakes to those made at Foundation, for example not understanding *enseñar*, *está en paro* or *estar harto* although they performed better in these parts than in part (a). The verbs *emborracharse* and *dormir* were well known and part (d) was quite well answered.

Question 6

This question was answered well, especially part (d). Some gave G ('important') as an answer for part (b) but most students now avoid the temptation of matching a word in the text for a word in the option boxes. Once again, understanding the words *nunca* and *nadie* were useful for understanding how Roberto felt at the end of the text.

Question 7

This question was very well answered showing good understanding of the vocabulary relating to the home and environment part of the specification. Students were very familiar with this language.

Question 8

This question is a common question type at Higher and once again students did well. Part (b) was the most challenging. Fernando was a popular choice here and perhaps students were focussing on the word *esencial* rather than on the whole sentence ***no es esencial***.

Question 9

This question was aimed at the A* students and they did very well. Those who failed to gain the mark in (a) did not find the **greatest** risk to health and put several answers down. In a question where the student has to decide which is the best/biggest/greatest marks will only be given if the correct answer is given. If students write a range/list of answers they will fail to gain the marks. Students showed good understanding of all of the risks associated with drinking alcohol but the question asked for the **greatest** risk so those who wrote about 'damage to the nervous system' and 'alcohol becoming a habit' or 'becoming addicted to it' did not get the mark because they had not identified the **greatest** risk. The mark scheme was generous in part (b) since it allowed students who wrote about 'bad breath' to get a mark despite the lack of reference to breath in the text. Students seemed to have made the link between *huelen mal* and their understanding of it, possibly from the context of smoking and had transferred their understanding to the theme of drink, so they were awarded a mark. The single most common answer in part (c) was 'everyone has different opinions'. For a mark to be awarded here, students had to add that 'you could still be friends'. Some understood the verb *seguir* to mean 'to follow' and wrote about following their friends, which was not quite the same thing as not losing a friend.

Question 10

This question was demanding in that it required students to read both the question and the answer to be able to write a response and then the response had to be precise. 'Interesting classes' was not enough in part (a) for example – they had to be '**very** interesting classes'. In part (b) the students had to have '**very** good/**excellent** behaviour' not just 'good behaviour'. The example was included to guide the students and those who followed it did well. Only the most able students scored full marks in this question which tested their ability to understand details very well.

Question 11

This question also differentiated well. Most students understood the second bullet point very well. The verbs *evitar* and *apoyar* were a problem for many students who either failed to translate beyond *amigos* in the third bullet point, or missed it out altogether in the first one.

Question 12

Part (a) was very well done indeed; all the key verbs *organizar*, *escribir*, *llamar*, *escoger* were well known. Part (b) was more difficult in that students were distracted by *tele* in the text and chose A as an answer, when in fact the boy was going to watch the match at the stadium rather than on TV. In part (c) students were able to recognise the use of *pienso* + infinitive to indicate a reference to a future action and most were able to score a mark here. By following *mi consola* with *este fin de semana* students got an extra clue to the answer which made it slightly easier than part (b). Also the verb *comprar* is very well known even in the preterite.

Question 13

This question was very well done, especially parts (a), (b) and (d), showing very good knowledge of the vocabulary related to relationships. A common error in part (c) was to give the answer that Ignacio wanted a dog rather than a baby, since the word *perro* was in the text. Only those who could make the link between *quiero ser papá* and 'baby' could be rewarded with a mark here.

Advice to teachers

- Encourage students to highlight the key question words in English.
- Train students to spot the distracters in a text.
- Advise students 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 or the **biggest** 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

- 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*, *sólo* 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!
- Don't use an oblique in your answer (eg money/sweets) – you are asking the examiner to choose your answer and you risk not getting the mark at all.
- It is also a good idea to be familiar with time phrases such as *hace diez años, últimamente, ahora, el año pasado, ahora, en el futuro, pronto*, etc.
- Be aware of how negative adjectives can create a positive answer and vice versa. For example – *No es malo* – 'it's not bad' therefore 'it's good'. Or in the case of Question 3 part (c), *Tengo que dar buen ejemplo pero lo odio* along with the rest of the text lead to a N answer despite the use of the word *buen*.

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