Examiners' Report Summer 2007

GCSE Spanish (1246)

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Papers 1F/1H: Listening and Responding

General comments

The overall impression of this year's Listening papers is that both Foundation and Higher candidates appear to have achieved results in line with last year's performances. Topics covered and task types set were well within scope. Overall, teachers are to be congratulated on the way in which they had clearly prepared their candidates for the examination. Individual items of vocabulary that were particularly well recognised at Foundation tier included: *fútbol, gato, playa, sol, madre, chaqueta, aburrido, español.* Foundation candidates struggling with the topics weather and health achieved well with the other themes covered in the examination. There were very few answers left blank.

At Higher tier candidates responded well to all topics selected and the tasks set. However, they struggled with questions at Grade B and above where they were required to interpret the information heard and to provide reasons for some of their selected answers. The crossover questions: Foundation - Qs 11-15, Q16, Q22 and Q23 and Higher - Qs 1-5, Q6, Q7 and Q12, discriminated effectively, although the majority of even the weakest candidates managed to score some points here.

Words and phrases either misheard or misinterpreted included the following: 1F Q16, 1H Q6 *junio* (often confused with *julio*), *perezoso* (often confused with *peligroso*), 1F Q7 *autocar* (often interpreted as *car*), 1F Q14 1H Q4 *biología* (linked with *ciencias*) and 1H Q 13 *cuesta mucho* (linked with *es caro*). On the whole, candidates entered for this section of the GCSE examination perform with continued confidence.

At both Foundation and Higher level, candidates achieved marks throughout the paper. They understood all tasks, generally answered in the correct language and appear to have found the examples provided helpful. Despite some problems with spelling in Spanish, the majority of candidates achieved positive scores. The length of each rubric and the required written content to support each task was not a noted barrier to positive outcomes.

At Foundation level Grade F (Qs 6-10 and Qs 17-21), candidates were able to identify main points and extract some detail from what they had heard. At Higher level Grade C and above, they demonstrated their ability to identify and note main points, additional details and points of view including references to past and future events. Grade A/A* candidates demonstrated additionally, their ability to recognise points of view and opinions, to provide reasons and to draw conclusions from what they had heard. Most candidates are very familiar with the question types used. It was pleasing to note good performances from candidates of all abilities on both papers. Teachers should be encouraged to continue practising and developing their candidates' listening skills.

Paper 1, Foundation Tier

Questions 1-5
The majority of candidates answered all these questions correctly although the items *conejo, ratón* and *caballo* proved problematic to some.

Questions 6-10
Again, the majority of candidates scored well on these questions. The words *playa* and *sol* were almost always correctly scored. Some candidates struggled with answer 6 *un grupo escolar* and in Q7 frequently *en autocar* was confused with the English *car.*

Questions 11-15
This was the first of the crossover questions and discriminated well between candidates below and above grade D. At the weaker end problems were encountered with matching what was heard with the choices available as follows: Q11 *el dibujo with prefiero pintar,* Q12 *la informática with mi ordenador,* Q14 *biología* with *ciencias.* Q15 was well answered with the majority able to see the link between *francés y español* and *lenguas.*

Question 16
The second of the 4 crossover questions, it targeted Grade C and was therefore, appropriately challenging. The majority of candidates managed to correctly identify *fútbol and tímido* but often misheard or did not recognise *junio.* The adjective *perezoso* was frequently misheard as *peligroso.* Misspellings and a failure to place the right items into the right sections of the grid caused additional problems for some candidates. Teachers are to be advised to spend more time practising this question type.

Questions 17-21
Many candidates found this topic quite challenging. Whereas there was a full range of marks noted, the following items caused significant confusion; *muelas, tos, garganta, fiebre.* Clearly, the topic Health needs revisiting.

Question 22
This was the third of the crossover questions and targeted Grade C. Candidates responded well and generally scored as predicted. The less successful items chosen for a response were: *cosmetics* and *presents.* The use of visuals to represent each item appears to have been a positive change to the choice of question type.

Questions 23a and 23b
In this final crossover question, targeting Grade D, candidates achieved well. In Q23a(i) weaker candidates missed the reference to *enjoyment* (*Fue muy interesante*) and in Q23b the heard *niños enfermos* was frequently misunderstood. This is possibly because candidates are more familiar with the verb *jugar* used to describe *video games* and *computers* rather than in the context of *work.*

Questions 24 - 28
Overall these questions were not well answered. Candidates struggled with the topic and made frequent errors. The following items proved to be problematic to many: *hace frío*, *nieva* and *hace viento. Hace sol* and *hace calor* scored highly.

Candidates coped reasonably well with these questions which gives a good indication of their ability to listen and understand, although there was still some evidence of guess work. Very, few answered in the wrong language.

In Q29, section a, most candidates correctly identified César's age as 15.

In Q29, section b, most candidates scored at least one of the two marks available. However, weaker candidates had some difficulty with identifying where César lives in a format that made sense. *Piso* was well recognised but some candidates misheard *pequeño* offering *Kenya* as an alternative.

In Q30, the majority of candidates managed to score at least one of the two marks available. *Simpática* was often incorrectly interpreted as *sympathetic.* Sadly, but to candidates' credit, the adjective *aburrido* was very well recognised!

Questions 31a, 30b and 32
These questions were quite well answered, perhaps because the topic healthy living was familiar to most. However, there was significant guess work. Frequently candidates were able to identify correct information but were less successful in making the connection with the questions asked. In Q31a the majority correctly identified that there were three meals per day and often named them. In Q31b there were some interesting variations offered as non healthy food items on offer in the school canteen. Often in this question where the food items were correctly identified as *patatas, fruta* and *ensalada*, the importance of the additional *demasiadas* and *no hay* were not understood and therefore some answers were rendered incorrect. Q32 was more successfully answered, with the greater majority of candidates scoring at least one of the two marks available. More successful answers given were *mother is a good cook* and *I love it*. Least successful was the idea relating to *spending time with the family*. Teachers would do well to advise their candidates to listen more carefully when attempting tasks of this type, to read the questions carefully and to keep their answers short.

Paper 1, Higher Tier

Questions 1 – 5
Overall candidates scored well on this question which appears to have allowed them to make a confident start to the test. At the weaker end problems were encountered with matching what was heard with the choices available as follows: Q11 *el dibujo with prefiero pintar,* Q12 *la informática with mi ordenador,* Q14 *biología* with *ciencias.* Q15 was well answered with the majority able to see the link between *francés y español* and *lenguas.*

Question 6
The majority of candidates managed to correctly identify *fútbol, tímido* and *videojuegos* but sometimes misheard *junio* as *julio.* The adjective *perezoso* was frequently misheard as *peligroso.* Misspellings sometimes rendered answers given indecipherable.

Question 7
The greater majority of candidates managed to score at least 2 of the four marks available for this question. Q7(ii) *conseguir calificaciones* linked to *estudiar* and Q7(iv) *decir la verdad* linked to *ser honesto* were the least successful sections of the question.

Question 8

Candidates generally approached this question with confidence. Overall performance was pleasing. Most candidates correctly identified the bus as the preferred method of transport in section a. In section b, a greater majority of candidates correctly identified 2 of the 4 possible reasons. Once again this year there were some significant issues related to poor spelling and presentation which rendered some answers indecipherable. Over the entry as a whole, all the correct answers were identified.

Question 9
This question targeted Grade C. Candidates responded well to the question type and generally scored well. Most sections were well understood although weaker candidates struggled with the choice of *bus* as the answer to Q9aiii and *children* in section Q9bii.

Question 10
This question targeted Grade A and was clearly well answered. Most frequently missed was the match between the adjectives *animado, egoista* and the transcript *tiene mucho energía and piensa en si mismo*.

Questions 11a and 11b
Candidates coped with these questions but with varying degrees of success. There were some very low as well as some very high scores. Section b (*aspectos negativos*) was generally more successfully completed than section a (*aspectos positivos*). In this question there were frequent instances where candidates simply transcribed phrases and extracts they had heard without attempting to make a connection with the questions. There were also instances where quite exotic spellings offered rendered answers almost totally indecipherable. Most candidates correctly identified *caro/poco dinero* and *no + ordenador/televisión.* More able students demonstrated their ability to interpret what they had heard, indicating their clear understanding and an ability to paraphrase in the target language. *Desde luego* and *incluso piso* frequently appeared in the list of positives and *es verdad* in the negatives. *Menos padres* was sufficient to score a mark for *Echar de menos a mis padres.*

Questions 12a and 12b
Candidates generally achieved well on these questions. The less successful items chosen, as with the responses at Foundation level, were: *cosmetics* and *presents.* The use of visuals to represent each item appears to have been a positive change to the choice of question type.

Question 13
This final question targeted Grade A* and proved to be appropriately challenging. Many candidates latching on to their own understanding of modern technology, answered the questions set but frequently misinterpreted what was heard. The result was some irrelevant guess work. Some candidates answered the questions in the wrong language thus achieving no marks at all for their efforts, although this tendency was not significant. Observations on each section are as follows:
Q13a. The greater majority failed to recognise *mochila* as bag with most writing *mobile phone* instead. Other unusual answers included *a butter dish, a special hem for clothing, a washing powder* and *a chinchilla*! *Fabricada por Nube* was not well recognised and frequently understood to mean the material base of the object being described(*plastic/cloth*). *iPod* was almost universally correctly identified. Where students noted the *volume control* they generally answered correctly. However, relatively few candidates achieved this mark. The greater majority correctly identified *original* with almost as many identifying *modern* as well. A small proportion of candidates correctly identified that there was *no need to remove the*

iPod (*from the bag*), although some resorted to guess work and went further by referring to *remote controls*. This was not in the transcript.

Q13b produced a better response with the majority of candidates achieving at least one of the two marks available. Almost every candidate *recognised mobile + blue tooth.* Some candidates confused the reference *to switching the music off* with *playing music while you talk*.

Q13c. Most candidates correctly identified *listening to music and talking.* The *solar panels* were also well recognised. Most candidates correctly identified *charging the batteries* but frequently miss recorded their answer as *charge **for** 4 hrs* rather than *the charge **lasts** for 4 hrs*. The availability of *a charger* was well understood although often candidates incorrectly noted that the use of electricity *was **necessary**.*

Q13d. Most candidates correctly identified the *cost/its expensive* but sometimes quoted the wrong price. *Can't fold it easily* was not often selected and *weight* rather than *size* was given as another disadvantage. *Ocupa bastante sitio* was often translated as *you can't use it in the city* or *it only works in the city.*

Papers 2F/2H: Speaking

General Comments

Most centres this year conducted the oral examinations in a competent, professional and sympathetic manner, giving their candidates every opportunity to display their abilities over a wide range of vocabulary, structures and tense usage. A major problem this year, however, was the timing of the conversations. A worrying number of centres allow the conversations to run over time – in one case at Foundation Level the candidates were given 5 minutes for each topic, totalling 10 minutes in all and at Higher Level, in another, the conversation extended to 14 minutes. This practice seriously disadvantages the candidates since the examiners only listen to the prescribed length of conversation for each topic and fast forward when the time runs out. Weaker candidates in particular tire easily and over-exposure to unnecessarily long conversations has an adverse effect on the candidate's overall performance. It is strongly recommended that Teacher Examiners use a stopwatch to time the conversations accurately and to keep a timed balance between the two conversation topics.

Equally disturbing with a few centres is the failure to reach the prescribed conversation length and Teacher Examiners must be aware that candidates will be penalized for communication and content if the conversation times fall short of the prescribed time for the examination. The quality of the recordings this year was variable. In most cases the recordings were clear, the microphone having been positioned to favour the candidate, the volume and tone controls were switched off during the recording and extraneous noise was kept to a minimum or eliminated. Some centres however clearly did not listen to some of the recordings before they submitted the tapes and it was difficult sometimes to hear what the candidate was saying. In some cases several candidates' responses failed to record at all. Most centres took care with the packaging of their tapes but in some cases they arrived smashed and unusable.

There are still instances of Teacher Examiners re-phrasing the script of the role plays or prompting their candidates. It is important for centres to be aware that this practice is not allowed and immediately deprives the candidates of the marks available. Occasionally, Teacher Examiners omitted tasks during the role plays, again depriving their candidates of the marks. Teacher Examiners need to ensure that they are fully conversant with the demands of the role play before they attempt to conduct the examination.

In some cases there remain too many examples of the initial presentation of Topic 1 being read out as a monologue from a prepared script, carefully injecting a variety of tenses and the odd subjunctive in an effort to impress. Sadly these scripts are often badly read with poor pronunciation and at breakneck speed. They are often in marked contrast to the real ability of the candidate to sustain a meaningful conversation, especially when compared to their performance in the unprepared topic. In the worst cases, some centres used exactly the same prepared topic for each of their candidates who offered identical responses in a protracted question and answer session which bore little resemblance to a conversation. A significant number of Teacher Examiners asked too many closed questions or fed answers to their candidates or conducted the whole conversation in the present tense, giving their candidates little opportunity to expand their responses or to demonstrate their linguistic versatility and so to aspire to the higher marks. Many centres are still slavishly following the list of suggested questions published at the back of the Handbook, often failing to listen to the candidate's replies or trying to encourage a natural conversation. At times there were long pauses when the Teacher Examiners lost their place and struggled to think what question to ask next. It can only unnerve the candidate when spontaneity of conversation is lost and this usually happens when the Teacher Examiner fails to listen to what the candidate has to say or becomes

over-dependent on a list of prepared questions. Centres should be aware that the comments made refer to a minority of centres; overall Teacher Examiners are to be congratulated on the professional manner in which this year's examinations were conducted.

A ROLE-PLAYS

<u>A1</u> - Most candidates chose to ask for 'patatas', hardly anyone going for 'cebolla' or 'coliflor'. A surprising number interpreted the image as 'pan' which was of course accepted. Several candidates combined the first two tasks – 'Quiero un kilo de patatas' and were given the marks accordingly despite being thrown by the follow-up question ¿Cuántas quiere? A significant number of candidates lost marks by asking ¿Cuándo es? instead of ¿Cuánto es? Some weaker candidates mistook the final task to mean 'Gracias' rather than 'Adiós'.

<u>A2</u> - This role-play presented few problems, although a surprising number could not manage 'duchas', several offering 'duche(s)'.

<u>A3</u> - Several weaker candidates asked for a 'tabla' and the mispronunciation of 'servicios' caused problems. Weaker candidates attempted different variations of 'toiletas'.

<u>A4</u> - The final task proved to be difficult for some students who could not manage 'bolsa' or 'mochila'.

<u>A5</u> - The most popular request was for a 'camiseta'. Several candidates asked for a specific size – 10, 12 etc. – and were awarded the marks appropriately.

<u>A6</u> - Several candidates said they were going to the 'centro de deportes' and were awarded the mark. There was some evidence of garbled language – 'Me gusta voy …' Some candidates chose to play basketball but offered the English instead of 'baloncesto'. This was surprising since they could have opted for 'tenis' instead. There is still a lot of confusion between 'lejos' and 'cerca'.

B ROLE-PLAYS

<u>B1</u> - 'Plaza mayor' proved to be a major stumbling block for some candidates. The more enterprising offered 'plaza grande' but several strayed too far by rendering 'el centro de la ciudad'. Ignorance of the word 'plaza' did show some lack of cultural awareness. Some did not understand the question ¿Cómo vas a ir? often interpreting the question as ¿Cuándo vas a ir? A surprising number of candidates could not manage 'plano' or 'mapa'.

<u>B2</u> - Most candidates managed the vocabulary for 'película' or DVD (Spanish pronunciation) and could explain what kind of film they wanted, although some asked for 'comida' instead of 'comedia'. The unpredictable question threw some candidates who heard the word 'tiempo' and assumed the question was asking about the weather. Inaccurate attempts to ask the cost lost marks.

<u>B3</u> - The notion of 'historic towns' led to some garbled Spanish - 'historia pueblos' for instance. In task 2 'parque' or 'castillo' were the most popular choices. Some candidates did not understand the unpredictable question - ¿Cuándo quieres ir? and gave inappropriate responses. In the final task, 'un día' caused problems for some candidates some of whom omitted it altogether or interpreted it as 'en el futuro' or mentioned a specific day.

<u>B4</u> - Most candidates managed the first task, although a service station attendant would be taken aback on hearing 'Quiero un león'. A couple of candidates asked ¿Hay un autocar en la televisión? Again the use of the word 'tiempo' in the unpredictable question -¿Cuánto tiempo vas a pasar en León? led some candidates to talk about the weather. The final task led to significant confusion. Many candidates could not think of the word 'billete', sometimes the French 'billet' was offered, and there were lots of variations in the kind of ticket required – 'singular' for example. Very few managed 'ida y vuelta' or 'sencillo'.

<u>B5</u> - Candidates frequently omitted 'ver' in task 1 – 'Quiero un médico'. 'Me duele la cabeza' was the most popular response for task 2, although a surprising number could not manage to say what was wrong with them. Equally surprising was the number of candidates stumped by a simple question asking their age and there were several examples of candidates repeating 'Tienes catorce años' instead of 'Tengo catorce años'. Similar problems occurred with '¿A qué hora puedes ver al medico?' instead of 'puedo'.

<u>B6</u> - There were few problems with this role-play, except for the final task when 'ascensor' was not widely known. Some candidates got as close as they could with 'escalera' while others relied on adding an 'o' to lift to make 'lifto'. The well-known unpredictable question ¿De qué nacionalidad eres? was still unknown to many and frequently resulted in a garbled response such as 'Soy Inglaterra' or 'Soy de inglés'.

<u>B7</u> - 'Voy a Málaga' was well known and most candidates asked for 'agua', a few for 'patatas fritas' and very few for 'caramelos'. The usual problems occurred with the unpredictable question when 'tiempo' was again interpreted as a question about the weather and difficulty in asking coherently for the toilets was again in evidence.

<u>B8</u> - Some problems occurred with the pronunciation of 'uniforme', often the English 'uniform' being offered instead. The vocabulary for school subjects was well known, the unpredictable question caused very few difficulties and the main problem came with task 4 when candidates had trouble with the pronunciation of 'comienza' or 'empieza'. It was also disappointing to find so many candidates who did not know the verb 'to begin'.

C ROLE-PLAYS

<u>C1</u> - The first task proved difficult for many candidates who could not explain the advantages of a homestay experience. Task 4 also proved to be challenging, several candidates choosing to talk about the journey home rather than the preparations they would make before setting out. Both unpredictable questions were generally well handled.

<u>C2</u> - While most candidates could articulate a complaint made about the hotel, not many could come up with a response to the first unpredictable question - ¿Y qué puedo hacer para ayudarle? Many chose to continue to talk about the complaints rather than offer any solutions. The final unpredictable question asking candidates to compare Spain with their own country was poorly handled, many choosing simply to say that 'En España hace sol' without attempting any comparison.

<u>C3</u> - Difficulties with the time frame obstructed some candidates who used the present tense instead of the past. Sometimes candidates scored lower marks by opting for minimal responses rather than taking the opportunity to expand their answers – eg 'Vi un ladrón' for task 1. Task 2 was poorly handled, with candidates finding it difficult to give an exact location. The rest of the role-play caused few problems and many candidates took the opportunity to give full, extended responses.

<u>C4</u> - Task 1 was generally badly handled with candidates simply stating that they wanted a job as an assistant without explaining why. Others began with 'Porque ...' without mentioning the job they were applying for at all. Some candidates failed to read the question carefully and thought they were being interviewed for a job teaching Spanish or Shakespeare. The present tense was often inappropriately used in task 2 when they were asked to give details of previous work experience. Task 3 also caused problems with candidates talking about their past experience or their exam qualifications rather than their personal qualities. The weaker candidates simply read out the prompts for task 4 - ¿El sueldo y el horario? rather than framing specific questions. Others asked one question instead of two.

<u>C5</u> - Many candidates failed to understand the first unpredictable question - ¿Qué quieres que haga yo entonces? while the abler students successfully asked for their money back or an exchange of goods. There was some difficulty matching the question ¿Quién te atendió? with the prompt requesting a description of the sales assistant. Some found it hard to explain why they were unable to wait (task 4).

<u>C6</u> - A surprising number of candidates experienced difficulty asking for a specific excursion and in task 2 many asked only one question and thereby covered only half the task. The first unpredictable question – task 3 – showed some surprising ignorance of 'datos personales', leading some Teacher Examiners to rephrase the question and ask ¿Cómo te llamas? etc. This immediately deprives the candidates of the marks. The tenses required to answer tasks 4 (past) and 5 (future) proved a stumbling block for some candidates.

<u>C7</u> - Tasks 1 and 2 were generally well done, although some candidates heard '¿Cuándo? rather than '¿Cuánto tiempo? and talked about when they wanted the appointment. Others heard 'tiempo' and sidetracked on to a discussion about the weather. Several candidates could not connect the Teacher Examiner's question 'Y cuándo quiere pedir hora con el médico? with the prompt on their card 'La cita'. Again a surprising number of candidates did not understand what 'datos personales' meant. The word 'recientemente' in the final unpredictable question caused unnecessary difficulties for some.

<u>C8</u> - This role-play caused few problems, although in task 1 several candidates launched into a description of an item without mentioning the fact that they had lost it. ¿Y cuándo notaste la pérdida' threw some candidates who elaborated on their description of the lost item rather than explaining when they first noticed the loss. Clearly several candidates thought 'sitios' meant cities and listed the Spanish cities they had visited, although fortunately this did not affect their marks. Some candidates did not understand the word 'dirección' and gave instructions about how to get to specific places.

It is disappointing to find how many students give minimal answers in the C role plays and this reflects on the marks they are awarded. They need to take every opportunity to develop and elaborate their responses if they are to gain the higher marks.

Foundation and Higher Conversations

Most of the comments about the conduct of the conversations has been covered in the opening preamble to this report. Suffice it to say that the following key remarks should be taken to heart:

1. The timing of the conversations should be rigorously adhered to.
2. Teacher Examiners should listen to the tapes before submitting them to ensure the quality of the recording.
3. The opening 'presentation' for Topic 1 should not be read out as a script.
4. Teacher Examiners should resist the temptation to follow slavishly the suggested questions at the back of the Handbook but should encourage a natural conversation rather then a question and answer session.
5. Teacher Examiners should ask open questions giving candidates the opportunity to develop their responses rather than closed questions requiring yes / no answers.
6.   Similarly, the conversations should cover different time frames and give candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to handle a variety of tenses.

Nevertheless it was encouraging to find many centres where the conversations were sympathetically and expertly conducted and where adherence to procedures was strict and comprehensive.

Administration by centres this year was generally carried out well with few examples of incomplete or unsigned Attendance Registers and L3s, with tapes properly labelled and without orals suddenly running out of tape and continuing on side 2. The majority of centres are to be congratulated on their overall handling of the examination.

Papers 3F/3H: Reading and Responding

Paper 3, Foundation Tier

The paper appears to have been comparable to previous years in all of the questions except the ones requiring answers in English. Candidates attempted all the questions, with very few unfinished papers or lack of attention to rubrics.

Question 1
Candidates performed as expected on these questions, with even the weakest candidates scoring highly on ii and ii, although v proved more testing for all candidates at this level.

Question2
Candidates performed as expected on these questions, with even the weakest candidates scoring highly on i and iii,

Question 3
This question proved to be a good discriminator with weaker candidates doing less well than more able ones in the C ranges. This question proved difficult for candidates across the range at F. Many candidates did not get the destination right, and the 'tipo de billete' was often rendered as 'reservar'.
A few candidates, as always, answered in English.

Question 4
This question proved to be a good discriminator, with the mean rising as the candidates improved, although it clearly taxed the majority.

Question 5
Candidates scored less well in sections i and v but consistently better in sections ii and iv, at all levels within the range.

Question 6
Q6 was answered as predicted with no particular pattern of error or strength.

Question 7
This question proved a good cross-over question as the majority of genuine C candidates entering at Foundation tier found no problems here, whereas candidates at F grade scored poorly overall.

Question 9
Lower ability candidates performed very poorly at this question. Some candidates answered in Spanish and some provided answers which were very clearly guesswork. This was particularly true for section c when they talked about road safety rules and made no relation at all to the text. Higher level candidates' answers were based more on the text than on guesswork and were more likely to include the notion of 'valable' in part c

Question 10
Higher level candidates had a good understanding of the basic vocabuary and an overall understanding of gist. Candidates at grade F generally performed poorly at this question. Some candidates answered in Spanish, and did not understand basics such as times and days of the week. Many thought that 'salida' and 'Navidad' were place names. There was much guesswork for section (d) 'regalos'.

Paper 3, Higher Tier

The statistics and examiners' reports suggest that the paper is comparable to previous years in its demands and difficulty.

Question 1
Higher level candidates performed as expected in this range with the vast majority of candidates scoring full marks. Other candidates also performed as expected, with sections i and ii returning the most correct answers overall.

Question 3
This question was answered at the expected level of competence by candidates in this grade range; the incidence of correct answers increases in line with overall performance on the paper as the candidates improve.

Question 4
This question was answered at the expected level of competence by candidates in this grade range; the incidence of correct answers increases in line with overall performance on the paper as the candidates improve. Candidates found this question accessible and were able to use their grammatical knowledge to get to the answers as well as their comprehension of the passage.

Question 5
This was a good discriminator at this level. Although the incidence of correct answers increases in line with overall performance on the paper as the candidates improve, candidates found this a challenging question overall. Less able candidates answered this question rather erratically.

Question 6
This was a good discriminator. The last section in particular produced low scores, doubtless as a result of the past tense plus infinitive construction. This was the case at all grade ranges and in all categories at each range.

Question 7
In accordance with a cross over question, more able candidates handled this question very well, while less able candidates scored less well.

Question 8
In accordance with a cross over question, more able candidates handled this question very well, while less able candidates scored less well.

Question 9
Candidates generally performed poorly at this question, with only the very best scoring highly. Sections a b and c were tackled better than sections d and e.
Section a answers often had the audience adapting instead of the singer and tenses were frequently wrong, 'he has adapted' for instance, which gives the impression of a fait accompli.
Section b answers were not, on the whole, specific enough, with many candidates simply mentioning the final.
Section c caused many problems for candidates who did not understand the word 'cajero'. Tenses once again caused many candidates to lose marks here.
Section d lost many candidates marks who had Sergio being moved rather than his audience.
Section e involved some guesswork, with 'fragile', 'caring' and 'volunteering' being common examples.

Papers 4F/4H: Writing

Paper 4, Foundation Tier

Statistical evidence supported examiners' initial views that candidate performance indicated that questions were fair and accessible. Few candidates had been entered inappropriately for this tier of the exam.

Question 1

Candidates scored well in the main. Even weaker candidates managed to provide a fairly comprehensive list of items. As in the past, the main mistakes included the inclusion of people, French words, English words, infinitives, repetitions, repeating the example and the inclusion of inappropriate words such as *fútbol* (even *football)*. Some candidates seem to have been phased by the words in the rubric *'The pictures may help you'* insofar as they struggled with attempts at *watch* and *earrings* although some candidates did know these words.

Question 2

Few candidates scored full marks. As expected, the main difficulties were with the verb forms. Candidates wrote in the wrong tense, wrote the verb in the first person or copied the infinitive. Many candidates found it impossible to match up the gaps for nouns with the preceding word, for example, en un cafetería or a una restaurante. There were also many misspellings for the number relating to the time in the last task. Verbs and items of vocabulary for parts a and d were generally more successful than b, c and e. Particularly difficult was the correct form of volver even among those candidates who were secure with the other verb forms. A surprising number of candidates could not spell teléfono correctly with many introducing ph into the spelling.

Question 3

There were many good responses although the correct use of verb forms caused the most problems. Tasks 1 and 4 seemed to provide the most difficulties for candidates. As with Q2, volver in whichever way they tried to use it caused problems for candidates. Many candidates failed to distinguish between voy and va with the all too frequent appearance of renderings like el autobús voy a salir. Too many candidates failed to cope with quiero, often writing quiere or quiera.

Question 4a

This was by far the more popular question of the two options. The main difficulties which candidates encountered centred on the problems they had with the range of tenses required to express ideas clearly although most candidates did their best to cope with all the bullet points. Many simply wrote the infinitive with yo, mi or me in front of it. Reasons for liking/disliking shopping were varied but generally well expressed. There was a competent use of fui and voy a......in bullet points 3 and 4 with some doubtful infinitives on occasions. Weaker candidates were less successful with bullet points 3 and 4, however.

Question 4b

This was the less popular of the two options. Similar comments apply here as for 4a above. Candidates lost Content/Communication marks because they did not mention watching sport on the television and a poor knowledge of tenses led to lower marks for Knowledge/Application of Language and Accuracy. Descriptions of sports facilities and why they liked/disliked sports were competently expressed.

Paper 4, Higher Tier

In general, candidates responded well to the questions. Few candidates seemed to have been inappropriately entered and there were few answers which were too long or too short. There were some excellent responses and there were few totally inadequate answers. The same grammatical weaknesses were observed as in previous years. Statistical evidence supported examiners' initial views that candidate performance indicated that questions were fair and accessible.

Question 1a
This was the more popular of the two options by far. There were some excellent scripts and candidates generally managed to communicate the 6 points required to answer this question. There were some very detailed answers in clear and accurate Spanish with a pleasing use of subordinate clauses at times. Many candidates were able to extend beyond the minimum response with fuller details and the expression and justification of opinions. Weaker candidates, however, did not always address why they liked/disliked shopping and with whom they would go out the following week; moreover, many thought that the shopping theme had to be carried over into the last task. The overall balance of responses seemed to be that candidates wrote at length on the first two tasks with shorter responses for tasks 3 and 4.
Candidates' grasp of tenses was generally sound and accuracy of language was reasonably good although weaker candidates struggled again here with many resorting to their native English or Portuguese. The most frequently misused item of vocabulary here was las ropas. As ever, gustar caused many problems and there were the inevitable repetitions of verb forms from the stimulus letter, e.g, compraste, fuiste and vas a ir.

Question 1b
This was the less popular of the two options although there were some very accurate pieces of writing. As per the Foundation Tier paper, a good number of candidates lost Communication/Content marks because they did not mention watching sport on television. Many candidates lost their way a little in being over effusive about sporting opportunities as opposed to sports facilities although quite a few were able to express the health benefits of exercise. Se puede was well known by the better candidates but there were many misspellings regarding the various forms of jugar. Candidates found difficulty in expressing vi with many preferring viste and in both Q1 options (as with last year's candidates), there was serious porque and por qué confusion throughout. Overall, examiners reported that this question posed more difficulties for candidates than Q1a.

Question 2a
In contrast to last year, Q2a was equally as popular as Q2b. The question was well answered by the majority of those who chose it and there were some pleasing scores. There was evidence of a range of tenses and wide vocabulary. Only the very best candidates coped successfully with the use of the Imperfect Tense here with vivía perplexing many. Candidates had difficulties with algo que te pasó en tu nuevo colegio with many simply outlining details of their new school, their teachers, subjects and opinions instead of giving a specific reference to an incident or an event. Surprisingly, some candidates wrote about not yet having started at the new school so had not realised that the past tense was required here. The correct use of

the reflexive pronoun perplexed many especially in the first task where candidates also (inexplicably, because it is in the rubric and the first task) thought the verb was mundarse. The better candidates really got to grips with expressing their emotions at leaving behind fond memories and their impressions of their new accommodation whereas weaker candidates often produced a mere inventory of the new house. There was a noticeable obsession with inserting pre-learned subjunctive constructions which sometimes made candidates drift off the point and miss one of the tasks. Future plans were really well done.

Question 2b
Equally popular as Q2a as mentioned above. Candidates usually managed to communicate all the points required and there were some excellent and very interesting answers. Native speakers, especially, found this topic to their liking. Candidates took the opportunity here to be quite creative with their answers and there were some romantic and poetic renderings of their impressions of the countryside and coast.

An informal approach was adopted by many even though candidates were supposed to be writing to the manager of the hotel, e.g., ¡Hola, gerente! The word paisaje was often taken to mean the whole country, i.e, Spain in general, and some weaker candidates thought that Ibiza was a country. The opportunity to make effective use of the Imperfect Tense (Task 2) was missed by many which seemed to mirror candidates' confusion with vivía in Q2a. Once more, gustar presented the usual problems even at this higher level and there was some confusion between tu and su. Examiners noticed that weaker candidates took the opportunity to pad out their answers by referring to an incident which had happened to them whilst there (usually an accident or a robbery, and probably pre-learned material to be inserted at all costs!). It was also quite depressing to read the savage attacks on the behaviour of British tourists in Ibiza. In general, candidates found plenty to say and extended their answers effectively.

Paper 4 Final Comments

Examiners reported the increasing incidence of very poor handwriting and untidy presentation this year. Candidates need to be informed that they cannot expect to achieve the good marks they may deserve if the examiner cannot decipher their answers because of illegible written responses. Another feature on the increase this year, too, was the practice by some candidates of placing part of their answer outside the EPEN writing frame and even using space allocated to one answer to answer another, e.g., continuing their answer to Q2a over several pages into the space assigned to the answer for Q2b. This makes the marking process within the EPEN system a lot more difficult for examiners.

Papers 4C: Coursework

Comments on overall candidate performance

As in previous years, good practice was observed in the majority of centres making the moderation process straightforward for the moderating team. Some centres still continue to ignore correct procedure, however, thus making moderation more difficult.

Candidates' work was generally pleasing with pieces which were imaginative, well constructed and pleasant to read. A significant proportion, however, was predictable and formulaic to some degree, both in terms of choice of topic and content/structure.

As ever, there were examples of pieces which were excessively long and quite a number where high marks had been awarded for pieces around 100 words in length with some word counts overstated. Once again, centres are reminded of the advice given in the Edexcel Specification where candidates aiming at Grade G-D are advised to write a total of 250-300 words over the three units and candidates aiming at Grades C-A* are advised to write a total of 500-600 words over the three units.

As observed every year, the best pieces of work were those where candidates were allowed to use a wide variety of tenses, structures and vocabulary in each unit of work whilst at the same time allowing weaker candidates to write simple sentences and paragraphs without relying too heavily on stimulus material of whatever kind. In this regard, centres are reminded that the same assessment grids cover the whole range of grades from A* to G so that candidates writing simple sentences etc. with little original input, perhaps, should **not** be accessing the top boxes when assessed.

Many centres still fail to submit stimulus material although moderators continue to report blatant plagiarism from various sources but especially from the Internet. Many items are tracked down quite easily at times by the moderating team through a Google search.

Coverage of topic areas was generally efficient but overlapping of topic areas continues to be a problem in a small number of cases. As noted last year, typical overlaps are Holidays with Town/Area and School with Work Experience. A good number of candidates had tried to get around the former overlap by submitting a unit on Holidays under Home and Abroad and a unit on their town/area under House, Home and Daily Routine. The latter ploy is guaranteed to fail and centres should be aware that Edexcel has instructed its moderators to be particularly vigilant re overlapping infringements. Moreover, in centres where overlapping occurs, candidates are seriously disadvantaged as only two units out of the three can be awarded marks.

A particular favourite this year, *Me presento*, was particularly ambiguous in that it often led to overlapping of several topic areas as there was often a description of the candidate (House and Home), his/her home town (At Home and Abroad), his/her social life (Free Time and Social Activities) and his/her school (Education, Training and Employment). The latter approach made it a lot easier for candidates to slip into an 'overlap' in one of the other two units submitted.

Tasks set were generally appropriate for the candidates' level of ability. Preferred topic areas ran a familiar course with little if any difference from previous years, e.g., Holidays, Family and Home, School, Work Experience, Health Issues, Description

of Town or Area, Film Review, Interview with/Article about a Famous Person, the Environment, Shopping, Leisure Time and Special Occasions. There seem to have been fewer Job Application letters and letters to an Agony Aunt which may be a good thing in that work submitted in the past within those areas has usually borrowed heavily from stimulus material and has restricted originality. The general consensus across the whole team of moderators seems to have been that approaches to some topic areas like House, Home and Daily Routine and School, as has been seen in the past, often did not allow candidates to use more sophisticated language and the work of many candidates in the latter areas rarely rose above the predictable and the pedestrian. Interviews with famous people were sometimes below the recommended word count and prevented candidates from using a wide variety of more complex structures and vocabulary.

On the other hand, some centres made an effort to take a more imaginative approach to some units, e.g, Holidays, Work Experience, Health and the Environment and in so doing gave candidates the opportunity to use a wider range of more sophisticated language and to access the higher assessment boxes.

Some centres still award inappropriately high marks for essay/letter writing templates (or barely different versions of a sample letter) so that the whole task turns into little more than a gap-fill exercise. Centres should continue to bear in mind that if candidates are given little opportunity to produce their own original work, it is impossible for moderators to agree marks from the top boxes of the assessment grids.

There were several instances this year of units which did not fit comfortably into any of the topic areas recommended by Edexcel in its Specification. Centres should be aware that this approach could seriously disadvantage their candidates.

Moderators continue to be perturbed by the great difference between the standard of some controlled pieces where candidates receive (very) low marks and the other two (uncontrolled) units where candidates suddenly produce wonderful prose to access the higher assessment boxes.

Assessment

Moderators reported generally accurate assessment but a significant number of centres continue to mark their candidates' work too leniently. Moreover, internal standardisation seems not to take place in a good number of those centres where more than one member of staff is assessing coursework. Lack of internal standardisation usually has serious and unexpected effects on the final mark/grade outcomes for schools.

Administration

Although there was general feeling that the quality of administration had improved slightly this year, there were still far too many instances of a cavalier approach by some centres.

Most centres make the effort to follow instructions and ease the moderation process for the moderating team. Some centres still do their best to contravene Edexcel's instructions, however, thus making moderation a more time-consuming process.

Once again, all possible combinations of OPTEMS forms were received from centres, sometimes not filled in and sometimes not signed. A worrying trend is for centres to send the Edexcel copy (the top copy) of the OPTEMS form to the moderator and not to Edexcel at Hellaby.

Various versions of the CF1 cover sheets were sent to moderators, some, of course, not bearing the signature of the candidate to confirm authenticity. Centres should be

aware that there are also Authentication Sheets available for this purpose. Centres often fail to fill in the correct details on the CF1 form whichever version they are using. Some centres even omit the candidates' exam numbers something which is surely the most basic of tasks. Once again, this slipshod approach wastes moderators' time when chasing up these errors. As per last year, one moderator reported that one centre had not submitted any version of the CF1 form.

Arithmetical errors by centres were in evidence once again this year. There were also more examples of discrepancies between the marks written on the OPTEMS form and the CF1 front sheet.

Drafts were often submitted haphazardly and frequently not marked as such.

Most centres made an effort to present folders in a neat and orderly way but units were often not submitted in the same order as they were itemised on the CF1 sheets. It would help moderators if work were submitted in *candidate number order*. A quick *identification number or letter* on the pieces of work themselves, mirrored on the CF1 sheet, would also speed up the process of identification. *The handwriting* of some candidates leaves a lot to be desired. Candidates need to be made aware that if they want their work moderated accurately, they have a duty to present that work in a legible way.

Marks, corrections and comments continue to be written on the pieces of work themselves, despite the fact that Edexcel specifically requests centres not to do this. Some corrections and comments at the draft stage are far too specific and outside the parameters allowed by Edexcel in terms of advice to be given by teachers to candidates; such corrections and comments will adversely affect candidates' marks.

Moderators reported that some centres were not submitting the work of the *highest or lowest* candidate if they did not appear in the original asterisked sample.

Most centres submitted their coursework *on time*.

Statistics

Paper 1F – Listening and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	39	32	25	18	11	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10	0

Paper 1H – Listening and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	39	36	33	31	19	13	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	0

Paper 2F - Speaking

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	27	23	19	15	11	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10	0

Paper 2H - Speaking

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	140	134	128	123	117	114	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	0

Paper 3F – Reading and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	31	26	21	17	13	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10	0

Paper 3H – Reading and Responding

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	32	28	24	20	14	11	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	0

Paper 4F - Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	30	25	21	17	13	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	59	50	40	30	20	10	0

Paper 4H - Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Raw Boundary Mark	50	36	32	28	25	18	14	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	35	0

Paper 4C – Written Coursework

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw Boundary Mark	60	51	45	39	33	27	21	15	9	0
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10	0

Overall Subject Boundaries

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Total Uniform Mark	360	320	280	240	200	160	120	80	40	0