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Examiners' Report June 2010

GCSE Spanish: Unit 3: Reading and Understanding in Spanish (5SP03) Foundation and Higher Tier

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Unit 3: Reading and Understanding in Spanish (5SP03) Foundation Tier

General Comments

This is the report on the first session of the new specification for GCSE Spanish Unit 3: Reading and Understanding (5SP03). Both the Foundation and Higher tier papers will be discussed.

In spite of being a new exam the majority of candidates demonstrated that they understood the rubrics and format of the exam and it was evident that they had been well prepared and had practiced in preparation for the examination. Both papers proved to be accessible to candidates and clearly tested their knowledge and understanding of Spanish.

Very good candidates scored highly and demonstrated a clear and precise understanding of the subtleties expected at the higher level questions, in terms of content vocabulary, grammar and level of inference. Very few candidates left significant gaps in their answers or failed to complete the paper at either level.

The crossover questions generally discriminated well and were consistently completed more accurately by candidates who entered at the higher level. In questions 10 (3F) and 5 (3H) some candidates lost marks because they did not follow the instructions given in the rubric and answered in Spanish rather than in English.

The spelling of English words proved to be a problem for some candidates especially at the Foundation level however recognisable versions of these words were credited with a mark e.g. dinamick for dynamic. In questions 4 (3F) 2 (3H) candidates were required to recognise and respond using the correct time frame. Some candidates made errors in their answers referring to a future rather than a past event or vice-versa, e.g. In the text '...usábamos la piscina municipal'. Students answer: Future tense.

Question 1

This question was answered well by all candidates. However were difficulties occurred with 'falda' and 'chaqueta', this was more prominent with less able candidates.

Question 2

The majority of the candidates scored 2 of the 4 marks available, this was because candidates failed to recognise basic vocabulary such as 'peras' 'limones' or 'champiñones'.

Question 3

Most candidates scored between 2 or 3 marks. In 3(b) many candidates failed to recognize 'me hace reir'.

Question 4

Foundation candidates found this a difficult question as they were not sure of the verb tenses used in the text and there was some evidence of guesswork and simply 'filling in' the gaps at random.

Question 5

This was well attempted by all candidates who scored well and clearly understood the basic language used in this question.

Question 6

This question was answered well by all candidates and gave the true F and G candidates an opportunity to score good marks.

Question 7

Candidates found this question challenging. There was some evidence of guesswork in the mismatch of the adjective to the comment. Candidates would do well to focus on key words in this type of question and find the clear links, rather than being distracted by detail.

Question 8

Most candidates scored 2 of the 4 points available with the following stumbling blocks noted:

8(c) some candidates failed to recognise 'a muy buen precio' 8(d) many candidates failed to link 'puntual, llegamos a la hora prevista' with the correct answer 'on time'

Question 9

Many candidates scored 3/4 marks for this question.

Question 10

Some students answered this question in Spanish so they did not score any marks.

10 (b) Most candidates recognised the word 'inteligente' but the spelling of the word dynamic was a problem, although recognisable versions of this word were credited with a mark.

This part of the question also gave rise to a misunderstanding of the word 'famosa,' as some candidates interpreted wrongly this adjective as a personal quality.

(c) Few candidates failed to recognize a simple word like 'hermana' and wrote 'assistant' or 'model' as a guess at professions in the fashion world.

Unit 3: Reading and Understanding in Spanish (5SP03) Higher Tier

Question 1

Most candidates scored 3 of the 4 marks available for this question. Inaccuracies noted were as with the Foundation tier candidates: Q1(c) some candidates failed to recognize 'me hace reir'.

Question 2

Although candidates were successful in answering this question. Where there were issues this was due to the use of tenses other than the present, as this confused some candidates and there was some evidence of guesswork and simply 'filling in' the gaps at random.

Question 3

As expected candidates at this level scored significantly higher marks than the equivalent at Foundation tier Q7. The majority of candidates scored the 4 marks available for this question.

Question 4

Most candidates scored 3 out of 4 of the marks available for this question. The main weakness was: Q4(d) some candidates failed to link 'puntual, llegamos a la hora prevista' with the correct answer 'on time'

Question 5

Candidates found this question challenging, with only the more able demonstrating a full and clear understanding of the more extended extract.

Q5(a) Most candidates found different ways of expressing in English 'contacto con la gente' and versions that imply talking with the public, clients or customers were credited with the one mark. However candidates that wrote vague answers like: meet new people or good with the clients, did not score anything.

Q5(b) Some candidates thought that 'job advert' alone would score a mark, but this answer was too vague.

Q5(c) Most candidates responded well to this question.

Q5(d) Some candidates did not know the words 'primeros auxilios' and guessed that it was something to do with 'first class' or 'first time flyers'. Some were also confused with 'apagado de incendios' and thought wrongly that 'coping with emergencies' alone would score a mark. There was also some evidence of candidates imposing their general knowledge of the job of a flight attendant rather than taking the information from the text. These candidates wrote answers like 'serving clients' 'how to carry plates' 'dealing with problems'.

Q5(e) Most candidates responded well to this question.

Q5(f) Most candidates gained at least one of the three marks allocated for this question.

Question 6

Only the more able candidates scored the full four marks in this question. The main cause for the loss of one mark in this section was Q6(a) where the candidates did not recognise the words "levantarse and acostarse " and/or did not work on the detail within the statement. Instead these candidates read 'spending a minimum of eight hours in bed' were distracted by this and incorrectly assumed that 'sufficient sleep' was the correct answer.

Question 7

Candidates were suitably challenged at this level by this question. Some candidates had difficulty linking 'current situation' with 'actualmente', 'improved facilities' with 'mejorando sus instalaciones' and 'Foreign aid' with 'organizaciones europeas ayudan con mucho dinero'. Successful answers were logically arrived at by candidates who were able to take an overview of the different statements and subsequently work on the detail to find the clear links.

Question 8

This is a multiple choice question using words in Spanish. More able candidates scored highly and demonstrated a clear and precise understanding of the language expected at this level.

Conclusion

The outcome of the first exam of this unit was pleasing and the majority of the centres had prepared their candidates thoroughly so they had a good understanding of the requirements of this unit and responded well to its demands. Where there are any concerns centres are recommended to review the GCSE Spanish webpage on www.edexcel.com in particular the teacher support section.

Grade boundaries

Foundation Tier (3F)

Grade	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw mark boundary	40				32	26	20	14	8	0
Uniform mark scale boundary	36				36	30	24	18	12	0

Higher Tier (3H)

Grade	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw mark boundary	40	30	27	24	22	15	11			0
Uniform mark scale boundary	60	54	48	42	36	30	24			0

The modern foreign languages specifications share a common design, but the assessments in different languages are not identical. Grade boundaries at unit level reflect these differences in assessments, ensuring that candidate outcomes across these specifications are comparable at specification level.

Uniform Mark Scale boundaries - Overall for 5SP03

Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
60	54	48	42	36	30	24	18	12	0

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