

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback January 2011

GCSE

GCSE Spanish (5SP04)
Unit 4: Writing in Spanish

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If you have any subject specific questions about the content of this Mark Scheme that require the help of a subject specialist, you may find our **Ask The Expert** email service helpful.

Ask The Expert can be accessed online at the following link:

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Unit 4: Writing in Spanish (5SP04)

Examiner's Report for Centres

The new specification has changed significantly from the legacy GCSE Spanish 1246 specification.

Candidates have up to two weeks and/or 6 hours to prepare each task. Candidates have to prepare two tasks, set by the centre, both of which are produced under controlled conditions and are sent to Edexcel to be marked by examiners. Unlike the legacy equivalent, this unit is not moderated. The tasks are marked following the same assessment grids and the results are by outcome. The tasks can be taken at any time during the course and can be submitted for assessment in the Summer or January series of examinations.

Candidates aiming at Grade C and above are expected to write over 200 words per task and it is anticipated that all candidates will write at least 100 words for each task in the two assessment sessions. In some cases it will be more appropriate for certain candidates (Grade G-D) if the tasks are broken down into a maximum of four shorter tasks to make up the word count.

As in the past, writing tasks are positively marked and the assessment grids are similar in weighting to the Higher Tier grids in the legacy GCSE terminal exam although the wording of the criteria has changed in places.

Candidates can choose to write within any of the four theme areas suggested by Edexcel in the new Specification:

- media and culture
- sport and leisure
- travel and tourism
- business, work and employment

or can choose to complete a centre-devised option outside these themes. In all cases, teachers can adopt/adapt Edexcel-produced stimuli (to be found under 'controlled assessment - tasks' on the Edexcel Spanish home page) or create their own.

As this series was only the second time for assessment, the entry was quite small. In general, candidates seemed well-prepared for the new tests and seemed encouraged by the opportunity to take ownership of the tasks in the sense that they could choose their own topic areas. In the main, tasks were generally sound and accessible to the full range of candidates. They showed evidence of good planning overall, although some work was a little formulaic at times with the same words and patterns of writing being seen repeatedly in different candidates' work at any given centre.

The majority of scripts were of a suitable length. The one-hour time limit seems to have discouraged overlong scripts. Candidates will not be penalised for an excessive word count but it should be noted that more does not always mean better. There were a few submissions, however, where some candidates had not written enough and consequently could not be awarded high marks.

Most centres submitted tasks similar to the legacy coursework favourites although the range of tasks was slightly narrower than that received under the old system. By far the most popular themes were accounts of Holidays and Travel, Work Experience, letters of complaint to Hotels, Healthy Living and Local Area. Centres seemed to be playing safe rather than branching out into more creative or unusual styles or topics.

Presentation of some tasks was still an issue and centres should note that candidates must realise that illegible handwriting can have a detrimental effect on the final result.

Administration

While many centres provided the required documentation correctly, a number failed to do so. Please note that the Controlled assessment authenticity record sheet - Writing that appears in the specification has now been replaced by a new Candidate Mark Sheet for Unit 4: Writing - this includes authentication statements and space for you to insert the task titles as well as space for Edexcel examiners to insert marks. Please use the new form or transfer information from the previous version, Your cooperation is much appreciated - the introduction of the new form will help to streamline the overall administration process for both teachers and examiners. Importantly, this will enable examiners to focus more time on marking student work and less on administration.

The Administrative Support Guide (Instructions for the Conduct of the Examination and Controlled Assessments) 2011 has details of what centres are required to send their examiner and the copies of the new forms to be used are held within the appendix. The Administrative Support Guide is available on our website at <http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse09/mfl/spanish/Pages/default.aspx> under 'Exam Materials'.

Below is a checklist of materials to send to your examiner.

For every candidate:	✓
Stimuli/tasks	
Form CA4 (Candidate Notes Form)	
Candidate work (2 pieces of writing)	
(Updated) Candidate Mark Sheet for Unit 4: Writing - signed by <u>both candidate and centre-assessor</u> . Any candidate unable to provide an authentication statement will receive zero credit for the component.	

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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