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Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In Spanish (1SP0) Paper 4H: Writing in Spanish

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## **Introduction**

The examination for paper 4H is 1 hour and 20 minutes in length and it carries 60 marks. The paper consists of two open response questions and one translation from English into Spanish. Candidates are required to answer all questions. Question 1 has two options, from which candidates must select one, and is common to the Foundation tier. Question 2 has two options, from which candidates must select one. Question 3 is the translation question. All candidates are required to translate the same short paragraph from English into Spanish. Throughout the question paper, titles, rubrics, and bullet points are given in Spanish.

### **Question 1(a) Las vacaciones**

Candidates were required to write a short informal letter of between 80 and 90 words in Spanish about holidays. The four bullet points asked about holiday preferences, what candidates did on their last holiday, an opinion about the importance of holidays, and where holidays will be taken next year.

The majority of candidates were able to address all four bullet points successfully. A majority of candidates developed their ideas well, giving additional details for each bullet point. The second bullet point, in particular, gave candidates lots of scope to develop their responses well. Ideas about the importance of taking time to relax and have a change of routine were often expressed in response to the third bullet point. A majority of candidates were able to express ideas in the future using future time frames or the conditional.

Where candidates did not score highly for Communication and Content, this was normally due to confusion with time frames. Candidates were aware of the need to include more complex structures to secure marks in the highest band for Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy. There was a wide variety of complex structures seen and some more unusual phrases, which resulted in more personal responses. In less successful responses, problems with verb forms and agreements sometimes led to a bullet point not being considered successful. However, many answers scored full marks.

### **Question 1(b) Las ambiciones**

Candidates were required to write a short response to a survey about ambitions. They had to write between 80 and 90 words in Spanish. The four bullet points asked about favourite school subjects, a job the candidate had done recently, reasons why it is important to have future plans, and what the candidate will do in the future after leaving school.

Although some candidates chose this option over question 1(a), the responses were as successful as the first question choice. The first bullet point was answered very well, being a common, familiar topic.

The second and fourth bullet points gave candidates the opportunity to extend and develop their responses, and it was here that more personal, individual responses were seen. Ideas about the importance of plans helping you to be organised and how having plans will enable you to get a good job were expressed in response to the third bullet point.

As with question 1(a), where candidates did not score highly for Communication and Content, this was normally due to confusion with time frames. Sometimes, some candidates lacked the ideas and language to convey coherent ideas about the third bullet point. Again, candidates were aware of the need to include more complex structures to secure marks in the highest band for Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy. There was a wide variety of complex structures seen and some more unusual phrases, which resulted in more personal responses. As seen before in question 1(a), in less successful responses, problems with verb forms and agreements sometimes led to a bullet point not being considered successful.

### **Question 2 (a) Una celebración**

Candidates were required to write a formal article of between 130 and 150 words in Spanish about a party that recently took place. The four bullet points asked for details about why the party took place, something interesting that happened during the party, the importance of celebrating special events, and the candidate's plans for celebrating another event in the future.

This question allowed candidates to be creative in both their ideas and their use of language. Reasons given as to why the party took place included birthdays, weddings, and seasonal celebrations. It was pleasing to see that some candidates also called upon their knowledge of festivals in target language countries and included details of them in their response. The most common approach to the third bullet point was to write about gathering friends and family to enjoy each other's company. All of the bullet points gave candidates plenty of scope to develop their responses well with particularly imaginative responses given to the second and fourth bullet points.

A majority of candidates showed a good lexical knowledge and were confident in the use of tenses and more complex linguistic structures. However, a lack of clarity due to attempting to write about ideas and use language which were beyond their ability, caused some candidates to miss scoring marks in the top two bands for both Communication and Content and Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy.

### **Question 2(b) Un intercambio escolar**

Candidates were required to write a formal report of between 130 and 150 words in Spanish about a recent exchange to Mexico. The four bullet points asked for details about why the exchange was important, something interesting that happened during the exchange, the advantages of doing an exchange abroad, and the candidate's plans for another exchange in the future.

This question was an equally popular choice as question 2(a), and it also allowed candidates to be creative in both their ideas and their use of language. Reasons given as to the advantages of doing an exchange abroad included being able to improve language skills and to experience the culture of another country. The second and fourth bullet points gave candidates the opportunity to develop their responses and lots of imaginative and personal ideas were expressed.

Again, as with question 2(a), a majority of candidates showed a good lexical knowledge and were confident in the use of tenses and more complex linguistic structures. However, as before, some candidates missed scoring marks in the top two bands for Communication and Content and Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy and this was mainly due to attempting to express ideas and use language which were beyond their ability.

### **Question 3 La tecnología**

For the translation candidates had to translate four increasingly complex sentences from English into Spanish. A majority of candidates made a good attempt to translate the passage as required, with a majority of candidates scoring marks in the top two mark bands which indicated that the meaning of the passage was mostly or fully communicated with few errors overall. A majority of candidates were able to communicate the first sentence correctly. Surprisingly, a majority of candidates misread the time indicator at the beginning of the second sentence and instead of *el fin de semana pasado* they wrote *la semana pasada*. In the third sentence, the phrase *pasa demasiadas horas* was often circumvented successfully by using the verb *gastar*. This was acceptable as it conveyed the required idea. The final sentence proved to be the most challenging, with only the most successful candidates producing a complete translation. The verb *preocuparse* was not known by some candidates, and *meta* or an acceptable equivalent was also not widely known. The correct use of the future tense of *ser* was well known.

## **Summary**

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Read every question on the exam paper before you begin to write your answers.
- Look very carefully at the whole question, including the rubric, to make sure that you fully understand what you are being asked to do.
- Look for key words, such as the tense of the verbs and time indicators, in the bullet points. These will help you to answer each of the bullet points correctly.
- Use vocabulary and language structures that you have learned which are related to the topic you are writing about.
- Use language which you know and do not try to use language that you are not confident using.
- Answer each of the bullet points in order using a new paragraph for each one. This will help you to organise your thoughts and will ensure that you do not forget to address a bullet point.
- Avoid leaving gaps in a sentence or writing an English word. It is better to try to think of an alternative way of expressing your ideas in Spanish.
- Leave enough time to check your work carefully at the end of the exam.

