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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In Spanish (1SP0)

Paper 4H: Writing in Spanish

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Spanish 1SP0 4H

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 examination. 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, rubrics and bullet points are given in Spanish.

Question 1(a) Work

Candidates were required to write a short informal letter of between 80 and 90 words in Spanish about work. The four bullet points asked about jobs that young people do, what candidates did to earn money in the past, an opinion about working at weekends, and future plans.

The majority of candidates were able to address all four bullet points successfully. Most candidates developed their ideas well, giving additional details for each bullet point. The fourth bullet point, in particular, gave candidates lots of scope to develop their responses well. Most candidates were able to express a wide variety of ideas in the future using future time frames or the conditional. Most candidates could also express clear ideas using the past tense.

When candidates did not score highly for Communication and Content, it 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 as successful. However, many answers received full marks.

Question 1(b) Family

Candidates were required to write an email about family. They had to write between 80 and 90 words in Spanish. The four bullet points asked about a favourite family member, what the candidate had done with their family last week, an opinion about spending time with family, and what the candidate will do tonight.

This question was more popular than question 1(a). The first bullet point was answered very well, being a familiar idea. 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. As with question 1(a), the fourth bullet point, gave candidates a lot of scope to develop their responses well. Most candidates were able to express a wide variety of ideas in the future. Most candidates could also express clear ideas using the past tense in response to the second bullet point.

As with question 1(a), when candidates did not score highly for Communication and Content, it 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 as successful.

Question 2 (a) My neighbourhood

Candidates were required to write a formal article of between 130 and 150 words in Spanish about their neighbourhood. The four bullet points asked about why their neighbourhood is a good place to visit, what the candidate likes to do with their friends, something that happened in the neighbourhood in the past, and how their region will change in the future.

This question allowed candidates to be creative in both their ideas and their use of language. The first two bullet points were very successfully addressed by most candidates with a lot of personal responses given. Most candidates gave convincing accounts of a past event in their neighbourhood or town. The fourth bullet point was addressed by most candidates but sometimes responses lacked detail and development.

Many 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 receiving marks in the top two bands for both Communication and Content and Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy.

Question 2(b) The environment

Candidates were required to write a formal report of between 130 and 150 words in Spanish about the importance of looking after the environment. The four bullet points asked what the candidate does to look after the environment, why it is important to help the planet, a project that they took part in in the past, and what the candidate will do to improve the planet in the future.

This question was a slightly less popular choice than question 2(a), and it also allowed candidates to be creative in both their ideas and their use of language. Candidates had little difficulty in expressing their ideas about the first and second bullet points. The third and fourth bullet points gave candidates the opportunity to develop their responses and a lot of imaginative and personal ideas were expressed.

Again, as with question 2(a), many 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 receiving 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 My classes

For the translation, candidates had to translate four increasingly complex sentences from English into Spanish. Most candidates made a good attempt to translate the passage as required, with many 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. Most candidates were able to communicate the first sentence correctly although some candidates did not know *asignaturas*. In the second sentence the verbs *escoger* or *elegir* were sometimes not known. In the third sentence, the imperfect tense was not always used, but given the challenge involved in this structure, the use of the preterite was accepted. Sometimes, candidates could not be awarded full marks because they had omitted a word or two from the translation. In the third sentence “always” was often not translated and “now” was often omitted from the final sentence.

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.
- In the translation, check that you have communicated the exact meaning of the sentences and have not missed out any key words.

