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GCSE Spanish 1245 Papers 1F and 1H

General comments

The overall impression of this year's Listening papers is that both Foundation and Higher candidates appear to have performed better than last year. This is partly explained by some items of vocabulary that were well recognised at Foundation tier for example: *fútbol, libro, banco, patatas fritas, pollo, uniforme, aburrido, español* and also as a consequence of the change in the general format of questions which targeted Grades B - A*. At Foundation level candidates appeared to relate well to the topics and themes covered in the examination as well as the tasks set. There were very few answers left blank. At Higher tier candidates responded equally well to the topics and tasks; however they struggled with questions where they were required to interpret information heard and to provide reasons for their selected answers. Words and phrases either misheard or misinterpreted included the following: *helado* (various interpretations), *tenedor (ordenador)*, *ambiente (medio ambiente)*, *nadar* linked to *natación* and *montar a caballo* with *equitación*. On the whole, candidates appear to have performed with increased confidence.

At both Foundation and Higher, 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 Grade F (questions 6-10 and 17-21), candidates were able to identify main points and extract some detail from what they had heard. At 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 now 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.

Foundation Tier

Questions 1-5

The majority of candidates answered these questions correctly although the words *camiseta* and *bañador* proved problematic to some.

Questions 6-10

Again, the majority of candidates scored well on these questions. The words *casa* and *banco* were almost always correctly scored. Some candidates struggled with answer 10 *le encanta nadar*, possibly because they are more familiar with the noun *la natación*.

Questions 11-15

This was the first of the crossover questions and discriminated well between candidates below and above grades C/D. Question 14: *el fútbol* scored highly. However difficulties were encountered with matching *la vela* with *deportes acuáticos* (Question 13) and *montar a caballo* with *la equitación* (Question 15).

Question 16

The mean mark scored for this question was 2 of the 5 marks allocated. The second of the 4 crossover questions, it targeted Grade C and was therefore appropriately challenging. The majority of candidates managed to correctly identify *pollo*, *patatas fritas* and *agua (mineral)*, but often misheard or did not recognise *helado*. The adjoining word *fresa* was often inserted on its own but was not sufficient to score a mark. Many mistook *tenedor* for *ordenador*. *Sucio*, whilst well recognised, was insufficient on its own to gain a mark. Frequent misspellings and a failure to place the right items into the right sections of the grid caused additional problems for some candidates. For example, *polo* for *pollo*, thus a wrong word or *patatas fritas* next to the rubric *Para beber*. Clearly, candidates still need more practice with this question type.

Questions 17-21

The majority of candidates scored well on this question, clearly responding well to a familiar topic. A minority of candidates confused *informática* with *matemáticas*.

Question 22

This was the third of the crossover questions and targeted Grade C. Candidates responded well to this new question type and generally scored well. Most were able to recognise verbs of opinion, for example *me gusta*, *me encanta* and *me aburre*, but were less successful in identifying the differences between positive and negative adjectives, in particular *inútil*, *caro* and *sencillo*.

Questions 23a and 23b

In this final crossover question, targeting Grade D, candidates achieved well. Once again they appear to have benefited from the slightly changed format of this question type. In question 23a (ii) candidates had some difficulty matching *extranjero* with *jugadores de todo el mundo*. Question 23b was generally well answered.

Questions 24 - 28

Overall these questions were well answered by the majority of candidates. Weaker candidates struggled with *tiendas*, *catedral* and *teatros*. *Parque* and *parque de atracciones* scored highly.

Questions 29a, 29b and 30

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, very few answered in the wrong language. In Question 29 section a, some candidates confused *dos* with *diez* or *doce*, and some, failing to read the question carefully enough, answered *where* Anastasio was staying rather than *for how long*.

Question 29b was better achieved, with most candidates scoring at least one of the two marks available. The adjective *simpático* continues to cause problems for some candidates; however most recognised *grande* and/or *moderno*. In Question 30 again, the majority of candidates managed to score at least one of the two marks available. Sadly, the adjective *aburrido* is very well understood!

Questions 31a, 30b and 32

These questions were rather poorly answered, perhaps because the topic 'playing tennis' was less familiar. There was significant guess work. In Question 31a again, the number *diez* proved problematic to many. In Question 31b there were some interesting pre match activities suggested, which seems to indicate a lack of understanding. However, often candidates over interpreted what they had heard. For example, many suggested specific activities undertaken in a gym including *weight lifting* and *stretching*. *Getting dressed/ready* was rarely offered. The answer *eating a banana* was frequently correct. Question 32 was significantly more successful, with the majority of candidates scoring at least one of the two marks available. More successful answers given were *eating well* and *drinking lots of water*. Least successful were the ideas relating to the *number* of times to play and confusion between *play* and *practise*. *Sleeping well* was often wrongly extended to include the number of hours required. Teachers would do well to advise their candidates to listen more carefully to tasks of this type, to keep their answers short, writing simply the information they hear. At this level, Grade E, they are not required to process or interpret information.

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. Questions 1, 2 and 4 were very well answered. However weaker candidates struggled with matching *la vela* with *deportes acuáticos* (Question 3) and *montar a caballo* with *la equitación* (Question 5).

Question 6

The mean mark scored for this question was 3 of the 5 marks allocated. The majority of candidates managed to correctly identify *pollo*, *patatas fritas* and *agua (mineral)*, but sometimes wrote *fresa* on its own, which was insufficient to score a mark as the answer required was *helado*. Likewise in the final section, *sucio* without *tenedor* was offered. Some weaker candidates mistook *tenedor* for *ordenador*.

Question 7

The greater majority of candidates managed to score at least 2 of the 4 marks available for this question. There was no variance noted between the various component parts.

Question 8

Candidates are now more confident with this question type and overall performance was pleasing. Most candidates correctly identified the theme park as the preferred venue in Section a. In Section b, the majority correctly identified 2 of the 4 possible reasons. However there were 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 this new question type and generally scored well. No specific areas of weakness in performance were noted.

Question 10

This question was very well answered by the majority of candidates. Most frequently missed was the match between the adjective *honesto* and the transcript *nunca dice mentiras*. It seems that candidates are now familiar with this question type.

Questions 11a and 11b

Candidates coped with these questions but with varying degrees of success. This seems to suggest appropriate differentiation. Section a. was marginally more successfully completed than Section b. In Section a the idea that items would be *cheaper*, *more original*, *with lots of variety* and that *it would be easier* were well interpreted. Problems occurred with *ahorrar tiempo*. In section b. *me vuelve loco* and *no te deja tiempo para hacer deporte ni nada*, caused considerable confusion.

Questions 12a and 12b

Candidates generally achieved well on these questions. Once again they appear to have benefited from the slightly changed format of the question type. In Question 23a (ii) weaker candidates had some difficulty matching *extranjero* with *jugadores de todo el mundo*. Question 23b was generally well answered.

Questions 13 and 14

This final question targeted Grade A* and proved to be appropriately challenging. Many candidates latched on to their own understanding of the topic of global warming rather than either the questions set or the transcript heard, which resulted in a lot of irrelevant guess work. Some candidates answered the questions in the wrong language resulting in no marks being awarded, although this was a significant minority. Observations on each section are as follows:

In Question 13a the majority of candidates correctly identified the expressed concern about temperature changes as well as the idea of toxic emissions, however *la irresponsibilidad de la raza humana* was not well explained and there was some confusion over future actions required as opposed to past lack of action. Question 13b produced a better response with the majority of candidates achieving at least one of the two marks available. In question 13c the tense of the question again caused problems for some. *Reciclar* was often interpreted as *cycling* and *reducir los residuos tóxicos*, as *reducing rubbish*. In Question 14, whilst the majority of candidates correctly identified the problem as a change in climate, they were less secure in their understanding of how this would affect the planet. *Sufrir* was frequently interpreted as *sucio*. There was evidence too of much guess work eg: *the ice caps will melt, the ocean will rise, the earth will become a desert*.

Principal Examiner's Report Papers 2F and 2H

The majority of Centres are to be congratulated both on their efficient administration of the 2006 oral exams and on the sympathetic manner in which those exams were conducted. Some Centres, however, caused significant problems, occasionally trivial but sometimes serious. A major problem in a few cases was the poor quality of the recordings and more than one Centre sent in blank tapes. In fairness to their candidates Teacher Examiners must ensure that the volume and tone controls are turned off during recording, that the microphone favours the candidate rather than the teacher and that the recordings are checked before despatch. Occasionally the tapes themselves were not labelled correctly, were not wound back to the beginning of side A and teachers were failing to announce 'end of side A or of side B'. When the packs of tapes from some Centres were opened, some L3s were found to be missing and others not filled in correctly or completely. Occasionally attendance registers were conspicuous by their absence. There were serious problems with the timing of conversations from a significant number of Centres this year; in one case at Higher Level the first topic of conversation lasted for 6 minutes, which is almost all the time allocated to the complete oral, and the examination came to an end after 12 minutes. In other cases the oral exam fell short of the prescribed time, penalizing the candidate whose marks were reduced accordingly. Imbalances between the timings of the first and second conversation topics were also evident and again the candidate's marks were affected. Some teachers are still rephrasing questions in the role plays, a practice that penalizes the candidate who cannot be awarded the marks. Finally in the conversations a number of teachers are still ploughing their way through the suggested questions at the back of the handbook or a list of prepared questions and not listening to the candidates' individual responses and developing a conversation accordingly. In the worst cases some Centres used exactly the same topics and list of questions for all of their candidates resulting in monotonous pre-learned Pavlovian responses from their students. Although each of the above problems was in evidence fortunately from a minority of Centres, it was a sufficient number to be highlighted in this Report and I would not wish the comments I have made to detract from the excellent way in which most Centres administer and conduct their oral examinations.

A ROLE-PLAYS

These were generally well conducted and caused few problems.

A1 Food and drink vocabulary was generally well known but there was some confusion between 'quiero' and 'quisiera' resulting in the hybrid 'quisiero'. Several candidates combined the first 2 tasks, asking for 'una botella de agua' for example and became puzzled when asked '¿Cuántas quieres?' Some candidates worryingly still do not know how to ask the price - '¿Cuántos?' and '¿Cuándo?' were still in evidence, and there was some confusion in misinterpreting the symbols for goodbye and thank you.

A2 Several candidates could not remember 'desayuno' or could not frame a question asking about breakfast.

A3 A significant number of candidate did not know 'sellos' and frequently asked for 'stampas'. Others forgot the word for postcards and asked for 'cartas' instead.

A4 The most popular request was for a 'libro' and a few asked for a 'periódico', although some offered 'papel'. The vocabulary for tourist office caused problems among some candidates who struggled with 'turista oficina' or 'oficina turístico'.

A5 A straightforward role-play that caused few difficulties apart from the vocabulary for crisps, but most candidates managed 'patatas fritas'. The weaker candidates just managed 'patatas'.

A6 Hardly anyone tackled this role-play because you would require at least 20 candidates in the Centre to reach a role-play combination that included A6. However those who attempted it were mainly successful and most selected 'mercado' or 'museo'.

B ROLE-PLAYS

B1 Some difficulty was experienced with the request to change some money and with the unpredictable question '¿Cómo vas a ir allí?' because the word 'allí' was not widely known and caused confusion. Many candidate asked where the bank was rather than how to get to it.

B2 Well handled in most cases, although 'empieza' was frequently omitted. The most popular request was for a 'camiseta'.

B3 The French influence was evident when candidates asked for a 'stylo' instead of a 'boli'. The important word 'para' was sometimes omitted from task 2. The common confusion between 'inglés' and 'Inglaterra' led some candidates to say 'soy Inglaterra'. Finally a surprising number could not remember 'Correos' and settled for 'Oficina postal'.

B4 Most candidates managed 'Quiero una excursión' and the most popular choice of destination was the 'castillo' or 'las montañas'. The unpredictable question '¿Cuándo?' puzzled those candidates who have difficulty remembering the meanings of interrogatives.

B5 Weaker candidates tried to render 'tabla' for 'mesa' and there was confusion in answering the unpredictable question between 'A las nueve' and 'Son las nueve'. Some candidates struggled to express where they wanted to sit, often asking for 'Teresa' rather than 'terrazza'. 'En el jardín' was common. Most candidates remembered 'cumpleaños'.

B6 Few candidates remembered 'sale' in task 2 and a significant number chose to omit the verb altogether. 'Departé' was frequently heard. The unpredictable question '¿Qué clase quieres?' was sometimes misunderstood or not understood.

B7 A significant number could not remember the word for 'tent' and 'tenta' was frequently heard. Otherwise there were no problems with this role-play.

B8 Expressing task 4 - Ask what there is to eat - often caused problems and a surprising number of candidates struggled with the question word '¿Qué?'.

C ROLE-PLAYS

C1 A number of candidates had difficulty with describing their injury and with responding to the first unpredictable question to describe how the accident

happened. The weaker candidates just managed 'Me duele la cabeza' while the stronger candidates successfully expressed ' Me he roto ...' or 'Me he torcido ...'. Many chose to answer where the accident occurred rather than how. Sometimes there was little precision offered in explaining '¿Dónde está usted alojado/a?' with minimal responses such as 'en un hotel'.

C2 Generally straightforward for most candidates, although some struggled to ask clear questions about '¿Alojamiento/Comida?' in Task 4. A significant number simply said where they were staying and what they liked to eat rather than framing questions.

C3 A significant number of candidates failed to answer the '¿por qué?' part of Task 1 and several candidates found it hard to ask a question about the weather in Task3, often simply reading out the prompt on their card - '¿El pronóstico meteorológico?'.

C4 There was a problem with appropriate tenses used in this role-play when responding to the first unpredictable question. The present tense was often wrongly used when attempting to describe the circumstances in which the bag was lost.

C5 Well done on the whole, although tense confusion was again evident in the response to the first unpredictable question which required the use of the past tense.

C6 The perfect tense used in the first unpredictable question threw some candidates and this was compounded by the inclusion of the word 'ya'. Again the present tense was used inappropriately and there was some vocabulary difficulty with weaker candidates in trying to express ways in which the environment could be improved.

C7 Generally a straightforward role-play and the most popular choice of equipment to hire was a 'bicicleta'. However a number of candidates failed to respond to the '¿por qué?' part of Task 1. There was confusion when some candidates asked to hire a 'ciclismo'. A surprising number of candidates could not manage to offer their 'detalles personales' coherently.

C8 This role-play caused perhaps the most difficulty for candidates in describing the details of a traffic accident, ascertaining where the responsibility lay and using a past tense to describe what they were doing at the time. However a number of candidates responded well and produced a successful and fluent account.

Foundation and Higher Conversations

Most of the comments concerning the conversation element of the exam can be found in the introductory paragraph of this report. However some important points bear repetition. In the first place, timing is all-important and teacher examiners who equip themselves with a stopwatch and keep a close eye on the exact timing for Topic 1 and then Topic 2 are to be applauded. There should be no excuse for short-changing the candidate on time nor for exceeding the limits of 4 - 5 minutes at Foundation Level and 6- 7 minutes at Higher Level. Some candidates are still being encouraged to read their initial prepared presentation from a script and in some cases it is clear that this practice of a scripted conversation extends beyond the initial presentation. This is clearly against the spirit of the exam, results in an unnatural question and answer session rather than a meaningful conversation and will affect the examiners' overall marking of the candidate's ability to hold a proper

conversation. Similarly, many teacher examiners are still ploughing through a list of questions which have been prepared for their candidates and which have been learnt by heart. When several candidates from the same Centre go through identical 'conversations' one after the other it is clear that the marks awarded have to be adjusted accordingly. A proper conversation means listening to what the other person says and developing the train of thought appropriately rather than following a list of scripted questions. It is a welcome escape from monotony to listen to those Centres whose teacher examiners engage in a full and lively conversation with their students and the marks awarded reflect the genuine ability to converse.

GCSE Spanish 1246 Paper 3F and 3H

The paper proved to be accessible to candidates and differentiated well. The rubrics and format of the questions were well understood and the time allocation was appropriate.

The majority of candidates were appropriately entered for their selected tier of this year's examination and generally coped well with the questions set and had been well prepared for the examination.

There was considerable improvement in questions where candidates had to select from given choices or match two phrases or halves of sentences - very few strayed from the choices given this year, demonstrating that candidates knew and had practised these question types.

There are still some candidates who write in red pen or pencil, and some who use correction fluid, although this year it is pleasing to note that there was considerably less evidence of this.

The crossover questions discriminated well and were consistently completed more accurately by candidates who sat the Higher Tier paper 3H.

Very few candidates failed to complete the paper or left many gaps in their answers at Foundation level but there were some incomplete answers at Higher Tier.

Specific problems or difficulties encountered are referred to in the detailed analysis of each of the papers, which follows.

FOUNDATION

Question 1

This question was generally well done, and suited the abilities of most Foundation candidates. 'Caramelos' and 'postales' were very well known, 'perfume' and 'póster' were tackled successfully by all but the very weakest candidates, as was 'camiseta'.

Question 2

Foundation candidates scored highly on this question and were able to demonstrate their level of understanding.

Question 3

Candidates found this question difficult at this level. 'Lugar de nacimiento' was frequently misunderstood and candidates confused where Claudia was born with where she lived. There was also confusion between 'hijas' and 'hermanas'. The part of the question dealing with her likes was well answered but the expression 'acaba de' was not known, leading to her ambition being given as starting a music group when, in fact, she had already done this.

Question 4

This question discriminated well at this level as higher level candidates within the Foundation range scored well here, whereas the lower end of the ability range did not appear to understand the gist and guesswork was evident.

Question 5

Candidates performed well in this question, the only point of difficulty being the word 'tienda', which was probably only known as 'shop' among weaker readers.

Question 6

Performed as expected.

Question 7

This question proved to be a good discriminator; most candidates made the link between 'motociclismo' and 'deporte' and between 'hijo' and 'niño'. However, 'regalo' was not well known and many candidates were put off by the infinitive form of the verb 'llover', being more used at this level to seeing it in the set phrase 'llueve'.

Question 8

This question was well done overall, although the last sentence was problematical for the weakest candidates. The vast majority of candidates understood the conventions of the questions, although there were a few who strayed away from the three choices (in enlarged text) and chose 'visitar el sitio'.

Question 9

Candidates generally understood the gist of this question, with some difficulties on the finer detail. Cognates such as 'experiencia' and 'resposable' were known or worked out by almost all.

Question 10

This proved to be a difficult question for many candidates, with guesswork clearly evident and a sense of transposing what their background knowledge told them about holidays rather than what the text actually told them.

HIGHER

Question 1

This question was answered much better by candidates at this Tier, although some still had problems with the link between 'regalo' and either 'televenta' or 'compra'. It appears they were not adept in recognising 'venta' in the form 'televenta'.

Question 2

This question was answered very well and caused no difficulties worthy of mention.

Question 3

Candidates answered this question well and were able to grasp inference such as benefits to the environment as well as facts which were stated overtly.

Question 4

This question proved to be a good discriminator, particularly for those candidates who were careless in their reading, and, for example, saw the phrase 'tenemos seis niños' and linked it with 'quiere más niños', without delving into the nature of Antonio's problem, or linked the word 'vela' in the stimulus and possible answers without properly considering the full meaning of the sentences.

Question 5

Performed as expected.

Question 6

This question also discriminated well between candidates of differing levels, although the nature of error was not consistent enough to be able to draw any conclusions.

Question 7

This question posed similar difficulties as at Foundation level, but to a lesser extent as would be expected from candidates who have been correctly entered.

Question 8

This question posed similar difficulties as at Foundation level, but to a lesser extent as would be expected from candidates who have been correctly entered.

Question 9

This question discriminated well at A* level as the candidates who really understood scored very well but many were side-tracked into guesswork and even leaving some answers blank. In particular, 'muñeca', 'torcida', 'desarrollar' and 'atreven' caused the most problems with a surprising number electing for 'ankle'. A large number of candidates also missed the reference to '...algo más que un deporte' and decided that base jumping was 'just a sport' for Jorge. As always, there were some candidates who answered in the wrong language (usually either Spanish or Portuguese) but it is pleasing to note that this occurred less than in previous years. The poor quality of English spelling and hand writing was a concern.

1246 GCSE Spanish Papers 4F and 4H

Paper 4F Comments on individual questions and performance

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*. 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 *lipstick*, *watch* and *gloves*.

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. Once again, this year, there was an abundance of *se* in front of the verb presumably because of the example. Many candidates found it impossible to match up the gaps for nouns with the preceding word, for example, *en la colegio* and *un libro de histórico*. There were also misspellings of *siete* and *media*. Verbs and items of vocabulary for parts a, b and c were generally more successful than d and e.

Question 3

There were many good responses although the correct use of verb forms caused the most problems. Candidates were able to give some indication of dates and means of transport but, unfortunately, many used versions of the word *arriver* in order to attempt to convey the message. Point 3 which required candidates to state what they hoped to do in Spain was generally well done although verb forms were often deficient. A good number of candidates omitted to say what they liked to drink and some candidates blithely omitted the idea of liking altogether.

Question 4a

This was marginally the more popular question of the two options. Again, the main difficulties which candidates encountered centred on the problems they had with the range of tenses required to express ideas clearly. Many simply wrote the infinitive with *yo*, *mi* or *me* in front of it. Reasons for liking/disliking work were well expressed in the main in the first two bullet points and 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

Similar comments apply here as for 4a above. Descriptions of the home and why they liked/disliked the latter were genuinely and competently expressed. Points 3 and 4, however, proved more difficult perhaps because of the inclusion of "*...at home*" and "*to help your parents*" in the English instructions.

Paper 4H Comments on individual questions and performance

In general, candidates responded well to the questions. Few candidates seemed to have been inappropriately entered. As reported last year, examiners noticed few really outstanding answers; by the same token, however, there were few totally inadequate responses.

Question 1a

This was the more popular of the two options by far. There were some excellent scripts with all points clearly communicated. Candidates' grasp of tenses was generally sound and accuracy of language was reasonably good. Candidates generally completed all the tasks. Many candidates stuck to *ir* for their description of events without attempting to put other verbs into the preterite or future. As ever, the gerund was frequently used after *gustar*.

Question 1b

This was the less popular of the two options. Candidates had some interesting things to say about why they liked/disliked their home. Generally, all tasks were completed. Language comments are as per above under 1a. There were lots of *jueg * in Task 3 and serious *por qu * and *porque* confusion throughout. There were many scripts where there was a serious imbalance between the length and depth of answers for the first two bullet points (long-winded) and bullet points 3 and 4 (often dealt with in a perfunctory way).

Question 2a

This was the more popular of the two options by far. 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 a wide vocabulary. Candidates had difficulties in explaining their opinion of family life in Spain and whether they would recommend such a holiday to anyone else. Reference to the neighbours was frequently omitted thus capping the communication and content point at 12 out of 15. Candidates frequently confused *hospitalidad* with *hospitable* and one candidate described the Spanish family's hospital and included his/her own local hospital as well. The *viaje de regreso* was frequently taken as the outward journey to Spain or the journey back home to the Spanish family's home after a day/night out. There were many examples of *recomendario* and the repetition of *recomendar *s in the final task

Question 2b

The less popular of the two options by far but there were some interesting and competent answers. Native speakers found this topic to their liking. Candidates fared well with the details of the first two bullet points but were more hesitant with points 3 and 4 although there were a few colourful descriptions of a struggle with the robber. The final bullet point was dealt with well by the majority of those answering this question. *Robo* was often taken to mean the *robber* and *entrar* was ignored by many in favour of *ir en...* in Task 2. Candidates took advantage of the last bullet point to air their knowledge of the subjunctive with some, unfortunately, going well off the point. Quite a few candidates had the theft happening to someone else with a different object stolen.

GCSE Spanish 1246 Paper 4C Coursework

General Comments

The coursework option was taken by 68 % of candidates entering for Paper 4.

Comments on overall candidate performance

Once again, good practice was observed in the majority of centres but some centres still continue to ignore correct procedure.

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 too many 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.

Coverage of topic areas was generally efficient but overlapping of topic areas is still a problem in a small number of cases. As noted last year, typical overlaps are Holidays with Town/Area and School with Work Experience. In centres where overlapping occurs, candidates are seriously disadvantaged as only two units out of the three can be awarded marks.

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 a Famous Person, Job Applications, The Environment, Shopping, Leisure Time, Special Occasions and Letter to an Agony Aunt. The general consensus across the whole team of moderators seems to have been that approaches to some topic areas like Family and Daily Routine, as has been seen in the past, rarely rose above the pedestrian. Some moderators reported a few refreshing approaches in a small number of instances where candidates had chosen to write about less well-known celebrities, for example. Moderators felt that the latter approach, apart from making for some interesting reading, also allowed candidates to be more creative and imaginative and consequently to access higher marks.

Overall, letters of application and letters of complaint improved in the sense that they contained more original material. The team hopes that this trend will continue. Essay/Letter writing templates seem to have been in vogue this year, however, with some leaving very little scope for original candidate input; so much so, on occasions, that the whole piece became little more than a gap-fill exercise. If candidates are given very little opportunity to produce their own original work, it is very difficult for moderators to agree marks from the top boxes of the assessment grids.

Assessment

Moderators reported generally accurate marking but a significant number of centres continue to mark their candidates' work too leniently. Internal standardisation does not seem high on the list of priorities in some centres.

Administration

Most centres make the effort to follow instructions and ease the moderation process for the moderating team. Where centres do not observe the correct procedures, however, this makes moderation a much 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 of the OPTEMS form to the moderator and not to Edexcel at Hellaby.

The new *CF1 cover sheet* now seems to be acknowledged by most centres although there is still a sizeable number of centres which continue to use old forms. Consequently, in such cases, candidates' signatures do not appear on the sheets to authenticate the work as their own and moderators have to spend valuable time chasing up centres for authentication of candidates' work. One centre did not submit any version of the CF1 form! Some centres omitted details like candidates' examination numbers from the CF1.

Arithmetical errors by centres, when submitting their marks for moderation, were once again reported by the moderating team.

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. One centre, apparently, did not know what the asterisk meant on the OPTEMS form.

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	33	27	21	15	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	35	31	28	18	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	33	28	23	18	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	34	29	24	19	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	32	28	24	20	16	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	31	26	22	16	13	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

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