Examiners' Report Summer 2008

GCSE Spanish (1246)

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1246/1FH Listining Responding Examiner's Report

General comments

The overall impression of this year's Listening papers is that both Foundation and Higher candidates appear to have achieved results in line with last year's performances. Topics covered and task types set were well within scope bar one or two lexical items noted in the summary report below. The crossover questions targeting Grades D and C proved more accessible this year to candidates at both Foundation and Higher level with the "note taking" question, 16F 6H in particular being well attempted by all. Once again teachers are to be congratulated on the way in which they had clearly prepared their candidates for the examination. Individual items of vocabulary that were particularly well recognised at Foundation tier included: *cine, playa, supermercado, pie, pantalones, profesor, aburrido, interesante*. Foundation candidates struggling with the topics places in town and fashion achieved well with the other themes covered in the examination. There were very few answers left blank.

At Higher tier candidates responded well to all topics selected and the tasks set, in particular the questions relating to mobile phones (Q8) and a trip to the moon (Qs 13-15). However they struggled where questions targeting Grade B and above where they were required to interpret the information heard and to provide reasons for some of their selected answers. The crossover questions: Foundation: Qs 11-15, Q 16, Q 22 and Q23 and Higher: Qs 1-5, Q 6, Q 7 and Q 12, discriminated effectively, although the majority of even the weakest candidates managed to score some points here.

Words and phrases either misheard or misinterpreted included the following: 1F Q16, 1H Q6 *las nueve* (often confused with the addition in the transcript of *en punto*), *martes* (often confused with *madre*), 1F Q 18 *Me encanta llevar corbata* (surprisingly not well known), 1F Q 23a (iii) 1H 9a (iii) *un poco nublado*, 1F Q32a *la comida rápida* interpreted as *eating fast* and 1H Q 14b *el cuerpo humano* translated as *my hand hurts*. On the whole, candidates entered for the higher level section of the GCSE examination perform with continued confidence.

At both Foundation and Higher level, 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 English and in Spanish, the majority of candidates achieved positive scores throughout both papers. The length of each rubric and the required written content to support each task was not a noted barrier to positive outcomes.

At Foundation level 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 Higher level 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 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.

1246/1F Listening and Responding Examiner's Report

Questions 1-5 Grade G
The majority of candidates answered all these questions correctly although the item *salgo con amigos* proved problematic to some.

Questions 6-10 Grade F
Again, the majority of candidates scored well on these questions. The items *supermercado* and *me encanta* were almost always correctly scored. Some candidates struggled with answer 6 *camarero*.

Questions 11-15 Grade D
This was the first of the crossover questions and discriminated well between candidates below and above grade D. At the weaker end problems were encountered with matching what was heard with the choices available in the questions in the series as follows: Question 11 *manzanas with market,* Question 12 *dolor de cabeza with farmacia,* Question 13 *cine with película*. Question 14 *folleto with oficina de turismo* and Question 15 *habitación doble with hotel*.

Question 16 Grade C
The mean mark scored for this question was 3.5 of the 5 marks allocated. The second of the 4 crossover questions, it was therefore appropriately challenging. The majority of candidates managed to correctly identify *museos and catedral* but often misheard *martes as madre*. The time *las nueve* was frequently misheard possibly because of the rider *en punto*. This last point was also noted although to a lesser degree. At Higher level and was taken into consideration when awarding the final grades.

Questions 17-21 Grade F
Lexical items caused problems for some candidates but with no apparent pattern of error. Whereas there was a full range of marks noted, the following items caused more confusion than others: *corbata* and *suéter*.

Question 22 Grade C
This was the third of the crossover questions. Candidates responded well and generally scored as predicted. The less successful links were: *su padre no trabaja* and *no tiene empleo, Es hija única* and *no tengo hermanos*. Some candidates latched onto the mention of a dog in the statement *paseo con el perro de mi padre* and *me encantan los animales* but missed the rider *no tenemos en casa*.

Questions 23a and 23b Grade D
In this final crossover question candidates achieved well. In question 23a (iii) weaker candidates misunderstood the reference to *weather* (*un poco nublado*) and in question 23b (ii) the heard *voy a esquiar* was frequently confused with the answer to the question relating to the **present** received: *dinero*.

Questions 24 – 28 Grade G
Overall these questions were well answered by all but the weakest candidates.

Questions 29 and 30 Grade E
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 few answered in the wrong language.

In Question 29 Section a, most candidates correctly identified the correct time allocation for watching TV
In Question 29 Section b, documentary programmes were sometimes misinterpreted as news items.
In Question 29 Section c, the greater majority of candidates managed to score a point for either *interesantes*, *divertidos* or *informativos*.

In Question 30, very, very few candidates managed to score a point for *los anuncios*. Most interpreted this as *the news*. This problem was identified as a concern and considered in the final award of grades. Most candidates managed to score a point for one of the following in Q30b: *una pérdida de tiempo, inútiles* and *(muy) aburridos*.

Questions 31 and 32 Grade E
The mean mark scored for this question was 3.5 of the 5 marks allocated. In Question 31a the majority correctly identified cycling as method of transport although there was some guess work here too! In Question 31b fruit, vegetables and sporting activities were more often correctly selected. However some candidates went too far by offering particular items not mentioned in the transcript. Teachers need to remind candidates that at Grade E they are only required to note what they hear rather than to interpret what was said.
In Question 32 some candidates misunderstood comida rápida to mean eating fast. It was also surprising to note the varying quantities of water consumed on a daily basis!!

1246/1H Listening and Responding Examiner's Report

Questions 1 – 5 Grade D
Overall candidates scored well on this question which appears to have allowed them to make a confident start to the test. As with Foundation level, some weaker candidates encountered problems with matching what was heard with the choices available in the questions in the series as follows: Question 11 *manzanas with market,* Question 12 *dolor de cabeza with farmacia,* Question 13 *cine* with *película.* Question 14 *folleto* with *oficina de turismo* and Question 15 *habitación doble* with *hotel*.

Question 6 Grade C
The mean mark scored for this question was 4 of the 5 marks allocated.   The majority of candidates managed to correctly identify *museos, estadio and catedral* but ocassionally misheard *martes* as *madre*. The time *las nueve* was sometimes missed possibly because of the rider *en punto*. This was taken into consideration when awarding the final grades.

Question 7 Grade B
The greater majority of candidates managed to score at least 2 of the four marks available for this question. 7(ii) *separar la basura para utilizar de nuevo lo máximo posible* linked to *Reciclar* and 7(iv) *la destrucción de los bosques* linked to *salvar los árboles* were the least successful sections of the question.

Question 8 Grade A
Candidates generally found this question challenging. Overall however, performance was in line with the intended outcomes. Most candidates correctly identified the mobile phone as the preferred present in Section a. In section b, the mean mark was 2 with the greater majority correctly identifying at least 1 of the 4 possible reasons. There was some evidence of pure guess work however the key points were identified. The most frequent right responses given related to *size, internet access* and *safety*.

Questions 9a and 9b Grade D
Candidates responded well to the question type and generally scored well. As with Foundation level, in question 9a (iii) weaker candidates misunderstood the reference to *weather* (*un poco nublado*) and in question 9b (ii) the heard *voy a esquiar* was sometimes confused with the answer to the question relating to the **present** received *dinero*.

Question 10 Grade A
This question with the mean mark as 3.5 was clearly, well answered. Most frequently missed was the match between the adjectives *seguro, animado* and the transcript *nunca tengo miedo* and *siempre hay mucha gente por la calle*.

Questions 11a and 11b Grade B
Candidates coped with these questions with varying degrees of success. There were some quite low as well as some very high scores. Section b. (*aspectos negativos*) was generally more successfully completed than
section a.(*aspectos positivos*) In section a. of this question most candidates provided *barato* and *elegante* as positive reasons, albeit with a variety of spellings. There were frequent instances however, where candidates simply transcribed phrases and extracts they had heard without making a suitable connection with the question. For example, *no hay problema* without a reasonable connection and confusion over the meaning of *no queda mal*.

In section b. there were some instances where quite exotic spellings offered rendered answers almost totally indecipherable. Most candidates correctly identified *feo* and *no +de moda/ individual/original*. More able students demonstrated their ability to interpret what they had heard, indicating their clear understanding and an ability to paraphrase in the target language. *Me gusta elegir la ropa que me pongo* often appeared as an incomplete answer: *la ropa me pongo*.

Question 12 Grade C
Candidates generally achieved well on this question as suggested by the mean mark of 3.5. The less successful links made, as with the responses at Foundation level, were: *su padre no trabaja* and *no tiene empleo*, *Es hija única* and *no tengo hermanos*. Some candidates latched onto the mention of a dog in the statement *paseo con el perro de mi padre* and *me encantan los animales* but missed the rider *no tenemos en casa*.

Questions 13 – 15 Grade A*
These final questions proved to be appropriately challenging. Candidates responded well to an unusual topic. Despite not recognising the reference to the moon and space most candidates managed to score points in each of the sections. A small minority answered the questions in the wrong language thus achieving no marks at all for their efforts. Observations on each section are as follows:
Question 13a and b. The greater majority managed to recognise one at least of the key points: *adventure/young people/ lunar travel*. In this question in particular, there were a variety of interesting responses offered which met with varying degrees of success. Weaker candidates hearing *avances tecnológicos* thought this was a *technology* holiday and when hearing *aventura* went on to add numerous activities including *climbing, camping* and *fishing*. Some very good answers were provided by the stronger candidates and all the key points were noted.
Question 14a and b.
The mean mark for question 14 was 2.2 of the 4 marks available. Candidates were able to note the key points referring to *training, scientific knowledge* and *special clothing* in section a. The word *humano* in section b. was sometimes confused with *mano* or *hermano*, therefore the effects of space on your *hands* or your *brother*.
Question 15 with a mean mark of 1.5 of the final 2 marks available was well achieved. The greater majority were able to achieve a mark for at least one of the three available points referring to the *weather*, the *cost* or potential *risk to ones health*.

1246/2FH Speaking Examiner's Report

The oral examinations this year were in general professionally conducted and gave the candidates every opportunity to display their versatility and competence over a wide range of vocabulary, tense usage and syntax. Most centres dealt with the administration accurately and comprehensively and the examiners are grateful to them for making the task easier and more straightforward. Some centres are still sending L3s in the order in which they appear on the tapes rather than in register order and this leads to unnecessary delay, especially with large centres. As happens every year, the timing of the conversations was identified as a major problem in several centres. At both Foundation and Higher Levels the oral examination for weaker candidates is sometimes prolonged in an attempt to elicit different tenses or complete sentences, but it should be noted that examiners only listen to the required length and fast forward to give equal time to the second, unprepared conversation topic, therefore prolonging the conversation serves no useful purpose. Equally disturbing is the occasional falling short of the prescribed time, notably with native speaker candidates, who consequently lose marks through no fault of their own. However it is good to hear the use of stopwatches on the tapes and it is recommended that this practice be adopted by all centres to ensure the accurate timing of the oral examinations.

The sound quality of the majority of the examinations was much improved this year. In most cases the candidates were positioned closest to the microphone, tone and volume controls were set at zero and this helped to reduce background noise and give advantage to the softer spoken candidates. The packaging of the tapes had also improved this year and in nearly all cases the tapes arrived safely and undamaged. Most Attendance Registers were accurately completed, although in a couple of cases examiners were put to unnecessary trouble searching for candidates who had been marked present and whose name appeared on the cassette insert but whose recorded examination was missing.

Fewer teacher examiners this year attempted to re-phrase the scripts of the role-plays or to give prompts, a practice that automatically deprives candidates of the marks. Occasionally teacher examiners read out the candidate's script or omitted one of the tasks by mistake, again errors that immediately deprive the candidates of the marks. It is essential that Teacher Examiners familiarise themselves fully with the requirements of the role-plays before conducting the examinations.

There was still evidence this year of the first prepared Conversation Topic being read – sometimes badly – from a script. In a few cases the scripted 'conversation' lasted well beyond the initial presentation, which is more correctly referred to as 'a brief introduction designed to give candidates a confident start' and which should never exceed one minute, since it counts for little in the assessment of the candidate's overall performance. It is obvious when weak candidates read their script at high speed, fail to pause at full stops and stumble over the pronunciation of unfamiliar vocabulary that the script bears little resemblance to their true ability. In extreme cases there are centres that clearly used exactly the same prepared topic for each of their candidates who gave the same cloned responses to identical questions and the end result was a scripted interrogation session that was nothing like a natural conversation.

Many Teacher Examiners still regard the suggested conversation questions at the back of the Handbook as prescribed and work through exactly the same sequence of questions with each candidate. Again this results in artificial question and answer

sessions in which little attention is paid to the candidates' responses and there is no development of a natural conversation. Sometimes the Teacher Examiners lost their place and dried up and there were long pauses as they struggled to think of what to ask next. This is clearly unnerving for the candidate when spontaneity of conversation is lost and when the Teacher Examiner is more intent on looking at the booklet rather than engaging in eye contact with the student.

However, there were many examples of good practice where Teacher Examiners had fully prepared for the examination, were asking open rather than closed questions, were listening intently to the candidates' answers and building on their interests and strengths as well as giving them every opportunity to show their ability over a variety of tenses and vocabulary.

A ROLE-PLAYS

A1   It is important that Teacher Examiners, when greeting candidates, do not use vocabulary that the candidates need at the start of the speaking test - ¡Hola!. Most candidates successfully offered 'mapa' or 'plano' in Task 2. 'Quiero ir a las tiendas' was the most popular response for Task 3. Those who could not manage 'centro comercial' resorted to 'centro de tiendas'. 'Centro cómico' was an interesting response.

A2   The vocabulary for Task 1 proved difficult for several candidates. 'Sopa' was commonly a wrong response. Similarly the pronunciation of 'toalla' defeated a number of candidates. Those who could not manage 'Tengo hambre' in Task 3 offered 'Quiero comer' instead. There is still some confusion between the symbols for 'Gracias' and 'Adiós'.

A3   The Task 2 drawings were successfully interpreted by most candidate, the most popular response being 'Quiero ir al cine'. Surprisingly 'lejos' was not widely known in Task 3. The pronunciation of 'autobús' in Task 4 was frequently suspect and occasionally 'car' was given. Finally some Teacher Examiners found the pronunciation of 'transeúnte' in the introduction something of a problem.

A4   The pronunciation of 'queso' was often a problem - 'Kwayzo' was frequently heard. 'Leche' proved to be the most popular answer, often followed by 'un cartón' in Task 2. The usual problems with '¿Cuánto es?' appeared, often 'Cuándo' or 'Cuántos' being offered instead.

A5   The only problems in this role-play occurred in Tasks 3 and 4. An attempted Spanish pronunciation of 'Bicicles' or 'Biciculs' was often heard. Various questions about meals, for example '¿A qué hora es el desayuno?', were offered in Task 4 and were marked correct.

A6   Most candidates went for 'hamburguesa' in Task 1, including some who could only manage 'hamburger'. 'Sandwich' was accepted as well as 'bocadillo'. Any request for a cold drink was accepted in Task 2, the most common response being 'Coca cola' closely followed by 'agua con gas'.

B ROLE-PLAYS

B1 'City centre' proved a problem for some candidates who found their minds locked into 'centro comercial'. Task 2 and the unpredictable question caused few problems. Task 4 was found to be the most difficult with many candidates confusing 'número' with 'nombre'.

B2 Mis-pronunciation of 'cine' – 'sine' (pronounced 'seen') – was evident in Task 1. Task 2 caused few difficulties, most candidates opting for 'cómica'. A negligent attitude to any form of Spanish pronunciation of 'horror' was also apparent at times. The unpredictable question differentiated Foundation from Higher candidates quite well; some candidates forgot that the opening question was '¿Qué vamos a hacer hoy?' and responded with 'mañana' or 'lunes'. Confusion between 'empieza' and 'termina' was again in evidence.

B3 Several candidates requested 'un billete de Salamanca' instead of 'un billete para Salamanca'. 'Andén caused difficulty in Task 2; 'plataforma' was often heard but is not acceptable in this sense in any Spanish speaking country. Most candidates managed to respond successfully to the unpredictable question, some having preempted the question by asking for 'un billete de ida y vuelta' in Task 1, and to the requirements of Task 4.

B4 Most candidates managed the verb 'ayudar' in Task 1. The most popular response for Task 2 was 'fregar los platos' although a few went astray with 'llevar los platos'. Most candidates responded to the unpredictable question with an offer to do even more housework. Finally in Task 4 'comida' was frequently confused with 'cena'.

B5 Apart from the usual confusion between 'empiezan' and 'terminan' most candidates managed the first task successfully with a variety of ingenious ways of responding to the task. For instance '¿A qué hora empiezan las asignaturas?' Task 2 was straightforward and most managed to answer the unpredictable question successfully, although some simply offered another school subject to engage their attention at midday. Some candidates simply said 'Quiero nadar' in Task 4 which lost marks.

B6 Quite a few candidates offered 'billete de entrada' in Task 1 and the occasional 'tiquete' was also heard. Some candidates attempted a Spanish pronunciation of 'basketbol' rather than 'baloncesto' and a few native South American candidates offered 'básquet' which is correct. A surprising number of Foundation candidates could not respond to the unpredictable question and give their age. In Task 4 there was confusion between 'cierra' and 'abre' and some candidates asked '¿A qué hora termina?'

B7 'Open air' caused problems. Several candidates asked for 'pez' instead of 'pescado' and mispronunciation of 'pollo' ('polo') was frequently heard. 'Coca cola' was the favoured response to the unpredictable question and very few knew 'cuchillo' in Task 4. Some managed to get round the problem with 'algo para cortar' and the less enterprising settled for 'knifo'.

B8 There were very few problems with the first task. The most common mistake in Task 2 was to ask for something 'más largo'. No problems with identifying a colour in Task 3 and nearly all candidates simple said 'Tengo 50 euros' without mentioning the 'billete' but this was marked correct.

C ROLE-PLAYS

C1 Most candidates managed to get across the idea that they had lost their luggage but in Task 2 several simply described the luggage or the contents without covering both. In Task 3 a surprising number of candidates did not understand 'vuelo' and assumed it was something that they had lost.   The weaker candidates who did understand 'vuelo' simply responded 'en avión' and failed to take the opportunity to provide useful details that might help in tracing the luggage.   Task 4 was generally successful but the final unpredictable question caused some problems with some candidates not understanding the significance of 'urgentemente' or explaining why they needed their items of property.

C2 Once candidates had identified the problem in Task 1, many struggled to provide more details in Task 2. Task 3 gave plenty of opportunity for candidates to give full and varied descriptions of the shop assistant. Quite a number of candidates struggled to think of why the problem needed to be resolved urgently in Task 4 and some found the final unpredictable question challenging.

C3 Most candidates managed to come up with ideas as to why they wanted to work in Spain – mainly to improve their language or because they had relatives living nearby, but found it difficult to provide any details of previous work experience. A few simply said they wanted to work in Spain without providing reasons. Most opted to work in the sports department because of their love of football. Some candidates could not frame questions to ask about salary and working hours in Task 4. Most candidates managed to think of how they might spend their 2 free hours in the final unpredictable question, although it stretched credulity to go along with the idea that they would travel to Madrid or Barcelona.

C4 The future tense in the first task was misinterpreted by some candidates who launched into a description of a journey they had made to Spain. In question 2, the first unpredictable question, some candidates referred to their own family rather than relating to the idea of staying with a Spanish family. Tasks 3 and 4 caused no problems; candidates felt at ease with describing sports they enjoyed and why and came up with several ideas as to how to spend a free day. The final unpredictable question caused some difficulty with candidates explaining what food they liked rather than focusing on food or drink that they would have problems with.

C5 Task 1 was successfully completed by most candidates and gave plenty of scope for full answers. 'Naturaleza' in the first unpredictable question was not understood by some candidates. Most opted for a simple response - 'es muy bonita'. Tasks 3 and 4 were generally well done. Task 3 provided scope for very full responses and Task 4 elicited good comparisons between the climates in Spain and the home country. The most popular response was to say that in Spain 'hace calor' whereas in the home country 'hace frío' or 'llueve'. In the final unpredictable question the wortd 'decidiste' provoked some hesitation and lack of comprehension.

C6 In Task 1 several candidates reported a loss rather than a theft and consequently lost some marks. When asked to describe the contents of the bag in the first unpredictable question, a number of candidates described the bag itself rather than what it contained. The description of the thief was generally well done – candidates generally feel comfortable when providing detailed descriptions. 'Datos personales' was understood, helped by 'detalles personales' on the candidate's card and the

final unpredictable question was largely understood. Most candidates offered their mobile number or the name of the hotel they were staying at.

C7   Task 1 was generally successful with candidates describing the symptoms they were suffering from.   The first unpredictable question was difficult for some, principally because of the failure to understand 'causa'. Some confused the tense usage and asked for aspirins rather than reporting what they had taken.

 'Aliviar' in Task 3 proved difficult for some.   Task 4 caused few problems, most candidates responding 'quiero ver al médico'.   Finally the final unpredictable open question gave the opportunity to describe in detail the candidate's plans for the following day.

C8   Most candidates seemed to enjoy this role-play and gave very full answers to Task 1. 'Recuerdos' in the first unpredictable question proved a stumbling block for some.   For Task 3, most candidates chose to talk about a music festival they had been to or read about, although some talked about November 5th or Christmas festivities or parties. Task 4 was completed without difficulty and Task 5, the final unpredictable question was successfully attempted in most cases.   Only a few candidates were thrown by the word 'ropa'.

FOUNDATION AND HIGHER CONVERSATIONS

Most comments about the conduct of the conversations have already been covered in the opening preamble to this report.   The following is a summary of the key recommendations:

1.   Teacher Examiners should adhere strictly to the given timings of the conversation – 4/5 minutes for Foundation and 6/7 minutes for Higher. The use of a stopwatch is highly recommended.
2.   Teacher Examiners should listen to the recordings before dispatch to check the quality and ensure that the candidates can be clearly heard.
3.   The opening 'presentation' in Topic 1 should not be read from a script.
4.   Teacher Examiners should avoid slavishly following the suggested questions at the back of the Handbook and try to conduct as natural a conversation as possible, listening to the candidate's responses and developing the conversation accordingly.
5.   Open questions should be asked rather than closed questions that require only brief answers, in some cases simply 'sí' or 'no'.
6.   The conversations should range over a variety of time frames and give the candidates every opportunity to demonstrate their handling of different tenses and wide vocabulary.

Nevertheless, there were many examples of good practice in a substantial number of centres where the examinations were sympathetically and expertly conducted and where the candidates were made to feel at ease.   Very few centres ran out of tape in the middle of a conversation and a minority failed to record 'end of side A' or 'end of side B'.
The majority of centres are also to be congratulated on their handling of the administrative procedures this year, with tapes correctly labelled and Attendance Registers correctly completed and signed.

1246/3F Reading and Responding Examiner's Report

General comments

The paper proved to be accessible to candidates and clearly tested their knowledge and understanding of Spanish. The majority of candidates have been well prepared for the examination and demonstrate that they understand the rubrics and format and have practised in preparation for the examination. This was particularly evident in questions where candidates were required to chose from a list of options, or specifically answer in either Spanish or English, where very few lost marks in inappropriate responses.

Very few candidates left significant gaps in their answers or failed to complete the paper at either level.

The crossover questions discriminated well and were consistently completed more accurately by candidates who entered at the higher level.

Question1
This question was generally well done by candidates of very limited ability and gave the true F and G candidates an opportunity to score marks. Some difficulties occurred with 'la equitación' and 'la vela' at the very weakest end of the range.

Question 2
As above, candidates scored well on this question and were able to demonstrate their level of understanding.

Question 3
There was some mix up of days and times in 'Un trabajo fin de semana'. Some careless reading also resulted in the start and end times of the job being confused. This question is a particularly good example of discrimination in which Higher Tier candidates scored very highly but Foundation Tier ones had more difficulties.

Question 4
Foundation candidates found this a difficult question and there was 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 language. A few confused 'ropa' and 'regalos'.

Question 6
Both the Spanish and the icons were clearly understood in this question, lauding to success for many Foundation candidates. The only major cause of difficulty was the phrase 'me visto'.

Question 7
Candidates were comfortable with this question and either knew or were able to work out their answers for some very high scores. The link between 'estación de esquí' and 'vacaciones en invierno' proved too tenuous for some students.

Question 8
This proved to be a testing question for candidates at this level. Parts (c) and (d) in particular were not answered well, with candidates not understanding key phrases. Overall understanding also appeared to be a problem here.

Question 9
This question was answered well and candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the material. Only the very weakest candidates did not understand 'el mes pasado'. The more subtle part (c), however, was missed by some who opted for 'international dishes' as the speciality instead of reading further.

Question 10
This question was a good discriminator at this level. Many candidates scored well here and demonstrated a good overall understanding. Some did not recognise the month 'enero' and too many candidates decided to invent specific free gifts for the dog in part (d).

1246/3H Reading and Responding Examiner's Report

Question 1
This question served a good purpose at this level as Higher Tier candidates scored more highly than Foundation Tier entries and were able to demonstrate a good understanding of the content throughout.

Question 2
Higher Tier candidates once again scored better here than at Foundation entry but there was still some difficulty with terms such as 'fuera de lo normal' and 'valiente' although 'inolvidable' was well known or deduced.

Question 3
Candidates generally performed well on this question and there was no particular pattern to the errors which did occur.

Question 4
This question was well handled by the more able end of the range of entries which demonstrated an understanding of the more subtle aspects and implications of the text and were able to match the two sentence halves accurately. Some candidates matched sentence parts which were grammatically correct but did not bear any relation to the meaning of the text itself.

Question 5
This question was well done by the majority of candidates and posed no specific difficulties.

Question 6
Candidates appeared to be divided between understanding the majority of this text, or to be struggling with much of it. Overall comprehension caused some problems and some candidates got side tracked into specific details rather than focussing on an overview which would have supported a better overall understanding.

Question 7
This question discriminated well as the vast majority of candidates scored very highly and demonstrated a better understanding than candidates answering the same question at Foundation Tier.

Question 8
As for Question 7, Higher Tier candidates performed well here.

Question 9
This was the most difficult question on the paper and proved to be a very good discriminator at the higher end of the ability range. Very good candidates scored very highly and demonstrated a clear and precise understanding of the subtleties expected at this level. Parts (b) and (c) gave candidates the opportunity to record a wide range of possible correct answers and most candidates did so successfully. Too many entries talked about a revolution in answer to part (i) and very few entries were able to recognise 'estadounidense', with most opting for 'Mexico'.

1246/4F Writing Examiner's Report

Few candidates had been inappropriately entered 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 members of the family and a list of souvenir items. As in the past, the main mistakes included French words, English words, infinitives, repetitions, repeating the example and the inclusion of words like *fútbol*. A favourite mistake this year, linked to the souvenir context perhaps, was *castanetas, guitar and guitare*.

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 verbs in the first person or copied the infinitive. Many candidates found it impossible to match up the gaps for nouns with the preceding word, for example, (e) ...*un hamburguesa* and (d) *varias camiseta/camisa*. The first and last verbs *gusta* and *come* were generally successful. Not so well done were *juega, va* and *tiene*. Vocabulary was generally accurate albeit with a variety of spellings for *parque* and *bicicleta/bici*.

Question 3
There were many good responses with the correct use of verb forms causing the main problems. Tasks 3 and 4 seemed to provide the most difficulties although a good number of candidates also stumbled with Task 1, writing *Soy 16 años,* for example. There were lots of difficulties with *hablo*. Dealing with the idea of starting work also caused huge problems for many.

Question 4a
This question was less popular than 4b. The main problems which candidates encountered centred on the difficulties they had with the range of tenses required to express ideas clearly although most candidates did their best to cope with the bullet points. Many candidates continue to write the infinitive with *yo, mi* or *me* in front of it. In bullet point 4, opinions re exams were generally coped with but limited to a large extent to the old favourites *aburrido(s)* and *interesante(s)*. There was a fairly competent use of the past tense in bullet point 2 although many relied on *fui*...In bullet point 5, *voy a* ..... was dealt with quite well. Candidates were less successful with bullet point 1, often omitting the fact that they were writing about the *Easter* holidays. Bullet point 3 posed fewer problems in the main.

Question 4b
This was the more popular of the two options. Similar general comments apply here as for 4a above. Candidates were able to produce simple, well-practised sentences about town, shopping and future plans and there seemed fewer problems overall. Some candidates merged bullet points 3 and 4 quite successfully although others concentrated solely on bullet point 4 thus missing out a little on Content and Communication. Bullet point 5 was generally well expressed.

1246/4H Writing Examiner's Report

In general, candidates responded well to the questions. Few candidates seemed to have been inappropriately entered and there were few answers which were too long or too short. There were some excellent responses and there were few totally inadequate answers. The usual grammatical weaknesses were observed as in previous years.

Question 1a
This was the less popular of the two options by far. There were some excellent scripts and candidates generally managed to communicate the 5 points required to answer this question. There were some very precise answers in clear and accurate Spanish with a pleasing use of subordinate clauses at times. It was pleasing to note that some candidates, even within the limited number of words they were required to write, managed to extend beyond a minimum response with fuller details and the expression and justification of opinions.
Better candidates often expressed the view that exams were a necessary evil and handled verbs like *odiar* and *gustar* quite well.
Weaker candidates, however, omitted to mention Easter, had some problems with their opinions of exams and failed to contextualise how they were going to spend the summer by omitting any reference at all to *'after your exams'*.
Weaker candidates, too, continue to have problems with *gustar,* with *gusto* and *gustamos* being common mistakes this year. It was also disappointing to see how often *fue* was substituted for *fui* and *hice* for *hizo* and vice versa.
Overall, examiners reported that this question posed more difficulties for candidates than 1b.

Question 1b
This was the more popular of the two options by far and there were some very accurate pieces of writing. Many candidates lost their way a little in giving over most of their answer to the description of their town/area to the detriment of the other bullet points but an even spread was maintained by the majority of candidates. Having said this, examiners reported some quite imaginative and sophisticated descriptions for bullet point 1.As in the FT Paper, there was some quite successful merging of bullet points 3 and 4 although some candidates concentrated solely on bullet point 4 thus losing out a little on Communication and Content.
All forms of *pasarlo bien* were surprisingly weak this year but the use of *ir a…* continued to please. Some examiners reported problems with the Preterite Tense with confusion between *fui* and *fue* and *hice* and *hizo* as mentioned above in 4a.

Question 2a
This was by far the more popular of the two options although it was evident that some candidates were drawn to it solely by the subject matter which their language skills could then not support. These candidates might have been better off if they had studied more closely the opportunities which 2b gave them which might have matched their language skills a little more closely.
There were enthusiastic answers by many with some weird and wonderful commentaries (some scathing) of the bands and their antics and the antics of their fans, e.g., one candidate had gained entrance to the concert via the the window of the men's toilets after a few drinks for courage; conversely, some struggled with any critical evaluation of the group's performance. Many gave long-winded descriptions of travel arrangements and many lost Content and Communication marks because

they missed one or more items from the four which were included in the first two bullet points. Some candidates spoiled their responses with long lists in English of the names of famous numbers performed by their favourite band.

Answers were generally quite successful with evidence of a range of tenses and some wide vocabulary on occasions, with the last 2 bullet points being the most difficult for candidates. There were frequent mistakes with the conjugation of *costar* and the correct spelling of *caro* with *libros* being frequently used for *libras* although many candidates of course chose *euros*. Candidates had great difficulty with the conditional tense spelling of *recomendar* with *recomendarías* often being repeated from the prompt in the question together with other incorrect spellings like me *recomendaría*, *recomendario* and *recomiendas* etc. It was also disappointing to note that many candidates did not expand their response to bullet point 5 but simply restricted it to a very short yes or no answer.

There was the usual obligatory insertion of the subjunctive which often lengthened paragraphs which had little or nothing to do with the prompts in the question. These subjunctives were very often the only example of correct language on offer which more than just suggests that they had been pre-learned for inclusion at all costs.

Question 2b

This was by far the less popular of the two options. Better candidates managed to communicate all the points required and there were some thoughtful and interesting answers.

Weaker candidates had difficulty in expressing what actually happened in bullet point 2 and opinions in bullet point 3 were often poorly expressed. Many candidates failed to mention any reference to *mucho calor* in bullet point 1, surely one the easiest responses to make. The latter omission then caused some confusion re the easy link between the beach, the heat and what actually happened in that many candidates then shot off at a tangent to (sometimes) regurgitating a pre-learned 'incident'; in this respect, many candidates became ill because of a fall, road accident or food poisoning etc. One candidate awoke from sunbathing to find someone standing over him with a knife so a fight ensued. Regarding what actually happened in bullet point 2, examiners gave a certain amount of leeway to the more esoteric incidents dreamt up by candidates.

The doctor's visit seemed to extract negative comments in the main with the doctor being rude, dirty, ugly, not very competent and not able to speak English. On the other hand, weaker candidates struggled to express an opinion regarding the doctor. Candidates also struggled with the advice to other tourists in bullet point 5.Once again, the spelling of the Conditional Tense proved problematic.

Paper 4 Final Comments

As reported last year, examiners were disappointed by the increasing incidence of poor handwriting and untidy presentation. Candidates need to be informed that they cannot expect to achieve the good marks they may deserve if the examiner cannot decipher their answers because of illegible written responses

On the increase this year, too, was the practice by some candidates of placing part of their answers outside the writing are and even using space allocated to one question to answer another, e.g., continuing their answer to 2a over several pages into the space assigned to the answer for 2b.

1246/4C Coursework Examiner's Report

Comments on overall candidates' performance

As per previous years, good practice was observed in the majority of centres making the moderation process straightforward for the moderating team. Some centres still ignore correct procedure, however, thus making moderation more difficult.

Candidates' work was generally pleasing with centres overall setting appropriate tasks containing a good range of topics 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, although fewer in number, there were 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 Grades G-D are advised to write a total of 250-300 words over the three units and candidates aiming at Grades A*-C are advised to write a total of 500-600 words over the three units.

As reported last year, the best pieces of work were those where candidates were enabled to use a wide variety of tenses, structures and vocabulary in each unit of their 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*-G so that candidates writing simple sentences etc., with little original input, perhaps, should not be accessing the top boxes when assessed.

Many centres fail to submit stimulus material although moderators reported fewer cases of blatant plagiarism this year from sources like the Internet. Centres are reminded that the moderating team often track down suspect items through a Google search.

Coverage of topic areas was generally efficient and overlapping of topic areas was less of a problem this year. As noted last year, typical overlaps are Holidays with Town and Area and School with Work Experience. It should be noted that in centres where overlapping occurs, candidates are seriously disadvantaged as only two units out of the three can be awarded marks.

Last year's particular favourite *Me presento* was much less in evidence this year and fewer candidates strayed into an 'overlap' situation in this respect.

Tasks set were generally appropriate for the candidates' level of ability. Preferred topic areas ran a familiar course with little difference from previous years, e.g., Holidays, School, Family and Home, Work Experience, Health Issues, Leisure Activities, Film Review, Interview with/Article about a Famous Person, Town and Area (less interest this year), the Environment, Shopping and Daily Routine. There were fewer Job Application letters, letters to an Agony Aunt and letters of Complaint which may be a good thing in that work submitted in the past within those areas has usually borrowed heavily from stimulus material thus restricting originality.

It was noted that Holidays, especially, allowed candidates to use a wider range of vocabulary and tenses and the best candidates wrote pieces which were of a high standard and very pleasant to read. Work Experience produced interesting essays where candidates gave their opinions of the work colleagues and future plans. Health Issues were chosen by more candidates this year with a Healthy Diet being the overwhelming preference. One particularly imaginative approach was observed where candidates had to imagine that they had a particular illness and link the latter into healthy living.

As in the past, the general consensus across the whole team of moderators was that approaches to some topic areas like House, Home and Daily Routine and School, often did not allow candidates to use more sophisticated language and the work of many of them in the latter areas rarely rose above the predictable and the pedestrian. Interviews with Famous People were sometimes below the recommended word count and prevented candidates from using a wide variety of more complex structures and vocabulary.'Playing safe' in this way often precludes candidates from the higher range of marks.

Some centres continue to award inappropriately high marks for essay/letter writing templates (or barely different versions of sample material) so that the whole task turns into little more than a gap-fill exercise. Centres should bear in mind that if candidates are given little opportunity to produce their own original work, it is impossible for moderators to agree marks from the top boxes of the assessment grids.

Moderators continue to be perplexed by the great differences between the standard of some controlled pieces where candidates receive (very) low marks and the other two (uncontrolled) units where candidates suddenly produce outstanding work. A startling improvement was also noted at times between the quality of first and final drafts.

Moderators reported generally accurate assessment but a significant number of centres continue to mark their candidates' work too leniently. Moreover, internal standardisation seems not to take place in a good number of those centres where more than one member of staff is assessing coursework. Lack of internal standardisation usually has serious and unexpected effects on the final mark/grade outcomes for centres.

Administration

Although more centres followed Edexcel's set procedures, and should be commended, other centres disregarded these and therefore making moderation a more time consuming process.

As in previous years, all possible combinations of *OPTEMS forms* were received from centres, sometimes not filled in and sometimes not signed; indeed, this year, it was reported that Attendance Registers were sent to moderators instead of the OPTEMS form. Last year's worrying trend of sending the top copy of the OPTEMS form to the moderator and not to Edexcel at Hellaby also continued this year.

Some centres had failed to insert any marks on the OPTEMS sheets which makes it difficult for moderators to check whether samples contain both the highest and lowest marks. The lowest mark must be submitted even where candidates may only have completed one unit, for example. Even in the normal course of events, it was

reported that some centres were not including the highest and lowest marks when submitting their sample if the highest and lowest marks did not appear in the original asterisked sample. For example, it was reported that a centre forwarded the yellow copy of the OPTEMS sheets to the moderator unaware that it also had to send in the coursework sample as well.

Various versions of the *CF1 cover sheets* were sent to moderators, some, of course, not bearing the signatures of the candidates to confirm authenticity. Centres should now be aware that there are Authentication Sheets available for this purpose if there is no room on the older version of the CF1 sheet which they may be using. It was also noted that centres were failing to indicate Topic Areas for the units on the CF1 sheets.

Arithmetical errors by centres were again in evidence this year with discrepancies between the CF1 sheet totals and those written on the OPTEMS sheets. There were also mistakes in adding up the total marks to go on the CF1 sheets.

Drafts continue to be submitted haphazardly and frequently not marked as such.

Moderators reported that 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 should be made aware that to achieve the mark their work deserves the moderator must be able to understand their handwriting.

Marks, corrections and comments continue to be written by teachers on the pieces of work themselves, even though 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 allowed to be given by teachers to candidates. Such corrections and comments will adversely affect candidates' marks.

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	41	34	27	20	13	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	38	35	32	29	18	12	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	27	21	16	11	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	32	28	24	20	15	12	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	33	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	32	28	25	18	14	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