

# Examiners' Report January 2013

## GCSE Spanish 5SP04 01

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January 2013

Publications Code UG034833

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## Introduction

Candidates aiming for a grade C or above are expected to submit two pieces of written work of about 200 words for each task. Each task must be produced in one session of up to 60 minutes under controlled conditions. All candidates should write at least 100 words for each task. Tasks of fewer than 100 words are capped at a mark of 6 for Communication and content.

The two pieces may be from the same general topic area or from different topic areas. Centres may set their own tasks or choose or adapt one from the stimulus material provided by Edexcel. The two pieces have to differ in content and purpose. They should also differ from the tasks set for the Speaking Controlled Assessment.

For less able candidates, two shorter pieces of work can be offered in lieu of one longer piece of writing.

## Tasks

Each task must have a stimulus, but this can consist of just a title or heading. It can be in either English or Spanish. The best tasks included 4–6 bullet points that encouraged candidates to give descriptions and opinions, to develop their responses using a variety of vocabulary and language structures, and to use a variety of tenses.

The wording of the stimulus is important. It is better to use the rubric *You could mention*, rather than *You must mention*, since the latter could potentially penalise candidates who have not covered all the bullet points listed. Examiners were instructed to take note of such omissions by candidates in assessing the mark for Communication and content.

Popular tasks noted by examiners included:

- Holidays
- School
- Work experience
- My town

Centres are encouraged to give plenty of thought to the selected tasks. It may be necessary, if a centre has a range of candidate abilities, to set two or more entirely different tasks. For more able candidates, it is important to ensure that the tasks set will enable them to access the higher mark bands of the assessment criteria. The task should encourage candidates to expand on ideas and points of view. More successful tasks included accounts where candidates could write at length and maintain a logical, linked thread throughout their work.

Certain tasks are less suitable for less able candidates. A film review demands a confident use of a wide range of vocabulary and language structures for it to be successful. Letters of application for jobs or letters of complaint to a hotel are not always good choices as they tend to limit candidate responses and follow set language patterns. Celebrity or sportsperson interviews are usually not very successful as there is little opportunity for linking ideas throughout the response and candidates often do not have the language skills to express themselves adequately.

Candidates should be encouraged to produce individual responses to a task stimulus. The best candidate responses were those that contained an element of both individuality and creativity. Some examiners noted that some candidates from the same centres were producing responses that followed a very similar rigid pattern and structure. Although it is recognised that candidates may have access to the same resources throughout the planning and preparation period, final responses should be varied and original. The best candidate responses were entirely relevant to the stimulus; were well structured with paragraphs with correct punctuation; and were well presented with neat, legible handwriting. A task may be presented as handwritten or word-processed.

## Form CA4 and dictionaries

Candidates are allowed to use notes in the controlled conditions session. The notes should be written on the CA4 form and may include no more than 30 words and up to five small pictures. The use of this form is optional. A greater number of candidates chose not to use the CA4 this series but, where it was used, it was a useful support for those candidates. Centres are asked to indicate on the CM4 (*Candidate Mark Sheet*) whether the CA4 form has been used or not.

The use of a dictionary is also allowed, but some candidates who had access to one were not able to use it properly and produced many errors due to this.

## Assessment

The best candidate responses communicated clearly throughout with a wide range of ideas and opinions presented and linked using a range of adverbs and adverbial phrases. A candidate who tries to express ideas beyond their capabilities will produce work that is likely not to communicate very well. Repetition of vocabulary and language structures and simple lists will not attract high marks. The best responses will also contain a range of verbs and tense formations and candidates will be unlikely to score high marks for Communication and content if these are not present.

With regard to language, the best responses include a variety of vocabulary and complex structures. Complex structures might include some of the following:

- Subordinate clauses
- Variety of tenses
- Comparative, superlative and possessive adjectives
- Present subjunctive
- Negative and interrogative forms
- Use of *desde hace*
- Direct and indirect object pronouns
- Adverbs and adverbial phrases
- Connectives and linking words

A mark of 4 or 5 may only be awarded for Accuracy if the candidate response contains enough examples of complex structures. A response that is very accurate but contains only simple, straightforward language will not attract a high mark for accuracy.

## Administration

Most centres adhered to all of the guidelines regarding administration. However, a number of administrative issues are yet to be entirely resolved. They include the following:

- Use of the old-style *Candidate Mark Sheet* instead of the up-to-date one (CM4), which can be found on the Edexcel website
- Inclusion of drafts that were not labelled as such, so it was difficult for the examiner to see which response was completed under controlled conditions
- Work despatched to the incorrect moderator/examiner
- Work not received by the published deadline

Centres are requested to arrange the candidates' work for their centre in the following order:

- The current CM4 (*Candidate Mark Sheet*), which must be fully completed and signed by both the candidate and the teacher
- Task stimuli with any suggested bullet points (if used)
- Form CA4 for Task 1 (if used)
- Candidate's response to the Task 1 stimulus. Task 1 is the first task listed on the *Candidate Mark Sheet* (CM4)
- Form CA4 for Task 2 (if used)
- Candidate's response to the Task 2 stimulus. Task 2 is the second task listed on the *Candidate Mark Sheet* (CM4)

The complete work of each candidate should then be stapled together or securely attached with a treasury tag. Centres are politely requested not to use plastic pockets as this slows down the marking process for the examiners.

The work for all candidates should then be arranged according to the order of the attendance register, which should also be forwarded to the examiner with the work.

Most of the work seen during this series complied with the above requirements and candidates produced much good-quality work.

## **Grade boundaries**

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

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

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Order Code UG034833 January 2013

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