



Pearson

# **Examiners' Report**

## Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCSE  
In Spanish (5SP02)  
Paper 2A: Speaking in Spanish

## **Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications**

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at [www.edexcel.com](http://www.edexcel.com) or [www.btec.co.uk](http://www.btec.co.uk). Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at [www.edexcel.com/contactus](http://www.edexcel.com/contactus).

## **Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere**

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: [www.pearson.com/uk](http://www.pearson.com/uk)

Summer 2017

Publications Code 5SP02\_2A\_1706\_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2017

**GCSE Spanish**  
**Unit 2A: Speaking**  
**Examiners Report**

5SP02 PRINCIPAL EXAMINER'S REPORT: SUMMER 2017

In this, the last of the Unit 2 examinations under the current Specification, it was clear that Centres are now very familiar with the format and requirements of the exam and had prepared their candidates appropriately. Similarly, there were fewer problems with administration and conduct of the exams. Teachers mainly asked open-ended questions and, conscious of the need to cover more than one tense, most teacher examiners asked questions that would elicit responses in tenses other than the present. As a result, candidates generally were afforded ample opportunity to demonstrate their abilities by using a variety of structures, vocabulary, verb forms and tenses. There was evidence that many candidates had been taught how to apply complex structures and lexical items which included reference to various time frames, subordination, use of object pronouns and comparative and superlative structures. Lexis was often predictable but on occasions was context-specific and helped to raise the quality of the discourse. A perennial problem has been that of rote-learning where candidates have been over-prepared and deliver pre-learnt responses to familiar questions, often at speed with little awareness of the significance of accents and displaying anglicised pronunciation and inappropriate intonation. In some cases, teachers asked exactly the same questions of all the candidates in their centres and it was obvious from the responses that the candidates had been drilled into giving similar or identical replies. Once again Presentations proved to be the most popular task types with Picture-based discussions coming a close second and Open Interactions the least popular. Of the Topics covered, many tests centred on Holidays, educational visits or school life and these topics gave plenty of opportunity for eliciting varied responses requiring different tenses. There were fewer problems with the timing of the tests and most teacher examiners managed to interrupt the Presentations at the appropriate time to allow adequate evidence of interaction.

PRESENTATION

As with previous years, Presentations tended to be pre-learnt monologues which then extended into question and answer sessions with no real evidence of spontaneous discussion. A number of teacher examiners appeared to use a bank of questions which they repeated throughout the exam with all their candidates. In several cases this practice led to robotic responses which often appeared to demonstrate a lack of understanding of the language. For example '¡Qué horror!' uttered in a monotone and devoid of feeling highlighted the practice of drilled rote-learning. Although generally teacher examiners kept a close eye on the time and prevented the Presentations from going on for too long, there were some examples of centres who

allowed their candidates to deliver their monologues for most of the examination time, allowing for at most two questions for the subsequent interaction. As a result, this led to some capable candidates failing to achieve marks in the higher bands for Content and Response.

### PICTURE-BASED DISCUSSION

The Picture-based discussions were generally handled well this year although at times there was little if any connection between the discussion and the picture. The pictures are designed to encourage the candidates and to give them some support for the discussion and good teacher examiners focused on the picture with questions such as '¿Qué hiciste allí?, ¿Quiénes son las personas en el fondo?' or 'Cuántos años tenías en la foto?' Centres should be careful to ensure that Picture-based discussions do not turn into Presentations in which the candidates deliver monologues in describing the picture rather than discussing the details with the teacher examiner. The pictures chosen by the candidates were usually of the family, holidays, pictures of the candidates doing various sports or a famous person whom they admire. The more adventurous came armed with pictures of social problems such as drinking, smoking, obesity or drugs. Many of the Presentations were conducted almost exclusively in the Present Tense with only the occasional 'fui' or 'quisiera' to demonstrate variety. More than this is required to access the higher marks for Range of Language. There was also an issue with Pronunciation and Intonation this year and at times it was difficult to unravel what exactly the candidate was trying to say. Any breakdown of immediate communication through poor Pronunciation or Intonation colours the marks awarded for Accuracy.

### OPEN INTERACTION

These were the least popular task types and the best tasks focused on job interviews, asking for information in a tourist office or checking in to a hotel. Too many Open Interactions, as was evident last year, were no more than general conversations with no attempt to introduce an element of transaction or negotiation. A simple question and answer session is not an Open Interaction. It is essential to include a requirement to ask a question or questions in the stimulus given to the candidates and equally important to ensure that the candidate fulfils this requirement in the course of the test. All too often candidates were prompted to ask a question at the end of the Open Interaction, for instance by the teacher examiner asking '¿Tienes una pregunta para mí?' Questions asked as an afterthought are very artificial and do not form part of an authentic interaction. Unpredictability was also a problem at times, especially where the teacher examiner dealt one by one with the bullet points given to the candidate and asked nothing that had not been prepared. This too has an impact on the marks awarded for Content and Response.

## MARKING OF THE CANDIDATES' WORK

The marking by Centres has been improving year by year both in accuracy and in consistency. The majority of centres were accurate and consistent in their marking although some were over-generous in their marks awarded for Content and Response, especially when there was little evidence of spontaneity, and for Language, especially when the language used by the candidate was repetitive and unimaginative. At times where the Centres had more than one teacher examiner conducting the tests, it was clear that no internal standardisation had taken place and as a result the inaccurate and frequently over-generous marks awarded to some of the candidates reflected on the marks of all the candidates in the centre when adjustments had to be made. As with last year it was the absence of spontaneity and unpredictability that prevented otherwise capable candidates from achieving the highest marks for Content and Response. Sometimes the marks for language – Range and Accuracy – were too high, especially because of the lack of variety of tenses or vocabulary or because of poor pronunciation and intonation. The usual linguistic problems were once again in evidence – the confusion between 'fui' and 'fue' which leads to ambiguity, the misuse of 'gustar' as in 'mi gusto' and the pronunciation of consonants such as 'j', 'g', 'll' and 'q'. 'Hay' reappeared as food for horses rather than rendering the idea of 'there is'.

## GENERAL COMMENTS

While most teacher examiners should be congratulated for conducting the tests in a professional and sympathetic manner, giving their candidates every opportunity to demonstrate their competence with a variety of verb tenses and time frames and with rich and varied vocabulary, others tended to disadvantage their candidates by using almost exclusively the Present Tense or by asking closed questions and in some cases asking the same question that had already been answered by the candidate earlier in the test. The best teacher examiners did not rely on a bank of questions but instead listened carefully to what the candidates were saying and building on their responses so that the conversations and discussion became authentic and naturally spontaneous.

Administration by Centres was generally very competent and carefully carried out although there were examples of CDs that were unplayable, no variety of task types sent to the Moderator and at times the second task recording sent instead of the correct one. Fewer candidates this year seemed to make use of the CA2 forms and no notification to this effect was sent to the Moderator. The quality of recordings was generally good, although there are still problems with the positioning of the microphone so that it favours the candidates rather than the teacher examiner. Occasionally the Pearson EDI printout was not sent to the Moderator and had to be requested. A few centres failed to complete the CM2 forms by omitting the choice of task types and/or the component and total marks. Some centres also submitted CM2 forms without the student signatures. All of these problems led to the

Moderator having to contact the Centres directly and request the missing information.