

Examiners' Report Summer 2009

IGCSE

IGCSE Spanish(4440)

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4440/01 Listening Examiner's report

General comments

This summer's examination produced some very pleasing responses. Teachers are to be congratulated for all their hard work in preparing their candidates. Examiners were pleased that across the paper marks achieved suggested that candidates' had responded well to the topics and they were able to achieve a reasonable measure of success, even at the very lowest ability level. There were very few marks of zero on any of the questions and high marks were not uncommon.

Section A

Questions 1-5

The majority of candidates answered all these questions correctly although the items *granjero* (B) *cocinero* (G) proved problematic to some.

Questions 6-7

Whilst candidates were mainly successful in selecting the right answers to these two questions, occasionally in question 6 B *patatas* was selected instead of E *tenedor*.

Question 8

The mean mark for this question was 4.5 of the total six marks available. Candidates generally wrote the correct information in the correct spaces and in the correct language. Minor inaccuracies noted occurred in all sections where either misheard or misunderstood some of the information in the message.

Section B

Questions 9-14

Questions 9 - 11 in part A were more successfully answered than questions 12 - 14 part B. Occasionally *sesenta* was confused with *setenta* in Q 11. In part B whilst candidates demonstrated their ability to write their responses in the target language, they did not always read the questions carefully enough and as a consequence rendered some of their responses incorrect. For example, the references to *para los alumnos* and *la comunidad local* in Qs 12 and 13.

Question 15

On the whole candidates were more successful when identifying the problems than the solutions. Whilst the relevant text had clearly been understood, the lack of a connecting verb or supporting statement meant that answers given were not communicated well enough to score a point. For example in Q15 *plantas y árboles* without *(hace falta) (cultivar) más* and Q 16 *policías* without *(se necesita) más*. More practice with note taking World clearly be advised.

4440/02 Reading and writing Examiner's report

Candidates were drawn from a wider range of ability than has been the case in previous sessions as more and more Centres enter students who are not native speakers (although a substantial majority of the entry does still have Spanish as a first language). Candidates performed accordingly, with a wide distribution of marks and competence in evidence which were tested by differentiated areas of the examination paper.

Rubrics and attention to conventions were followed appropriately. Candidates were able to complete the paper in the time allocated and did not omit sections or leave questions unfinished.

Section A

Part One

Question 1

Candidates generally scored full marks on this section; there was no evident pattern of error in the very few mistakes which did arise.

Question 2

The majority of candidates performed well on this question; some, however, did not recognise the verb 'viaja'.

Question 3

This was a good discriminating question as higher ability candidates and native speakers performed better than others. Some candidates did not make the connection between taking brothers and sisters to school with 'cuidar a los pequeños' or between 'es más rápido' and 'ahorrar tiempo'.

Section A

Part Two

Question 4

Native speaker and higher ability candidates tended to write more words than the amount suggested, but as the quality of language was so high this did not adversely affect their marks. Candidates who were not native speakers answered adequately at this level with shorter passages and more mistakes in basic constructions, although the question was generally tackled well.

Section B

Part One

Question 5

Candidates demonstrated a full range of comprehension of this question. Several did not make the link between changing one's mind and being 'indecisa' and some assumed that balancing work and family life would cause tension without actually reading carefully that Blas thought this was a positive challenge.

Section B

Part Two

Question 6

Many candidates performed well on this question, demonstrating a good command of language and idiomatic expression. Some candidates failed to score highly on the use of language mark allocation as they made little or no attempt to express their answers in their own words and lifted blocks of the original text which include the correct answer but gave no indication of in-depth understanding.

Section C

Question 7

Candidates scored across the full range of marks in the essay writing part of the paper and some produced fluent, imaginative and interesting work which met the criteria and made good use of appropriate idioms. Some candidates wrote more than was suggested for the total number of words but this was not generally detrimental to their marks due to their overall competency as native speakers or competent linguists at this level. Less able candidates made frequent and basic errors and the very weakest mixed English with their very limited Spanish which rendered the overall version incomprehensible in places. Candidates had generally been well prepared for this section of the paper however.

Option (a) was the most popular choice, although the other two possibilities attracted a good percentage of writers. Some candidates who opted for (b) did not clearly explain how their town had changed. A small minority of candidates lost marks by not addressing *all* the points asked for in the question prompts. Choice (c) caused some difficulties for candidates who could not properly manipulate the imperfect and preterit tenses.

4440/03 Speaking Examiner's report

General Comments

There were 63 candidates chose to take the optional IGCSE Paper 3 Speaking Test this summer. The standard of the entries was high and centres are to be congratulated on having prepared their candidates thoroughly for the examination.

The speaking tests were conducted efficiently and in most cases strictly in accordance with the requirements of the Specification, although in a few cases it would be advisable to become fully conversant with the Specification before conducting the exams. It is important that candidates should select a picture or a photograph that means something to them and in which they have an interest. They will talk more passionately and fluently about something that holds a personal meaning for them. Equally, Teacher Examiners should wherever possible allow the candidates to take the initiative and talk freely about their chosen subject. Ideally about 80% of the oral exam should be dominated by the candidate and the Teacher Examiner's role should be restricted to asking the open questions that prompt the student to provide the information. Every opportunity should be given to the candidates to demonstrate their ability over a wide range of structures, vocabulary and tenses in all three sections of the exam and care should be taken to time the conversations as equally as possible since all three of the conversations are marked separately.

Candidates were put at their ease, had prepared well the pictures and photographs that were used for Section A and responded readily to the unprepared topics in Sections B and C. The recordings were generally clear and the microphones had been positioned to the advantage of the candidates. However in one case there were ten minutes of silence during which the candidate had failed to record; it is therefore important that centres should check the recordings before submitting them. Most of the candidates responded spontaneously, fluently and in detail, frequently giving their opinions and justifying them. It was pleasing to find that many candidates took the initiative and volunteered information without waiting to be asked.

The level of accuracy in language was impressive and the teachers conducting the exams gave the students every opportunity to demonstrate their abilities over a wide range of vocabulary, tenses and structures. The timings of the tests were accurate and the teacher examiners are generally to be congratulated on their thorough, efficient administration.

Statistics

IGCSE Spanish 4440

Grade	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Lowest mark for award of subject grade (all candidates)	100	85	76	67	59	49	39	30	21
Lowest mark for award of grade for Paper 3, Speaking (optional)	60	51	45	39	33	26	19	13	7

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