

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback Summer 2010

IGCSE

IGCSE Spanish (4440/02)
Unit 2: Reading & Writing

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Paper 2: Reading and Writing (4440/02)

Performance in this paper was in general very good: a high proportion of candidates showed very good linguistic knowledge and skill; only a handful of less able candidates were entered. Candidates were in general well prepared in reading and writing skills, with the exception of Question 6, where too many candidates relied on the language of the reading passage when answering.

Question 1

Performance was very good overall, as expected in this question, which required candidates to match jobs with images of people carrying out those jobs. All candidates, however, had the occasional problem with the recognition of certain jobs, notably *dependiente*.

Question 2

All candidates, except the least able, performed very well.

Question 3

It required the matching of a series of utterances about television with short statements that were associated with them. The most able candidates usually scored full marks but some candidates tended to be tripped up by one or two of statements, failing in particular to connect in (i) *la publicidad* with utterance F concerning *anuncios* and in (ii) *quitar el estrés* with television being a *modo de relajarme* (utterance C).

Question 4

The short writing task is linked to the topic of Question 3 (in this case “television”) and it was anticipated that candidates might re-use the ideas, and some of the language, that they had encountered in Question 3. Some straight lifting of the language of Question 3 did take place, but for the most part candidates used their own ideas and language. Candidates were well-prepared for this type of task: in general they responded directly to the three points they had to address; occasionally they digressed or introduced irrelevance but this was not very widespread.

Question 5

It addressed the topic of celebrating birthdays and was of the same type as Question 3, but the utterances were more challenging. As a result, candidates of average ability fared less well than in Question 3, frequently scoring 3 or less out of 5. They found (b), (c) and (d) the most demanding: in (b) they did not connect *comprar* with *regalos*; in (c) they often failed to decipher which young person had changed his/her mind; in (d) the word *ambiente* proved difficult to associate with Asunción’s desire to create a pleasing look and atmosphere in her house.

Question 6

This question targeted the highest grades. Candidates had to answer a series of questions on Spanish on a reading text about a new mode of transport, the electric bicycle. The passage was well understood and the questions enabled candidates to show their understanding. No single question caused widespread problems: (a), with two sub-questions, was well answered by all but the least able candidates; (b) was occasionally misunderstood because candidates did not pick up the reason for the attractiveness of these bicycles to the disabled (that they do not have to expend any physical effort when riding); in (c), when asked *how* the batteries of the bicycles were charged, candidates occasionally missed a detail relating to this process; in (d), again, candidates sometimes missed one of the reasons for the ease of transport of these bicycles (they are light and portable).

This question is marked out of 10 for the content of the answers and out of 5 for language. Disappointingly, many competent candidates took the route of repeating the language of the passage, with only a minimal attempt to use their own Spanish. In these cases candidates rarely scored more than 3 out of 5 for language, since it was difficult to assess their linguistic quality. A number of candidates did make the effort to use their own language, for which they were rewarded.

Question 7

There were three alternative writing tasks, each of which was designed to enable candidates to write at length (150 words) about a topic, in response to 4 bullet points. The assessment of these tasks is by outcome, and candidates tended to score in line with their linguistic ability. To score the maximum mark of 15 candidates have to:

- (a) write a coherent piece, addressing all four bullet points fully and relevantly, according to the task;
- (b) manipulate the structures of Spanish competently, using a range of tenses, and vocabulary appropriate to the task;
- (c) ensure that their language is accurate throughout; it does not need to be flawless, but they lose credit if they make major errors.

In task (a) concerning a trip made in relation to winning a prize, candidates lost marks if they failed to say in any detail why they liked the place they visited

Task (b) was well done for the most part. Where candidates neglected to write at any length about the penfriend's family they lost credit.

In task (c) the accounts of the book read by candidates were often entertaining and showed a real appreciation of the chosen book. Marks were lost in this question when candidates failed to state the *tema* of the book or to give a convincing opinion about it.

Grade Boundaries

Grade	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Subject mark	100	85	76	67	59	49	39	30	21

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