

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

International GCSE Spanish (4SP0)
Paper 2

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Summer 2013

Publications Code UG036925

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International GCSE Spanish

Paper 2 Reading and Writing

Introduction

This paper contains reading texts of varying lengths, requiring a range of answer styles, from a cross in a box to a full sentence in Spanish. There are two writing questions, one which relates to the reading text in question 3, so that students can take ideas from what they read. The second writing activity is longer and is based on 5 bullet points.

The questions are targeted at different levels of ability, from F and G grade at the beginning, to A and A* at the end. Students of all abilities were able to do a good job on the writing questions in section 7. The first option (about holidays) was far more popular than the other options. This may have been because the topic matter seemed the most familiar.

There are now many more entries from home centres for this qualification. The profile of the cohort has changed and the range of marks achieved has widened. There is still a preponderance of high achievers and many beautifully fluent and clear passages of Spanish written in the essay questions. It was a pity that many students made little attempt to use their own words in question 6 and so were unable to score much for Knowledge and Application of Language.

Question 1

The first question on the paper should be accessible to all students. This year's question was about items on a menu and almost every student scored maximum marks.

Question 2

Q2 was based on Pablo's blog about his father's daily routine. Students had to match events from the blog with a timetable. The skill here is to recognise synonyms. Most students scored maximum marks, although question 2(iii) was sometimes incorrectly answered. The timetable said "Lee las cartas", which should have been matched with "abre el correo" from the blog, but was matched with "Compra el periódico" by some students.

Question 3

Q3 again demanded the skill of identifying synonyms and was about television viewing habits. Students had to identify who said what. This question was not overly demanding and the majority of students scored full marks.

Question 4

This was a writing question where students were asked to say whether they like watching television and why or why not. It was important to remember that the 'why' part of the question needed to be answered.

Most students produced a good piece of writing, the only real problem was where students failed to say why, instead writing about their favourite programmes and forgetting to justify. This was a shame as these students were capped at 2 for Communication and Content. In spite of this, around 75% of students were able to achieve maximum marks.

In general there were some varied sentence structures but a common error was "la ver" / "lo ver" instead of "verla" or "verlo".

Exemplar 1

Section A
Part Two

4 ¿Te gusta ver la tele? ¿Por qué (no)?
Do you like watching television? Why / why not?

Escribe unas 50 palabras en español.
Write about 50 words in Spanish.

Me gusta ver la tele. Hay ~~dos~~ dos televisiones en mi casa
y ~~a~~ ^{normalmente} yo y mi familia ~~vimos~~ ^{vimos} los documentales de
animales. Sin embargo, prefiero ver las películas ~~f~~ de amor
porque son muy interesantes y románticas. Me gusta ver
la tele porque es muy relajante ~~pero~~ ^y ~~es~~ ^{es} a veces
es educativa. ~~Además~~, ~~es~~ Es muy ~~sociable~~. Sociable.

It is important to answer both halves of the question, ie state whether you like television or not and state why. In this example, the reasons come near the end, but they are completely convincing and this student scored maximum marks.

Exemplar 2

Section A

Part Two

- 4 ¿Te gusta ver la tele? ¿Por qué (no)?
Do you like watching television? Why / why not?

Escribe unas **50** palabras **en español**.
Write about **50** words **in Spanish**.

A mi no me gusta ver la tele, porque para mi las programas en la tele son muy aburridos, prefiero jugar juegos en mi ordenador o montar en mi bicicleta. Solo veo la tele cuando no tengo nada para hacer. Cuando veo la tele, solo veo a CSI, porque es la unica programa que me interesa.

A negative response to television can be equally relevant and well explained. This student gives lots of reasons why s/he does not like television.

Question 5

Q5 was a brochure about a holiday camp for young people. Students had to identify which paragraph contained the information given in the question. Most students scored close to maximum marks here.

Question 6

This question is a long reading text with questions and answers in Spanish. There are 10 marks available for comprehension and another 5 marks for the quality of the language used. The average score was around 11 marks.

The only way students can score maximum marks for the Knowledge and Application of Language is to use predominantly their own words. The language must also be varied and accurate. Students who stuck to the words from the text could not earn more than 2 marks for the Knowledge and Application of Language.

In question 6(a), some students did not score because they wrote that sport is good for your health (which is an answer from their general knowledge rather than from the text) or that it is a good hobby. Presumably this was a mistaken understanding of 'pasártelo bien'. Question 6(b) was answered well, as there were many possible acceptable responses.

Question 6(c)(i) and Q6(c)(ii) caused some confusion, with many students giving the answers the wrong way round. They could not be given credit for this. Question 6(d) was answered well by many, although there were a number of students who incorrectly answered that you might also feel nervous before competing, or who omitted the 'por primera vez' from either of the two correct answers (first day of school and first flight on a plane). It was pleasing to see answers where students had found an imaginative way to give this information without using the words from the text.

Question 6(e) was answered correctly most of the time, although a significant number of students mistook 'asistir' for 'to assist' and gave an answer that included 'ayudar'.

Exemplar 1

(d) ¿En qué otras situaciones puedes sentirte nervioso? (Da 2 ideas).

(2)

Me siento nerviosa cuando tengo exámenes, y también cuando voy al dentista.

This student has given a personal experience of being stressed, rather than information that was included in the text. This could not be rewarded.

Exemplar 2

(d) ¿En qué otras situaciones puedes sentirte nervioso? (Da 2 ideas).

(2)

Si antes antes de salir a competir es el mismo que si antes alguna persona al primer día

This student opted to 'lift' words from the text. This is acceptable, if the lifted words are relevant. Here the student has missed the important points that would have answered the question. There is nothing worth a mark here.

Exemplar 3

(d) ¿En qué otras situaciones puedes sentirte nervioso? (Da 2 ideas). (2)

Según el artículo:
Se puede sentirse estresado cuando va a un nuevo instituto, o ~~se~~ coge un avión cuando no ha cogido uno antes.

This student has given the correct information and has used original words to do so. This answer was given full marks.

Question 7(a)

This was the first option of three writing tasks and was chosen by the vast majority of students; perhaps because the subject matter was the most familiar. The essays produced often displayed a good range of tenses, opinions and descriptions. Some super expressions used were, "después de mis vacaciones puede que vaya", "al llegar me di cuenta de", "el viaje estuvo genial aunque me hubiese gustado". By contrast, the adjectives "fenomenal" and "interesante" were rather overused and there was a lot of confusion over the use of "ser" and "estar".

Some students were obviously unfamiliar with the geography of Spain as a number related how they went to the beach while staying in Madrid.

An average score of just over 13 out of 15 was achieved and nearly 50% of students were awarded maximum marks for this essay.

Exemplar 1

~~Mi actividad favorita~~ Pasamos cinco días viviendo en una comunidad muy aislada en las orillas del lago Titicaca, y ayudamos a los habitantes instalar nuevos aseos públicos, así que en el futuro la salud de toda la aldea mejorará puesto que el suministro de agua potable no será contaminado. ^{todas las tardes} Jugaba con los niños del pueblo; y los dimos regalos pequeños como caramelos. Opino que es importante que los jóvenes visiten países lejanos, porque pueden aprender sobre culturas interesantes. Además, me chiflaba los mercados en Cusco - ~~ahí~~ allí se puede encontrar muchas gangas - ¡nunca he visto ropa tan barata! ^{me} ^{compra} ~~preferido~~ gustaba comprar de todo!

In this example, the student scores maximum marks for both Communication and Content and Knowledge and Application of Language. There are lots of ideas given about one-off activities and activities done every day. This gave the student the opportunity to use both the preterite and the imperfect. This student has also used the future, the present subjunctive and a complex compound tense. There are also excellent vocabulary items like "gargas".

Exemplar 2

Lo que me gustó más era cuando hicimos el piragüismo en el mar. ¡Que divertido! Era muy emocionante. Mis padres no lo gustó mucho. Cuando ~~tena~~ sea mayor, me gustaría visitar Italia con mis amigos, porque pienso que sería muy divertido. Si vamos, visitaremos muchos ^{lugares} ~~países~~ famosos y viajaremos por el país. Me gustaría alquilar un moto, - pienso que será muy emocionante.

This student has also taken the opportunity to include a range of tenses in this imaginative paragraph about what was liked the most and where he/she will go in the future.

The language is not flawless, but the meaning is completely clear and most structures are handled well. This student gained full marks.

Question 7(b)

The second of the essay options was about shopping. This was much less popular than the previous question, although those who did select it scored, on average, slightly higher than those writing about holidays. The average mark was just over 13.5 and over 50% of students who opted for this essay gained maximum marks.

As with the previous option, there were some good examples of accurate, imaginative writing, but the spelling of past tense verbs was patchy.

Question 7(c)

The final essay option was about earning money from a job. This essay only attracted 80 students and was, by far, the least popular option.

The scores achieved were, however, better than on the other two essays. The average mark awarded was a shade under 14 and 65% of students who attempted this essay gained full marks.

The third bullet point was the weakest, on this essay. Students sometimes interpreted "cómo encontraste el trabajo" as an invitation to give an opinion on the job, rather than explain how they had found out about the job. This

interpretation of the bullet point was accepted as equally valid, however, it meant that some students missed the opportunity to write much in the past.

Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, students are offered the following advice:

- Make sure that all parts of a question are addressed
- Where there is an opportunity to gain additional marks for the language you use, try to use your own words
- If you copy material from the text, make sure it gives the information that is needed
- Remember that in a text requiring written answers, the information needed for each question will be in the right order in the text (eg the answer for Q2 will be between the answer for Q1 and the answer for Q3)
- In writing exercises, try to include verbs in the past, present and future

Grade Boundaries

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