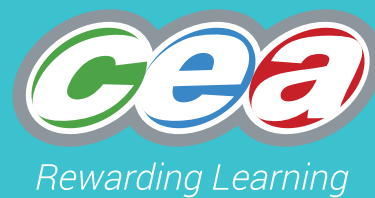


GCSE



Chief Examiner's Report
Spanish

Summer Series 2018



Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of CCEA's General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in Spanish for this series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's microsite on our website at www.ccea.org.uk.

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GCSE SPANISH

Chief Examiner's Report

Assessment Unit 3

Reading

Foundation Tier

About 100 candidates opted to do the Foundation Reading test. Almost all scored at least half marks out of 60 with a significant number in the 40's and 50's.

- Q1–4** These early questions posed few problems and most candidates scored high marks. Even though Question 2 was also in the Higher Level paper, a large majority of candidates scored at least 1 or 2 out of 2. In Question 3(a), a number of candidates wrote “changing rooms” or “classes” for “**servicio de comedor**”.
- Q5** This was quite well done although in Question 5 (c), a large number incorrectly ticked option B (“won her first medal”) instead of A.
- Q6** Although candidates did well in this question, answers to Question 6 (a) (“**doscientos mil**”) were very varied and often incorrect e.g. “200 million” or just “200”.
- Q7** This question was a translation exercise with four sentences and worth a total of 8 marks. This is a new aspect of the paper and, although many did not have problems, a number found this difficult and even failed to write anything in response to some of the sentences.
- (a)** “**mi deporte preferido**” was conveyed in a range of ways e.g. “my preferred sport”, “the sport that I prefer”, both of which were acceptable.
- (b)** “**Mis hermanos son miembros de un equipo de voleibol**”. Although the emphasis in this part of the paper is communication, the version given should be true to the original sentence. Many simply ignored the words “**son**”, “**miembros**” or “**equipo**” and simply wrote “My brothers play volleyball.”
- (c)** “**Ganaron un partido**” proved to be too difficult for many. A large number were unaware that the verb was in the past tense and, of those who did recognise this, several wrote “I won” instead of “they won”. A number thought that “**Ganaron**” was a person and that the sentence was referring to what he did or was going to do e.g. “Ganaron is having a party on Saturday”.
- (d)** A number did not know the meaning of “**footing**” and thought it referred to football or walking. A majority did not realise that “**Vamos a hacer footing**” referred to a future event as did “**este fin de semana**”.
- Q9–12** This section of the paper contained questions and answers in Spanish. The answers were entirely non-verbal but the marks were very variable. In many cases a link had to be made between phrases or words in order to answer the question correctly. In Question 9 (b) this proved a little more difficult as the text referred to “**un descuento**” and only some recognised that this meant the same as “**pagas menos dinero**”. Similarly, in Question 11 (e) a number did not make the connection between “**a pie**” and “**andando**”. In the final question, which was worth 8 marks, most scored at least half marks.

Assessment Unit 3

Reading

Higher Tier

Around 40 – 50 students entered the Reading test at Higher Level. The marks were very varied, ranging from 11/60 to 58/60.

- Q1–2** These were well answered. Question 1 was also the second question on the Foundation paper.
- Q3** In Question 3 (a) which referred to **“entrevistas de trabajo”** a majority omitted any reference to interviews and simply wrote “at work”. A number of important words in the text were cognates e.g. **“pureza”, “respeto”, “seriedad”** which proved helpful.
- Q4** This question also was on the Foundation paper and, like their Foundation Level counterparts, many candidates incorrectly chose option B for Question 4 (c) instead of A.
- Q5** This proved a little more difficult for candidates. In Question 5 (a) many were able to provide correct versions of **“un buen sueldo”** but could not supply any further information to gain more marks for the question. In Question 5 (b), **“hambre”** and **“guerra”** were known only by a minority of candidates.
- Q6** In Question 6 (a) **“el siglo diecinueve”** posed problems for candidates and several thought it referred to the 19th of the month. Most fared reasonably well in Questions (b) and (c) but surprisingly few were able to give a correct version of **“muchas habitaciones libres”** in relation to Question 6 (d).
- Q8** This was the translation question which was different from the one included in the Foundation paper.
- (a) This sentence was generally translated accurately although a number did not know the meaning of **“me llevo bien con”**.
- (b) An encouragingly high number of candidates recognised **“fuimos”** and **“vimos”** as being in the preterite although some translated them as “I went” and “I saw”.
- (c) Although the first part of this sentence proved to be straightforward, many were confused by the phrase **“había poca gente allí”**. Thus, it was not uncommon to see versions such as “people talked everywhere”, it was very gentle” and “there were a lot of people there”.
- (d) The verb **“iremos”** proved difficult for many as they did not identify either the correct person or tense of the verb.
- Q9 – 12** In this section all the questions and answers were in Spanish and candidates scored reasonably well. In Question 12, a full sentence or phrase was required in Spanish in order to answer the question. However, this proved to be relatively straightforward. A careful reading of the question guided the student to the relevant part of the text. In most cases, candidates were able to score at least half marks or more in this final question.

Assessment Unit 4

Writing

Foundation Tier

Approximately 40 – 50 students did the Writing test at Foundation level. A few gained just under half marks but a majority scored over half. Overall, marks ranged from 23/60 to 55/60.

- Q1** The first question involved listing words in Spanish according to the context given. The emphasis in this exercise was firmly on achieving communication. A vast majority of candidates scored at least 6 or 7 out of 10. Those who gained lower marks either failed to write five words as the question required or were guilty of serious misspelling e.g. **“fistido”** (for “vestido”), **“zapallas”** (for “zapatillas”).
- Q2** In this question, students had to write a short sentence in response to the prompt given. Even though only a brief sentence was required to successfully convey the information needed, the expectation was that each phrase would contain a verb. However, this was not always the case. Some simply wrote **“mi casa en el campo”** when referring to where their house was situated. Some were confused with Question 2 (d) and wrote about what they do as soon as they get up. A simple phrase using the first person of the verb in the present tense proved beyond the reach of some e.g. **“me levanta seis y medio”**, **“mi viajar es autobus.”**
- Q3** This was a translation exercise which contained five sentences to be translated from English into Spanish. Candidates should acknowledge that although this is now an obligatory part of the Writing examination, translation is a separate and distinctive skill which involves a good knowledge of basic grammar and a high level of accuracy and precision. Versions of the original which are merely approximate will not receive high marks.
- In Question 3 (a) “I like to go” was frequently translated as **“Me gusta voy”** or **“Me gusta salgo”**. Many struggled to translate the verb “we go” in Question 3 (b) and it was not unusual to see versions such as **“mi salgo”**, **“fuimos”** or **“voy”**. Similarly, a great many could not translate “there are” and there were several who wrote **“hice”**, **“tiene”**, **“está”** or **“son”**. Manipulation of verbs again proved to be a stumbling block in Question 3 (d) in relation to the phrase “they are dear”. Among the versions given there were phrases such as **“están caro”**, **“tienes muy caro”**, **“van a expensivo”** and **“es caro”**. In Question 3 (e) few were able to correctly form the preterite of “comer” and a number struggled to translate “last Saturday”.
- Q4** In the extended writing question, the most popular topics were those in Contexts 1 and 2 (family and holidays). The marks for Communication were based on the candidates’ responses to all five bullet points in an essay of about 80 – 100 words. The best answers provided an accurate, clear, balanced and well organised response to all five points. There were a number of excellently written, detailed answers which achieved very high marks. Some bullet points proved to be more straightforward than others. A description of one’s family or what is done on holiday usually received a detailed response. However, reference to how you get on with a family member was more difficult and many were unable to achieve this with a degree of clarity. e.g. **“Tengo relación problemas con mi hermano”**. Also, those bullet points which required reference to the past or future were beyond the ability of several candidates. In relation to a family outing in the past, one candidate wrote **“Los fin de semana mi y mi familia es nadé”**. When mentioning what you are going to do this weekend, versions given included **“En la semana voy a natación”**, **“voy a veo una película”** or **“mi familia ciclismo.”**

In general, many candidates at this level found it difficult to manipulate verbs even when using the present tense. Examples of this included **“mi madre veo la tele”**, and **“mi hermano y hermana juego al fútbol”**. In a number of cases, instead of forming the verb in the present tense the infinitive was used. Other frequent grammatical errors included those associated with **“gustar”** and **“encantar”** which are, admittedly, complicated to use and adjectival agreement, for example, in relation to other family members.

Assessment Unit 4 Writing

Higher Tier

Between 30 and 40 candidates entered the Writing examination at Higher level. Most did reasonably well although there were only a few who received high marks.

- Q1** This question was also on the Foundation paper and consisted of five short sentences to be written in response to the prompts given. The amount of information needed in order to do this was relatively small and, in general, most candidates found the question very accessible.
- Q2** This was a similar style of question to the previous one and, although again only short sentences were required, it proved to be a little more difficult. In a number of cases, candidates were unable to convey what they normally do in their classes at school. Some responses tended to be very repetitive while an insufficient knowledge of grammar and vocabulary resulted in a lack of clarity. Examples of this included **“escribimos notes en clase”** and **“no hacemos trabajar en la clase”**. Questions 2 (d) and (e) required the use of the preterite and this was beyond many of the candidates. Several produced confused answers mixing the past, present and future tenses e.g. **“jugará al fútbol paseo de semana”**, **“mi tocó el violin”**.
- Q3** This was a translation exercise which now forms a compulsory part of the Writing examination. As such, it requires a broad knowledge of grammar in order to faithfully convey the meaning of the original English sentence. In Question 3 (a) “I like to go” was sometimes translated as **“me gusta voy”** and most candidates struggled to give an accurate version of “on Friday nights”, writing phrases such as **“son viernes a la noche”** or **“a noche de viernes”**. An inability to correctly manipulate the verb “ir” caused problems in translating “My friends and I go” and it was not uncommon to see versions such as **“mis amigos y yo ir”** or **“mis amigos y yo voy”**. Question 3 (c) included two verbs in the preterite and most candidates could only manage to give one e.g. **“Fui a Belfast y veo una película”**. In Question 3 (d) few were able to correctly translate “I prefer to go” with many writing **“prefiero voy”** while in the same sentence several substituted “muy” for “más” when translating “faster”. In Question 3 (e) the phrase “I am going to go” elicited many confused responses e.g. **“soy iré al concierto”**, **“mi voy al concierto”**.
- Q4** In the extended writing question, the questions based on contexts 1 and 2 (Christmas and local area) were clearly the most popular. However, a majority found the coverage of all five points challenging although a few made a very good attempt to do so. In a large number of cases, paragraphs contained insufficient detail as well as a significant number of both major and minor grammar errors. Several candidates did not provide a balanced answer, providing one or two long paragraphs alongside other very short ones or else omitting bullet points altogether. A number did not develop the information given to any great degree and simply gave lists of places in their town or items eaten at Christmas. In many cases, language errors had a major effect on communication. Examples of this in relation to activities in a local town included **“suelo voy ver una película”**, **“tenemos a in piscina”**. Some resorted to English in order to convey certain points e.g. **“hay opportunities y employmente”**. The

need to use tenses other than the present proved to be a step too far for a number of candidates with several unable to successfully convey either e.g. **“los adultos bebaron”**, **“voy a busco trabajo”**. The use impersonal verbs such as “gustar” and “encantar” which can be complex, was also the cause of many errors.

Contact details

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