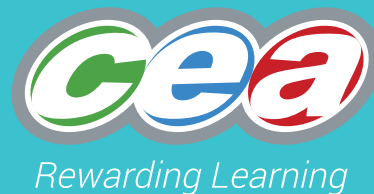


GCSE



Chief Examiner's Report
Spanish

Summer Series 2019



Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of this specification for the Summer 2019 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 section on our website at www.ccea.org.uk.

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GCSE SPANISH

Chief Examiner's Report

Assessment Unit 1 Listening

Foundation Tier

Overview

This was the first year of the new specification for GCSE Listening and the candidates faced a new-style question paper for the first time. Despite having the same amount of time there are now 12 questions worth 60 marks in total and in Section B the rubric, questions and answers are all in Spanish.

Another feature of this new examination is that there are more questions that require a free-hand response and are therefore more exacting. I would encourage teachers to adapt past papers to reflect this style.

All of the above makes for a more challenging test but I am pleased to say that the vast majority of candidates scored well.

Section A

- Q2** This free hand question about TV was not well done and only some knew **“guerra”** and **“telediario”**.
- Q3** This was well done in parts but only a few knew **“alegre”** and **“gemelos”**.
- Q4** This question dealt with the basic vocabulary of the school bag and many scored full marks here.
- Q5** Despite being a free-hand response answer, this question was done well by many with only a few not knowing **“enfermo”** and **“dormir”**.
- Q6-7** These were done very well by almost all the candidates apart from the preposition in **7(e) “enfrente de”** and the verb in **7(g) “no se abre”**.
- Q8** This free-hand response question about school was done very well by the vast majority of candidates.

Section B

- Q9-12** All of these Target Language questions were multiple choice and therefore candidates performed well given that there were supported answers.

Higher Tier

Overview

The same comments made about the new specification also apply to the Higher Tier paper. There is the same amount of time given but there are now 12 questions worth 60 marks with Section B all in the Target Language.

Also, half of the marks are given for free-hand response answers and again, I would encourage teachers to adapt past papers to reflect this change.

The average mark on this Higher Tier paper rose by 6 which was very pleasing to see and would suggest that the candidates performed better in this new style paper.

Section A

- Q1** This question, common with the Foundation paper, reflected that Higher candidates were more familiar with TV vocabulary.
- Q2-3** These multiple-choice questions were very well done by almost all the candidates.
- Q4** This question, common with the Foundation paper, was well done by most candidates despite requiring a free-hand response.
- Q5-6** Both these questions were well done by most candidates but a few did not recognise “**desarrollo**” and “**naturaleza primaveral**”.
- Q7** This question, common with the Foundation paper, was very well done by all the candidates.
- Q8** This free-hand response question was well done by most but some candidates didn’t pick up on the future tense in **(a)** and a few not recognising “**ninguno de sus amigos**”, “**aislada**” and “**va despacio**”.

Section B

- Q9-11** These Target Language questions were given support in the form of choosing words from a box or multiple-choice and were therefore well done by the vast majority of candidates.

- Q12** This was a new style question in which the candidate had to write a free-hand response in Spanish, reflecting the last question in the specimen papers.

Despite looking like a daunting prospect, most candidates scored 3 out of 6 on this question with almost all knowing “**aburrido**” and “**Italia**”.

Assessment Unit 2 Speaking

Overview

This was the first year of the new specification for GCSE Speaking and the candidates faced an end of year examination, which included unseen role-plays. This made for a much more daunting prospect, but I am pleased to say that the average score was nearly the same as under Controlled Assessment, which is testament to the hard work of both teachers and candidates alike.

This year's Speaking Test also saw a return to external marking and there was a big team of examiners who took on the task. They marked with enthusiasm and professionalism and I thank them for their dedication.

Teachers conducting the test were, on the whole, upbeat, reassuring and supportive to their students, which made the whole test less daunting for all concerned. They pitched questions at the correct level, stretching the more able and providing scaffolding for the weaker students. Most teachers kept to the 4 minute time limit for each conversation.

Role-plays

Candidates are advised to read the tasks thoroughly, looking out for plurals, tenses and two part tasks i.e. "Say why you like/dislike"

Teachers are also encouraged to read over their 'part' because **if a teacher deviates from the script or prompts their candidate in any way zero marks will be awarded for that task.**

Teachers are also encouraged to state clearly the **context, role-play session and role-play letter** before beginning the tasks, to facilitate examiners in their marking.

Pre-release conversation 1

Teachers structured questions for this topic very well, with many candidates showing off an impressive variety of structures, time frames, opinions and points of view.

This topic also suited the less able candidates as they were able to say a lot about themselves and their families, however, a few teachers had the same set of questions for every student which may facilitate the brightest students but can disadvantage weaker students. This approach to questions is to be discouraged.

Conversation 2

This was done very well by almost all the candidates and some pupils even seemed to perform better than in the first conversation. It is to be noted here that only one bullet point from the context should be used, as some teachers asked questions covering the whole context.

Asking questions

Most candidates asked their teacher **one** question in **each** conversation but there were many who did not. Some asked two questions in one conversation but then didn't ask any in the next conversation. Some didn't ask any questions at all.

It was hard for the teacher to manage this, as the onus was on the student to remember to ask the questions.

In conclusion, it was evident that all centres have embraced the new structure of the GCSE Speaking Test and the examiners made many favorable comments about the conduct of the tests and the high performance of the candidates.

Assessment Unit 3 Reading

Foundation Tier

Overview

This year's paper had a slightly different format to that of previous years but, in general, candidates found the paper very accessible with a great many scoring at least 40 out of 60 marks.

- Q1** In Part (a) of this question a number of candidates failed to score a mark as they simply wrote **"Spain"** instead of **"the east of Spain"**.
- Q2** Surprisingly, **"hacer su cama"** was not well known by a number of candidates and **"ocuparse de"** was variously translated as **"entertain"**, **"help"** etc.
- Q3-5** These questions were very well answered and a majority of candidates scored high marks in all three.
- Q6** Most candidates answered this question very well although in 6(e), many opted for **"sister"** instead of **"wife"**.
- Q7** This question was a new addition to the Reading paper consisting of four sentences in Spanish to be translated into English. It therefore proved to be more demanding and very few candidates scored full marks. In 7(a) many were not familiar with **"Ayudo"**. Question 7(b) was generally well done but 7(c) and (d) proved to be the most difficult sentences to translate. Candidates should be aware that a past or future tense will be included at some point in the translation question. Greater precision is necessary when translating these as a failure to recognize the person or tense of the verb will result in marks being lost. A range of versions of **"recibí"** was evident and many confused **"libras"** with **"libros"**. A large number of candidates did not recognize that **"voy a comprar"** was referring to the future.
- Q8** This was well done, although for many, the most difficult part of the question was the reference to **"siete mil alumnos"**, which many incorrectly translated as **"seven"**, **"seventy"** or **"seven hundred"**.
- Q9-12** This section of the paper consisted of Target Language questions and, as is often the case, these proved to be more demanding. In general, candidates coped well with Questions 9 and 10. However, the last two questions on the paper were the ones in which marks were lowest. They were both gap-fill questions which candidates traditionally find difficult although, in a number of cases, the low mark was simply due to the fact that candidates failed to fill in the space with one of the options given.

Higher Tier

Overview

As at Foundation Level, candidates adapted well to the new format of the Higher Reading paper, scoring an average mark of 42 out of 60.

- Q1** This was generally answered correctly but in 1(b) many struggled with the verb **"ocuparse de"**, with many giving versions such as **"entertain"** or **"help"**.
- Q2** Most candidates scored at least 1 out of 2 in this question, although many were unsure of the meaning of **"falta de energía"**.

- Q3-6** All of these questions proved to be very accessible for a majority of candidates. Question 5 was a gap-fill exercise, although the options were given in English which gave additional support to the candidates. However, the words “**vecinos**” and “**respuesta**” sometimes proved problematic and candidates sometimes chose the wrong option from those provided.
- Q7** This proved to be a fairly challenging question due to the nature of the vocabulary being tested. While many correctly translated “**orfanato**”, few gave correct versions of “**cambiar**”, “**cárcel**” or “**desigualdad**”.
- Q8** This newly included translation question proved to be fairly demanding. Candidates should note that, in contrast to comprehension, translation requires greater precision and attention to detail. In 8(a) “**librería**” was translated as “**library**” while in 8(b) “**ahorro**” was confused with “**ahora**”. Questions 8(c) and (d) involved tenses other than the present and, often, these were not recognized. For example, although many knew that “**trabajé**” was associated with work, when they translated the word they did so giving the wrong tense or person. The first half of 8(d) posed few problems but a number of candidates thought that “**propia**” meant “**proper**” and therefore they incorrectly translated the second half of the sentence as “**I hope to get a proper job**”.
- Q9-12** In general, candidates scored well in this target language section of the paper. The one exception to this was Question 10, which was a gap-fill exercise. These are often problematic for candidates, as they not only require comprehension, but also grammatical awareness. By contrast, Question 12 was generally well done. Although answers had to be given in the Target Language, no manipulation of language was necessary and candidates were able to access marks by simply giving the correct information directly from the text.

Assessment Unit 4 Writing

Foundation Tier

Overview

Overall, candidates adapted well to this new style of written examination. The average mark this year was 42 out of 60. This was lower than the previous year, although this was due, in large measure, to the fact that, in previous years, Writing had been tested through Controlled Assessment.

- Q1** This was very successfully done and many candidates gained full marks. Candidates should note, however, that they cannot repeat words they have previously used, nor can they use the example given as an answer.
- Q2** This was also well done with a majority of candidates scoring half marks or more and very few failing to obtain at least 1 out of 2 in individual sections of the question. It must be emphasised that only a brief sentence is necessary to respond to each point. However, a sentence must include a verb and, in a number of cases, candidates' responses did not do so. Instead, some candidates wrote in note form. Thus, when asked to say what there is in their town, some simply wrote **“un estadio”** or a similar answer. Others wrote answers in the future or past tenses although they were not required to do so.
- Q3** Although, on the surface, translation into Spanish seems a daunting task, the standard of answers in this question was encouraging. Questions 3(a) and (b) were well done but in Parts (c) and (d) phrases such as **“makes a cake”** and **“I receive presents and money”** were often too challenging for many.
- Q4** In this question, most candidates favoured the tasks based on Contexts 1 or 3. Generally, most candidates scored well in this question and it was clear that work which had been done for the speaking test was equally useful in this part of the examination. Most candidates started their answers with lengthy, well written paragraphs, but were unable to maintain this level of work when addressing the other bullet points. In relation to this question, it would be useful for centres to note the following points:
- As a previous circular sent out to all centres has indicated, candidates only need to write 80–100 words overall. Candidates may, of course, write more and no one will be penalised for doing so.
 - The overall answer should be balanced so that a roughly similar amount is written in response to each bullet point. Given that there are 5 bullet points, this amounts to around 20 words per point on average which would be the equivalent of 2 or 3 sentences.
 - Candidates should ensure that the presentation of their answer is such that it is clear where paragraphs begin and end. It is also helpful if the order of the paragraphs follows the same order as the bullet points. It goes without saying that candidates will lose marks if they omit one or more bullet point.
 - Candidates should be aware that in each context, one bullet point will require future tense reference and another will require reference to the past. While some candidates were secure when using the present tense, they were unable to refer to either the past or future in Spanish with confidence. It would be advantageous to be prepared for these aspects of the question in order to access the higher mark bands for both Communication and Grammar and Structures.

Higher Tier

Overview

As at Foundation Level, those candidates who opted to do the Higher Level Writing Test achieved high marks. The average mark in the paper this year was a very encouraging 47 out of 60 which was only a little lower than the previous year when Writing was tested by Controlled Assessment.

- Q1** This proved to be a very straightforward question for Higher Level candidates with most achieving 8–10 marks out of 10. In accordance with the mark scheme, marks in this question were awarded for communication only, so the presence of minor errors did not prevent candidates from scoring 2 out of 2 for each individual part of the question.
- Q2** Parts (a) to (c) of this question proved to be very accessible. Although candidates could not copy the example word for word it was perfectly admissible to use **“se debe”**, **“debes”** or equivalent phrases in order to give health advice. However, 2(d) and (e) were a little more problematic, as many were unable to include a suitable future reference in their response. Several used the past or present tenses in this section of the question.
- Q3** This proved to be a fairly demanding question for some, as it involved translation into the Target Language. Nevertheless, many achieved high marks and were able to give precise and accurate Spanish versions of each of the five sentences. The most common errors in this question were the following:
- **“sud”** was often written instead of **“sur”**.
 - Candidates found it difficult to translate weather expressions **“Es sol y hace caliente”** is an example of some of the errors that were made here.
 - Few were able to able to translate **“we stayed”**.
 - Several candidates correctly wrote **“era cómodo”** but could not manage **“había”** for **“there was”**.
- Q4** The marks achieved in this question were encouragingly high. It should be pointed out that the work which candidates had done in preparation for the Speaking Test proved to be useful for this part of the examination. The task for Context 3 was clearly the most popular option followed by that for Context 2 while the Context 1 task proved the least popular. Some general guidelines which could be helpful to centres who are preparing their candidates for this question include the following:
- As a previous circular sent to all centres has indicated, candidates are to write 130-150 words overall in response to the five bullet points. Of course, no candidate will be penalised for writing more and a great many did so.
 - The response to each bullet point should be balanced so that a roughly equal amount is written in response to each point. Candidates are strongly discouraged from omitting one or more bullet points in their response, as they will lose marks as a result.
 - Candidates should ensure that it is clear when a paragraph begins and ends. In some cases, there was no paragraph division of any sort, which made the overall response difficult to mark.
 - It should be noted that the task for each context will include a bullet point requiring past reference and another requiring future reference. Some candidates lost marks, as they were unable to sustain the use of these tenses accurately.

Contact details

The following information provides contact details for key staff members:

- **Specification Support Officer: Joan Jennings**
(telephone: (028) 9026 1200, extension: 2552, email: jjennings@ccea.org.uk)
- **Officer with Subject Responsibility: Claire Fitzsimons**
(telephone: (028) 9026 1200, extension: 2325, email: cfitzsimons@ccea.org.uk)



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