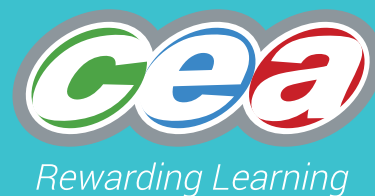


GCSE



# Chief Examiner's Report Spanish

Summer Series 2023





## Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of this specification for the Summer 2023 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](http://www.ccea.org.uk).



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# GCSE SPANISH

## Chief Examiner's Report

### Subject Overview

It was very encouraging to note that the number of candidates who entered the 2023 examination was broadly similar to that of the previous year. This year there was a slight increase in the number of students who entered components at Higher Tier in comparison to 2022. Another encouraging feature of this year's examination was the overall performance of the candidates which was very good in all components, with many examples of outstanding work. Credit for this is due to the dedication and perseverance of both the students and their teachers as they have prepared for the examinations in circumstances which have continued to make teaching and learning very difficult.

### Assessment Unit 1

### Listening

#### Foundation Tier

Overall, students scored highly in this paper showing that they prepared well for their exams, despite the disruption caused to their learning in previous years due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Teachers and students should be commended for how well they overcame the challenges and difficulties that they faced during the last 3 years. The majority of the questions were multiple choice and generally candidates found these questions more accessible than the free hand response ones. Candidates and teachers should ensure that they are familiar with exam rubrics as a minority of students continue to write the word instead of the letter when asked to write the correct letter.

Pleasingly, in the majority of cases, most candidates wrote clearly or crossed out an answer clearly if they wished to change their answer. However, in a minority of cases it was not obvious which box candidates wished to choose for their final answer. The 4 questions in Section B overlap with the Higher paper and although these questions did pose difficulty for some, most candidates coped well with them, especially Question 12.

#### Section A

- Q1** This question posed few difficulties.
- Q2** This question caused difficulties for many candidates with a lot of students not knowing the meaning of 'baja', 'delgada', 'generosa', 'simpático' and 'gracioso'. Some candidates understood the words but used them to describe the wrong people i.e. they used the aunt's adjectives to describe the uncle and vice versa.
- Q3** This question on chores did cause problems for some candidates as they were unsure of the meaning of 'preparo la cena' and 'limpio el cuarto de baño'.
- Q4** This question was answered very well, however, some candidates did not understand the words 'árboles' or 'polideportivo'.
- Q5** This question on body parts proved to be very challenging for the majority of candidates. The words 'la espalda', 'el dedo', 'la rodilla', 'la garganta' and 'los oídos' were not well known.
- Q6** Many candidates scored full marks here, however, the words 'la luz' and 'los periódicos' did pose some problems.

- Q7** Although this free hand response question did pose difficulties for some, a lot of candidates scored very highly here. However, the words 'mercado' and 'recuerdos' were not always well known and 'tomar el sol' also caused some confusion for candidates as they were unsure how to express this phrase in English.
- Q8** This question showed that in general, candidates had a good grasp of weather and hobbies, however, 'hace viento', 'llueve' and 'la pista de hielo' did cause difficulty for some.

## Section B

- Q9** This question which also required grammatical knowledge caused difficulty for many candidates and although some students chose the correct letters, they did not put them in the correct order which was required in Parts (b) and (c).
- (a) This was answered quite well.
- (b) This posed difficulty as a lot of candidates did not recognise that 'no es similar' corresponded with 'diferente'.
- (c) This was not answered well as many candidates did not connect 'diciembre y enero' with 'las Navidades' and 'miel' also posed problems for some.
- Q10** Most candidates scored at least one mark here, however, the words 'fuera' and 'inconveniente' did cause some difficulties.
- Q11** Mixed success here.
- (a) Many candidates chose the option 'caro' instead of 'barato'.
- (b) Some candidates did not choose the option 'comida' to link with 'bocadillos'.
- (c) Some candidates failed to make the connection between 'no funciona' and 'está roto'.
- Q12** This question was answered very well and many candidates scored full marks here.

## Higher Tier

The same comments made regarding candidates' preparation for the Foundation Listening exam also apply to the Higher paper. Overall, candidates performed well in the Higher paper, reflecting the consistent and determined efforts of all students and their teachers to overcome the challenges they have faced in recent years. Two out of the twelve questions required free hand responses and although students coped fairly well with these, some candidates did find Question 12 difficult. Nonetheless, it was pleasing to see that the vast majority of students attempted all questions.

- Q1** The majority of students coped well with this question although some candidates wrote the answers in the wrong order.
- Q2-4** These questions were very well answered.
- Q5** Few candidates scored full marks here and many had difficulties with the following sports and time phrases: 'el footing', 'la vela', 'el piragüismo', 'de lunes a viernes' and 'en verano'.
- Q6** Parts (a) and (b) were answered very well, however, the words 'caramelos' and 'helado' were not always well known in answer Part (c).
- Q7** This question was well answered but some candidates only ticked one box instead of two for answer Part (c).



- Q8** Many candidates had trouble with this question and students should be reminded to read the text carefully so that their chosen answer makes sense in English.
- (a) A lot of students put their answers in the wrong order.
  - (b) Many candidates chose 'car' or 'taxi' for 'metro'.
  - (c) Many candidates put their answers in the wrong order or chose 'dancers' instead of 'musical acts' or 'spectators'.
- Q9** In general, this two-part question was answered well, although the words 'oscura', 'ordenada' and 'corazón' were not always understood.
- Q10** Students coped well with this free hand response question but the words 'edificios', 'puente' and 'lluvioso' were not well known.
- Q11** This question was answered well, however, many candidates failed to recognise 'el Derecho' and 'abrir su propio negocio'.
- Q12** Many candidates scored at least one out of six marks in this free hand response question on mobile phones.
- (a) Very few candidates gained a mark here as they did not include all the required information - '12 years old or less'.
  - (b) 'Pueden controlar mejor a su hijo' caused some difficulty as many students said that parents could control what their children watched or did on their phones.
  - (c) The words 'agenda' and 'despertador' were not well known.
  - (d) The phrases 'no la han mejorado' and 'la comunicación cara a cara' were misinterpreted by some candidates.

## Assessment Unit 2 Speaking

Due to the COVID pandemic, this unit has not been compulsory for all students since 2019 and examiners found that there was a greater range of abilities on show in comparison to last year when this unit was optional. Having stated that, the standard was very good overall and this is a credit to both teachers and students alike.

Teachers conducting the tests were, on the whole, very supportive, engaged and encouraging towards their students which made the whole test less daunting for all the candidates. Mostly, they pitched questions at the correct level, stretching the more able and providing scaffolding for the weaker students. It was a pleasure to hear so many candidates reach their full potential in this unit. The Role-plays and conversations gave candidates the opportunity to show off their knowledge and perform to the best of their ability. The examination catered well for students of differing abilities.

The location of the speaking tests is still of paramount importance for both the student and the examiner. It should be a quiet and calming environment for the student devoid of extraneous noises and also for the examiner who is trying to listen carefully to what the candidate is saying. Problems still exist in this area and must be addressed by schools as a matter of urgency before the next series of examinations.

## Role-plays

The Role-plays this year were accessible and positive and managed very well by the vast majority of candidates. Almost all candidates scored some marks in the Role-plays by saying even a minimal amount. All candidates should be encouraged to say something as they may gain one mark.

Role-plays are the most challenging section of the speaking test with question forms remaining the most difficult element. Also, where the response requires a tense, the candidate needs to think carefully how to approach these tasks.

Candidates are advised to read the tasks thoroughly, looking out for plurals, tenses and two-part tasks i.e. 'Say why you like/dislike ....'. If a candidate has to start a Role-play, they must remember to provide all the information on their card in Task 1.

Teachers are also encouraged to read over their 'part' because if a teacher deviates from the script or prompts their candidate in any way, no marks will be awarded for that task.

The examiners were delighted that the vast majority of teachers introduced the Role-plays by stating clearly the context, role-play session and role-play letter before beginning the tasks and this facilitated the examiners greatly in their marking.

## Pre-release conversation 1

This year's pre-release topic was wide in scope taking in all the topic of leisure and also daily routine. This gave candidates plenty of range to give detailed accounts of their leisure activities and describe their typical daily routine. Teachers ensured candidates were able to access top bands by introducing different ideas and encouraging candidates to use complex language and tenses.

Candidates, for the most part, offered lengthy answers, using a wide variety of vocabulary, complex structures and tenses.

It is disappointing that a few teachers are still conducting tests which last well in excess of 4 minutes. This does not favour the candidate or the examiner and most candidates begin to flag and make more mistakes the longer the test lasts. It would be appreciated by all if the length of the tests did not exceed the time limit stated in CCEA's guidance to centres.

## Conversation 2

Most centres chose to ask questions on the topics of 'My local area, Travel and tourism or My studies and school life' dependent on what context the candidates chose for their Role-play. These topics were handled very well by most of the candidates as they are familiar topics. 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.

In conclusion, it was evident that, despite disruption to learning from the COVID pandemic, teachers and candidates have risen to the challenge to sit a speaking test examination this year and have triumphed in providing a high standard overall. That is a massive achievement for all concerned!

## Assessment Unit 3

## Reading

### Foundation Tier

There was a wide range of marks in this examination, however, teachers are to be commended for their work with candidates for continuing to encourage them to read, understand and to respond to a range of narrative styles across the various topics of the specification. Candidates responded well to the variety of question types, with the vast majority of candidates attempting to answer all questions. For the 2023 examination, as was the case for 2022, the wave of varied incline had been removed and replaced with a level of progression so that the final question was the most taxing. It was encouraging to see that many candidates coped well with more challenging topics within the specification. It was felt that the Advance Information released to schools was helpful with vocabulary revision.

At Foundation Tier, Section A involves questions and answers in English and Section B involves questions and answers in Spanish. If a candidate answers in the wrong language, no marks can be awarded. In the revised format of the examination, target language answers are either non-verbal or have text supplied. Where a candidate provides an either/or answer, the first answer will be marked. It is therefore necessary to encourage candidates to be wary of providing superfluous information.

In general, candidates found the paper very accessible with a great many scoring very pleasing marks.

### Section A

- Q1** In this question most candidates scored full marks.
- Q2** Surprisingly, 'tienda' was not well known by a number of candidates.
- Q3-5** These questions were very well answered and the majority of candidates scored high marks in all three, although 'hacer footing' was not well known nor was 'plancho la ropa'.
- Q6** Most candidates answered this question very well although in Part 6 (a), many did not know 'el pavo', however most candidates knew 'los pasteles' and 'el pescado'.
- Q7** Numbers again have caused difficulty amongst some candidates, with many not knowing 'veinte millones' in Part 7(b). The vocabulary required for Part 7(c) was very well known.
- Q8** This question consists of four sentences in Spanish to be translated into English. It was encouraging that many candidates scored full or almost full marks. Candidates should be aware not to paraphrase, nor to add in extra material or delete vocabulary or structures from the sentence. In Part 8 (a) many were not familiar with 'los martes'. Question 8 (b) was generally well translated. Question 8 (c) was also very well answered but Question 8 (d) proved to be the most difficult sentences to translate as 'una película' was not well known. Candidates should be aware that a past, future or conditional tense will be included at some point in the translation question. Greater precision is necessary when translating these as a failure to recognise the person or tense of the verb will result in marks being lost. A range of versions of 'me gustaría tocar' was evident.

## Section B

**Q9** This was well done with many candidates being very familiar with the vocabulary associated with environmental issues.

**Q10-12** In general, candidates coped well with Questions 10 and 11 being very familiar with the vocabulary of the weather and also money management. Question 11 was a non-verbal question which was answered fairly well although some candidates did not de-select an answer which they had changed and therefore if two ticks are supplied instead of one tick, no marks can be awarded.

The last question on the paper was the one in which marks were lowest. It was a gap-fill question 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. The vocabulary associated with social issues for example 'el desempleo'/'el paro' in Part 12 (f) was not well known.

## Higher Tier

This paper covered a variety of topics and question types, allowing candidates from a wide range of abilities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Again, teachers are to be commended on continuing to provide candidates with a wide range of narrative styles across the many topics on the specification and to target key areas of vocabulary. It was encouraging to see many excellent performances. However, there was some evidence to suggest that a small number of candidates found the paper very challenging and that the Foundation Reading would have been more accessible and potentially less de-motivating for lower-attaining candidates.

As in 2022, the wave of varied incline has been removed and replaced with a level of progression with the final question being the most taxing.

If a candidate answers in the wrong language, no marks can be awarded. In the revised format of the examination, target language answers are either non-verbal or have text supplied. Where a candidate provides an either/or answer, the first answer will be marked. It is therefore necessary to encourage candidates to be wary of providing superfluous information as it can be self-penalising.

At higher level, Section A involves questions and answers in target language (common questions with Foundation Tier) and Section B involves questions and answers in English.

## Section A

**Q1** This was well done with many candidates being very familiar with the vocabulary associated with environmental issues.

**Q2-4** In general, candidates coped well with Questions 2 and 3 as the topics of weather and money management were well known. However, Question 4 was a gap-fill question 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. The vocabulary associated with social issues for example 'las personas sin hogar' required for Part 12 (e) was not well known.

## Section B

- Q5** This question consists of four sentences in Spanish to be translated into English. It therefore proved to be more demanding, however, many candidates scored full marks. Candidates should be aware not to paraphrase, nor to add in extra material or delete vocabulary or structures from the sentence. Candidates should note that, in contrast to comprehension, translation requires greater precision and attention to detail.
- (a)** Most candidates scored at least 1 out of 2 in this question, although a few were unsure of the meaning of ‘pecas’.
  - (b)** The possessive pronoun ‘nuestro’ was not translated well by many candidates, however the adjectives ‘alto y delgado’ were well known.
  - (c)** This sentence was generally very well translated although many candidates did not recognise that the indefinite article was required when translating ‘un supermercado’ and used the definite article instead. Candidates should be aware that a past, future or conditional tense will be included at some point in the translation question. Greater precision is necessary when translating these as a failure to recognise the person or tense of the verb will result in marks being lost.
  - (d)** Many candidates did not recognise that ‘serán’ was future tense.
- Q6-Q7** All of these questions proved to be accessible for the majority of candidates. However, in Part 6 (b) ‘una chica huérfana’ proved problematic as did the noun ‘pájaros’ in Part 7 (a).
- Q8** This proved to be a challenging question on the topic of work experience. While many correctly understood ‘una empresa’, fewer gave correct versions of ‘un trabajo exigente’. This was a non-verbal question which was answered fairly well although some candidates did not de-select an answer which they had changed and therefore if two ticks are supplied instead of one tick, no marks can be awarded.
- Q9** In general most candidates found ‘noroeste’ in Part 9 (a) problematic, often confusing it with ‘north east.’ ‘Ropa del siglo quince’ in Part 9 (c) also proved challenging, however the vocabulary required for Part 9 (d) was well known.
- Q10** Very well answered although ‘melocotón’ was mis-translated as melon or watermelon rather than peach.
- Q11** Very successfully answered by the majority of candidates although some were unfamiliar with the meaning of the verb ‘descubrir’. It is pleasing that many candidates have been encouraged to be accurate and concise in their comprehension technique.
- Q12** Was a gap-fill exercise. These questions are often problematic for candidates, as they not only require comprehension of the text, but also grammatical and linguistic awareness. In Part 12 (a) ‘desarrollo’ was not well known and in Part 12 (b) ‘la igualdad de derechos’ was challenging as was ‘las sequías intensas’ in Part 12 (e).

## Assessment Unit 4

## Writing

### Foundation

- Q1 (a)** Although for most candidates this proved to be straightforward exercise in listing items of clothing, some failed to name four of these and some simply left blank spaces. In some cases, candidates resorted to writing words in other languages. The emphasis in this exercise is purely on communication so, if the word was recognisable, despite being spelt incorrectly, it was awarded a mark.
- (b)** Generally, this question was well answered although it must be emphasised that the instructions state that 3 phrases were to be written so full sentences are unnecessary. Several candidates overcomplicated their answer by attempting to use 'comer' or 'beber' sometimes unsuccessfully. The fact that a verb was not necessary meant that answers such as 'patatas fritas' or 'cereales con leche' would have been enough to earn full marks.

- Q2** This section of the examination paper proved to be very accessible to the vast majority of candidates. The emphasis in the mark scheme for this question is on communication so the clarity of what is written is very important. It is also essential to note that each response should be a properly constructed sentence so a conjugated verb is necessary in order to gain full marks. However, this cannot be the case with any response in which the verb is not in the appropriate tense or person, is in the infinitive form or has simply been omitted. It is also important for candidates to note that marks are awarded for simply and clearly communicating the information required by the task and not the length or detail of the answer. Simple, clear and correct responses such as 'Trabajo en una tienda' were therefore sufficient to gain full marks.

In general, the marks gained by candidates in this question were good with only a few scoring 0 out of 2 for any of the responses given.

In Part 2 (b) candidates sometimes wrote a phrase such as 'veinte libras', omitting the verb. Although some found it difficult to find a suitable verb to say how much they earn, most began their answer with 'Gano' or 'Recibo'. In Part 2 (d) a number began their answer with 'Empiezo' rather than 'Termino'. Several candidates used 'Terminan' or 'Me terminan' which made their answer unclear. In the same question, the reference to when you finish work was usually done accurately but some finished the sentence with phrases which were more ambiguous such as 'a hora de nueve' or 'a las cuarto'.

- Q3** In general, candidates' answers in the translation test were very good. Very few were unable to attempt a Spanish version of any of the translation sentences.
- (a)** Either 'pueblo' or 'ciudad' were acceptable for town. However, some translated this as 'barrio' or 'centro'. Some incorrectly translated 'I live' as 'Mi vivo'.
- (b)** Some minor misspellings of 'pequeño' and 'tranquilo' were acceptable but some used the French spelling 'tranquille'. Those who were unsure of the word 'quiet' wrote 'silento' or 'silencio' instead.
- (c)** Again, minor misspellings of 'prefiero' were acceptable but not 'preferido'. Instead of 'el campo' a number of candidates wrote 'el aire libre' or 'la granja'.
- (d)** Quite a few did not spell 'polideportivo' correctly with the most common version being 'polidivertido'.

- (e) This proved to be the most challenging part of the translation as the infinitive was required after 'me gusta' and many wrote 'Me gusta voy'. Some omitted the preposition 'a' before 'la piscina'.

**Q4** The essays for all of the three contexts proved to be accessible to candidates and a fair number did each one. The essays written varied in length but most candidates made a good attempt to cover all the bullet points. Some, however, omitted one or two parts of the task and it is important to note that this will lead to a reduction in the overall mark awarded for Communication. Candidates are reminded that two of the five bullet points always require the past tense or future reference and it is often these which prove to be more challenging. In some cases, candidates mixed up the past and present tenses.

## Communication

In all three cases, candidates were able to convey information for the first three bullet points but when it came to the fourth or fifth, a number were not as successful due to the requirement to use the past or future tense. In Part 4 (a) some found it difficult to express how they get on with the other members of the family, sometimes using 'llevo' without the reflexive pronoun and omitting 'con'. In Part 4 (b), although the first two points proved to be straightforward, the use of weather expressions caused problems for many who wrote phrases such as 'hace llueve' 'es calor' or 'hace es nieve'. In Part 4 (c), although candidates found it easy to describe their uniform, it proved more difficult for many to give reasons why they liked or disliked it.

## Grammar and Structures

The overall length of the essay at Foundation Level is 80-100 words, around 20 words per paragraph. Many write more and no one is ever penalised for doing so. Candidates are reminded that in order to gain high marks in this question, the language used does not have to be complex. In fact, by writing a series of simple, clear and correct sentences, the candidate will score well in both Communication and Grammar and Structures and many did so. By contrast, a number of candidates lost marks in both of these areas as the quality of language adversely affected the clarity of what was being said. On occasions, the infinitive was used instead of a conjugated verb or words were omitted from a sentence. The most frequent errors included the following:

- Very incorrect spelling, examples of which included 'cathro' (cuatro), 'abbito' (aburrido).
- Omission of words from a sentence, for example 'mi hermana muy trabajador' 'No me gusta mi hermano porque ruidoso'.
- Use of the incorrect person or tense of verbs. Examples included 'Mi hermano tienes alto' 'Hay son mucha gente' 'Soy es deportista' 'Me relajante en la playa'.

In all the above cases these are major errors which unfortunately affect understanding of what is written. It is not uncommon to see minor errors such as lack of proper adjectival agreements, slight misspelling, incorrect gender etc., and, although these result in a greater degree of inaccuracy, they do not seriously affect understanding.

## Higher Tier

Question 1 and 2 proved to be very accessible to the vast majority of candidates. The emphasis in the mark scheme for both questions is on communication so the clarity of what is written is very important. It is also essential to note that each response should be a properly constructed sentence so a conjugated verb is necessary in order to gain full marks. This cannot be the case with any response in which the verb is not in the appropriate tense or person, is in the infinitive form or has simply been omitted. It is also important for candidates to note that marks are awarded in both Questions 1 and 2 for simply and clearly communicating the information required by the task and not the length or detail of the answer. Simple, clear and correct responses such as ‘Trabajo en una tienda’ are therefore sufficient to gain full marks.

- Q1** In general, the marks gained by candidates in this question were good with only a few scoring 0 out of 2 for any of the responses given. In Part 1 (b) candidates sometimes wrote a phrase such as ‘veinte libras’, omitting the verb. Although some found it difficult to find a suitable verb to say how much they earn, most began their answer with ‘Gano’ or ‘Recibo’. In Part 1 (d) a number began with ‘Empiezo’ rather than ‘Termino’. Several candidates used ‘Terminan’ or ‘Me terminan’ which made their answer unclear. In the same question, the reference to when you finish work was usually done accurately but some wrote more ambiguous responses such as ‘a hora de nueve’ or ‘a las cuarto’.
- Q2** In general, this question proved to be a little more difficult than Question 1. However, candidates answered Parts 2 (a), (b) and (c) fairly well. It should be emphasised again that, as in Question 1, the accuracy of the verb is essential to clarity of communication. At times, for Part 2 (b) candidates wrote ‘hay es’ or ‘hay son’ for ‘there is’ or ‘there are’. Questions 2 (d) and (e) required past and future tense reference and both proved a little more challenging. While most were able to use both tenses, some attempted unsuccessfully to form the past or future tense of the verb while others simply used the present tense in both cases. In Part 2 (e) it was perfectly acceptable to refer to the future by using ‘querer’, ‘esperar’, ‘me gustaría’ or other similar verbs with the infinitive as well as the immediate future and many did so.
- Q3** In general, candidates did reasonably well in the translation exercise with very few failing to gain at least one mark out of two in each of the five sentences. The most frequent errors were the following:
- (a)** Although this was well done, some used ‘gentes’ instead of ‘personas’. A few wrote the French equivalent ‘personnes’.
  - (b)** Many translated ‘older’ as ‘mejores’ rather than ‘mayores’.
  - (d)** A number failed to translate ‘we play’ correctly with a number writing ‘juegemos’ or the first person ‘juego’. Many found the phrase ‘on Saturday’ challenging with a range of versions using ‘por’, ‘al’ or ‘en’ rather than ‘el sábado’.
  - (e)** It was important that the preterite of ‘visitar’ was correctly formed and this was successfully done by many. A few omitted the word ‘Ayer’.



**Q4** The marks achieved in this question were encouragingly high with many candidates producing an excellent standard of written work. The task for Contexts 2 and 3 were clearly the most popular options while the Context 1 task proved the least popular. However, the content required by all the options would have been fairly familiar. Candidates are to write 130-150 words overall in response to the five bullet points. Many wrote a good deal more but it should be pointed out that no candidate will be penalised for doing so. Candidates are strongly discouraged from omitting one or more bullet points in their response as they will lose marks as a result although very few did this. It should be noted that the task for each context will include a bullet point requiring past reference and another requiring future reference. These frequently prove to be the most challenging part of the essay for candidates and some lost marks as they were unable to sustain the use of these tenses accurately.

## Communication

- Q4 (a)** This was the option chosen the least by candidates. Those who chose it sometimes struggled to say what type of presents they liked or disliked and, in some cases, were unsure how to spell 'regalos'. With regard to types of present, some referred to 'ropa regalos' and 'dinero regalos'. Others found it difficult to write about a recent family birthday and were unable to use the past tense accurately.
- (b)** This was very successfully done by a majority of the candidates who chose it. It was clear that this was a topic which was very familiar to candidates and many produced outstanding work, in particular, in the final paragraph. These essays contained a good range of vocabulary and structures including the future and conditional tenses as well as the subjunctive at times. This was particularly impressive and showed evidence of careful preparation.
- (c)** The topic of school life attracted many candidates and was generally very well done. Most very ably expressed their opinions on school subjects as well as their favourite teacher. Some found it a little more challenging to say why Spanish was important but many explained this clearly and comprehensibly. The fourth paragraph which dealt with a recent school activity proved to be straightforward for some but others could not sustain the use of the past tense and lapsed into the present or the future instead.

## Grammar and Structures

The level of written Spanish was often extremely high which is a result of the hard work of both teachers and students alike. Many students produced lengthy essays containing a wide range of vocabulary, structures and tenses.

It should be pointed out that length does not determine the mark awarded but rather the quality of what is written. The following were the most common grammatical errors in the essay:

- When expressing opinions, most students will use 'gustar' or 'encantar' but few are able to manipulate these accurately e.g. 'Mi madre encanta las vacaciones en España'.
- Syntax which is heavily influenced by English e.g. 'la profesora es no severa', 'mi hermanos cumpleaños', 'el parque jugamos en'.
- Inaccurate formation of verbs e.g. 'Mi prefiero', 'Soy tengo', 'hay son' which make the sentence confusing.
- Incorrect weather references such as 'es calor' 'hace caliente' 'es hace llueve'.

Mistakes such as those above mostly come into the category of major errors which affect the clarity of what is written in contrast to minor errors e.g. adjectival agreement, minor misspelling etc. which, though technically incorrect do not impede understanding.

Despite this, the overall standard of written work remains very good and, for this, a great deal of credit must go to both students and teachers alike for the excellent and very thorough preparatory work they have done in this skill.

## 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](mailto:jjennings@ccea.org.uk))
- **Officer with Subject Responsibility: Claire Fitzsimons**  
(telephone: (028) 9026 1200, extension: 2325, email: [cfitzsimons@ccea.org.uk](mailto:cfitzsimons@ccea.org.uk))



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