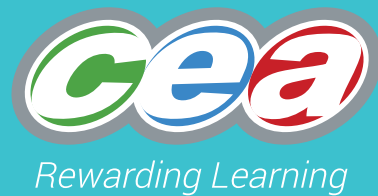


GCSE



# Chief Examiner's Report Spanish

Summer Series 2024





## Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of this specification for the Summer 2024 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 there was an overall increase in the number of candidates who entered the 2024 examination in comparison with the previous year. This year there was also a greater number of candidates who entered components at Higher Tier in comparison to 2023. Another encouraging feature of this year's examination was the overall performance of the candidates with average marks in all components, either on a par with or higher than those achieved in previous years. In all components there were many examples of outstanding work. Credit for this is due to the dedication and hard work of both the candidates and their teachers, despite the demands and pressures of their busy school schedule.

### Assessment Unit 1

### Listening

#### Foundation Tier

Overall, the majority of candidates performed well in this paper with many scoring 40 marks or more and a healthy number scoring 50 marks or above. Pleasingly, the vast majority of candidates attempted all questions including the open-ended ones that required an answer in English. Candidates must remember to write clearly and if they change an answer, it must be clear which answer they have now chosen. Candidates should also avoid writing alternatives. Candidates had difficulty with clothes, food, directions and places in the town. The grammar element in question 12 proved challenging. Overall, candidates coped well with this paper and attempted to answer all questions.

- Q1** Almost all candidates scored full marks in this question.
- Q2** The majority of candidates scored full marks although in Part (d) 'la mayor' caused a few difficulties.
- Q3** This question was generally well answered although the days of the week caused a few problems.
- Q4** This question was well answered although 'viento' and 'llueve' caused some problems.
- Q5** This question was answered quite well by candidates although 'zanahorias' and 'guisantes' caused problems for many.
- Q6** In Part (c) 'un jersey' and, especially, 'los vaqueros' were not well known.  
In Part (d) 'una bufanda' was only correctly answered by a minority of candidates.  
In Part (e) 'zapatillas' caused some problems with many writing 'shoes' instead of 'trainers'.
- Q7** This question was very well answered although 'terror' and 'guerra' caused some problems.
- Q8** There was a very mixed response to this question: some candidates knew places in the town and directions very well and scored full marks or almost full marks, other candidates experienced a lot of difficulties with this question. A lot of candidates had difficulty with all the directions and 'la comisaría' and 'Correos' were not well known.

- Q9** This question was well answered.
- Q10** This was generally well answered although ‘camarero’ posed some problems.
- Q11** This question was quite well answered although ‘barato’ and ‘caro’ caused some difficulty in Part (a) and ‘vestido’ and ‘sudadera’ were not always well known in Part (d).
- Q12** Candidates found this question very difficult with some candidates scoring 0 or 1 mark.

## Higher Tier

Overall, the majority of candidates performed well in this paper with many scoring 40 marks or more and a healthy number scoring over 50 marks. Pleasingly, the vast majority of candidates attempted all questions including the open-ended ones that required an answer in English. Candidates must remember to write clearly and, if they change an answer, it must be clear which answer they have now chosen. Candidates should also avoid writing alternatives. Clothes and TV programmes caused a lot of difficulty and again, numbers caused problems for some.

- Q1** This question was very well answered with the majority of candidates scoring full marks.
- Q2** In Part (a) and Part (b) ‘camarero’ and ‘postres’ caused difficulty for some candidates, however, many candidates scored full marks here and the vast majority correctly answered Part (c), Part (d) and Part (e).
- Q3** This question was generally well answered, however, ‘vestido’ and ‘sudadera’ caused difficulty for many.
- Q4** The grammar in this question caused a lot of difficulty especially in Part (d) and Part (e).
- Q5** The majority of candidates scored full marks here but ‘piragüismo’ and ‘ajedrez’ caused some difficulties.
- Q6** This question caused problems for many. A lot of candidates wrote ‘1974’ instead of ‘1964’. In Part (b) the word ‘cuerpo’ was only known by a minority of candidates with many writing ‘face’ or ‘skin’ instead of ‘body’.
- Q7** This question was answered very well.
- Q8** This question was generally well answered, however, ‘hijos pequeños’ in Part (a) caused some difficulties and ‘en el suelo’ caused quite a lot of problems in Part (b).
- Q9** Many candidates had difficulty with this question. In Part (a)(ii) ‘un vecino’ caused some problems while Part (b)(i) and, in particular, Part (b)(ii) and Part (c) were not well answered. Many wrote different types of TV programmes for ‘las noticias’ and ‘el tiempo’ with some writing ‘the time’ for ‘el tiempo’. ‘Los concursos’ was only known by a minority and ‘alimentos’ was correctly answered by even fewer candidates, with many writing ‘medicine’ and some writing ‘makeup’ or ‘clothes’.
- Q10** This question was very well answered.
- Q11** In Part (a)(ii) many candidates incorrectly chose ‘higher than in Spain’. In Part (b) (i) most candidates chose ‘Switzerland’ for ‘Suecia’ and in Part (b)(ii) ‘tantos...como’ caused difficulty for many candidates.



**Q12** This question discriminated well between pupils of differing abilities.

- (a)** Many candidates wrote 'he gets up' or 'school starts' for 'tengo que despertarme'.
- (b)**
  - (i)** 'el comercio' was not well known with many translating it as 'ICT' or 'Cooking'.
  - (ii)** 'banda ancha' was not well known.
- (c)** 'aprobar los exámenes' was not well understood.
- (d)** 'las aulas son muy anticuadas' was not well known with many writing that the school or library was old.

## Assessment Unit 2 Speaking

This was the second year since the pandemic that the Speaking test was compulsory for all candidates and the examiners were pleased to note that the standard was again high, with many conversations showcasing a confident use of spoken Spanish using a wide range of complex structures and tenses.

There was also a full range of abilities on show but those candidates who found this skill challenging were expertly guided by their supportive and encouraging teachers who gave them the opportunity to perform to the best of their ability.

Those teachers exemplified best practice by stretching the most able to perform at a very high level but also providing scaffolded questions for their weaker candidates. This approach is to be encouraged, however not all adhered to this multifaceted conduct of the tests.

### Role-plays

The Role-plays were well received. They offered a wide range of accessible topics from Contexts 1 and 3 and most candidates performed well in this section. A few weaker candidates found the tasks challenging but the Role-play marks they achieved boosted their overall mark considerably. Even giving straightforward, short answers here can gain considerable marks as the Role-plays are marked for Communication only. However, where a tense is required, it is crucial that candidates read the tasks very carefully in English to fully understand the requirements of the task. Also, it is worth noting here that the tasks are set and cannot be changed depending on the personal situation of the candidate. For example, in Situation D, Task 3 – ‘Describe your family pet’, the candidate cannot choose to say that they do not have a pet or they will lose marks.

The following are the tasks which gave the most problems this year:

- Situation A, Task 2: Many forgetting to say what they *like* to do on social media.
- Situation A, Task 4: Some had difficulties with ‘eres’.
- Situation B, Task 1: ‘later’ was not well-known.
- Situation C, Task 1: Many not realising they had to say what time they ‘wake up’.
- Situation D, Task 2: Some not knowing ‘me llevo bien/mal con’.
- Situation D, Task 3: If the task asks to describe a pet, it is not acceptable to say you don’t have one.
- Situation E, Task 3: Some had issues with ‘no se puede’.
- Situation G, Task 1: There was confusion between ‘mayor’ and ‘mejor’.
- Situation G, Task 2: There were issues with the 3rd person singular of the verb ‘ir’.
- Situation H, Task 3: Asking questions in the ‘tú’ form – ‘¿quieres ir ...?’
- Situation J, Task 3: There were problems with ‘cuesta’.
- Situation L, Task 1: The perennial issue with ‘libras’.
- Situation L, Task 5: There were difficulties with ‘¿qué quieres...?’
- Situation M, Task 2: The perennial confusion between ‘bien’ and ‘bueno’.
- Situation N, Task 5: Many simply described a single teacher instead of ‘teachers’.
- Situation O, Task 3: ‘a las ..’ is necessary for communication of time.
- Situation O, Task 4: Many didn’t know ‘dura’.

- Situation P, Task 1: 'Volver' was not well-known.
- Situation P, Task 5: Too many used 'colegio/escuela' instead of 'educación'.
- Situation Q, Task 5: There were problems with 'ahorrar'.
- Situation R, Task 3: Many trying to pronounce 'jugué' but incorrectly, leading to ambiguity.
- Situation T, Task 5: If the task says that 'languages are important' they should not give their own opinion.
- Situation W, Task 1: 'Visito' was not well-known.

In at least four of the above, careful reading of the tasks would have prevented loss of marks.

## Pre-release Conversation 1

This year we had the Context 2 topic of 'My local area and the wider environment' for the pre-release. It was very well received and allowed the candidates to talk about their house, area, town, region and country. Teachers made sure that candidates were able to access top bands by asking a diverse range of questions to elicit complex language and tenses.

Candidates responded by using a wide variety of vocabulary, structures and tenses. Indeed, many candidates this year volunteered information in the past and future tenses without being explicitly asked and more candidates than ever offered subjunctive phrases with great aplomb.

## Conversation 2

Most centres asked questions on topics such as 'daily routine', 'free time' and 'leisure' from Context 1 or 'school life' from Context 3 dependent on which context was chosen by the candidate for their Role-plays. These topics are very well known by the vast majority of the candidates and consequently were done very well.

## Areas of Concern

### Role-plays

In order to facilitate marking, teachers are encouraged to state, at the beginning of the Speaking test, which Role-play session and Situation letter the candidate has selected.

Worryingly, more teachers than ever this year did not give their candidate the opportunity to complete Task 5. They seemed to skip the task, therefore depriving their candidates of 2 marks.

Whilst CCEA can, in these cases, request a copy of the candidate's Role-play Response Sheet from the centre, this is not ideal. We would encourage teachers next year to take care not to overlook the last task.

### Timings

Some conversations were short (2 – 2 ½ minutes) which did not allow candidates the opportunity to display a wide range of knowledge or skills in the target language, hence preventing the chance to achieve marks in the top bands.

Some conversations were considerably longer than the 4 minutes specified (up to 7 minutes) which only serves to tire the candidate and increase mistakes.

Neither of the above scenarios are acceptable and teachers must endeavour to ensure that CCEA timings are adhered to for the next series.

## **Conversation 1 (Pre-release) and Conversation 2**

The pre-release topic this year was from Context 2 but a few centres went on to ask candidates about holidays, also from Context 2, in the second conversation which meant one context was not covered in the Speaking test. This is outside of the CCEA specification guidelines. Teachers must ensure that they choose a topic for the second conversation from the remaining context not covered in either the Role-play or the pre-release.

### **Questions**

Some centres seem to use the same standard set of questions with all candidates. Centres should take note that the conversation should be a natural, genuine interaction/exchange. A natural exchange/interaction would not normally follow exactly the same pattern from candidate to candidate. Within a class group, even on the same topic, the teacher would rarely be posing exactly the same questions during a natural and genuine conversation. Furthermore, this approach of asking the same, standard set of questions does not favour less able candidates. It would be good practice to begin with simple questions and from there on asking questions graduating in difficulty depending on the candidate's ability. Candidates can gain early confidence with this approach. Additionally, there are some centres who encourage candidates to give mini presentations as answers with very few questions asked. Even though the specification states that candidates should 'produce extended sequences of speech' this approach is taking this statement to the extreme and must be discouraged.

### **Tenses**

In some centres, teachers did not ask any questions in the past or future tenses during the conversations which has the danger of limiting their candidates' marks for Grammar and Structures. Unless the candidate offers a range of tenses in an unsolicited way, teachers are reminded to directly ask questions in a variety of tenses to enable their candidates to access the top bands.

### **Sound Quality/Noise**

Most tests were carried out in a quiet space and were clear and audible but in an increasing number of cases the recording device was closer to the teacher than the candidate. Audibility is of the utmost importance in the Speaking tests so this is an easy issue to rectify, by conducting a sound test before the recordings begin. If possible, teachers must also try to ensure that there is reduced corridor noise. In the 2024 recordings, sound quality was also marred due to chairs moving in classrooms above, the sound of typing on a keyboard, school bells ringing and outside noise from lawnmowers. These background noises affect what the examiners can hear and judge so it is in the best interest of the candidates that action is taken by the centre to ensure that Speaking tests can be conducted in a quiet environment.

## 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 and 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. The format of the Reading paper follows a level of progression so that the final question is the most taxing. It was encouraging to see that many candidates coped well with more challenging topics within the specification.

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. Candidates should be discouraged from providing alternative answers.

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

- Q1** In this question most candidates scored full marks although 'el pelo rubio' was not known by all candidates.
- Q2** Surprisingly, 'la primavera' was not well known by a number of candidates.
- Q3–Q5** These questions were very well answered and the majority of candidates scored high marks in all three, although 'un lago' was not well known nor was 'huevos'.
- Q6** Most candidates answered this question very well although in Part 6 (a), many did not know 'a las once y media', however most candidates knew 'una manzana'.
- Q7** This was an accessible question on the topic of school rules although 'joyas' caused difficulty amongst some candidates.
- 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 Question 8 Part (a) many were not familiar with 'Tengo hambre'. Question 8 Part (b) was generally well translated although greater precision is necessary when translating 'Me gusta(n)' as a failure to recognise the person or tense of the verb will result in marks being lost. A range of versions of 'me gustan las patatas' was evident. Question 8 Part (c) was also very well answered but Question 8 Part (d) proved to be the most difficult sentence to translate as 'un bocadillo de queso' was not well known.
- Q9** This was well done with many candidates being very familiar with the vocabulary on clothes.
- Q10–Q11** In general, candidates coped well with Questions 10 and 11 - being very familiar with the vocabulary of transport and jobs. 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.

**Q12** 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 environmental issues, for example, 'las temperaturas suben' in Part (e) 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 these candidates.

The format of the Reading paper follows 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. Candidates should be discouraged from providing alternative answers.

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

**Q1** This was well done with many candidates being very familiar with the vocabulary on clothes.

**Q2–Q3** In general, candidates coped well with Questions 2 and 3 being very familiar with the vocabulary of transport and jobs. Question 3 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.

**Q4** The last question of Section A was one in which marks were low. It was a gap-filling 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 environmental issues, for example, 'las temperaturas suben' in Part (e) was not well known.

- Q5** This question consisted 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 that they are 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 ‘las afueras’.
  - (b)** ‘Abajo’ was not translated well by many candidates, and very few candidates knew the meaning of ‘un despacho’.
  - (c)** This sentence was generally very well translated although many candidates did not recognise that the definite article was required when translating ‘las ventanas’ and used the indefinite 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 know that ‘le gusta’ is third person singular and ‘cortar el césped’ was unfamiliar to many candidates.
- Q6–Q10** All of these questions proved to be accessible for the majority of candidates. However, in Question 6 Part (a) ‘contar’ proved problematic as did the noun ‘la nariz’ in Question 7 Part (c).
- Q8** This proved to be a challenging question on the topic of Easter celebrations. While many correctly understood ‘los desfiles’, fewer gave correct versions of ‘conciertos de música clásica’.
- Q9** In general most candidates found ‘el ciberacoso’ and ‘el robo de identidad’ in Part (d) problematic, often confusing the former with ‘cyber-attack’.
- Q10** This question was very well answered although ‘travieso’ was challenging for some candidates.
- Q11** This question was very successfully answered by the majority of candidates although some were unfamiliar with the meaning of the verb ‘vigilar’. It is pleasing that many candidates have been encouraged to be accurate and concise in their comprehension technique, use of English and handwriting.
- Q12** This question was a gap-filling 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 (b) ‘palabras’ was not well known. Some candidates struggled with ‘la risa’ in Part (c) and in Part (d) ‘los dulces’ was challenging for some candidates.

## Assessment Unit 4

## Writing

### Foundation Tier

There was an increased number of entrants for the Foundation Tier examination this year in comparison to 2023. Overall, candidates performed well and the average mark achieved by candidates was higher than in 2023. In general, candidates tended to do well in Questions 1 and 2 and most found the translation exercise in Question 3 to be very accessible. However, the extended writing question proved to be a little more challenging and, although many produced well written answers, in general, there was a wider range of marks in comparison to the other questions on the paper.

- Q1 (a)** As in previous years, this question is a straightforward exercise which consists of listing individual words, in this case, school subjects. Despite this, some failed to name four of these and some simply left blank spaces while others 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. Therefore, words such as 'informático' or 'geographia' were accepted but not versions such as 'inglesia', 'gymnasio' or 'Alemania'.
- (b)** Generally, this question was well answered although it must be emphasised that the instructions state that phrases were to be written -so full sentences are unnecessary. Several candidates wrote too much and attempted to use 'llevar', sometimes unsuccessfully. It is important to note that what is required as a response to this question is essentially a list containing three phrases of two or three words each. A verb is not necessary, so answers such as 'chaqueta verde' or 'una corbata roja' 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 full communication implies that the response should be in the form of a properly constructed sentence, therefore 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 'Compro los regalos' 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.

- (a) This was answered very successfully with only a few confusing the country and the language e.g. 'En verano, siempre voy a español'.
- (b) The most common difficulty was forming the verb 'alojarse' or 'quedarse', with a number writing versions such as 'alojo', 'quedarme' or 'mi quedo'.
- (c) This was generally well done although some wrote 'Hay son' or 'hay es' for 'there is/are'. Occasionally, the item of interest was not clearly conveyed e.g. 'Hay central comerciales'.
- (d) Although this question did not pose too many problems, a number wrote too much and often self-penalised as they sometimes confused the present with past or future tenses. When answering a question of this type, candidates are advised to write one sentence containing one verb, ensuring that it is in the right tense and person.
- (e) In this question, candidates sometimes used the past or future tenses of 'comprar' instead of the present resulting in the loss of a mark.

**Q3** In general, candidates' answers in the translation were very good. Very few were unable to attempt a Spanish version of any of the translation sentences.

Candidates are reminded that a correct and accurate translation will require precision on their part. The Spanish version must be true to the original sentence in English. Words cannot be added to or removed from the original, nor can words be changed.

- (a) This posed few problems for candidates. Some wrote 'una hermana' for 'a brother' but many scored full marks.
- (b) Many found this sentence straightforward but some wrote 'largo' or 'grande' instead of 'alto' for 'tall' or 'mucho' or 'más' for 'very'.
- (c) Again, minor misspellings of 'mi cumpleaños' were acceptable but the date had to be correctly written. Some wrote versions which were confusing e.g. 'en mayo de cuatro', 'es le cuatro mayo' or wrote the month in English or French.
- (d) Quite a few did not know the word for 'party' in Spanish with the most common versions being 'partido' or 'festival'.
- (e) Although many knew 'como', the phrase 'chocolate cake' proved to be very challenging for many candidates. A few used the English word 'cake' or simply left the word out. A number left out the preposition 'de' before 'chocolate'.

**Q4** The Context 1 essay proved to be the most popular option this year. This was followed by the Context 3 option with only a few attempting Context 2.

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 Question 4 Part (a) most addressed the first two bullet points easily but found it a little more difficult to express why they liked a particular hobby. Similarly, in Question 4 Part (b), although the first two bullet points were straightforward, candidates were often unable to clearly convey why certain activities, foods etc were unhealthy. In Question 4 Part (c), few candidates had problems talking about their job and what they like or dislike about it. By contrast, for many, the fourth paragraph, which required a description of activities done during work last week, proved to be very difficult. Some simply wrote about what they do normally, using only the present tense.

## Grammar and Structures

The overall length of the essay at Foundation Tier is 80 – 100 words, around 20 words per paragraph. Many write more and candidates are not 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 nor does the overall essay have to be very long. 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. Some candidates perhaps wrote too much and, in doing so, made more errors which affected their overall marks. On occasions, the infinitive was used instead of a conjugated verb or words were omitted from a sentence. The areas of grammar which proved to be most problematic for candidates included the following:

- Errors using 'gustar' or 'encantar', For example 'mi gustaría voy', 'me encanta juego', 'mi y mi familia te gusta fútbol'. This was particularly noticeable in the final paragraph of essays in which future reference was required and many candidates used 'me gustaría' or 'me encantaría' with the present tense rather than the infinitive.
- Use of the incorrect person of verbs. Examples included 'mi llevante', 'mi estudiar', 'hago desayunar', 'mi y mi familia voy'.
- Using prepositions incorrectly or simply omitting them e.g. 'quiero trabajar en un profesor', 'prefiero hablar gente', 'quiero viajar mundo'.
- Not distinguishing accurately between the present, past and future tenses e.g. 'la semana pasada, juego al fútbol', 'el verano que viene fui a España'.

All of the above cases are major errors which, unfortunately, affect understanding of what is written. These will have an adverse impact on the overall mark awarded. 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

In 2024, there was a significant increase in the number of candidates who opted to enter the Writing examination at Higher Level. In general, candidates performed well in the paper and the average mark was broadly similar to that achieved in 2023.

**Q1** This question 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 full communication implies that the response should be in the form of a properly constructed sentence therefore 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 ‘Compro los regalos’ 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.

- (a) This part of the question was answered very successfully with only a few confusing the country and the language e.g. ‘En verano, siempre voy a español’.
- (b) In this question, the most common difficulty was forming the verb ‘alojarse’ or ‘quedarse’, with a number writing versions such as ‘alojo’, ‘quedarme’ or ‘mi quedo’.
- (c) This question was generally well done although some wrote ‘Hay son’ or ‘hay es’ for ‘there is/are’. Occasionally, the item of interest was not clearly conveyed e.g. ‘Hay central comerciales’.
- (d) Although this question did not pose too many problems, a number wrote too much and often self-penalised as they sometimes confused the present with past or future tenses. In order to avoid this, candidates are advised to write one sentence containing one verb, ensuring that it is in the right tense and person.
- (e) In this question candidates sometimes used the past or future tenses of ‘comprar’ instead of the present resulting in the loss of a mark.

**Q2** Part (a) was answered successfully by the majority of candidates but some found the formation of the verb difficult. Occasionally, the infinitive ‘levantarse’ was used or the reflexive pronoun was omitted. Occasionally, ‘me despierto’ was used instead. Candidates should be aware that minor spelling errors e.g. ‘me llevento’ are overlooked as the verb is clearly understandable and communication is not impeded in any way.

In Part (c), sometimes the way in which the mode of transport was conveyed was not technically correct but understandable e.g. ‘voy al colegio en pie’, however, some other responses were not clear e.g. ‘voy del coche’, ‘voy a la ciclismo’. In cases like this, maximum marks could not be awarded.

For Part (d) and Part (e), in order to fully communicate the response, the use of the past or future tense was required. Some candidates unfortunately answered in the present tense thus losing marks. Some others did attempt the answer in the correct tense but were unable to do so successfully. This was particularly unfortunate when a candidate wished to use a verb such as ‘jugar’ or ‘hacer’ which are irregular in the past tense. Similarly, in Part (e), although a future reference was acceptable, versions such as ‘voy a juego al fútbol’ or ‘planeo voy a ir’ were not acceptable for communication.

**Q3** In general, candidates' answers in the translation exercise were very good. Very few were unable to attempt a Spanish version of any of the translation sentences.

Candidates are reminded that a correct and accurate translation will require precision on their part. The Spanish version must be true to the original sentence in English. Words cannot be added to or removed from the original, nor can words be changed.

- (a) Although this was well done, some used 'mucho' or 'más' instead of 'muy'.
- (b) Despite this being a very short sentence, it proved to be problematic for candidates. Many misspelt 'los profesores' or wrote versions which were ambiguous e.g. 'el profesoras' and in the second half of the sentence, some wrote 'están' instead of 'son' or ignored the required adjectival agreement e.g. 'son amable'.
- (c) A number failed to translate 'I have to wear' correctly, with a number writing 'tengo llevo' or 'tengo llevar'. Many also found the phrase 'a blue uniform' challenging, with a range of versions such as 'una uniform azules'.
- (d) In this question, 'classes end' was successfully done by many. The phrase 'at three o'clock', however, posed many problems and some candidates added further elements to the sentence e.g. 'a las tres en punto'.
- (e) Although 'I am going to study' was successfully translated by a large number, the word 'languages' was not always known and the French or English versions of the word were written as well as specific languages e.g. 'francés y español'.

**Q4** The marks achieved in this question were encouragingly high with many candidates producing an excellent standard of written work. The tasks for Contexts 1 and 3 were clearly the most popular options while the Context 2 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 parts 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 proved to be the most popular option this year as it involved the topic of free time, a very familiar and accessible subject. Those who chose it often wrote varied answers making reference to a wide variety of leisure time activities. When writing about a recent leisure activity, however, some simply referred to a recent holiday which was not entirely in keeping with the topic. Some were unsure how to refer to a hobby in Spanish and wrote 'pasa tiempo' as two separate words, and sometimes confused 'paseo' and 'paso'.
- (b)** This was generally well done although only a minority of candidates chose it. A majority of those who did were obviously familiar with the topic and wrote excellent essays including a wide range of vocabulary and structures, often of a technical nature which was very impressive. In such essays, phrases such as 'puede afectar tus pulmones o tu corazón', 'bebidas azucaradas', 'el riesgo de obesidad' were commonplace. On the other hand, a few tended to confuse the words 'sano', 'salud' and 'saludable' and frequently referred to 'mi sano' instead of 'mi salud'.
- (c)** The topic of money and part-time work attracted many candidates and was often very well done. Many linked the money they received with household chores. A number of candidates, however, referred to part-time work as 'un parcial' or 'un trabajo parcial'. Many had interesting things to say about the value of part-time work. Although there were many well written paragraphs on a recent job, some found it difficult to express this using the past tense and sometimes wrote using the present 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 candidates alike. Many candidates 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. There were a number of very concisely written essays which were awarded very high marks. The following areas of grammar tended to cause most problems for candidates:

- When expressing opinions, candidates frequently use "gustar" or 'encantar', but few are able to manipulate these accurately, e.g. 'Mis amigos y yo encantamos compra'.
- When using modal auxiliary verbs such as 'querer' and 'poder', candidates often fail to use the infinitive afterwards, e.g. 'no puedo salgo con amigos', 'Quisiera ayudando gente'.
- In some cases, candidates confused adjectives with nouns or verbs and vice versa, e.g. 'Quiero jugar más deportivos', 'el golf es muy relajarse'.
- At times, verbs were formed inaccurately, e.g. 'Mis amigos prefiero', 'hay es', 'hay son' which make the sentence confusing.

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, although 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 candidates and teachers alike for the excellent and very thorough preparatory work they have done for this part of the examination.

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