

Examiners' Report January 2012

GCE Spanish 6SP02 01

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Introduction

Unit 2 tests the skills of listening, reading and writing. Candidates have to answer questions of various styles. Some answers can be given with a cross in a box, one question is answered by selecting an appropriate Spanish word, one question must be answered in English and some questions require an answer in Spanish.

It was pleasing to see so many candidates deal successfully with so many of the questions. Questions 1, 2, 3 and 5 remained accessible to all candidates and the most able had opportunities to showcase their abilities. The long reading question, Q7, also seemed to be answered better than in some previous series, with candidates using a mixture of their own words and words from the text in their answers. The subject of the essay in Q8, access to university, was obviously a familiar topic, as most candidates were able to respond imaginatively to all four bullet-points.

Question 1

Question 1 was a listening passage about the preparation of some traditional Christmas biscuits. The word 'navideño' was key to being able to answer Q1i, although candidates who did not know this word, were mostly able to select the correct answer, perhaps by a process of elimination. The majority of candidates scored at least 3 on this question. A score of 2 or 3 on this question was common.

Question 2

Q2 was about classical music in China. True statements C and H were often correctly identified, while E and G seemed harder to spot.

Question 3

Q3 was a listening text about stress and the ways to deal with it. The first word to select: 'común', was found by most candidates. Some decided that 'medicamentos' was a likely answer in b), when 'violencia' was what was needed. A score of 2 was common.

Question 4

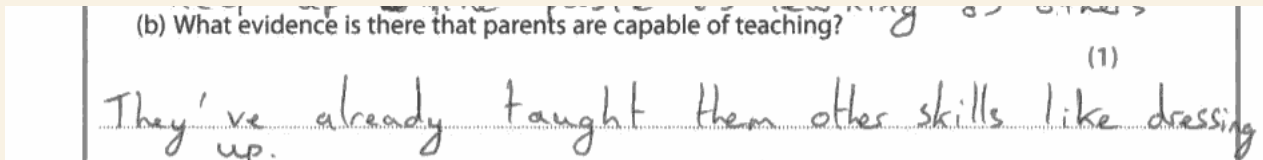
Mexican roadside assistance was the topic of the interview in Q4. Most candidates scored in a), although there were many incorrect spellings of 'carreteras' (which generally were accepted). Those who did not score in b), had mostly ignored the question word: 'Quiénes' and did not gain credit for repeating that the Angeles Verdes help 'en ocasiones de accidentes'. Some candidates tried to give 'tourists' as an answer, but wrote 'turísticas' instead. The number 45 was correctly identified in c), but without the '(desde) hace' it could not be given credit. The answers given in d) sometimes did not include a verb, which was essential as the question asked what one must do to summon help. Question 4e) was often answered well, even if the Spanish was flawed at times.

Question 5

This question was answered very well, with the majority of candidates scoring full marks.

Question 6

This question was a text in Spanish about home schooling, with questions and answers in English. Many candidates scored above 3 marks out of a possible 5. The most common mistake was to try to render 'ritmo de aprendizaje' with the cognate word 'rhythm'. Unfortunately, this produced unclear English statements about following the rhythm of the class. Candidates who wrote 'pace' or 'speed' of the class were more successful.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

A mistake seen occasionally was to change 'to dress' to 'to dress up'. This was not acceptable as it means something different. 'Salute' did not score, of course. Many candidates were also mistaken in thinking that 'saludar' meant something connected to 'salud' and suggested that parents taught their children to be healthy. That did not score either.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Look out for 'cognates': words that look almost the same in two languages, but beware of false friends!

(a) What is the advantage of not learning in a group?

(1)

The home-schooled children doesn't have to
keep up ~~with~~ the pace of learning of others



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Examiner Comments

Spelling mistakes and some grammar errors are tolerated, but where a mistake turns one word into another, credit cannot be given. This rule applies in both Spanish and English answers. This candidate has misspelled 'pace' and turned it into an incorrect word that is meaningless here.



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Examiner Tip

Always check your spelling.

Question 7

This is the longest reading text on the paper and as it has questions and answers in Spanish, it is one of the most testing tasks. The text concerned the introduction of food-recycling bins. Candidates handled the questions well, on the whole. The question that caused most difficulty was 7b, where the correct answer was to say that this waste came from kitchens or food. A lot of candidates misread the question and wrote where the waste was going, rather than where it had come from or simply lifted 'de origen vegetal o animal'.

Although at first glance question 7d appears the most challenging, as it requires a lengthy explanation, many candidates managed to communicate the idea that this was a pilot scheme and would be rolled out to other districts if it was successful.

(e) (i) ¿Dónde se usan los residuos orgánicos desde hace mucho tiempo?	(1)
<i>pueden poner en el Suelo</i>	
(ii) ¿Por qué?	(1)
<i>enriquece el suelo con nutrientes</i>	
(f) ¿Cómo se diferencia el nuevo sistema de lo que se hacía tradicionalmente?	(1)
<i>ahora se convertirá en uno de escala comercial</i>	
(g) Cita dos posibles desventajas del nuevo sistema.	(2)
<i>el nuevo sistema tomará mucha tiempo para separar de los inorgánicos, también producirá olores inaceptables.</i>	



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Examiner Comments

Answers can sometimes be a direct lift from the text, or may need some manipulation. In this example the candidate has made an attempt to manipulate the language of the text in each question. In 7e(i), the candidate has used his/her own words. Although the grammar is not perfect the meaning is clear and the mark is given. 7e(ii) is a successful mixture of words from the text. 7f is a lift with the addition of 'ahora' at the beginning. This makes the direct quote from the text relevant and it was given the mark. In 7g, the first element has not been successful as there is no mention of what the inorganic matter must be separated from. The second element uses 'olores inaceptables' from the text but adds the candidate's own 'producirá' at the beginning.

In this example, the candidate scored full marks for 7e and 7f and 1 out of 2 for 7g.



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Examiner Tip

Do not be afraid to use words from the text, but always make sure that what you write makes sense. You may need to change a verb ending or add words of your own to write an answer that will score marks.

Some candidates did not read the question accurately.

(e) (i) ¿Dónde se usan los residuos orgánicos desde hace mucho tiempo?	(1)
Los Jardineros	
(ii) ¿Por qué?	(1)
los residuos orgánicos contiene nutrientes para un suelo mas fértil.	
(f) ¿Cómo se diferencia el nuevo sistema de lo que se hacía tradicionalmente?	(1)
el nuevo sistema es en una escala mas grande que antes.	
(g) Cita dos posibles desventajas del nuevo sistema.	(2)
El olor terrible y tener que organizar los residuos que toma mucho tiempo.	



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

There are some good answers here. The answer to 7g has been written in the candidate's own words with no errors. 7f is also answered well, using a mixture of words from the text and the candidate's own words. 7e(ii) contains the inaccurate word 'fértil', but the meaning is still clear, so the mark is awarded. In 7e(i), though, there is a problem. The candidate may well have understood that gardeners have used organic waste for a long time, but crucially s/he has not read the question properly. The question word is 'dónde' and so the answer cannot possibly be 'jardineros'. 'En el jardín' is what was needed.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Always double check the question word. Questions have often been written to require an answer that cannot be lifted from the text directly. If you are asked 'where' then you must answer with a location, if you are asked 'who' then the correct answer will be a person or group of persons etc. It might help to highlight the question words and when you have finished answering, go back and check your answer against the question word.

Question 8

The essay in Question 8 was about entry to university which was clearly a familiar topic to candidates who all managed to respond to some or all of the bullet points.

Examiners were pleased to note that there were not too many overlong essays and that in most cases all four bullet points had been addressed. It was a shame that few answers had a title, which would have been appropriate for an article.

The fourth bullet point gave candidates the chance to give advice, but some did not take the opportunity and simply recycled what they had written for the second bullet point, about the importance of going to university.

Hoy en día la mayoría de los estudiantes quieren entrar en la universidad que a ellos más les apetezca, pero eso no es siempre posible. Uno de mis mejores amigos que quiso estudiar interpretación y traducción no fue a la universidad ya que no le llegaba la nota. Él ahora está estudiando desde casa para poder intentar ^{sacarse la carrera sin asistir a la universidad} ~~(acceder el año que viene)~~



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Examiner Comments

This candidate has addressed the point about someone who did not go to university. Although there is more than one point mentioned, this is not particularly well-developed. The language, however, shows a good range of structures (subjunctive, present continuous) and idiomatic constructions ("no le llegaba la nota") and a high level of accuracy.



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Examiner Tip

Make sure you write several things about each bullet point. You will be rewarded even for a brief mention of a bullet point, but the only way to access the highest mark-range (13-15) is to fully develop all the points. Do not go over the word-limit, though.

Paper Summary

In order to improve performance, candidates should:

- read each question carefully (is it asking where, when, who etc.)
- read the listening questions before listening to the text
- make guesses based on grammar for Q3 before listening
- make use of cognates but beware false friends
- ensure any 'lifts' are not too long and manipulate the language where necessary
- write more than one idea for each bullet point in Q8
- stick to the word length in Q8

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