

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel GCE
in Spanish (6SP03) Paper 1A/1B

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6SP03 GCE Spanish – Examiner’s report – June 2016

The following points were noted by the examiners:

Format of the test

The assessment for this unit is divided into two sections and lasts between 11 and 13 minutes.

The first section is a debate and requires candidates to present and to take a clear stance on any issue of their choice. The examiner then plays devil’s advocate, adopts the opposite view to the candidate and provides strong and meaningful challenges to allow candidates to defend their views and to use the language of debate and argument.

At the end of this section, the examiner indicates that the examination is moving to the second part of the test and moves away smoothly from the debate in part one to the discussion in part two by asking a link question that leads from the initial issue into an area associated with the initial issue.

It is acceptable to move to the second part of the test by moving to a completely different topic and making an appropriate remark to that effect “*Ahora vamos a hablar de algo completamente diferente.?*”

In this second part of the examination candidates are required to demonstrate their ability to engage in a natural, unpredictable (but not unfamiliar) and meaningful discussion of two or three follow up issues. During this section the examiner should encourage the candidate to express their views on the issues raised.

The aim of this unit is set out in Section A, page 6, of the Specifications. Candidates are expected to interact effectively with the teacher/examiner, defend their views and sustain discussion as the teacher/examiner moves the conversation away from the chosen issue. Centres are reminded that the test is an examination of the candidate’s ability to use language spontaneously in largely unpredictable circumstances.

Assessment Principles

The test is assessed positively out of 50.

Response - 20 marks

There are three descriptors in this box.

- Spontaneity - is the discourse spontaneous or pre-learnt, over rehearsed and to what extent?

Discourse is the exchange of opinion and information on an issue between the teacher and the examiner developing the line of argument and exploring it in more depth. In practice, this means that each participant addresses the points made by the other responding appropriately to each other’s input, whether that be a question, a comment or a remark.

Candidates will score well here if the test is a genuine discourse and not a sequence of questions and answers.

- Abstract concepts - Ideas beyond the norm: moral, ethical, political, values and opinions. Can the candidate handle abstract concepts, not purely concrete exchanges? Is the discussion about ideas not purely narrative or descriptive?
- Range of lexis and structures - Does the candidate have a good range of lexis and sentence structures appropriate to the issues discussed? Is the language authentically used?

Quality of Language - 7 marks

This box assesses accuracy of language, pronunciation and intonation.

Reading and research - 7 marks

This box assesses the candidate's level of awareness and understanding of both general issues and the chosen issue for debate.

Candidates need to undertake research into their chosen issue and read widely around other topics in order to be able to demonstrate awareness and to be able to formulate their opinion and justify their arguments.

Comprehension and development - 16 marks

There are two descriptors in this box:

- The ability to understand the spoken language - can candidates understand all the implications of the questions put to them? Is there evidence of challenging questions required to demonstrate that candidates have engaged in a discussion and debate at an appropriate intellectual level for A2?
- The ability to develop the responses - can candidates respond demonstrating understanding, take the initiative and move the discussion forward? Can candidates independently sustain the development of ideas? Can candidates develop the discussion by offering longer contributions that lead to further paths for development.

Development is appropriately expanding on an idea and point of view. This can be in the form of justification, illustration, exemplification, clarification, comparison of the candidate's ideas and views.

Candidate performance

Most Centres are now very familiar with what is required of this unit and their candidates were well prepared. There was a range in quality in the performances heard. However, there were many fine and very competent performances noted.

It is very important for Centres to remember that successful outcome for candidates in this test is closely related to and often dependent upon the way the teacher/examiner conducts the examination. The following observations from tests submitted this summer illustrate this point.

Some teacher/examiners allowed their candidates to recite long monologues learnt by heart without interruption and at times it appeared that they had colluded with candidates. Such practice merely indicates a lack of spontaneity and an over reliance on pre-learning. In such instances candidate's marks will have been affected as per the Marking Guidance sheet.

Candidates should be told that they will be expected to discuss any of the issues they have worked on in the class, at home or are currently in the news. The precise issues to be discussed in their exam, and how they are going to be treated, constitute the unpredictable nature of the test and thereby ensuring that candidates' responses are spontaneous.

Candidates will not score highly if Centres use the same set of topics and questions for all candidates.

Some Centres are still failing to challenge the candidates during the first part of oral assessment. Teacher/examiners conducted the initial issue as a knowledge test rather than as a proper debate. Some did a mixture of probing and factual information questions, with more emphasis on the latter. If the teacher/examiner did not challenge the candidate's stance the appropriate marking principles were applied, as per the Marking Guidance sheet.

A few centres did not observe the appropriate timing for both parts of the assessment. Some presentations were unduly long. Some debates were short, (around 4 min) and some lasted as long as 7 min. Some teacher/examiners wasted time with long-winded explanations and unduly wordy questioning, some even taking up to 1 minute.

The majority of candidates did answer the question asked but there were still some who decided to reinterpret the question into one that they would have liked to be put to them and followed their own agenda.

In spite of the above it was pleasing to note that many candidates approached the test with confidence and responded readily and fluently to all questions asked and they were able to develop their replies without too much reliance on, or prompting from, the teacher/examiner.

The debate

The best candidates had researched their chosen issue, had anticipated counter arguments and had sufficient evidence and knowledge to support their arguments. They also had good command of lexis relevant to their area of debate. Weaker performing candidates simply relied on assertion, generalisations or personal conviction to pull through and consequently all too often ran out of ideas and tended to repeat their arguments.

The following are three suitable issues for the debate noted by our examiners:

- *En contra de la cirugía estética*, which explored moral and ethical ideas as well as including a great deal of research.
- *En contra de los Juegos Olímpicos* - this candidate scored high marks after a detailed debate about the Olympics including a wide range of reasons and

justification for the argument and a vast knowledge about the history and issues related to the Olympic Games.

- *A favor del vegetarianismo*, although on the surface this may seem like a topic which would only allow for minimal debate, the candidate had fully researched the topic which allowed for an interesting debate with lots of factual and abstract ideas expressed. The topic also led nicely to the follow on discussion in part B which was, “*los experimentos con animales*”.

This is an example of an unsuitable issue for a debate noted by one of our Examiners:

- *A favor de los artistas Goya y Miró* - this was more of a presentation rather than a debate, although the candidate demonstrated research on the topic, the grade was limited because there was no discourse/debate with the teacher/examiner.

The discussion

In this part of the examination the better performing candidates were well informed and aware of current issues, could express their opinions clearly, analyse and justify their points of view with examples or evidence and develop their responses. Some excellent examining was heard from many Centres where teacher/examiners asked probing questions in no more than two or three follow up areas which allowed their candidates to produce the necessary detail and depth in their responses. All areas introduced for development followed a natural course in ensuing discussion.

Occasionally some teacher/examiners had clearly prepared their challenging questions and followed their planned line of questioning not responding to or picking up in any way what the candidates said. There was no sense of interaction between the teacher/examiner and candidate and, even though questions were often challenging, the discussion followed a question and answer format.

Sometimes many unconnected topics were covered and the examinations were more interviews than discussions which resulted in a series of long monologues. For example, one candidate spoke uninterrupted for 2 minutes 45 seconds. This is not what is expected or required.

Very occasionally the teacher/examiner interrupted the candidates unnecessarily, talked over them or spoke as much as them not leaving the candidate much time to say anything meaningful and as a consequence disadvantaged him/her when it came to judging his/her performance.

Some teacher/examiners adopted a clear debating attitude in the second part of the exam, instead of just conducting a discussion.

Teacher/examiners must also be aware that questions concerning the candidate's future plans can only be relevant if they lead on to a more in-depth examination of topics like unemployment fears or the value of tourism/effect of tourism on the environment.

The follow up areas for this part of the examination can be chosen from the Additional General Topic Areas for A2 as well as from the General Topic Area for AS.

However, for a candidate to access the higher marks, AS topics visited at A2 should be considered in greater depth and answers given to questions should clearly indicate progression from AS to A2. Occasionally teacher/examiners conducted the first part of the exam (the debate) correctly but for the second part (the discussion) they asked AS type questions carrying out a re-run of the Unit 1 speaking test and thereby not giving the candidates any opportunity to develop their response appropriately.

Illustrated below and noted by our Examiners are:

1. An example of a discussion that illustrates challenging questions about the referendum.

*-Ahora vamos a hablar sobre la permanencia del Reino Unido en la UE ¿tú crees que este voto es tan importante como dicen los políticos?
- Muchas personas se quejan de las leyes que se fijan en Bruselas ¿Tienen razón?
-¿Tú crees que la UE es esencial para nuestra economía y seguridad?
-¿Cómo crees que votará la mayoría de la gente y por qué?
- Si se produjera el 'Brexit' y abandonáramos la UE ¿cuáles son los efectos imprevistos que podría tener esto?*

2. An example where after the candidate's one-minute presentation, the initial issue is discussed rather than debated. The teacher/examiner merely seeks information from the candidate on the issue. Marking principles had to be applied despite the candidate having the ability to respond very well to all the questions asked.

Initial issue: A favor de que los refugiados entren a Europa.

T/E intervention:

*¿Muy bien, pero no crees que sería peligroso abrir las puertas a todos los refugiados?
¿Crees que somos más reacios a recibir refugiados después del atentado en Bruselas?
¿Es la obligación de los países en la Unión Europea ayudar a los refugiados?
¿Cuál sería la solución ideal?
¿Qué crees que va a pasar en el futuro?*

3. An example of an exam that had suitable A Level questions relating to anorexia and Size 0 models, common topics discussed in the AS exam.

Se dice que estas modelos crean una imagen imposible de imitar ¿estás de acuerdo con esta afirmación?

¿Qué problemas psicológicos y físicos ocasionan esta imágenes?

¿Tiene la culpa la prensa o la sociedad? y ¿en qué medida?

¿Qué es lo que ha cambiado en nuestra sociedad?

A pesar de estas imágenes ¿Cómo se puede lograr que las chicas y los chicos respeten y acepten su propio cuerpo?

4. An example of an exam where there were too many unsuitable questions for this level with very little depth. The candidate could not demonstrate clearly progression from AS to A2.

Ahora vamos a hablar de la influencia de la tecnología en la vida de los jóvenes.

*¿Cuáles son las ventajas y las desventajas de la tecnología?
¿Cómo se puede prevenir el ciberbullying?
¿Los amigos en Facebook son amigos de verdad?
¿Añadirías a tu madre a tu Facebook o Twitter?
¿Cuando seas madre, serás más estricta con tus hijos?*

Native or near-native speakers

It was noted by our Examiners that there appeared to be what may be considered native or near native speakers taking this examination. However, not all of them scored high marks. This was often because they had done little or no preparation at all for the examination relying solely on the quality of their spoken language to pull them through. There was some evidence of candidates from South America and although there are indeed some differences, for example in vocabulary, depending on the country from which they originate, our Examiners were aware of these and gave due consideration to all Hispanic alternatives as entirely appropriate.

Suitability of Topics/Issues

The range of issues chosen for the debate was fairly wide. The most successful ones tended to be those that had a moral and/or ethical dimension and which had several possibilities for development. Some issues chosen for the debate were opinions rather than debatable points and as such could not create a meaningful argument.

The most popular issues were UK in or out of the European Union, abortion, euthanasia, the death penalty, immigration/ the refugee crisis, the legalisation of drugs, nuclear energy, terrorism the Paris/Brussels attacks.

Some other interesting issues presented this year were:

- *A favor del veganismo*
- *A favor de que los jóvenes de 16 años puedan votar en el Referéndum*
- *A favor de prohibir el uso de armas en USA*
- *Estoy en contra de la fracturación hidráulica*
- *En contra de la huelga de los médicos*
- *En contra de la independencia de Cataluña*
- *En contra de los Juegos Olímpicos en Brasil*
- *En contra de los inmensos sueldos que ganan los futbolistas*
- *A favor del uso de drones para combatir el terrorismo*
- *A favor de priorizar la tecnología como solución principal al calentamiento global*
- *A favor del turismo a Marte*
- *En contra de los zoos*
- *En contra de la monarquía*
- *A favor de legalizar la prostitución*
- *En contra de las ideas de Donald Trump*
- *A favor del graffiti como arte*
- *A favor del cierre de Guantánamo*
- *Contra el gravamen de los refrescos*
- *A favor de que los directivos empleen las redes sociales para contratar a empleados*

Unsuitable issues were those that were not arguable from both sides, or ones where the candidate was simply expressing personal opinión, such as:

- *En contra de la violencia doméstica*
- *A favor de los artistas Goya y Miró*
- *Creo que el lenguaje usado por los medios es racista*
- *A favor de escuchar música*
- *La familia ayer y hoy: yo estoy a favor de la familia de hoy*
- *A favor de la integración*

Quality of language

Common errors:

- Confusion of ser, estar and haber/ saber,conocer/por,para.
Wrong verb endings, infinitives and gerunds.
- No verb at all 'no necesario' 'no posible'
Gender of nouns, agreement of adjectives,
- Erratic subject/verb agreement
- Confusion between nouns and adjectives

Good candidates stood out with examples of:

- Complex sentences with relative pronouns
- Use of phrases such as 'ya que', 'entonces', 'por eso', 'por consecuencia', 'no solo eso sino también', 'sobre todo', 'lo que quiero decir es que' 'y además'.
Correct comparatives.
Correct use of pronouns.
- Correct and appropriate use of the subjunctive.
- Correct verb endings, varied tenses,
- Correct use of the reflexive.
Correct prepositions following verbs.
Natural use of conversational joiners like "Lo que pasa es que...."
"comprendo lo que dice pero...." "bueno en algunos casos pero en otros es...."

Idiomatic expressions and lexis such as:

de la noche a la mañana / poner en tela de juicio/ retocar las fotos / postrado en la cama / los banderilleros / las dos caras de la moneda / la fuga de cerebro / / ser propenso a sufrir / las directrices legales / un tema de gran envergadura / los cuidados paliativos / para colmo /no cabe la menor duda / si el gobierno ayudara / habría menos delincuencia / los narcotraficantes / las pruebas de aptitud / vasos sanguíneos / sobre dicha cultura / que el gobierno impartiese / las leyes que se imponen desde Bruselas / la brecha salarial / un sistema judicial sofisticado / la custodia compartida / es necesario que actuemos inmediatamente / los daños colaterales / está claro que siempre hay una minoría que se beneficia / una serie de parámetros / morir prematuramente / sería una vergüenza si no diéramos .../ el cordón umbilical / las células madre embrionarias / es esencial que mantengamos la sociedad a salvo / existen en dos mundos paralelos / contribuyen al efecto invernadero / no es apto para todos los bolsillos / la tasa de abandono escolar / es necesario que nos involucremos

In some cases, the pronunciation of some words, especially those close to the English, gave rise to some difficulty. For example:

difícil.. fácil.. idea.. usan.. policía.. problema.. variedad.. sociedad.. Europa.. eutanasia.

Also the incorrect pronunciation of the silent 'h' For example: "alcohol" became 'alcojol'; ahorrar became 'ajorrar'

Intonation - some candidates seem to pay no attention to authentic-sounding intonation, natural pauses and conversational interaction. Without these sometimes it was difficult to understand what was being said, even if the pronunciation of the words was relatively accurate.

Some confusion with:

- muy/mucho, mayor/mejor and menor
- words such as igualdad, mayoría, controversial, suportivo, serio, las medias, los resultados, los afectos, el mundo tercero, la destinación, las Olímpicas.
- expressions such as es depende, es vale, es necesita, es importancia, es ridículo, es puede, no es importancia, es debe que.
- English verbs given a Spanish ending: restringir, afrontar, acceder, permitir, suportar, promover, resolver.

Candidates should be encouraged to use the language of debate and teachers might like to introduce idioms that aid this kind of dialogue such as:

a mi parecer, a mi modo de ver, estoy convencida que, admito que, yo también lo veo así, además, no solo eso sino también, no se puede negar que, lo que quiero decir es que, hay excepciones, de acuerdo a, según, no comparto este punto de vista, no estoy de acuerdo con lo que dices porque, entiendo lo que dice pero, hay que tener en cuenta que, etc.

Teacher/Examiner performance

1. Conduct of the examination

Most teacher/examiners conducted excellent tests. They had carefully read the oral training guide, the Examiner's Report as well as the Teacher/Examiner Handbook and followed all the guidelines. To reward the candidate's ability to understand spoken Spanish these teachers/examiners asked clear, uncluttered and yet challenging questions using a variety of structures and lexis. They listened to the detail of what their candidates said and followed their lead.

However, in a few cases, some teacher/examiners spoke too much and asked long and some quite convoluted questions, interrupted/corrected the candidate or, dominated the exchange. This was to the disadvantage of their candidates.

2. Timing

The specification is clear about the timing required for the Unit 3 exam.

In Part 1, the debate, the candidate should introduce his or her stance for up to 1 minute, (it is not essential that the candidate uses the whole minute for this) after which the teacher/examiner should interrupt so the debate continues for a further 4 minutes before the teacher/examiner moves on to the discussion section (Part 2).

The whole oral should last between 11-13 minutes.

Teacher/examiners are reminded here that it would be unnatural for any discussion to adhere precisely to the quoted timings as there needs to be a smooth transition from one topic to another. Nevertheless, the timings of the examination should remain as close as possible to those indicated in the specification.

In the cases where the tests were short the agreed penalty was applied to the test and resulted in a loss of marks. Where tests were too long our Examiners stopped listening at the end of the next sentence once 13 minutes had passed.

Centre Performance

1. Recording

- Tracks on CD/USB should be clearly labelled.
- Labels should not be stuck onto CDs/USBs that could impede the function of the medium.
- The relevant candidate's number must be entered on the OR3 form.
- OR3 Forms must be signed by both candidate and teacher/examiner.
- CD/USBs should be adequately packed/protective packaging.

The quality of recording should be clear. Occasionally the teacher/examiners placed the microphone closer to themselves rather than to the candidate and as a consequence recordings/utterances of the candidate were difficult to hear.

Candidates should be discouraged from tapping pens, rattling keys or any other noise that interferes with the recording.

Before sending the CD to the Pearson Examiner it is important that the Centre double checks that all recordings are saved correctly on the CD/USB

2. Documentation

A few Centres failed to send the attendance registers.

Occasionally the OR3 forms included 'the stance on the issue' written in English rather than in Spanish, as required.

A new version of the OR3 form is available to download from the Pearson website. This version of the form should be used for all future examinations for Unit 3.

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/spanish-2008.html>

Teacher/Examiners Advice and Guidance

The following is offered as advice and guidance for the successful preparation of candidates for future oral assessments at A2:

- Examiners need to observe the appropriate timing for both parts of the examination.
- Candidates must choose a controversial issue that easily lends itself to debate and they must make sure it is phrased correctly '*Estoy a favor de..*' '*Estoy en contra de..*'.
- Candidates need to undertake reading and research to provide supporting evidence for their arguments.
- Teacher/examiners should challenge the candidate's views so that they are given suitable opportunities to demonstrate their ability to argue their case and justify their opinion. If there is no debate the penalty cap will be applied, as per the Marking guidance sheet.
- Candidates should not be given advance knowledge of the issues to be raised during the examination or learn their answers by heart as this lack of spontaneity will be reflected in the application of the mark scheme. In particular, a minimum marks allocation for Response.
- Teacher/examiners need to ask sufficiently complex and challenging questions to allow their candidates to access the full range of marks available for Comprehension and Development. Please note, questions can be linguistically challenging or conceptually challenging. Complexity can be achieved through the response individual questions require.
- The candidate and the teacher/examiner should respond appropriately to each other's input. To reach the full range of the marking criteria there should be frequent examples of spontaneous discourse.
- Teacher/examiners must make sure that the second part of the exam is not a re-run of the Unit 1 oral test. For candidates to access the higher marks they must show progression from AS to A2
- Teacher/examiners must remember that the second part of the exam is a discussion not a debate.
- Teacher/examiners should not introduce too many follow up issues to allow the candidate to produce depth of discussion and development of opinions.
- Teacher/examiners should not rotate the same two or three issues for all their candidates but rather personalise each examination for each individual candidate.
- Teacher/examiners should not correct or finish candidates' responses.
- Teacher/examiners should not re-phrase what the candidate has said to clarify meaning or 'interpret' what the candidate meant.

Conclusion

The outcome of the examination of this unit this summer was pleasing. The majority of Centres had prepared their candidates thoroughly so they had a good understanding of the requirements of this unit. This allowed candidates to respond well to the demands and challenges for an A2 oral assessment.

Unit 3: Understanding and Spoken Response

Marking guidance for oral examiners

Tests that are too short

The timing of the test begins the moment the candidate starts the presentation.

A test is too short if it is less than 10 minutes 30 seconds (including a 30 second tolerance).

Drop down one mark band to the corresponding mark across the following assessment grids:

- 'Response'
- 'Comprehension and Development'

e.g.

5–8	Limited incidence of spontaneous discourse; limited range of lexis and structures; very little evidence of abstract language.
9–12	Satisfactory incidence of spontaneous discourse; range of lexis and structures adequate with some ability to handle language of abstract concepts.
13–16	Frequent examples of spontaneous discourse; good range of lexis and structures; good use of abstract concepts.

If a candidate would have scored 12 for Response, they should be given 8, if they would have scored 9, they should be given 5. A similar adjustment would be made to the mark for Comprehension and Development. This adjustment should not be applied to marks for Quality of language or Reading and Research.

Tests that are too long

Once the 13 minute mark has passed, the examiner stops listening at the end of the next sentence/sense group.

Tests that do not have a debatable or defensible issue

e.g. *where the candidate does not present or defend a definite stance, or the teacher-examiner fails to give the candidate an opportunity to justify their opinions.*

- Candidates will be limited to scoring a maximum of 4 for 'Reading and Research'.
- This may affect the marks given for 'Comprehension and Development'.

Tests that do not move away from initial issue/topic

e.g. *further unpredictable areas of discussion are not covered and/or a monologue.*

- Candidates are limited in the amount of marks they can score. Please see the grids.

Response	
Only one unpredictable area discussed	No more than 12 marks
No unpredictable areas discussed	No more than 8 marks

Reading and research	
Only one unpredictable area discussed	No more than 4 marks
No unpredictable areas discussed	No more than 3 marks

Comprehension and development	
Only one unpredictable area discussed	No more than 10 marks
No unpredictable areas discussed	No more than 7 marks

Spontaneity/Response

A performance which is, in the marker's view, *largely* recited, and demonstrates *very little* spontaneity as well as impaired intonation may suggest pre-learning. If the examiner believes that a test has been pre-learnt then the mark for **Response** will be limited to 8, irrespective of use of lexis/structure/abstract language.

A pre-learnt test may also affect the mark given for **Comprehension and Development** if it does not permit a natural and logical interaction.

It is important that the PE and team leaders can see clearly the justification for marks awarded and examiners should note briefly on the OR3 form the reason for any caps which are applied in marking an oral test.

Spontaneous use of language arises from manipulating the reservoir of structures and lexis they have acquired in preparing for the examination in response to the unpredictable nature of the discussion as it unfolds. The unpredictability is created by the teacher/examiner picking up on a remark and probing for greater clarity or further explanation or opinion.

Discourse

Discourse is a discussion where the candidate demonstrates the ability to interact on an issue. This means developing the line of argument and exploring it in more depth.

Discourse describes the exchange of opinion and information on an issue between the candidate and the teacher/examiner. In practice, this means that each participant addresses the points made by the other. The candidate and the Teacher/Examiner should respond appropriately to each other's input, whether that be a question, a comment, a remark. To reach the full range of the marking criteria there will be frequent examples of such discourse.

Challenge

Evidence of challenging questions is required to demonstrate that candidates have engaged in discussion and debate at an appropriate intellectual level for A2.

In the first part, there must be evidence that the teacher/examiner has confronted the points of view presented by the candidate. In the second part, there must be evidence of opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their full understanding of the issues.

Development

Development means appropriately expanding on an idea and point of view. This can be in the form of justification, illustration, exemplification, clarification, comparison of the candidates' ideas and views.

If a score of '0' is awarded for any of the assessment grids, the recording should be referred to your Team Leader.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>