



Pearson

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Spanish (4SP0/02)

Paper 2: Reading and Writing

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General comments

The reading and writing paper is designed to test comprehension skills through a number of tasks of different types, based on texts of different lengths and levels of complexity. The reading comprehension questions vary in length from just a few words to an extended article. Students must respond to questions using both verbal and non-verbal methods. There are two writing tasks, one long and one short and a variety of topic areas are covered.

This series, it was pleasing to see that the majority of candidates showed a clear understanding of the rubrics and the demands of the paper, both for the comprehension questions and the writing tasks; they had been well prepared for the examination. This was particularly evident in the Question 6 essays, where the performance of most candidates demonstrated that they were aware of the need to cover all bullet points, enabling them to access the higher bands of the mark grids. It is worth noting however, that many candidates wrote far more than was necessary for both Question 3(b) and Question 6. There was no specific penalty for this, but for some candidates, the more they wrote, the more weaknesses they displayed.

Question 1

Question 1 was based on weather, with candidates having to match a statement with a picture. Most candidates were able to score full marks here.

Question 2

Question 2 was another picture matching exercise set in the context of a report about a holiday. Most candidates were able to score at least 3 out of 5. There were very clear difficulties with Question 2(iii) and Question 2(iv), where *arena* and *maleta* were not recognised. The vocabulary for this task is taken from the *Minimum Core Vocabulary*, so there should have been no surprises here.

Question 3(a)

Question 3(a) was done well by most candidates, with many achieving full marks. The task was to fill a gap in sentences referring to what we were told about three people's homes. The greatest difficulties were in Question 3(a)iv and Question 3(a)v. In Question 3(a)iv, *llaves* was often incorrectly given in place of *escaleras* and in Question 3(v), an adjective was often offered instead of the correct noun *vista*.

Question 3(b)

Question 3(b) was a writing task linked to the theme of Q3(a). Candidates were asked to explain what they liked about their home. Some candidates merely described their home, without saying what they liked about it and so could not gain full marks for content. In spite of this, most candidates

achieved full marks for both content and language and many went beyond what was required by the exercise and wrote lengthy answers including complex sentences in a variety of tenses. Many candidates used the prompt words *zona* and *jardín* and based their responses on these aspects of their home. There were a few who made a reference to family life as part of what they liked about their house.

Question 4

In Question 4, candidates had to match statements to the description of three job offers. The jobs were to report on life in a beautiful but remote part of Australia, to be an ice-cream taster and to spend some months lying down as part of a scientific experiment. This was a more challenging task, with candidates scoring on average 3 or 4 marks. The items which caused the most difficulty were Question 4(ii) and Question 4(v), where *oro* and *sugerencias* were unknown.

Question 5

Question 5 is the most challenging of the comprehension questions. This year it was a text about the food of the future, which, according to the text, may rely on insects as a source of protein. Candidates scored a full range of marks on this question, from 10 to 0 and everything in between. The average score was 5. The question that proved accessible for all abilities was Question 5(h). The main problem in Question 5(b), was where students wrote about the advantages of cultivating insects (they require less space, energy and water), rather than answering the question, which required them to write about the disadvantages of animals (they need more space, energy and water). Many candidates failed to score in Question 5(c) because they did not simply refer to cooking. Some lifted *esto se reduce al cocinarlas*, which makes no sense in the context of the question while some misunderstood the word *grillos*, taking it to mean "grills" and gave an answer such as *cocinar en los grillos*. This could not be rewarded.

Many chose to lift words directly from the text to answer the questions. Although this is permissible and in many cases could lead to a correct answer, some candidates failed to score because they lifted either over-long or incomplete sections of text, demonstrating that they had not really understood the passage, but had simply recognised a key word. Question 5(f) was particularly prone to this. The only lift that adequately answered the question was the full quote *en el Oeste hemos perdido mucho tiempo temiendo que los insectos nos cayeran en la comida*. Many candidates missed the beginning, therefore failing to make reference to a context that makes eating insects ironic. Some missed off the end, suggesting that we are afraid of insects, not mentioning them falling in our food. Correct answers referred to the context, either of time (e.g. *en el pasado/ antes/ normalmente*) or location (e.g. *en el Oeste*). Question 5(g) was often

answered with a lift from the text about Harvard or the packaging being made from chocolate etc, none of which answered the question “Why does food need packaging?”.

Examiners enjoyed reading many well written essays in Question 6. They were creative and interesting to read as well as accurate and with good elements of application of language. Only the very weakest candidates were not able to handle at least two time frames in their pieces. Some had prepared in advance examples of complex structures which they managed to include, by adjusting them to the particular requirements of each of the essays.

It is of paramount importance that candidates address fully all the bullet points in order to have the opportunity to achieve high marks for communication and content. Some students responded to the bullet points in a rather mechanical fashion, with statements that in no way were connected, while others were able to cleverly link the four aspects to create a convincing blog, report or email. Some idiomatic language was reported by examiners, for example: *se me hace la boca agua, para chuparse los dedos, un ojo de la cara, entre dicho y hecho hay largo trecho, para colmo, estoy hasta la coronilla, aburrirse como una ostra, me pone de los nervios, al fin y al cabo, me subo por las paredes, vayas donde vayas, tu granito de arena, si quiere que te diga la verdad, gangas, a la vuelta de la esquina, en menos que canta un gallo.*

Question 6(a)

The least popular choice of essay was Question 6(a), which was about the environment, but candidates who attempted it often displayed an impressive command of relevant, topic-specific vocabulary. A common mistake was to substitute *dormir* for *morir*, when describing a future brought about by a failure to protect the environment.

Question 6 (b)

In Question 6(b), there were some imaginative reasons given for preferring either the shopping centre or local shops, including a desire to support the local economy and the relationships that exist between customer and sales staff, as well as a discussion of the amount of choice available. Common issues in Question 6(c), were students not explaining WHEN they watch TV with their family and the final bullet point, which an unfortunate number of students interpreted as what they would see in the cinema in the future, rather than what cinemas would be like in the future. Those who did approach this bullet point correctly, often gave convincing answers about improved special effects and cheaper popcorn, while some very good answers referred to the rise in streaming services and the resulting decline in the popularity of the cinema.

Overall, candidates performed well this year, though useful points to bear in mind are:

- It is possible to achieve full marks in Question 3b by writing only 50 words in one tense.
- Written comprehension answers MUST directly answer the question. An over-long or partial lift may not do this and may therefore not score.
- All four bullet points in the Question 6 essays must be covered in order to be able to access all the marks available.

Grade Boundaries

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