

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

GCSE Spanish (5SP03) Paper 3H

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Background to the paper

In both reading papers students are asked to demonstrate their understanding of a range of different written texts types. Items selected for testing cover different contexts and styles. They are written to reflect a balanced coverage of all the common topic areas. Types of questions used to assess candidate's performance include: matching pictures to words, multiple choice, completing grids, selecting between a number of given options and identifying correct statements from a list of possible options. There is in addition, one question on each paper that requires candidates to provide short answers to specific questions posed in English. Each question has a total of 4 marks except for Grades A and A* where the total is 8 marks. All rubrics are given in English.

Higher level candidates are required to demonstrate an understanding of a variety of written texts which include both familiar and unfamiliar language and which relate to past present and future events. At Higher level candidates are also required to demonstrate their ability to extract specific details from what they have read, to identify main points from the relevant text and to draw conclusions from items read which include more complex and less familiar language included in extended reading texts.

General comments

Generally candidates performed appropriately on each paper of the papers set. Marks for each ranged between forty to eighty per cent on each task set. In the crossover questions common to both papers, candidates entered at Higher tier as anticipated were about 20% more successful than those entered for the Foundation tier.

Detailed comments

As a rule, candidates followed the instructions given in the rubric for all the different types of questions set.

Spelling

The spelling of some English words proved problematic for some candidates. However, examiners were sympathetic in their responses and where spelling was phonically recognisable versions of required words were credited positively.

Grammar

In question 2 candidates were required to read a text message referring to a birthday celebration and to respond indicating the appropriate time zone of each event. Some candidates struggled with recognising verbs in different tenses.

Candidates' performance

Most candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the rubrics and the general format of the examination. It was evident that they had been well prepared and had practiced in preparation for the examination.

The Higher paper proved to be accessible to all candidates. Entry selections made by centres were appropriate. Questions set clearly tested their knowledge and understanding of Spanish. Very good candidates scored highly throughout each paper set. They demonstrated a clear and precise understanding of the subtleties expected at the higher level questions, in terms of content vocabulary, grammar and level of inference. Very few candidates left significant gaps in their answers or failed to complete the paper at either level. Crossover questions generally discriminated well and were completed more accurately by candidates who entered at the higher level. In question 4, some candidates lost marks because they did not follow the instructions given in the rubric and answered in Spanish rather than in English. Centres need to remind their candidates to ensure they follow all instructions given very carefully in the future.

Question 1

Whilst overall candidate performance was better on this paper than on Paper 3F, candidates still found this question challenging. References in the passage to tenses other than the present confused some candidates causing fluctuation in outcomes. There was too some evidence of random guesswork.

Question 2

The majority of candidates scored the 4 marks available for this question.

Question 3

Q3 This question was targeted at Grade B and above and proved challenging to many candidates. Slightly less than 50% of the cohort entry scored all of the marks available for this question.

The main cause for the loss of marks in this section was:

6(b) candidates incorrectly ticked this answers because they did not focus sufficiently on the key words in the passage and were distracted by the detail in the statement.

6 (d) candidates failed to recognise *se ha roto los dos tobillos*.

6 (f) candidates missed the link between lectura and reading.

Question 4

Q4 Typical Grade A candidates generally scored well on this question.

However only the very high end of the entry scored the full marks available.

4(a) Slightly more than 50% of candidates scored the one mark available.

4(b) Most candidates got this correct.

4(c) All but the very best candidates failed to recognise *se evita hacer colas and comprar artículos que no se encuentran en tu país*. However *se puede comprar con hacer un click* was well recognised.

4(d) Most candidates managed to score at least one of the two marks available for this question .

4(e) This section of the question discriminated well between candidates.

Whilst the most able were successful in identifying the correct responses, there was some evidence of guesswork. In particular where candidates offered their own speculative responses about what is likely to happen in the future rather than referring to the information given in the text.

4(f) Few candidates provided the right answer to this question. Many

candidates struggled with sean más cuidadosos en el mundo virtual que en el mundo real and simply guessed that this was something to do with the importance of living in the real world.

Question 5

Most candidates scored the 4 marks available for this question.

Question 6

Most candidates scored 3 of the 4 marks available for this question.

Question 7

Q7 Overall candidates attempted this question well with many scoring the full 4 marks available for this question.

Question 8

The final Q in this examination targets Grade A*. The following key points are worthy of note.

Q 8 (i) 70% of all candidates answered this question correctly.

Q 8 (ii) was largely successful.

Q 8(iii) nativo' was problematic to all but the very few.

Q 8(iv) was mainly successful.

Q 8 (v) candidates often confused 'devolverán' and 'recibirán'

Q 8 (vi) only 50% of all candidates were able to link between 'todos los días' with 'a diario'.

Q 8 (vii) this question was more frequently correct than incorrect.

Q 8 (viii) Most candidates answered this question correctly.

Conclusion

The outcome of this unit was pleasing. The majority of centres had prepared their candidates thoroughly so they had a good understanding of the requirements of this unit and responded well to its demands

Grade Boundaries

The modern foreign languages specifications share a common design, but the assessments in different languages are not identical. Grade boundaries at unit level reflect these differences in assessments, ensuring that candidate outcomes across these specifications are comparable at specification level.

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>

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