

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback Summer 2010

GCSE

GCSE Spanish (5SP04)
Unit 4: Writing in Spanish

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Unit 4: Writing in Spanish (5SP04)

The new Specification has changed significantly from the legacy GCSE Spanish 1246 Specification.

Candidates have up to two weeks or up to six hours to prepare each task. Candidates prepared two tasks, set by the centre, both of which were produced during controlled conditions and were sent to Edexcel to be marked by examiners. Unlike the legacy equivalent, this unit is not moderated. The tasks are marked following the same assessment grids and the results are by outcome. The tasks can be taken at any time during the course and can be submitted for assessment in the Summer or January series of examinations.

Candidates aiming at Grade C and above are expected to write over 200 words per task and, it is anticipated that all candidates will write at least 100 words for each task in the two assessment sessions. In some cases it will be more appropriate for certain candidates if latter tasks (Grades G-D) are broken down into to a maximum of 4 shorter tasks to make up the word count. This is acceptable, and the work will be marked holistically.

As in the past, writing tasks are positively marked and the assessment grids are similar in weighting to the Higher Tier grids in the legacy GCSE terminal exam although the wording of the criteria has changed in places.

Candidates had a choice to write within any of the four theme areas suggested by Edexcel in the new specification:

- Media and culture
- Sport and leisure
- Travel and tourism
- Business, work and employment

or centres chose to complete a centre-devised option outside these themes. The other option was to use or adapt Edexcel-produced stimuli. The tasks can be found under 'controlled assessment - tasks', on the Edexcel Spanish homepage.

As this series was the first time for assessment, entry was small. In general, candidates seemed well prepared for the new tests and seemed encouraged by the opportunity to take ownership of the tasks in the sense that they could choose their own topic areas. In the main, tasks were generally sound and accessible to the full range of candidates. They showed evidence of good planning overall.

There were a few submissions where some weaker candidates had not written enough, the consequence of this was that candidates could not be awarded high marks and some work was a little formulaic but not excessively so.

Administration by centres was generally effective although there were instances where the completed Examiner Mark Sheets had not been submitted to Edexcel. Centres usually remembered to enclose the Authenticity Record Sheets. Centres are reminded that there is a check list in the Instruction for the Conduct of Examination (page 15 of the Summer 2010 booklet). The required materials must be posted with the submitted materials.

Most centres submitted tasks similar to the legacy coursework favourites. Popular topic areas were Holidays and Travel, Local Area, Film Reviews, Interviews with Famous People, School (centre-devised option) and introducing oneself to a Spanish penfriend etc. Presentation of some tasks was still an issue and centres should note that candidates must realise that illegible handwriting can have a detrimental effect on the final result. If the examiner cannot mark the material, marks the candidates may deserve cannot be given.

It would be helpful if centres could remember to submit the following in future years:

- (i) Copies of the stimulus for each task.
- (ii) Copies of the Examiner Mark Sheets duly completed in all relevant areas.
- (iii) The Authenticity Record Sheets.
- (iv) Copies of the CA4 student preparation forms containing the 30 words/5 drawings maximum that the student used as a prompt during the test.
- (v) Copies of the attendance registers.

It would also be helpful if candidates adhered to the suggested word count mentioned above. There were a few very long submissions and although candidates will not be penalised for overlong tasks it should be noted that more does not always mean better.

For more information about this unit please refer to the specification or the 'Controlled Assessment Support Book - Writing'. Both of which can be found on the Edexcel website.

Grade Boundaries

Grade	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw mark boundary	60	48	43	38	33	27	22	17	12	0
Uniform mark scale boundary	90	81	72	63	54	45	36	27	18	0

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.

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