

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

GCSE Spanish (5SP04)
Paper 1 Writing in Spanish

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GCSE Spanish Unit 4 Writing in Spanish Examiner Report

Unit requirements

Students are required to submit two pieces of written work of about 200 words each for grades C and above. Each task must be produced in one session of up to 60 minutes under controlled conditions. All students should write at least 100 words for each task. Tasks of fewer than 100 words are capped at a mark of 6 for Communication and content. For weaker students, two shorter pieces of work can be offered to make up one task. The two pieces may be from the same general topic area or from different topic areas. Centres may set their own tasks or choose or adapt one from the stimulus material provided by Edexcel. The two pieces have to differ in content and purpose. They should also differ from the tasks set for the Speaking assessments in Unit 2. Most of the work seen during this series complied with the above requirements and a lot of good quality work was produced by students.

Task setting

Each task must have a stimulus, but this can consist of just a title or heading. It can either be in English or Spanish. The best tasks included four to six bullet points which encouraged students to give descriptions and opinions, to develop their responses using a variety of vocabulary and language structures and to use a variety of tenses. The wording of the stimulus is important. It is better to use the rubric "You could mention ..." rather than "You must mention ..." since the latter could potentially penalise students who have not covered all the bullet points listed. Examiners were instructed to take note of omissions by students in assessing the mark for Communication and Content.

Popular tasks noted by examiners included:

- Holidays
- School
- Work experience
- My town

Centres are encouraged to give plenty of thought to the selected tasks. It may be the case with a range of student abilities to set two or more entirely different tasks. For more able students it is important to ensure that the tasks set will enable them to access the higher mark bands of the assessment criteria. The task should encourage students to expand on ideas and points of view. It should give them the opportunity to use a variety of

vocabulary and complex language structures. The task should also enable students to use a wide range of tenses. More successful tasks included accounts where students could write at length and maintain a logical, linked thread throughout their work.

Certain tasks are less suitable for less able students. A film review demands a confident use of a wide range of vocabulary and language structures for it to be successful. Letters of application for jobs or letters of complaint to a hotel are not always good choices as they tend to limit student responses and follow set language patterns. Celebrity or sport person interviews are usually not very successful as there is very little opportunity for linking ideas throughout the response and students often do not have the language skills to express themselves adequately. Some new suggested tasks will be appearing on the Edexcel website in September 2013 which give some fresh ideas for tasks.

Students should be encouraged to produce individual responses to a task stimulus. The best student responses were those which contained both an element of individuality and of creativity. Some examiners noted that some students from the same centres were producing responses which followed a very similar rigid pattern and structure. Whilst it is recognised that students may have access to the same resources throughout the planning and preparation period, the final responses should be varied and original. The best student responses were entirely relevant to the stimulus, well structured with paragraphs and correct punctuation and were well presented with neat, legible handwriting. A task may be presented as handwritten or word processed.

Form CA4 and dictionaries

Students are allowed to use notes in the controlled conditions session. The notes should be written on the CA4 form and may include no more than 30 words and up to 5 small pictures. The use of this form is optional. A greater number of students chose not to use the CA4 this series but where it was used, it was a useful support for those students. Centres are asked to indicate whether this form has been used or not on the CM4 Mark Sheet. The use of a dictionary is also allowed, but some students who had access to one were not able to use it properly and produced many errors due to this.

Assessment Criteria

The best student responses communicate clearly throughout with a wide range of ideas and opinions presented and linked using a range of adverbs and adverbial phrases. A student who tries to express ideas beyond their capabilities will produce work which is likely not to communicate very well. Repetition of vocabulary and language structures and simple lists will not attract high marks. The best responses will also contain a range of verbs and

tense formations and students will be unlikely to score high marks for Communication and Content if these are not present.

With regard to language, the best responses include a variety of vocabulary and complex structures. Complex structures might include some of the following:

- Subordinate clauses
- Variety of tenses
- Comparative, superlative & possessive adjectives
- Present subjunctive
- Negative and interrogative forms
- Use of *desde hace*
- Direct and indirect object pronouns
- Adverbs and adverbial phrases
- Connectives and linking words

A mark of 4 or 5 may only be awarded for accuracy if the student response contains enough examples of complex structures. A response which is very accurate but contains only simple, straightforward language will not attract a high mark for accuracy.

Administration

Most centres adhered to all of the guidelines regarding administration. However, there are a number administrative issues which are yet to be entirely resolved. They include the following:

- Use of the old-style Student Mark Sheet instead of the up-to-date one (CM4) which can be found on the website.
- Inclusion of drafts which were not labelled as such so it was difficult for the examiner to see which response was completed under controlled conditions.
- Work despatched to the incorrect moderator/examiner (often the Unit 2 moderator).
- Work not received by the published deadline.

Task submission

Centres are requested to arrange the students' work for their centre in the following order:

- The current Student Mark Sheet CM4 (available on the website) fully completed and signed by both the student & the teacher.
- Task stimulus with any suggested bullet points (if used).
- Form CA4 for Task 1 (if used).
- Student's response to Task 1 stimulus. Task 1 is the first task listed on the Student Mark Sheet CM4.
- Form CA4 for Task 2 (if used).
- Student's response to Task 2 stimulus. Task 2 is the first task listed on the Student Mark Sheet CM4.

The complete work of each student should then be stapled together or securely attached with a treasury tag. Centres are politely requested to not use plastic pockets as this slows down the marking process for the examiners.

The work for all students should then be arranged according to the order of the attendance register which should also be forwarded to the examiner with the work.

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>

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