



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Spanish (5SP04)
Paper 4: Writing in Spanish.

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GCSE Spanish
Unit 4: Writing
Examiners Report

Summer 2017 is the final year for the current specification. The following notes are the final observations and feedback for this unit (5SP04):

Unit requirements

Candidates were required to submit two pieces of written work of about 200 words each for grades C and above. Each task had to be produced in one session of up to 60 minutes under controlled conditions. All candidates should have written at least 100 words for each task. Tasks of fewer than 100 words were capped at a mark of 6 for Communication and Content. For less able candidates, two shorter pieces of work could have been offered to make up one unit. The two pieces may have come from the same general topic area or from different topic areas. Centres might have set their own tasks or chosen or adapted one from the stimulus material provided by Edexcel. The two pieces had to differ in content and purpose. They should also have differed 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 candidates.

Task setting

Each task had to have a stimulus, but this could consist of just a title or heading. It could either have been in English or Spanish. The best tasks included four to six bullet points which encouraged candidates 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 was important. It was better to use the rubric "You could mention ..." rather than "You must mention ..." since the latter could have potentially penalised candidates who had not covered all of the bullet points listed. Examiners were instructed to take note of omissions by candidates in assessing the mark for Communication and Content.

Popular tasks noted by examiners continued to be:

- Holidays
- School
- Work experience
- My town
- Healthy Living

Throughout the lifetime of this specification, centres have been encouraged to give plenty of thought to the selected tasks. It might have been the case with a range of candidate abilities that it was better to set two or more

entirely different tasks. For more able candidates it was important to ensure that the tasks set enabled them to access the higher mark bands of the assessment criteria. The task should have encouraged candidates to expand on ideas and points of view. It should have given them the opportunity to use a variety of vocabulary and complex language structures. The task should also have enabled candidates to use a wide range of tenses. More successful tasks included accounts where candidates could write at length and maintain a logical, linked thread throughout their work.

Certain tasks were less suitable for less able candidates. A film/book review demanded 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 were not always good choices as they tended to limit candidate responses and follow set language patterns. Celebrity or sport person interviews were usually not very successful as there was often very little opportunity for linking ideas throughout the response and candidates often did not have the language skills to express themselves adequately.

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

Form CA4 and dictionaries

Candidates were allowed to use notes in the controlled conditions session. The notes should have been written on the CA4 form and may have included no more than 30 individual full words and up to 5 small pictures. Please note that any kind of code such as dashes in place of words or pictures to represent the sound of a word was not acceptable. The use of this form was optional. If it had been used then it must have been included with the work when it was forwarded to the examiner. Where the CA4 form was included, it was a useful support for those candidates who had chosen to use it. Centres were asked to indicate whether this form had been used or not on the CM4 Mark Sheet.

The use of a dictionary was allowed. However some candidates who had access to one were not able to use it properly and often produced many errors in their responses.

Assessment Criteria

The best candidate responses communicated clearly throughout with a wide range of ideas and opinions presented and linked using a range of adverbs and adverbial phrases. A candidate who tried to express ideas beyond their capabilities produced work which did not communicate very well. Repetition of vocabulary and language structures and simple lists did not attract high marks. The best responses also contained a range of verbs and tense formations and candidates were unlikely to score high marks for Communication and Content if these were not present.

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

- Subordinate clauses
- Variety of tenses
- Comparative, superlative & possessive adjectives
- Use of the 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 was only awarded for accuracy if the candidate response contained enough examples of successful complex/ambitious structures. A response which was very accurate but contained only simple, straightforward language did not attract a high mark for accuracy.

Administration

Most centres adhered to all of the guidelines regarding administration. However, there were a number administrative issues which were not entirely resolved. They included the following:

- 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 examiner
- Work not received by the published deadline

