



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level
In Spanish (WSP04)
Paper 01: Research, Understanding and
Written Response

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This paper is worth 90 marks. It is a mixed-skill unit which consists of three sections.

Section A - Listening (20 marks)

Candidates listen to four recorded extracts in Spanish. They retrieve and convey information given in the recordings by responding to questions of different types.

Question 1 - La moda de verano

A multiple-choice question worth 4 marks. The question was accessible to most candidates. The mark most frequently missed was 1(c), as some candidates did not manage to identify “ropa de playa” as a new aspect of the fashion collection.

Question 2 - Una futbolista de la selección española

A multiple-choice question worth 4 marks. This question also proved accessible to the majority of candidates. The mark most frequently missed was 2(d).

Question 3 - La primera planta de energía termosolar de América Latina

A cloze text question worth 4 marks. Candidates had to choose the correct answers from a pool of 8 possible words. Although most candidates scored full marks, a few candidates opted for the incorrect distractors “económico” in 3(b) and “produce” for 3(c).

Question 4 - El ciclismo profesional colombiano

This question is worth 8 marks. Candidates heard a discussion between two speakers and gave short answers in Spanish. The majority demonstrated a solid understanding of the question and provided accurate answers. This question provided a spread of marks.

(b) Sometimes this question was only half answered. Candidates wrote, “les dio un respiro” without adding the circumstances. Occasionally “dieron” was copied from the text, but caused ambiguity and was therefore rejected. Some candidates talked about the similar experiences growing up that Bernal and other Colombians share. While this information was mentioned, it does not answer the question.

(c) The majority of candidates gave the correct idea of determination. Some candidates made reference to the fact that all non-europeans that won the Tour de France were Colombian, which was incorrect. Some candidates wrote that Colombians feel inspired that they can be number 1, without mentioning that the inspiration comes from winning at something huge.

(d) Correct answers expressed the feelings of the Colombians due to the victories in cycling. Some candidates lost marks for not referring to a feeling with answers such as, “pueden mirar más allá de la guerra y la violencia” or “ha dado un motivo para mirar más allá de la guerra” Some answers suggested that they were happy about their country, which was a misinterpretation.

(e) This was well answered in most cases although some candidates omitted any reference to cyclists and simply said “no daña al otro” which was not specific enough.

(f) Most candidates managed to score both marks here. A few quoted “sugieren otra manera de relacionarse con la violencia” without explaining what that “otra manera” was.

Section B - Reading and Grammar (30 marks)

In this section, candidates read texts written in Spanish. They retrieve and convey information in the texts by responding to questions in Spanish. Candidates also manipulate grammatical structures by re-formulating a selection of phrases taken from the reading texts.

Question 5 - ¿El fin de la escuela tal y como la conocemos?

A multiple choice question worth 5 marks. The majority of candidates scored well on this question. In (c), the idea “aprender en contextos reales” was not always correctly identified.

Question 6 - El meteorito de Aguas Zarcas (Costa Rica)

A reading comprehension text worth five marks with short answer questions in Spanish.

- (a) Was answered mostly correctly. Some candidates lost one mark by saying that Marcia woke up, which was already given in the question.
- (b) Again, generally answered correctly. Some said that most meteorites disintegrate without explaining that this one didn't.
- (c) Nearly all candidates managed to get the right answer apart from very few who clearly did not understand what they were reading. Some lost the mark by focussing on wrong parts of the text, for instance that the meteorite has lots of carbons that can combine easily with other elements. Similarly, some missed the point and said that the chemical reaction gave rise to the origins of human beings.
- (d) Most candidates successfully communicated the idea that scientists could analyse the composition of the meteorite before any changes took place. A few omitted to mention that this was done while the meteorite was still unchanged or pristine.

Question 7 - El crecimiento del sentimiento religioso en España

A longer reading comprehension text with short answer questions in Spanish worth 10 marks. In general, candidates performed well in answering this question. However, some improvement could be observed if candidates paid closer attention to the question's specifics. Responding with greater conciseness would enhance the clarity and focus of the answers.

- (a) Generally well done, although some candidates made reference to a greater connection with religion, which did not answer the question. Some candidates said that relationships have strengthened by 54%.
- (b) Again, most candidates scored both marks on this question. Some answers did not make clear reference to older and younger people. Some mentioned differences in the upbringing of older and younger generations, which was not the information required.
- (c) Correct answers included a verb that indicated an increased awareness, understanding or realisation. Several candidates wrote “tenemos una manera distinta de ver la vida” without explaining what that “manera distinta” was. Others simply said that “recurren a la religion” which did not score.
- (d) There were several possible answers, but most candidates opted for the relief of stress or anxiety and scored the mark.
- (e) Both marks were picked up by the majority of candidates, often with single word answers.

(f) Most candidates scored 1 mark for the idea of people losing their faith because of a difficult experience. Some candidates said the trend will reverse, when the text presents that as a possible, not definite development.

Question 8 - Manipulation of grammatical structures

Candidates reformulated phrases from the reading comprehension texts in Questions 5, 6 and 7 including the given structures in each question. Candidates need to consider the context of the original text when addressing this question. A successful response will demonstrate contextual understanding by ensuring that the same message is conveyed after the applied manipulation.

The question phrases were emboldened in the reading texts in Section B to assist candidates in reformulating the phrases.

- (a) Several candidates wrote “la tecnología hace que” which did not include part of the original phrase. There were some examples of “la tecnología hace que posibilite” which did not score.
- (b) There were several different but acceptable word orders which included all elements of the original phrase. While “la arquitectura de nuestros centros podría cambiarse” was accepted, candidates are reminded that they must consider the location of the ellipsis which indicates the position in the phrase that the structure should appear.
- (c) Several candidates wrote “ingreso” and lost the mark because the verb changed to first person present tense rather than third person preterite. Sometimes the candidates added “se” ingreso and lost the mark. Others incorrectly used the present tense “ingresa”.
- (d) Most candidates successfully manipulated the verb to produce the subjunctive “lleguen”.
- (e) A number of candidates wrote “se ha caído” and lost the mark. Similarly, “ha caído” on its own lost the mark. Correct answers included the idea that the meteorite had fallen recently.
- (f) Most candidates produced the correct present tense of “perciben”, although some tried to make it subjunctive – “perciban”. Some changed the verb from “perciben” to “ven” and lost the mark.
- (g) Several wrote “A medida que avanza en edad” (rather than “avanza la edad”) and lost the mark. Answers which gave “avanzan” also lost the mark as the third person plural did not fit in with the original text.
- (h) Most candidates found this straightforward, although some wrote, “dando cuenta que” rather than “dando cuenta de que”.
- (i) Very few scored the mark here. “Gracias a no sentir”, “Gracias a la cual le permite no sentir”, “Gracias a que le permite no sentir” were common responses. Many candidates did not see the overlap in meaning between the original clause and the phrase in brackets and added “gracias a” to the original sentence, thus duplicating the meaning of “le permite”.
- (j) Some omitted the ‘aun’ and lost the mark.

Section C - Writing (40 marks)

The overall quality of responses was impressive, with many candidates delivering thorough analysis and providing insightful personal interpretations. Candidates who expressed their personal opinions and perspectives presented more in-depth responses and analyses.

A noteworthy observation in this year's entries was the increased inclusion of detailed bibliographies by candidates. While not obligatory, this practice demonstrates a valuable skill that candidates have acquired. Providing bibliographies not only showcases their ability to reference relevant sources but also highlights their sound knowledge of the cultural or social works they have studied. This skill is particularly beneficial as they transition to higher education.

It is worth mentioning that some candidates overly focused on word count, which often resulted in shallow responses lacking depth. On the other hand, longer and well-focused answers, comprising a clear introduction, key points, and a coherent conclusion, proved to give the best results. It is encouraging to note that many candidates demonstrated effective pre-planning of their essay responses, further contributing to their overall performance.

Las bicicletas son para el verano (14a and 14b) *Ocho Apellidos Vascos* (17a and 17b) were the most frequently chosen works. *Como Agua para Chocolate* (11a and 11b) and *Yerma* (15a and 15b) were also popular.

Many candidates were unable to score in the top bands for Critical Analysis, Organisation and Development because their essays either did not have a conclusion, had one that was extremely short or lacked an individual response.

Candidates are encouraged to remember that the reader of the essay needs to be able to get the full picture without having any previous knowledge of the film, book or topic.

Relationships between characters need to be explained. Candidates should avoid vague phrases such as “en la escena de la playa”, or “él explica todo” which require the reader to have watched the film or read the book in order to fill in the gaps.

A small number of essays, or parts of them, were almost illegible because of handwriting or messy corrections. Candidates must write clearly and legibly. It is very difficult for examiners to credit work they cannot read.

The following comments summarise the examiners' observations on the most popular essay choices:

Question 9 Geography

There were a small number of essays on each question. 9a was on the topic of investments in the country or region and 9b required candidates to consider changes in population and their effect on religious traditions. Both questions produced some good responses with strong analysis in some cases, particularly on 9b.

Question 10 History

There were a small number of essays on both questions. Candidates were able to demonstrate good knowledge and provide evidence to support their points of view. In both questions, the analysis was less well addressed than the descriptive aspect of the essays.

Question 11 Literature - Esquivel: Como agua para chocolate

The most popular choice was 11b on the theme of forbidden love in the novel. Successful essays considered the effects of “el amor imposible” on the characters. 11a was generally well done. Candidates were able to describe examples of magic realism in detail. Some essays did not go beyond describing these episodes and were less successful in linking magic realism to the themes of the novel.

Question 12 Literature - Delibes: El príncipe destronado

A small number of candidates chose option 12a on the role of Tía Cuqui and her relationship with Merche and Quico.

Question 13 Literature - Allende: Inés del alma mía

There were no essays on this novel.

Question 14 Literature - Fernán Gómez: Las bicicletas son para el verano

14(a) Candidates were able to describe a range of dramatic techniques. The connection of the techniques to the themes of the play was clearly made in some essays. In others, candidates simply described techniques and did not fully address the “Analiza” element of the question.

14(b) Candidates demonstrated preparedness and provided well-crafted responses to this question. Their answers revealed a clear understanding of the key themes present in the play and how these themes reflected the societal context of Spain at the time. The candidates exhibited an ability to analyse the portrayal of families and to establish connections between the narrative and the broader historical context.

Question 15 Literature – García Lorca: Yerma

15(a) Many essays exhibited a comprehensive understanding of the central themes in the play and effectively explored how these themes contributed to the prevailing tragedy throughout the book. The candidates' analytical skills were evident as they made connections between the text and its broader implications.

Question 16 Film – Guillermo del Toro: El laberinto del Fauno

16(a) Candidates were able to describe different aspects of the how the film presents childhood during the post-war period. The analysis of the effect of using a child as the protagonist was less well done.

16(b) Several essays gave a detailed explanation of the importance of Ofelia’s baby brother in the plot. Some candidates described the characters’ different attitudes towards the child but did not analyse what those attitudes reveal.

Question 17 Film – Martínez-Lázaro: Ocho apellidos vascos

17(a) Candidates presented well-considered answers to this question about Merche’s role. They demonstrated a clear grasp of the key themes in the film and effectively analysed how these themes could be understood in relation to the main characters, thereby offering insights into Spanish society.

17(b) There were some detailed and analytical responses to this question. Many essays compared the techniques used to present characters and settings and considered how these techniques highlighted the differences between them.

Question 18 Film – Wood: Machuca

A small number of candidates wrote about this film. They chose option (a) on symbolism in the film and the relationship between Gonzalo and Pedro.

Question 19 Film – Marston: María, llena eres de gracia

A small number of candidates wrote about this film. All chose option (a) on the theme of crime and the presentation of the drug mules as criminals or victims.

Question 20 Film – Bollaín: También la lluvia

There were no essays on this film.

Advice to candidates

Based on performance in this examination, candidates are offered the following advice:

Sections A and B

- Take care to answer the questions precisely. Write clear and concise answers. Use your own words as far as possible.
- In Question 8, find the emboldened question phrase in the articles in Section B. Ensure the reformulated phrase is not only grammatically correct, but also works in the context of the article.
- Also in Question 8, consider the context of the original text. A successful answer needs to convey the same message as the original text.

Section C

- Read essay questions carefully. Make sure that all your points are clearly relevant to the question.
- Avoid long-winded description and retelling of the plot that is not relevant to the question.
- When giving examples and other evidence to support your points of view, explain clearly. Imagine that your reader has not read the book or watched the film.
- The mark grid for Critical analysis, organisation and development requires a conclusion. Remember to end the essay with a conclusion which summarises the arguments in the essay and gives a personal response to the question.
- Introductions should relate to the precise question you are answering. Avoid general introductions to the work which has nothing to do with the question.
- For Geography questions, you must demonstrate that you have researched the topic. General knowledge is not enough to score highly.
- Include a wide range of different types of relevant factual evidence to support points of view, for example:

- History and Geography: specific examples, figures, dates, events for history and geography essays.
- Film and literature: specific examples, quotations, director's or author's technique.
- Always write clearly and legibly. Make corrections clearly.

