



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel International A Level

In Spanish (WSP01)

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Introduction

The following report is a summary of comments and feedback from the examiners. This report should be read in conjunction with the "Marking Guidance for Oral Examiners" and the "Indicative Content" of the mark scheme. These materials can be found on the website in the Course Materials section. Please note that the indicative content in the mark scheme provides only suggested answers and is not prescriptive.

The candidate is rewarded for the ability to demonstrate understanding of a target language stimulus based on one of the General Topic Areas (GTA) of the Pearson IAL Spanish specification, and to discuss that same General Topic Area. Candidates need to demonstrate that they can engage in a discussion in Spanish that relates to a chosen GTA and allied subtopics. They will be expected to give relevant and appropriate information, convey opinions, interact, and respond to a range of questions. Further information about the preparation of candidates, the conduct and the administration of this test can be found in the "Administrative Support Guide – Conducting Oral Examinations" which is found under the "Forms and Administration" tab of the IAL Spanish page on the Pearson website, and the "Oral Training Guide" found under the "Teaching and Learning" tab of the same page.

Up to 40 marks are awarded positively as follows for this test:

- 10 marks for Quality of Language (5 marks for Accuracy of Language and 5 Marks for Range of Lexis)
- 16 marks for Spontaneity and Development
- 4 marks for Understanding of the prescribed stimulus card.
- 10 marks for Knowledge and Understanding of the General Topic Area

The test should last between 8 and 10 minutes in total (Sections A and B combined). This time should be divided equally between Sections A and B. However, if the student completes the answers to the questions in Section A in less than four minutes, the teacher/examiner should ensure that the discussion in Section B is extended, in order that the total test time is not less than eight minutes.

Section A

Section A requires candidates to respond to four set questions on a stimulus related to one of the candidate's chosen General Topic Area (GTA). The GTAs are:

- Youth matters
- Lifestyle, health, and fitness
- Environment and travel
- Education and employment.

The candidate is asked four questions relating to the stimulus card. These questions are mandatory and may be repeated, but for the purpose of fair assessment across all centres, they must not be re-phrased. The first two questions relate specifically to information in the stimulus material, the second two relate to aspects of the subtopic, upon which the stimulus text is based.

For Question 1, it is expected that the candidate will manipulate the wording of the text to arrive at a complete answer to the question. This question targets information in the first paragraph of the stimulus text. There are three elements to the answer to Question 1 in the first paragraph which must be communicated by the candidate in his or her own words, for it to be considered a full answer.

For Question 2, it is expected that the candidate will find the answer in the second paragraph of the text. It will be necessary to manipulate the language found in the stimulus text to arrive at a complete answer. Personal opinions and information not contained in the text in answers to Questions 1 and 2 will not gain any credit.

For Questions 3 and 4 it is expected that the candidate will give answers which are full and detailed, drawing on the research that they undertook on the GTA, in preparation for the examination.

The candidate's understanding of this stimulus specific topic area is marked out of four. The four marks are not directly allocated as one mark per question. The statement in the mark grid, which best matches the entire performance of section A, will dictate the mark awarded.

Examiners' feedback on Section A

The most popular GTAs were "Youth matters" and "Lifestyle, health and fitness". A significantly lower number of students were tested on "Environment and travel" or "Education and employment".

All eight stimulus cards made similar demands of the students. Nearly all candidates were able to attempt the first two Section A questions, the ones based purely on the text, whereas the level of response to the second two Section A questions proved to be a good discriminator between performances.

Candidates must answer questions 1 and 2 precisely. Those who include information from the text which does not answer the question cannot be awarded full marks on Understanding (stimulus specific).

Candidates are advised to listen very carefully to the questions. They must provide relevant answers which respond precisely to the question they have been asked. They should aim to give at least three details, in their own words, for Question 1 and a detailed answer in their own words to Question 2 based on the information given in the text.

Teacher/examiners are reminded that they must read the questions exactly as written on the cards. Additional questions and rephrasing are not allowed. The candidate's response to any question that has been rephrased will not be credited.

¿Hasta qué punto?, ¿Por qué (no)? and Explica tu respuesta are frequently used in Questions 3 and 4. These question forms invite candidates to weigh up different aspects of an issue and to give opinions. Candidates who gave detailed and well-balanced responses and who considered various aspects of the question were awarded 3 or 4 marks for Understanding (stimulus card specific).

Even fluent candidates are often very nervous at the start of the test. Teacher/examiners are advised to read the questions in Section A slowly and clearly to help candidates grasp the full implications of the question.

The stimulus cards

Youth matters: Cards 1A& 1B (El primer móvil de los hijos)

In cards 1A and 1B, most students were able to offer three pieces of information in response to Q1. Candidates are expected to answer in their own words, showing an ability to manipulate the language. In Q2, some candidates did not identify “la madurez” as the most important factor but gave a list of all the factors mentioned. “La madurez” as part of a list was not credited.

Q3A was well answered by many candidates, who were able to outline the benefits of having a mobile phone as a means of communication with family and friends, a useful educational resource and a form of entertainment. Better candidates also outlined the negative aspects such as access to unsuitable material and websites as well as the possibility of becoming addicted to it.

There were good responses to Q4A on whether mobile phones should be banned in schools. Most candidates felt that mobile phones if used sensibly in lessons had a very positive affect on learning and were a useful tool in the classroom. Others believed they were an unwelcome distraction and that they had no place in schools.

Q3B was generally well answered. Good responses included the issue of addiction to mobile phones and the increased sedentary lifestyle of children as well as less face-to-face communication and poorer social skills. In a couple of centres the teacher/examiner asked about the “ventajas” instead of the “desventajas”. Teacher/examiners must read the questions as they appear on the card as the candidate’s response will not be credited.

There were some interesting responses to Q4B. Many candidates suggested that 12-13 was the best age for children to have their first mobile phone as they have just started secondary school and were becoming more independent, responsible and mature.

Youth matters: Cards 2B (Messi, un buen modelo a seguir)

Most candidates performed well on Q1. However, Q2 proved more challenging for some. A common incorrect response was “muchos niños aman el fútbol gracias a Messi”.

For Q3A good responses included the importance of promoting positive behaviour, a healthy lifestyle and body image as well as undertaking charity work.

In response to Q4A many candidates outlined the negative influence of group pressure with regards to schoolwork, substance abuse, alcohol, smoking, bullying and petty crime.

Some of the best responses to Q3B saw sports people as good role models due to their hard work, discipline, determination, motivation and healthy lifestyle.

Q4B attracted good responses that included the importance of group support in helping to improve confidence and self-esteem as well as social skills. Some candidates thought that being part of a group also provided support with schoolwork, mental health and general wellbeing.

Lifestyle, health, and fitness Cards: 1A&B (La dieta española)

In Q1 quite a few candidates did not mention time to buy and cook food as 2 separate points.

Q2 was generally well answered.

Q3A presented very few issues. Most candidates included health issues such as obesity, high cholesterol, heart disease and diabetes.

Q4A. Good responses outlined the need for parents to instil good eating habits into children from a young age and the importance of home cooked meals using fresh ingredients. Some candidates included the idea of parents shopping for ingredients and cooking with their children as a way of developing a healthy diet.

In Q3B candidates were able to list the main ingredients of the Mediterranean diet but they did not always outline the benefits as was asked in the question. Better candidates mentioned lower cholesterol, improved cardiovascular health and longevity as some of the main benefits.

Q4B proved to be slightly more challenging. The best candidates presented ideas such as healthier school meals, advertising campaigns, nutrition and cookery classes in schools as well as imposing a tax on sugary and fatty foods.

Lifestyle, health, and fitness Card 2A&B (Los pueblos abandonados de Asturias)

For Q1 some candidates omitted “prepara la madera “as one of the 3 points required.

Q2 was mainly answered correctly.

Q3A was answered well overall, and most candidates were able to identify the main reasons why people are leaving rural areas. Reasons given included lack of work, public services, transport, schooling and leisure facilities.

Some interesting responses to Q4A identified incentives to return to rural areas such as help with housing, better Internet connection, improved infrastructure and more leisure activities.

Q3B posed very few problems, and most candidates responded very well to this question stating why young people prefer to live in the city. Some went on to outline the benefits of living in a rural area such as cleaner air and a less stressful environment.

There were also lots of good responses to Q4B. The better candidates were able to come up with very good arguments for future rural living including the increase in people now working from home leading to less need to commute daily to the city, improved Internet connections and the trend to move away from stressful and often polluted cities.

Environment and travel: Card 1A&B (La contaminación por plásticos en América Latina)

In Q1 the third point “crea basura “was omitted by a number of candidates.

There were no issues with Q2.

Q3A attracted some very good answers on how to reduce the daily use of plastic. These included not buying prepackaged food, using recyclable coffee cups and shopping bags.

Q3B was also well answered. Candidates who chose this topic area were well prepared and most provided excellent responses to the question on the main causes of pollution.

In response to Q4A some candidate believed that young people today are very concerned about the future of our planet and that they do recycle. They also thought that adolescents today are more environmentally conscious because of education in school and in the media. Others believed that they do not have time to recycle due to a busy lifestyle with study and work.

Responses to Q4B included incentives to encourage recycling and more advertising and education in the media.

Environment and travel: Card 2A&B (El turismo rural en Colombia):

Q1 and Q2 were generally well answered.

Q3A on what tourists look for in a holiday destination was well answered. Ideas included beaches, mountains, entertainment, history, culture and gastronomy.

Some candidates found Q4A more challenging. Good responses outlined the benefits to the environment and the local economy as well as being less costly for the tourist.

Most candidates coped well with Q3B. Some were in favour of city-based holidays which provide history, culture and a wealth of entertainment and gastronomy. Others preferred to spend their holiday in a more rural location with cleaner air and proximity to nature.

Q4B was equally accessible with most candidates advocating the many benefits of travelling abroad.

Education and employment: Card 1A&B (La educación científica)

Candidates dealt well with Q1 and Q2 which posed no issues.

For Q3A candidates came up with good arguments for and against the use of technology in schools. Most believed that technology has enhanced teaching and learning as it is a useful tool in research, pupil independence and in the consolidation of learning. Better candidates also outlined the disadvantages such as less face-to-face time with teachers and other pupils as well as the unreliability of some online sources.

Candidates responded equally well to Q4A with most having the view that there is a wealth of job opportunities in the field of science.

Q3B produced some interesting responses. Most candidates believed that the teacher cannot be fully replaced by technology but also felt that technology has a role to play in education today.

In response to Q4B the most popular subjects identified were Information Technology and Modern Foreign Languages.

Education and Employment:2A& B (El voluntariado en Viña del Mar, Chile)

Candidates had little trouble finding the information to successfully answer Q1 and Q2.

Q3A on how to help the local community was well answered by most candidates. Activities ranged from participating in local environmental projects to helping local charities.

Candidates responded well to Q4A on the benefits of being a volunteer. Ideas included the experience of working in a team, building self-confidence and self-esteem as well as learning about the needs of others.

Q3B attracted good responses on the benefits of working abroad that included learning about other cultures and developing a range of skills such as speaking a foreign language.

For Q4B important qualities for a volunteer identified were empathy, determination, autonomy and flexibility.

Section B

In Section B, the teacher/examiner develops a discussion about the General Topic Area chosen by the student. The topic of the stimulus card may be used as a starting point for this discussion, but the teacher/examiner should move to a more general discussion of the topic area and to discussion of at least one other subtopic within this General Topic Area. The candidates must attempt to show a clear understanding of the chosen topic and use the research they completed in advance of the examination, ideally citing sources they have used in their research.

Centres are reminded that in Section B the teacher/examiner must initiate a follow-up discussion on the same General Topic Area and its sub-topics as the one on the stimulus card. This summer a small number of teacher/examiners asked questions on a different General Topic Area to the one on the card. On such occasions, the candidate's ability to access the full range of marks for "Knowledge and understanding" will be restricted. No marks can be awarded for "Knowledge and understanding of the General Topic Area" if Section B is entirely based on an incorrect General Topic Area or if the discussion does not move away from the focus and sub-topic presented on the stimulus card, or if Section B is completely missing.

Please see below a list of the General Topic Areas and subtopics.

Youth matters

Family relationships and friendships
Peer pressure and role models
Music and Fashion
Technology and communication

Lifestyle, health and fitness

Food and diet
Sport and exercise
Health issues
Urban and rural life

Environment and travel

Tourism, travel and transport
Natural disasters and weather
Climate change and its impact
Energy, pollution and recycling

Education and employment

Education systems and types of schooling
Pupil/student life
Volunteering and internships
Jobs and unemployment

For the candidate to be able to access the full range of marks available, it is essential that Section B be a discussion, not merely a list of questions and answers. The teacher/examiner should pick up on what the candidate says, using this to inform further questions, and encourage the candidate to develop the points made where this is possible.

It is essential that teacher/examiners give students the opportunity to deal with questions suitable for AS level, i.e., to show that they have moved on from GCSE level. Where all or some of the Section B discussion centres around GCSE level questions and there is insufficient evidence of the level of challenge expected at AS level, the student may not be able to access the full range of marks for “Knowledge and understanding.”

Examiners’ feedback on Section B

Choice of General Topic Area (GTA)

The most popular combination of topic areas chosen by candidates was once again Youth matters combined with Lifestyle, health, and fitness. The topics of Environment and travel; and Education and employment have more specialised topic-specific vocabulary relating to them, and so candidates who did choose these topics tended to score well for Quality of Language (Range of Lexis) and generally demonstrated very good or excellent knowledge of their chosen General Topic Area. Good candidates were able to use sophisticated lexical items when talking about Youth matters and Lifestyle, health, and fitness, but less successful candidates tended to employ rather pedestrian vocabulary, often drawing on their IGCSE knowledge, offering anecdotal evidence, or talking about personal preferences. Centres should be aware that to access the higher marks for “Knowledge and understanding” candidates need to offer facts and figures and/or other evidence of research into the chosen GTA; many offered no more than general knowledge.

Quality of Language

The quality of language was high, both in accuracy and range. Although perfection is not necessary to score 5 in both QOL grids, candidates must use a wide range of structures and vocabulary to access the top mark bands of 5.

Spontaneity and Development

In most centres, teacher/ examiners had a good examining style. They put their candidates at ease and conducted natural-sounding conversations in Section B. In some centres, examiners heard “question and answer-type” conversations. In such tests, the teacher/examiner asks many

questions and does not respond to the candidate or interact naturally with them. In these cases, even fluent candidates would be less likely to reach the highest mark band for Spontaneity and Development because they do not have the opportunity to engage in discourse in Section B.

For more information about the requirements of the Spontaneity and Development mark-grid, please refer to the Mark Scheme and the "Marking Guidance for Oral Examiners."

For candidates to achieve a mark of 9 or above in Spontaneity and Development in Section B, they must be given the opportunity to respond to questions that are conceptually and linguistically challenging. Some questions asked by examiners did not give the candidate the opportunity to develop their answers at AS level. Personal questions, for example: "¿Qué deportes haces?", or "¿Qué tipo de música prefieres?" are more appropriate at GCSE level.

Development of responses in Section A is credited in the Spontaneity and Development grid.

Knowledge and Understanding (General Topic Area, Section B only)

Some candidates demonstrated excellent knowledge and understanding of their chosen GTA, but the majority appeared to have not done any research on their chosen topic. Tests, where Section B is a general conversation with the candidate speaking about their own experience and general knowledge, will not meet the requirements for a mark of 7 or above in this grid. In the most successful performances, candidates were able to demonstrate an independent and well-informed perspective on the GTA and were able to support their points of view consistently with facts, information, and evidence.

Recording quality

The quality of the recordings submitted this year was generally very good. It is the centre's responsibility to submit the recordings in one of the formats accepted by Pearson; details of the permitted formats can be found in the "Administrative Support Guide – Conducting Oral Examinations" which is found under the "Forms and Administration" tab of the IAL Spanish page on the Pearson website. It is also the responsibility of the centres to ensure that the recording quality is sufficiently loud and of decent quality.

Administrative matters

Centres are reminded that the teacher-examiner must announce the centre, number, general topic area, and stimulus card number for each candidate at the beginning of each recording. A small number of centres did not announce the GTA nor stimulus card number.

