



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel International A Level

In Spanish (WSP04)

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## **Format of the test**

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 ballena franca austral en la costa argentina**

A multiple choice question worth 4 marks. This question was accessible to most Candidates. The mark most frequently missed was 1(c) as some Candidates did not home in on the phrase 'No se sabe a qué se debe el aumento poblacional', which was synonymous with D, the correct option.

#### **Question 2 - Mantenerse al día con la tecnología**

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). Careful listening to the final paragraph was required in order to discount the distractors and link 'sistemas de alquiler para eliminar problemas financieros en la utilización de tecnología' in the text to the correct answer, A.

#### **Question 3 - María Luisa Carcedo – una mujer política española**

A cloze text question worth 4 marks. Candidates had to choose the correct answers from a pool of 8 possible words. Although most scored full marks, a few misunderstood that María Luisa had been a doctor before becoming a politician and opted for the distractor "después" in 3(d).

#### **Question 4 - Un padre y un hijo hablan del inicio de sus carreras**

Candidates listen to an interview with two speakers and gave short answers in Spanish. This question is worth 8 marks.

In (a), a few candidates only mentioned Jorge's wide professional experience, without linking it to reason for his success as a psychologist. For (b), some wrote 'marcó su identidad' or copied out 'fue una escuela de vida'. In (d) many candidates omitted the idea of 'trabajando su habilidad' and concentrated simply on the idea of his 'habilidad' turning into a 'talento' without mentioning his hard work. Marks were lost in (d) when candidates said that Demián had been inspired by his father, but didn't mention 'trabajo' or 'lo que hacía'. Some answers made

reference to the fact that Jorge speaks a lot with his patients, which did not answer the question. In (e), most candidates got that they spoke about important things, but relatively few were able to infer that they sat on cushions on the floor. Candidates mentioned the 'luz' and 'cojines' without explaining what the patients were actually doing.

### **Section B - Reading and Grammar (30 marks)**

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 reformulating a selection of phrases taken from the reading texts.

#### **Question 5 - El menú del día**

A multiple choice question worth 5 marks. This question is the most accessible of the reading tasks and most candidates scored well. The mark most frequently missed was (d) as some did not link the phrase 'la afición por pedir comida para llevar' in the text to the idea that some customers do not sit down to eat in restaurants.

#### **Question 6 - Una antigua maravilla de la ingeniería urbana azteca**

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

(a) Most candidates gave the correct response that Aztecs had found their future home. In some instances the answers simply described the snake rather than focusing on what the legend had prophesied. (b) Some candidates wrote 'lagos profundos' instead of 'poco profundos', which can be interpreted as deep lakes. Some answers missed the point of the question mentioning the 'plataformas flotantes', which were not a natural feature of the area. In (c), some incorrect answers said 'para conectar las islas con la ciudad' or 'para conectar las islas con áreas más alejadas'. In (d), some candidates lifted 'les da una nueva vida' which, due to the phrasing of the question, read as if the islands were giving the inhabitants a new life. Some wrote that the islands were fertile but not that they were still used to produce food.

#### **Question 7 - Jon Kortajarena: una leyenda de la moda**

A longer reading comprehension text with short answer questions in Spanish worth 10 marks.

In (a), Most candidates homed in on 'un niño hipersensible' or the 'núcleo de seguridad' which the family provided. In (b), some answers concentrated on the idea that watching films led to 'ganas de crecer' and missed the mark. Others did not explain what the films made Jon curious about. (A common mistake in (c) was that Jon's mother was happy for him to go to Paris. (d) was

an inference question in which correct answers described Jon's grandfather's attitude. Many candidates wrote about he said or thought. Some answers incorrectly said that the grandfather had a positive attitude towards the 'buenos lios'. Some answers to (e) said that the fashion world attracted 'gente que se siente diferente' and missed the adjectives 'arriesgada y salvaje'. In (f), candidates frequently opted for a direct lift of 'funcionaban en pleno rendimiento' without conveying the idea that men's fashion was becoming more important. In order to score two marks in (g), answers needed a clear contrast between Jon's attitude at the beginning of his career and later on. Some answers stated incorrectly that Jon maintains a certain distance without explaining how he has changed. Most got the mark for (h), although a few incorrectly stated that Jon recommends that you should not stop thinking about fashion as a business.

### **Question 8 - Manipulation of grammatical structures**

Candidates reformulated phrases from the reading comprehension texts in Questions 5, 6 and 7. They had to include the given structures in each question. They had to produce a correct phrase, without altering the meaning of the original. The question phrases were emboldened in the reading texts in Section B to assist candidates in reformulating the phrases.

Candidates frequently lost marks for incorrect accents or the omission of accents where they were needed.

- a) Some answers omitted the accent on 'solían'. The omission of 'tiempo atrás' was a common error. Quite a few candidates made spelling mistakes on 'anudaban', (eg. anudababan). Others omitted the pronoun 'se'.
- b) In many cases, candidates changed 'no olvida' to 'pero sin olvidar'. 'Evoluciona pero sin olvidar' was a common formulation which did not score.
- c) Missing the accent on 'técnica' was sometimes a careless mistake. Otherwise, most candidates got this mark. A few lost the mark for unnecessarily adding 'las', before the word 'plataformas'.
- d) Some marks were lost through failure to spot the agreement of the past participle 'ancladas' (not 'anclados'). There were occasional misspellings such as 'anclaradas'. A few changed the phrase to 'al fondo del mar'.
- e) Making the verb 'queda' plural after 'lo único' was a frequent mistake. Some candidates unnecessarily added 'las' between 'de' and 'islas'. Some missed the accent on 'único'.
- f) A number of candidates did not realise that a verb, either 'está' or 'trabaja' was needed in order for the sentence to make sense. The omission of the accent on 'está' was a common mistake. 'Hace más tiempo que lleva dentro de la moda que fuera de ella' was a frequent incorrect formulation.
- g) Missing the accent on 'veía' or adding an accent on 'vi' lost marks. Some alternative phrasings such as 'que eran de Almodóvar' or 'que hizo Almodóvar' were accepted.

- h) A few candidates missed the imperfect subjunctive. They left 'probar' in the infinitive, put it into the present tense 'prueba' or the present subjunctive 'pruebe'.
- i) Common mistakes were to leave the accent off 'decírselo' or to leave out the pronoun 'se'.
- j) Occasionally, candidates did not correctly transform 'mantenerse' into the preterite. Some left out the pronoun 'se'.

### **Section C - Writing (40 marks)**

Candidates write one essay on a topic chosen from the list prescribed in the Specification for the unit.

There were essays on almost all questions. As in previous summer series, 'Ocho Apellidos Vascos' (17a and 17b), 'Yerma' (15a and 15b) and 'Las bicicletas son para el verano' (14a and 14b) were the most popular choices.

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

#### **Question 9a and 9b Geography**

9b was the most popular of the two Geography questions. Most candidates were able to list some goods and services that their chosen region offers, although not all went beyond naming them. The second part of the question was frequently not addressed in depth, with a number of candidates producing only the superficial analysis that the goods and services bring money into the economy, which improves people's standard of living. The best candidates were able to relate the goods and services of the region to the climate, geography and culture of the area and link them to lifestyle.

#### **Question 10a and 10b History**

10a was the most popular choice. A number of candidates wrote about the Second Republic, the increasing tensions between the Republican government and the right-wing backlash. Some were thorough and full of relevant information while others were sketchy and superficial. One excellent and detailed essay on the early years of the Transition and the 'golpe de estado' by Tejero in the Cortes, examined the political reasons as to why it happened and how the king's broadcast to the nation brought it to a close.

The best essays were structured in paragraphs and addressed the requirements of the question. Many essays were unplanned. Candidates simply wrote an account of the events of the period which they had studied. Some started off saying they would talk about a certain event or

political figure, but then their essay broadened out and became generic. While the factual knowledge of the candidates that choose history is usually good, more careful planning is encouraged to ensure that essays meet the criteria to score in the top bands.

#### **Question 11a and 11b Como agua para chocolate**

11a) many essays were able to explain influence that Mamá Elena has on the characters. Some focused on Tita only, which was acceptable if done in depth. The best candidates were able to analyse how the circumstance of Mamá Elena's life shaped her interactions with others. Some candidates didn't fully understand the question and wrote about whether her actions were normal in the society of the time, without delving into their root causes.

11b) Many essays went to the heart of the novel and candidates were able to demonstrate a good knowledge of magic realism and how it is demonstrated through the supernatural events that occur. The best essays analysed closely the episodes in the book that showed the supernatural at work and provided detailed information about how these episodes affected the characters. In some essays, candidates struggled to go beyond broad statements of the importance of the supernatural.

#### **Question 12a and 12b El príncipe destronado**

It was pleasing to see more essays on this novel. In 12a, some essays simply described the characters, rather than explaining the means and techniques through which the author introduces the reader to them. In 12b, most candidates focused on the figure of Quico's father and his dominant presence in the family. Some drew parallels with Franco's government of the time.

#### **Question 13a and 13b Inés del alma mía**

No candidates chose to write about this novel.

#### **Question 14a and 14b**

14a) Most candidates who chose this question gave detailed and relevant information about the difficult conditions that people experienced in Madrid during the early years of the Civil War and how the characters in the play rallied round to support each other regardless of social class or political affiliation. Essays showed good knowledge of specific characters and episodes from the play.

14b) This was a popular choice and candidates who had studied the play carefully were able to give precise details concerning the conversation between Luis and Pablo in the first scene and to show how the innocence and naivety of the two boys playing at war contrasts with the reality of war later in the play. Many essays referred to the cyclical structure of the work and how attitudes and priorities changed. Some contrasted the prologue and the epilogue, analysing the parallels and differences and the message this conveys to the audience or reader.

### **Question 15a and 15b Yerma**

15a) Candidates had plenty of opportunity to look at contrasts in the play, for example, between Yerma and other characters such as Juan, La Vieja and Maria. Many candidates considered the symbols of water and fertility in contrast with dryness and sterility. Most managed to provide detailed analysis and relevant evidence from the play.

15b) Candidates generally responded to both parts of the question – how the male characters are portrayed in the play and how far they are responsible for Yerma’s situation. The most successful essays gave some historical information about the patriarchal nature of society in 1930s Spain and how the roles of men and women were defined by that society. There was plenty of opportunity for textual references and for carefully chosen quotes to support the points being made. A few essays focused exclusively on Juan, which meant they were more limited in their depth and analysis. Some dedicated entire paragraphs to the role of women, which was irrelevant unless clearly linked back to the question as a means to show contrast between the genders. In some cases, candidates did not explain what Yerma’s situation is. In others, the observations shifted between some of the issues she faces, which made the argument difficult to follow.

### **Question 16a and 16b El laberinto del fauno**

16a) Candidates who chose this question often showed a good knowledge of the historical context of the early years of the dictatorship when resistance to Franco and the nationalists was still strong. The most successful essays showed how the role of the maquis resistance was portrayed in the film with supporting evidence such as relevant characters, episodes and the director’s techniques.

16b) Many essays on this question described the scenes of Ophelia’s trials in the fantasy world. Some described the shocking scenes of violence and cruelty in the real world. Whilst most essays showed good knowledge of plot and character, the analysis part of the question was less well done. There was description of cinematic techniques, but few essays clearly showed how they affect the viewer.

### **Question 17a and 17b Ocho apellidos vascos**

17a) The most successful essays focused on the different types of love (young and romantic, mature and romantic, father-daughter, or even friendship and fading romantic love). Some candidates stayed in the descriptive, without explaining the importance love in the film. Some essays would have benefitted from an introduction explaining who the characters were and key relevant events. A number of candidates resorted to story-telling rather than giving a careful analysis of the importance of the love element in the film and assessing how far the portrayal of love was realistic.

17b) Here again, most candidates knew the film well and were able to list instances of Rafa's trying to pose as Basque. However, often candidates didn't explain who Rafa, Amaia or Koldo and Merche were, where they came from, or why Rafa was even having to pretend, which meant that the reader wouldn't fully understand why characters were acting the way they do or why this is funny. Careful planning with a focus on the reader's experience is encouraged to ensure that candidates can score in the highest bands for depth and evaluation.

### **Question 18a and 18b Machuca**

A small number of candidates chose 18b about socialism and whether the director presents an objective point of view.

### **Question 19a and 19b María, llena eres de gracia**

19a) Candidates generally showed a good knowledge of the characters of María and Blanca and were able to analyse the changes in the relationship throughout the film.

### **Question 20a and 20b También la lluvia**

It was pleasing to see some responses on this film. In 20a, candidates explained Hatuey's role. They were able to analyse the parallels between Hatuey and Daniel's struggles. In 20b, they described difficulties encountered by the film crew during 'la guerra del agua' in Cochabamba. They analysed the reactions of Costa and Sebastian, showing how the characters developed in response to the difficulties they faced.

## **Advice from the examiners on essays:**

### One examiner made the following observations:

'In the history and geography essays there was knowledge, but few matched the depth of the essays on films and literature. There were not enough factual details, whereas many film and literature essays included quotations and textual references.

Most candidates found it easy to explain and describe the topic about which they were asked, but only a minority of candidates successfully addressed the second part of the questions where they had to exhibit critical analysis and insightful observations.

In general, the language used in the essay tasks was readable and showed some fluency. The level of complexity in grammar and vocabulary varied widely. Candidates should aim to use a range of complex structures and try to include vocabulary and expressions which are appropriate to essay writing.

I strongly recommend that students work on essay structure in preparation for this exam. There should be an introduction which refers to the question, clear paragraphs, and a conclusion. Many candidates did not structure their essays in this way”.

### Other recommendations from the examiners:

- Candidates should be aware that examiners can only consider the first answer in a one-mark question and the first two answers in a two-mark question. Answers should be as precise as possible. Extra information before the correct answer can result in marks being lost.
- Whilst the occasional accent error in the essays will not lose marks, accents are important in Question 8 as this is a test of grammar. Candidates should check their answers very carefully to avoid losing marks because of accent errors.
- Teachers should emphasise the importance of handwriting to students. A surprisingly large number had handwriting that was very difficult (and sometimes impossible) to read.
- In the essays, candidates should be encouraged to focus on answering the question and avoid irrelevant information. Some candidates gave seemingly pre-learned answers that were informative but not relevant to the question.
- Candidates must make sure they answer both parts of the essay question. They should prioritise analysis over description. The best essays were those that followed the point-evidence-explain pattern.
- Essays need to have conclusion which follows on from the essay content and includes a personal response.

