



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel International A Level

In Spanish (WSP04)

Unit 4: Research, understanding and written response

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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 – Vicente Fernández, el último gran cantante de rancheras de México

A multiple-choice question worth 4 marks. The question was accessible to most candidates. The mark most frequently missed was 1(a), as some candidates did not manage to link El último de los grandes intérpretes de las canciones rancheras, la música más característica mexicana with continuó una tradición.

Question 2 - Un desarrollo medico

A multiple-choice question worth 4 marks. This question also proved accessible to the majority of candidates. The mark most frequently missed was 2(c). Close listening was required to identify that the technology was still to be trialled on a larger scale.

Question 3 – ¿Has cometido un error en el trabajo?

A cloze text question worth 4 marks. Candidates had to choose the correct answers from a pool of 8 possible words. The mark most frequently missed was 3(a) as some candidates did not manage to spot that despite being annoying, we all learn from our mistakes and therefore they are useful.

Question 4 – Una entrevista con la embajadora de Estados Unidos en España

Candidates listened to an interview with two speakers and gave short answers in Spanish. This question is worth 8 marks. The majority of candidates demonstrated a solid understanding of the questions and gave accurate answers.

- a) Most candidates were able to identify the surprising element was either that the ambassador, Julissa, speaks Spanish or that the interview was conducted in Spanish. An alternative correct answer was that the ambassador is female or that she is the first female ambassador to the EEUU. Marks were dropped if the answer simply referred to

being a woman (que sea mujer without reference to the ambassador) or that the majority of interviewees were English speakers.

- b) Most candidates identified that Julissa received a grant. A variety of different tenses were accepted if the candidate had the correct key idea. Similarly, a variety of different spellings for beca were accepted.
- c) Most candidates did well in this question. Candidates needed to identify that Julissa travelled to Spain the first time for tourism or holiday purposes. Some candidates dropped a mark because they focused on the idea that Julissa had family in Spain, was travelling for work or was there as a student.
- d) The majority of candidates were successful in this question. Candidates needed to identify that Julissa knows about her family origins due to DNA tests. A variety of different wordings were accepted including genetic tests and tests about her origins/roots. Marks were lost here if a candidate suggested that Julissa was having medical tests.
- e) This question proved more challenging for candidates who needed to identify that people must better understand their history in all its complexity or evaluate the roles played by different groups of people in order to come to terms with their colonial past. Successful candidate responses identified at least two groups whose roles were important in their colonial past. Less successful answers were ambiguous and often simply stated panorama más amplio.
- f) This question also proved more challenging for candidates who needed to identify that Julissa suggests a better immigration system is needed in order to solve the problems at the Mexican border. Candidates were awarded a mark for suggesting that the government needed time to improve immigration systems. However, marks were dropped if the response was too vague. For example, the suggestion that It was going to take time or they were working on it, without reference to better or fairer systems, was not awarded a mark. References to the need for caminos legales were not awarded a mark because The text makes it clear that these already exist but require improvement.

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 – Escuchar de manera Segura

A multiple-choice question worth 5 marks. This question was accessible to most candidates. The mark most frequently missed was 5(d) as some candidates did not manage to link tiene un zumbido persistente en los oídos with option C, siempre oye ruido.

Question 6 – ¿Por qué son tan importantes los incas en Perú?

A reading comprehension text worth five marks with short answer questions in Spanish. This question proved accessible to the majority of students.

- a) Most candidates gained the mark by identifying that although the Incas disappeared from Peru five centuries ago, they continue to be a symbol of Peru. In order to be awarded the mark, candidates needed to identify not only that the Incas are a symbol of the country but that it is surprising because they disappeared centuries before. A number of candidates gave an incorrect answer which focused on poderosos soberanos (cubiertos de oro).
- b) Most candidates identified that some towns resisted the Incas or that they had a conflicted relationship with them. Other correct answers conveyed the idea that many towns lived together under Inca rule. Answers which conveyed the idea that the Incas succeeded in creating an empire that integrated numerous different ethnic groups were awarded a mark. However, se convirtió en el imperio más grande, without reference to the integration of different groups, was not awarded a mark.
- c) Candidates needed to identify something that facilitated Pizarro's victory. Correct answers suggested either that the Incas were not united and were fighting amongst themselves or that the Incas had become unwell due to illnesses brought by the Europeans. The most successful answers indicated either that internal disputes led to Pizarro's victory or that the Incas were weakened by diseases caught from the Europeans.
- d) To score two marks, candidates needed to give two ideas about why the link with the Incas is so important to the economy of modern Peru. The majority of candidates were successful in this question, identifying that Peruvian gastronomy is exported all around the world and that Machu Picchu attracts many visitors. Less frequently identified was the fact that the paved roads increase the standard of living in Peru. A number of candidates incorrectly referred to the importance of monuments in general or to the widespread use of their language their language, quechua.

Question 7 - Jon Kortajarena: una leyenda de la moda

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

- a) This question proved challenging for some candidates although many picked up at least one mark. Successful candidates mentioned that students thought Goya's painting was about General Franco. They also identified that there was a confusion between the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War. Several variations were awarded a mark, including that students thought the painting of the 3rd of May was a painting of Franco's firing squads, that there was confusion over the causes of the Civil War or about Franco's ideology or that they were confusing Franco with Hitler. Marks were dropped if candidates incorrectly stated that the confusion was about the Second World War or that

the painting was of the shooting of Franco. The key idea for candidates to understand was that, whilst the painting is not about Franco, the students mistakenly think it is. Similarly, marks were dropped if candidates simply answered *se confunde del cuadro (de Goya)* as this was too vague.

- b) This question proved challenging for a number of candidates. Successful answers identified that the objective was to understand why young people never attended commemorative events. In order to be awarded the mark, candidates needed to refer to the commemorative events. Marks were dropped when candidates' responses were ambiguous such as *saber porque no hay jóvenes* on its own. Some candidates unfortunately focused on the idea that the aim was to learn more about students' understanding and knowledge of the Civil War.
- c) The majority of candidates were able to identify that Pilar was concerned that young people could be manipulated due to their ignorance of the past. Some answers concentrated solely on the word *manipulación* and were not awarded the mark. Similarly, answers that focused on the idea of banning or burning books did not score the mark.
- d) This question proved accessible to the majority of candidates, many of whom lifted *lo que más influye en el conocimiento de los jóvenes hacia la memoria histórica es la experiencia familiar* from the text. A number of candidates successfully put this into their own words to convey the idea that it is important for the older generation to talk about their lived experiences in order that young people better understand the past. Alternatively, a mark was also awarded to candidates who identified that the older generation should talk about their experiences because there is insufficient focus on *Franquismo* and Civil War history in schools.
- e) Most candidates got the mark here, indicating that schools should teach young people more about the Civil War and Franco's regime. A few candidates incorrectly stated that the history of the Civil War is not sufficiently present in school programmes, which does not actually answer the question about what schools should do.
- f) This question proved challenging for a number of candidates who were asked to identify what revealed that the *Ultraderecha* had influenced some young people. The key idea here was that some young people believed the suggestion by the *Ultraderecha* that the government's ideas about historical memory are an attempt by the government to rewrite history. Some candidates misunderstood this, thinking that the *Ultraderecha* were trying to rewrite history. Other less successful answers focused on the idea of opening old wounds or trying to resolve a situation of injustice.
- g) The majority of candidates were successful in this question, identifying that *Vox* is an attractive political party for young people because they see it as going against the system.
- h) Most students scored the mark in this question, identifying that old wounds should not be reopened. Marks were dropped when candidates incorrectly focused on the idea that people agreed that historical memory was subject to *una fuerte politización*.

- i) The key idea in this question was to identify that the association had chosen to use social media in order to bring young people closer to their past or to teach young people about their history. Successful answers mentioned los jóvenes so that there was no ambiguity to the answer. Marks were dropped when candidates simply said acercarlos a su pasado as the pronoun did not make it clear to whom they were referring.

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 and 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.

It is very important for candidates to refer to the bold phrases in the texts and check that the transformation fits and keeps the same meaning as the original. A successful response will demonstrate contextual understanding by ensuring that the same message is conveyed after the applied manipulation.

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

- a) Several formulations were accepted and most candidates got this mark. Candidates dropped marks for the incorrect use or omission of accents.
- b) This question was also correct in most cases and several formulations were accepted. Some candidates missed the mark because they omitted the accent on está or because they used a subjunctive form (esté). Omission of the de at the beginning of the sentence often lost the mark.
- c) This question required a transformation from the imperative to the second person plural subjunctive of the verb cuidar. The omission of the accent on cuidéis and/or oídos resulted in the loss of a mark.
- d) Many candidates scored the mark for this question. The most frequent mistakes here were the omission of either the accent on the Preterite tense verb or the omission of the letter u or the letter i in extinguió.
- e) Many candidates successfully made the transformation to either llegó a ser or llegó a convertirse en. Marks were dropped when candidates did not realise llegó needed to be followed by a + an infinitive.
- f) Most candidates correctly wrote tardó poco (tiempo) en sucumbir a los conquistadores. In a few cases, candidates lost a mark because they omitted accents or made sucumbir reflexive.
- g) Overall, this question was well-answered. Candidates found many different ways to correctly perform the grammatical transformation in order that the new version correctly

fitted into the original text. Use of the adjective innegable in the transformation was not awarded a mark because the transformation had to include the word no.

- h) This was a challenging grammatical transformation requiring candidates to change *rodeada de* to a present tense verb. Many candidates unfortunately provided either a preterite or imperfect tense verb and were not awarded the mark.
- i) The majority of students realised that the transformation required a subjunctive. Correct answers involved either *vieran* or *viesen*. Unfortunately, a number of candidates were not awarded a mark because they used the present subjunctive instead.
- j) This proved to be a challenging grammatical transformation. Marks were dropped by candidates who did not attempt to transform the adjective *manipulable* to the passive.

Section C - Writing (40 marks)

Candidates write one essay on a topic chosen from the list prescribed in the Specification for the unit. As in previous series, the history essays (10a and 10b), *Ocho Apellidos Vascos* (17a and 17b), *Como Agua Para Chocolate* (11a and 11b), *'Yerma'* (15a and 15b) and *'Las bicicletas son para el verano'* (14a and 14b) were the most popular choices.

Candidates may include a bibliography as evidence of their research but this is not essential and no extra marks are gained for the essay by doing so. Candidates are encouraged to spend time drawing up a structured plan for their essay that fully addresses both parts of the question.

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

Candidates who chose novels or plays tended to produce a more comprehensive analysis, making references to the historic and socioeconomic circumstances of the time in which the work was set. Those who chose a film tended to make references to the plot but often stayed in the descriptive and were therefore not always able to reach the top mark bands because of a lack of critical analysis.

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

Question 9 Geography

Only a small number of candidates chose to write essays on 9a and 9b. Many essays lacked factual evidence and instead relied on general impressions rather than concrete research. A very small number of essays were unfortunately about non-Spanish speaking countries and therefore could not be credited with any marks.

Question 10 History

There were a number of very well-informed and well-constructed essays full of detail and analysis. For 10a, many essays concentrated on the period of the Spanish Civil War. Whilst many candidates demonstrated a sound knowledge of the period and analysed how the events which took place had an impact on the course of history, some candidates wrote too widely rather than focusing on a specific place or region. 10b was the more popular choice and many candidates demonstrated detailed knowledge of their chosen hero/heroine and the impact of their actions on events during that historical period. For example, there was an excellent essay on Perón and Argentina, full of relevant detail and highly informative. The essay was well-organised into paragraphs with consistently justified links between ideas and the candidate had clearly researched the topic in depth. Several candidates wrote about King Juan Carlos and/or the first Prime Minister Adolfo Suárez and how they were instrumental in the restoration of democracy to Spain during the transition after General Franco's dictatorship. The candidates produced informative and historically accurate essays that were interesting to read.

Question 11 Literature - Esquivel: Como agua para chocolate

This was the fourth most popular essay choice on the paper with 11a being slightly more popular than 11b. In 11a, candidates offered an effective description of the family ranch together with description of the roles of characters such as Mamá Elena, Tita and Gertrudis. The most successful essays offered a perceptive analysis of how these characters and life on the family ranch reflected traditional society, the situation of women living within that traditional society or the struggles of those trying to escape society's expectations. One excellent essay established clear comparisons between the characters and events of the novel and the revolutionary background that prevailed in Mexico at the time. The candidate gave plenty of detailed information and perceptive references to the text to support the development of their ideas throughout the essay. A small number of candidates chose 11b, considering the literary techniques employed by Esquivel and focused around the use of magic realism, symbolism and metaphor. Less successful essays did not move beyond storytelling and therefore lacked sufficient depth of analysis to reach the top mark bands.

Question 12 Literature - Delibes: El príncipe destronado

A very small number of candidates chose 12a, analysing the importance of Quico's younger sister in the novel and the relationship between the two children.

Question 13 Literature - Allende: Inés del alma mía

No candidates chose to write about this novel.

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

This was the second most popular choice on the paper. There were a number of well-written essays that demonstrated a clear understanding of the text. In 14a, the most successful essays analysed the character of Don Luis and his importance in the text. Some candidates simply described his character and did not fully address the “Analiza” element of the question. 14b was only slightly more popular. Successful essays showed excellent knowledge of the text and detailed analysis of how day-to-day life in Madrid is presented before the Civil War, exploring in detail how the characters managed to survive the impact of the Civil War on their lives. The highest scoring essays gave relevant quotations and clear textual references to substantiate the points candidates were making.

Question 15 Literature – García Lorca: Yerma

15a was the least popular of the Yerma essays. Here, candidates often described the scene but did not adequately analyse the role and significance of the lavanderas. 15b was by far the more popular choice. There were some good essays which demonstrated detailed knowledge of the patriarchal society of the time. These essays got to grips with the role of women and how Yerma is affected by the expectations of the society in which she lives. The highest scoring essays were well-organised, looking chronologically at how the character of Yerma deteriorates throughout the play from beginning to end, thereby revealing her progressive decline and how other characters contributed to it. Some essays lacked organisation and tended to jump from one part of the play to another without being able to effectively trace Yerma’s decline. Less successful essays did not fully address the ‘Analiza’ element of the question and only looked at other characters’ contribution in a superficial manner.

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

There were only a handful of essays on 16a and several lapsed into storytelling rather than an effective explanation of the importance of fairy tales in the film. Many lacked analysis of the degree to which the film has the characteristics of a fairy tale. Similarly, in 16b many candidates resorted mainly to storytelling rather than an effective analysis of Vidal's role in the film and the effect he has on other characters.

Question 17 Film – Martínez-Lázaro: Ocho apellidos vascos

Question 17a about Amaia and the evolution of her character throughout the film was by far the most popular choice on the paper. Many candidates demonstrated a detailed knowledge of the film and wrote well-constructed essays in which they gave a more personal analysis of the film. There were many pleasing responses which traced the development of Amaia’s character from

the earliest scenes in Sevilla in which she appears intolerant, ill-tempered and cold through to the later scenes where she has mellowed into a far more tolerant, warm and loving individual. Many candidates made frequent references to specific episodes in the film together with perceptive insights into her development as a character. Some candidates, however, did not fully answer the question, especially the analysis part. A number of candidates focused almost entirely on describing the character and storytelling. Conclusive remarks were often missing. Not all candidates used evidence to support their observations. In general, candidates had a sound knowledge of the film, although at times that knowledge was not demonstrated in sufficient depth.

There were some detailed and analytical responses to question 17b which examined the humour derived from language differences between the north and south of Spain. There were many well-written and well-researched essays, the most successful of which made frequent reference to specific sequences in the film in which language becomes not only problematic but also very amusing and analysed the effect these had upon the overall success of the film. A number of essays did not have real depth to them and resorted to storytelling rather than analysis. Some candidates provided only a very brief conclusion or none at all.

Question 18 Film – Wood: Machuca

There were only a few essays about this film. In 18a, one successful essay described the parents of the main characters in detail, analysing the difference in their values and political ideas and the way that these values and ideas influence their children.

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

A small number of candidates wrote about this film, with both essay choices being of equal popularity. Candidate performance was variable. Several essays resorted to storytelling rather than an analysis of how Maria's character develops and which of her experiences had the greatest influence upon her. More successful essays traced Maria's character development throughout the film and provided an in-depth analysis of which experiences were most influential. Similarly, in essay 19b, more successful essays not only described the conditions in which Colombians were living but gave an in-depth analysis of the impact of poverty upon women. Less successful essays again focused on storytelling and lacked the in-depth analysis required to reach the top mark bands.

Question 20 Film – Bollain: También la Lluvia

There were no essays about this film.

Advice to candidates:

Based on performance in this examination, examiners would like to offer candidates the following advice:

Sections A and B

- Take care to answer the questions precisely. Write clear, concise answers. Use your own words as far as possible.
- In two-mark questions, think carefully about whether your two answers give two clearly different pieces of information. Examiners can only consider the first answer in a one-mark question and the first two answers in a two-mark question. Extra information before the correct answer can result in marks being lost.
- In Question 8, find the emboldened question phrase in the articles in Section B. Refer to the bold phrases in the text and check that the transformation fits with the text.
- Also in Question 8, consider the context of the original text. To score the mark, the answer needs to be grammatically correct and convey the same meaning as the original text.
- 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.

Section C

- Read essay questions carefully. Make sure that all your points are clearly relevant to the question.
- Candidates must make sure they answer both the explanation/description and the analysis parts of the essay question. They should prioritise analysis over description. The best essays tend to be those that follow the point-evidence-evaluate pattern.
- Write an essay plan. In the planning phase, check that each paragraph has one key idea which relates clearly to the question.
- Explain clearly when giving examples and other evidence to support your points of view. Imagine that your reader has not read the book or watched the film. 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 las lavanderas”, or “él explica todo” which require the reader to have watched the film or read the book in order to fill in the gaps.

- Always include an introduction which is rooted in and relates precisely to the question you are answering. Avoid general introductions to the work which have little to do with the precise question.
- Essays need to have a conclusion which follows on from the essay content, summarises the arguments presented in the essay and includes a personal response.
- For Question 9 Geography essays and Question 10 History essays, candidates must demonstrate that they have researched the topic. General knowledge is not enough to score highly. History and Geography essays need specific examples, statistics, figures, dates and/or events.
- For film and literature essays, candidates need to include a wide range of different types of relevant factual evidence to support points of view, such as in-depth, specific examples from the text or film, quotations, director's or author's techniques.
- Teachers should emphasise the importance of handwriting to students. A small number of examination scripts, or parts of them, were almost illegible because of messy handwriting or messy corrections. Candidates must write clearly and legibly. It is very difficult for examiners to credit work if they cannot read it.

