



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

In Spanish (4SP1) Paper 02

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## Report to Centres

There are three sections to this paper. Section A is reading comprehension, Section B is writing and Section C is a grammar exercise. The two opening questions of this paper are based on medium length texts, each with a complete-the-sentence format. Q03 is based on three short texts and a who-said-what grid to complete. Q04 is a note-taking exercise. Q05 is a long reading passage with questions and answers in Spanish. Q06 is a short writing task where candidates have to include 4 stimulus words. Centres are strongly advised to ensure that candidates are trained to use all of the words and to include them verbatim. Q07 is a long writing question with three choices of essay, each requiring a different style of writing (eg a blog, an email, an article) and being based around four bullet points. The bullet points will encourage the use of a variety of tenses and an opinion. The grammar exercise is Q08. Candidates are given a text with ten gaps and a word (eg an infinitive or an adjective) that must be manipulated to fit correctly into each gap. One point is awarded for a word correctly modified. Subject-verb agreement, two verb combinations, tenses and adjective agreement are all tested. The rubric reminds candidates that there may be words that do not need to be changed at all (eg where an infinitive is grammatically correct, or a masculine singular adjective form is required). There are grammatical items of different levels of complexity, so that the exercise is accessible to candidates of all abilities, but there is scope here for the most able to be stretched.

In this series, Q01 was about future plans. Candidates had to select the correct sentence ending from a choice of 4. The average score was 4 out of 6. The most difficult element was the final part where candidates did not recognise the link between *quiero casarme* and *celebrar su propia boda*.

Q02 was about some futuristic aeroplanes. Candidates had to complete sentences summarising the text, by selecting from a bank of words. Candidates needed to consider not just meaning, but also grammar in order to make their selection. For example, when completing the sentence: *Un billete en el salón será más ... que en primera clase*, the only answers that can fit grammatically are adjectives, and of these *reciclada*, *cómodo* and *ecológico* would either not agree or not make sense. Although the exercise looks like a choice of 1 out of 12, by using logic, the choice can be as narrow as 1 out of 2. The element that proved most accessible was Q02(b): *En el Avetécnic habrá un espacio para poder trabajar*. The most difficult element was Q02(d) where many candidates assumed that the ticket would be more, rather than less expensive. Most candidates scored 4 marks out of 6.

Q03 was based on statements by three people about their best friend. Candidates had to indicate which of the three had made each of the 7 statements. The instructions inform the candidates that some statements may refer to more than one person or to none of them. Candidates had to place 8 crosses in the appropriate boxes. Most candidates followed this instruction, although there were many who offered fewer than 8, which was a real wasted chance to score. For those who offered more than 8 crosses, for each extra cross that was offered, one mark was deducted from the total score. The average score was 6 or 7 out of 8. Nearly all the candidates got at least 3 marks. Most candidates got A and G correct. Many of the candidates got D and F correct. In option E, *Ismael* seemed to be easier to find than *Elsa*. C seemed to be the most difficult.

Q04 was about the birthday celebrations of the Spanish singer, Rosalía. Ten items of information from the text were required in note form. These were a range of individual words, numbers and short phrases. Candidates performed well, with an average score of 9 out of 10.

Although most candidates gained a mark for Q04(e), a sizable number of candidates overlooked that they had been asked to name her edible presents, so *un cinturón* or *calcetines* could not be an answer. Q04(f) and Q4(g) were about her next birthday and these seemed to cause the most difficulty, with candidates not always communicating that the celebration would be a football match or that the guests would not just be friends but her *amigos famosos*.

Q05 was a literary text taken from *La Ciudad de la niebla* by Pío Baroja. This was the most challenging comprehension question, although prior knowledge of the text was not necessary. The average score was 5 out of 10. The first element of the question was often answered incorrectly. Some candidates made an unsuccessful lift from the text here, either by quoting the phrase *fue un error*, which was too short or *llevarme allí fue un error*, which could not be credited as it is in the first person and therefore did not directly answer the question. Other candidates overlooked that the first question specifically asked about the information given in the first sentence; the answer *era una verdadera prisión* could not be correct as it is not in the first sentence. Q05(e) was only answered correctly by the most able candidates. Most did not understand the description of one of the teachers: *una portuguesa, baja y morena, cuyo hermano era cura de la iglesia de al lado*. The use of the relative *cuyo* probably caused confusion about who was the RE teacher. Examiners were surprised to find that Q05(g) was often answered incorrectly. Candidates either did not recognise that *ninguna* meant that María had no friends or they were distracted by the mention of two mysterious girls and suggested that she had two friends. A significant number of candidates said that she had one friend called Ella, presumably not recognising this very basic word in the last sentence *deseo de empezar una amistad con ella*.

The short writing task in Q06 was about 'Mi tiempo libre'. As in past series, the majority of candidates scored well here, the average mark was 9 out of 10. Some candidates lost Communication and Content marks as they failed to refer to all four stimulus words exactly as they are written in the paper. Sometimes the word *deporte* was changed to *deportes* and the word *juego* changed to *videojuegos*. This type of manipulation was not accepted.

Many candidates wrote an effective account of their free time in accurate Spanish. Issues of gender, incorrect agreement and coordination of tenses were noted, such as: *el familia, el película nuevo, fui a el cine, la semana pasada voy*. A lot of candidates used *juego* incorrectly in the phrase *me gusta juego*. There were, however, many candidates who went far beyond the level of language expected in this question, using a variety of tenses and examples of complex expressions such as the subjunctive.

The long writing tasks in Q07 produced many wonderful essays that covered all four bullet points in interesting detail and included a rich variety of vocabulary and grammar. Of note were idiomatic expressions such as *me puse morada, pan comido, llover a cántaros, subirme por las paredes, estoy sin blanca*. Q07(c) (about role models) was the least popular of the three options. Q07(a) was about the environment and Q07(b) was about school trips. Examiners found many essays written in such poor handwriting that they had great difficulty deciphering them. They always tried to give the candidate the benefit of the doubt when a key word was ambiguous, but teachers should emphasise the need for legible handwriting and make their pupils aware that poor presentation could potentially lead to a less successful outcome than deserved.

In Q07(a), at times, it was clear that some candidates were writing a pre-prepared essay about the environment and were not addressing the bullet points. For the third bullet point, candidates needed to give their opinion on being green, but many failed to do this effectively.

In Q07(b), for the first bullet point, examiners were hoping to find more details about who went on the trip, but many candidates just mentioned that they had gone with their class or *compañeros*. Essays that were given top marks for Content and Communication contained convincing descriptions of some of the pupils or teachers. The final bullet point was considered only partially addressed if the future activity was not clearly a school activity. Some candidates just mentioned a future holiday they were going on. More successful answers described how, for example, they were hoping their school would take them skiing next year.

Q07(c) was answered by a small number of candidates. Native speakers tended to do a good job of covering the bullet points, but many others struggled especially when writing about something the famous person had done in the past. Sometimes they wrote about having seen the famous person in concert, which did not count. At other times, examiners observed poor use of the preterit, which caused ambiguity. This choice had the lowest average score, 12, with candidates who opted for the other choices scoring an average of 14 or 15 out of 20.

The grammar test in Q08, where candidates had to modify 10 given words, was based on a text about how children develop. This task is designed to give the strongest candidates the chance to shine, while also offering weaker candidates one or two places where they can score. The elements where most candidates picked up points were the adjective manipulations in Q08(b) *importantes*, (e) *jóvenes* and (j) *sana*. Many candidates also scored with the regular present tense verb manipulation in Q08(c) *van*. The present tense in Q08(d) *muestran* was less successful as many candidates omitted the stem change. The reflexive infinitive needed in Q08(a) *vestirse* was sometimes given as *se vestirán* or *vesterses*. The most challenging manipulation was Q08(g) *se subió*, where the correct preterit ending was applied, but the reflexive pronoun was frequently missed. The other preterit manipulation was in Q08(h) and this was handled well by most. Only the most able candidates were able to score above 8 marks, with the average score being 5.

Given the performance in this exam, students are offered the following advice:

- Use grammar rules to narrow down your choices in Q02.
- In Q04 and Q05, take care to read the question carefully in order to give the correct detail in the answers.
- Use the four stimulus words EXACTLY as they are printed in Q06.
- Avoid writing a pre-learnt essay in Q07, you need to include the specific details suggested in the bullet points.
- Include irregular, reflexive and stem-changing verbs in your revision of tenses, in order to give yourself the best chance of success in Q08.

