



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

In Spanish (4SP1) Paper 02R

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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 a school trip to a museum. 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 Q01(e), where candidates did not recognise the link between *una pared donde puedes dejar un mensaje; allí vamos a divertirnos añadiendo mensajes* and *A los alumnos les gustará escribir en la pared*.

Q02 was about the negative aspects of school. 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: *Prefiero pasar tiempo con alumnos ...*, the answer needs to be an adjective, and of these only *trabajadores* and *simpáticos* work grammatically. 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 difficult was Q02(a): *Odio ... despertarme ... temprano*. The most accessible element was in Q02(b): *En casa prefiero ... relajarme*. Most candidates scored 4 marks out of 6.

Q03 was based on statements by three people about their fear or love of flying. 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 have 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. Correct answers relating to Nadia (who liked flying) seemed easier to identify than statements relating to Raúl or Pedro.

Q04 was based on a text by someone remembering a naughty thing he had done as a child. 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 6 or 7 out of 10 and a high number scoring full marks.

In Q04(a), a lot of candidates struggled with the meaning of *edad*. There were many scores of 1 mark because the second response given was *hice algo muy malo* or the names of the brothers instead of their ages. Question parts (b), (c) and (d) were usually answered successfully, but the two brothers were mixed up sometimes which made (e) and (f) incorrect. Examiners were pleased to see that a lot of candidates were able to manipulate the preterit tense from first to third person in (f), although they also saw many answers that included *mi dormitorio*. These were unsuccessful.

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. Q05(a) and (b) were often answered with a direct lift from the text. This worked for some candidates in (a) but not in (b), where only the most able candidates were able to convey that the couple had been getting married. Most candidates scored at least one mark for Q05(c), although offering a lift here of *buena calidad para ti* resulted in no mark. Nearly all candidates scored one mark on Q05(d) and Q05(e). The second mark for (e) was awarded to only the small number of candidates who changed the verbs from first to third person. The inability to change verbs into the third person also resulted in a poor performance in Q05(f).

The short writing task in Q06 was about 'Mi pasatiempo favorito. As in past series, the majority of candidates scored well here, the average mark was 8 or 9 out of 10. Some candidates lost Communication and Content marks as they missed out a stimulus word or failed to refer to all four stimulus words exactly as they are written in the paper. Many candidates talked about doing homework, as this was obviously how they had learnt to use the verb *hago*. However, a good number of them managed to keep this relevant to their favourite pastime. Some wrote too much

and therefore lost some relevance, often describing their free time or daily routine instead of a favourite pastime. A small number of candidates used all four words but did not relate their writing to their favourite pastime at all. An essay must be on the topic prescribed and include the four stimulus words in order to score.

The long writing tasks in Q07 produced many wonderful essays that covered all four bullet points in interesting detail. Examiners were impressed with the range of tenses used here by many candidates, including present subjunctives, imperfect subjunctives and many idiomatic expressions. There were, however, many essays written in such poor handwriting that they were difficult to decipher. Candidates will always be given the benefit of the doubt when a key word is 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), which was about a family party, essays that scored least well did not give a description of a guest but just mentioned briefly who was there. Some candidates mixed past and present tenses, making them difficult to follow; quite a few candidates wrote about a party that was going to take place in the future, which then created ambiguity when they said what they did at the party. In bullet point 4, some candidates copied *celebrarás* from the bullet point, instead of manipulating the verb. Overall, the average score for this option was around 14, making it the most successful option.

In Q07(b), an essay about recycling, the lower scoring responses failed to earn marks for bullet point 1 as they mentioned recycling in general but not what they recycled at school. Sometimes bullet point 3 was not addressed successfully and candidates just described what their family does to help the planet without mentioning how they saved water. Some candidates struggled with tenses in bullet point 4. This was the least popular choice of the three options and had an average score of around 13 out of 20.

Q07(c), about a future profession, also had an average score of nearly 13. Most candidates gave an convincing account of a profession that interested them for bullet point 1. Bullet point 3 was less successfully handled, with many candidates mixing present and past tenses. For bullet point 4, many candidates did not understand *solicitar un trabajo* and just spoke generally about the future, saying they would like to buy a house, get married and earn lots of money.

The grammar test in Q08, where candidates had to modify ten given words, was based on a text about parents as role models. 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) *famosa*, (f) *maduros* and, surprisingly, the apocopation in (j) *buen*. Many candidates also scored with the regular present tense verb manipulation in Q08(b) *influencian*. The present tense in Q08(a) *quieren* was less successful as some candidates omitted the stem change. The infinitive in Q08(i) *ser* was usually given correctly. The most challenging manipulation was Q08(c) *dijo*, where the irregular preterit form was frequently missed. The imperfect tense manipulation in Q08(e) *veía* was not handled well either, despite there being so few irregular verbs in the imperfect tense. The future tense in Q08(g) was more successful. Only the most able candidates were able to score above 8 marks, with the average score being 4.

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 and write about the topic given.
- Make sure you understand the tenses suggested by the bullet points when selecting an option in Q07.
- Include irregular, reflexive and stem-changing verbs in your revision of tenses, in order to give yourself the best chance of success in Q08.

