

GCE A Level Examiners' Report

Spanish
A Level
Summer 2025

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Introduction

Our Principal examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each component.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.¹

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	Eduqas offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.eduqas.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each component that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results and Grade Boundaries and PRS (eduqas.co.uk)

¹ Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

Exam Results Analysis	Eduqas provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page.
Become an examiner with WJEC.	We are always looking to recruit new examiners or moderators. These opportunities can provide you with valuable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	Become an Examiner Eduqas

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Executive Summary

Overall, candidates were well prepared for the 2025 suite of examinations.

For Component 1, examiners were once again impressed by how confidently and calmly candidates approached their tests and by how well centres had prepared their candidates for their speaking tests. The Independent Research Project (IRP) forms an important part of the speaking assessment. The IRP allows candidates to choose an area of personal interest for independent study. The topics that work best tend to have an element of nicheness and step significantly away from the taught part of the course because they move well away from things that any Hispanic person would know about and, therefore, demonstrate quality research. Examples of topics which worked well this year are included in the main body of the report. Centres are reminded that they are able to contact Eduqas if they are unsure of the suitability of an IRP title.

In the IRP discussion, centres are reminded that examiners do not bring their own knowledge of the topic to the discussion but, instead, seek to ask initially open questions based on the headings that the candidate has supplied on their Appendix B form. As candidates speak, examiners listen carefully and formulate subsequent lines of questioning based, as far as possible, only on what the candidate has indicated they are able to speak about. Candidates may be asked about what they have said in their presentation, what they have put on their form or what they have said in response to earlier questions. It is helpful if teachers could draw future candidates' attention to this approach to questioning to allay any concerns about being asked about things that were not part of their research.

For Component 2, the Principal Examiner reported that the paper differentiated well and across the full grade range. It was positive that very few candidates failed to complete the paper or left questions unanswered. It was also noticeable that many candidates scored quite similar marks on the two translation pieces. In response to feedback from teachers, useful work has been done to bring the demand of these two questions more closely into line with each other and to design the mark schemes in such a way as to allow access to marks right across the ability range. The listening summary question is the only one where some further training from centres could help candidates communicate their answers better to examiners; this is discussed in more detail in the main report.

In Component 3, the Principal Examiner was pleased that candidates displayed excellent linguistic ability, using a wide range of lexis, grammar, idioms, and academic register. However, errors in subject-specific vocabulary persist; candidates are encouraged to review key terms in advance. Candidates are advised that set idioms should be used carefully, as forced or incorrect usage can detract from clarity. Furthermore, informal language and referring to authors or directors by first names remain inappropriate for academic writing.

Areas for improvement	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
IRP research and title issues	Guidance on preparing learners for C1. OER (Online Exam Review) CPD material	A website guide for teachers preparing candidates Exemplar material.
Accuracy when producing Spanish.	Past Papers Mark Schemes OER (Online Exam Review) CPD material Exam Walkthroughs	Resources (eduqas.co.uk) Previous responses from candidates / mark schemes found on the website.

SPANISH
GCE A level
Summer 2025
COMPONENT 1 - SPEAKING

Overview of the Component

This component assesses the candidates' ability to use the spoken language effectively to present the findings of independent research, discuss the research conducted in detail and to show knowledge and understanding of the Hispanic world through a spontaneous discussion based on a stimulus card.

All four assessment objectives are assessed in the course of the test, which lasts between 16 and 18 minutes and is conducted by a visiting external examiner.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Preamble

Examiners would once again like to extend sincere thanks to centres who hosted them and for the administrative and practical support given by teachers and centre staff. This allowed the tests to run smoothly and in the best interest of the candidates.

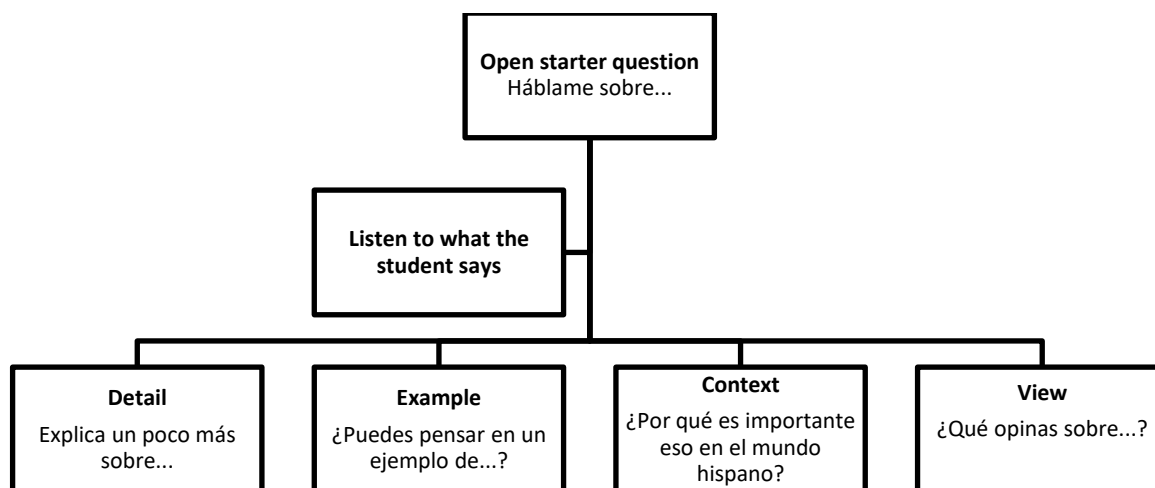
The examiners' reports from previous series provide valuable information for teachers and this report aims to build on those. New teachers to this specification, in particular, are recommended to read back over reports from previous years to inform their approach to the delivery of the specification.

The approach of examiners and useful guidance for teachers

Examiners always aim to make candidates as comfortable as they can during the test and the questions asked aim to provide the candidates with the opportunity to lead the discussions and to showcase what they know and understand about the aspects of Hispanic society that they have studied.

Examiners can never know exactly how the topics in the specification have been taught or exactly what candidates have researched for their independent research project. For this reason, examiners try to keep questions as open as possible at the beginning of each new line of discussion; they then listen carefully to what the candidate says and base their follow-up questions on the responses the candidate gives. A candidate who mentions a particular idea or perspective may then reasonably expect that the examiner would ask more about this. This may be to ask for more detail, a concrete example, the cultural or social significance of something in the context of Hispanic society or a view about the issue raised.

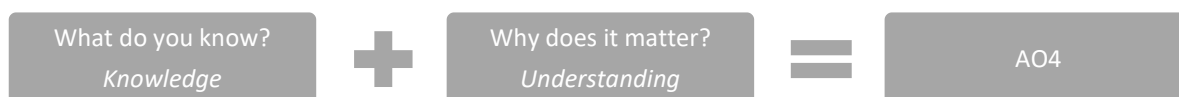
Teachers can usefully model this approach to questioning as they prepare candidates for future series. This can help candidates to plan and possibly anticipate approaches to questioning. This is also good practice for teachers conducting practice tests with their students, because this broad approach across both discussion parts of the test allows for effective targeting of the marking scheme. Whilst the phrasing and order the questions may vary, the chart below, replicated from earlier series reports, remains a useful schematic representation of the approach.



As examiners assess the AO4 marks, they are looking for factual knowledge about the Hispanic world, awareness of the cultural significance of this factual information, ideas and points of view that link knowledge with understanding and also relevant evidence to support what they say.

In general terms we can say that the words ‘analysis’ and ‘evaluation’ which figure in the marking scheme are almost interchangeable but what examiners are looking for is the link between the knowledge and examples that the candidates offer with the relevance of these within the culture and society of Spain or the Spanish-speaking world.

As a kind of equation, we can see AO4 as:



In order to help candidates to prepare in future series it may be useful for teachers to encourage students to develop the good habit of gathering facts and examples and then connecting these to the context of the Hispanic world.

The marking scheme for AO4 also requires relevant evidence. Here the best performing candidates used detailed and up to date evidence that showed evidence of deep learning. For example, one candidate spoke about immigration and mentioned the issues of ‘*los menas*’ and the controversy surrounding the poster that Vox published in the metro station at the Puerta del Sol in Madrid. This was excellent AO4 coverage because the example used was current and detailed and there was a connection made to the political backdrop of present-day Spain. Another candidate spoke about there being lots of immigrants in Spain and said they all came from Africa and arrived on boats. This showed only reasonable knowledge and understanding because the subsequent discussion revealed that the candidate was unsure about how some sections of Spanish society viewed this or what the drivers of migration were.

Teachers should ensure that, as far as possible, candidates have good range of concrete, current examples and are able to comment on the wider relevance of these. Again, using the schematic equation above as a teaching tool can be helpful in developing this personal portfolio of examples. These may be taken from anywhere in the Hispanic world and stretch and challenge can be added for the more able students by encouraging comparisons between countries within it.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Independent research project

Examiners again recognised the diligent and, in many cases, impressive work of candidates in preparing and researching their chosen topics.

The topics that work best tend to have an element of nicheness and step significantly away from the taught part of the course because they move well away from things that any Hispanic person would know about and, therefore, demonstrate quality research.

Topics which worked well this year included:

- ¿Por qué Ceuta y Melilla pertenecen a España y cómo afecta las relaciones internacionales del país?
- ¿Cómo ha evolucionado la economía sumergida en España y cuáles son sus implicaciones actuales?
- La economía de Venezuela, ¿qué falló?
- ¿Qué factores afectan el cargo de España como el líder mundial de donación de órganos?
- El aumento de la participación femenina en la política mexicana.
- La cuarta ola del feminismo en España.
- ¿Hasta qué punto se puede describir el tratamiento actual del pueblo cubano como una violación contra los derechos humanos?
- ¿Hasta qué punto la cultura de Oaxaca impacta la cultura y la sociedad mexicana entera?

Centres are reminded that they can have topic titles checked and receive feedback from WJEC, if they wish.

The following general guidance about the presentation and the IRP discussion is replicated from the report for the 2022 series but will be helpful for teachers new to delivering the Eduqas GCE Spanish course.

The presentation and how marks are awarded (general guidance)

Candidates first spend two minutes presenting their topic. Here marks are awarded for the quality of the research that they have conducted from reading in Spanish (AO2) and also for the quality of their knowledge and understanding of the Hispanic world (AO4).

Candidates provide examiners with a list of sources that they have read, and which are the basis for their presentation. It is not a requirement for candidates to refer directly to their sources in their presentation but where they do so, this is a useful strategy.

The AO2 marks are given for the quality of the topic specific information in the presentation. For example, this may include detailed background, history, trends, data, timelines or other indications that the candidate has gathered together information from a range of source material. Often this was in-depth information that stepped beyond what the average person in the Hispanic world would know and would, themselves, need to research to speak about with assurance and confidence.

The AO4 marks are given for what candidates do with the information they have gathered from research, for example connecting it to the culture of the Hispanic world and showing understanding of it.

Example: **AO2** - *Hoy en día un 22.4 % de los trabajadores autónomos madrileños trabajan la jornada intensiva, con solo una corta pausa a mediodía.* **AO4** - *En el pasado la mayoría de los trabajadores volvían a casa a mediodía para comer y esta nueva tendencia está presentando desafíos para las familias con hijos, ya que las escuelas continúan con el horario de siempre.*

Here the first sentence gives specific information, in the form of precise data: a statistic, a kind of worker and a location. This is not information that the average person in the street would know and is, therefore, an indicator of research. The second sentence places the factual information into a cultural context, by focusing on the impact in a specific context within the Hispanic world.

The IRP discussion and how marks are awarded (general guidance)

The second part of the task is a 9-to-10-minute discussion, during which examiners explore the research topic in greater detail.

In this second part examiners do not bring their own knowledge of the topic to the discussion but, instead, seek to ask initially open questions based on the headings that the candidate has supplied on their Appendix B form.

As candidates speak, examiners listen carefully and formulate subsequent lines of questioning based, as far as possible, only on what the candidate has indicated they are able to speak about. Candidates may be asked about what they have said in their presentation, what they have put on their form or what they have said in response to earlier questions. It is helpful if teachers could draw future candidates' attention to this approach to questioning to allay any concerns about being asked about things that were not part of their research. If this does happen, candidates are encouraged simply to indicate that a particular aspect was not part of their research and examiners will refocus their questioning.

Candidates are marked for AO1, which is their ability to respond in an assured way and to interact in a natural discussion. The higher scoring candidates in this assessment objective were spontaneous and at times led the discussion, taking it in a new direction or refocussing an examiner's question with phrases like '*Bueno, no todo el mundo estaría de acuerdo con ese punto de vista, porque...*'. Lower scoring candidates in this assessment objective showed a tendency to recite pre-learned material, often at unnecessary length. When interrupted by the examiner with a question that probed or challenged, they often struggled or answered in ways that did not address the question asked. Candidates in future series should be advised that over reliance on memorisation can be limiting.

Candidates are also marked for AO3, which focusses on the quality of the language used. Candidates who scored highly in this assessment objective used the language in natural way and there was a wide range of grammatical features such as the use of complex tense sequences, subordinate clauses, negatives and correctly manipulated object pronouns. Minor errors that did not hinder clarity did not necessarily prevent candidates from achieving full marks; absolute perfection is not needed. This said, it is important for candidates to ensure that they have a good grasp of the real basics of the language, beginning with gender, number, simple tense formation and subject-verb accord. Some of the lower-scoring candidates spoke in such a way that meaning was sometimes lost, became unclear or was ambiguous.

It is also important for teachers to work to broaden vocabulary; a noticeable feature is the overuse of certain words. 'Problema', for example, could be replaced with 'reto', 'desafío' or 'dificultad'. Lower scoring candidates used a narrower range of vocabulary and it was noticeable that what they said often lacked topic specific items. In conducting research, candidates should also seek to gather the specific vocabulary items they need to express their ideas and also think about the areas of grammar they may need to do their topic justice. For example, if candidates are dealing with an historical topic, they should work hard to firm up their grasp of past tenses, including more complex tense sequences such as the conditional perfect with past subjunctive, so they can 'what could have happened if...'. This is helpful in enabling candidates to make analytical comments or draw conclusions, which impact AO4 marks positively.

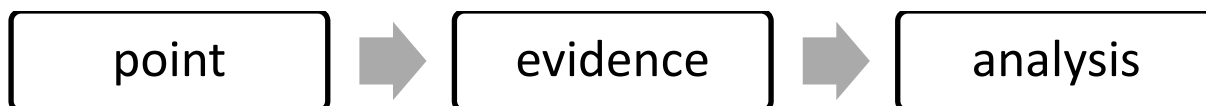
The card discussion and how marks are awarded

Much of what has already been said about the IRP discussion also applies in the card discussion, where AO3 and AO4 are concerned.

There are two key areas of difference. Firstly, candidates are required to ask the examiner at least two questions to show that they are interacting. If they do not ask questions AO1 is affected. Examiners will prompt candidates at the end, if they forget. Questions do not need to be fully formed, so it is acceptable for candidates simply to engage the examiner by asking if they agree or what they think. These questions sometimes work better than speculative questions like 'What would you do if you were the President of Colombia?', because examiners are unlikely ever to be in such a position and so the discussion is not so natural as if they asked: 'What do you think the President should do?'.

The card discussions

The best candidates made points, gave evidence and then provided analytical or evaluative comments. Many candidates used the PEA technique to good effect.



They also targeted the marking scheme effectively in so doing because they showed what they knew about the topic in a general way and could begin by summarising the issues, then they used a good range of concrete examples that were consistently focused in the hispanosphere. These examples often included up to date statistics or data, references to current affairs, key figures in politics and society or clear ideas about historical timelines. They then went on to connect ideas together, saying how the issues they were speaking about affected the societies involved, drawing conclusions about the impact on different groups of people and showing subtlety and nuance of understanding about historical context. This was noticeable when they spoke about social attitudes under Franco, for example. The most able candidates were able to see that there could be comparisons between current and contemporary attitudes. If we compare Spain now with Spain then, we see huge differences but if we compare Spain in 1950s with other European countries at the same time, these differences may be less.

The most able candidates also showed an element of religious literacy in their comments about the role of the Catholic Church in the times of Franco, so that they recognised that many of the people involved were very committed and believed powerfully in what they were doing; they did not act out of malice. Some candidates were able to speak about the way the Second Vatican Council and Liberation Theology movements in Latin America impacted the attitudes and approaches of the Church in the 1960s. The evolution of the dictatorship was also best understood by these candidates.

Candidates who scored less well tended to rely heavily on memorised language and so often said what they had to say but did not answer the questions in a targeted way. They also provided a lot of generalities which, whilst they may be true in the Hispanic world, could also relate to anywhere.

The knowledge organisers on the website should provide candidates with key approaches and ideas to prepare for the discussion.

Card discussion detail for 2025

Two key issues were noticeable. Firstly, candidates sometimes did not take account of a specific named country in the text. This meant that they then said ‘el gobierno debe...’ without moving from Cuba or Peru to Spain. This meant that some discussions lacked precision. The second issue is related to the way in which the candidates reference the text on the card. It is useful if they can aim to pick out two three key ideas from the text that connect it to the statement.

Card 1 dealt with political activism as a feature of good citizenship. Many candidates were able to talk about the loss of confidence in traditional party politics and why certain groups feel under-represented in political debate. They could talk about student protests and generational differences in attitude.

Card 2 dealt with the influence of AI in the life of Hispanic people. Many candidates spoke in quite a general way about this topic and did not build on the ideas in the text, for example the use of AI translation. Teachers are reminded that a range of examples specific to the Hispanic world are useful in this topic area to help access AO4 marks.

Card 3 dealt with Erasmus and the opportunities to study abroad that are available to young Hispanic people. Key ideas from the text were the combination of educational and cultural elements and the idea of cost. Candidates were sometimes able to connect to issues such as international trade and brain-drain.

Card 4 dealt with the custom of the siesta. As the discussion developed many candidates aimed to steer the discussion away and into talking about festivals. There was some indication that everyday customs in the Hispanic world were not well known. These are often very simple things like the ‘paseo’, mealtimes, the long lunchbreak, diet and so on. These may be areas for teachers to work on a little more.

- Card 5** dealt with the centenary of Sorolla and the popularity of museums and galleries with Hispanic people. Many candidates were able to speak about Guernica and Frida Kahlo. Fewer connected traditional art to ideas about elitism or were able to speak about street art. It may be useful for teachers to begin to expand their range of examples of Hispanic artists, Sorolla being a good example, and possibly look at how they reflect their time. Candidates were often able to speak about the idea that art can be a window into the past but not quite able to say how or why. It is useful to be able to connect Goya with war, Picasso with politics, Zurbarán with religion and so on. This helps make connections with the social and cultural context.
- Card 6** dealt with female filmmakers in the Hispanic world. This was not a popular choice with candidates and so there may be indications that this area is not well covered. Candidates who chose it were able to cite certain series on popular streaming services but few were able to name any female directors or offer any insights into their work.
- Card 7** dealt with the language barrier faced by Hispanic migrants in the USA. Here there was some evidence of a lack of awareness about the geopolitical drivers of migration. The more able candidates were able to compare migration within the Hispanic world, for example the situation of people from Hispano-America migrating to Spain, with the challenges of those who go to places where Spanish is not spoken. In preparing candidates to talk about migration, it may be helpful to ensure that they understand that it is not always poverty that is the key driver.
- Card 8** dealt with inclusivity in the workplace and many candidates were able to speak successfully about the issues raised. However, specific examples of how inclusion is supported, such as by equality laws within the European Union or the 2024 *Regulation on Foreigners* that promote inclusion in Spain, were often not cited.
- Card 9** dealt with the mismatch between the existence of laws that aim to prevent racism and the application of them in Cuba. Again, some candidates were not able to offer specific details about groups that are discriminated against based on ethnicity. Some useful work could be done by teachers on developing greater exemplification in this area. For example one candidate spoke impressively about the ethnic makeup of Guatemala and was able to give details about 'Ladinos', Maya, Xinca, African and Garifuna roots and how different groups are viewed by each other.
- Card 10** dealt with Franco's fear of communism and the use of propaganda. Many candidates had good information to share about the censorship of cinema, state control of the press and publishing and some were able to give specific examples, such as saying that *La casa de Bernarda Alba* was unknown in Spain and first performed in Argentina. Others were able to speak about the reasons why the Spanish railways had a different gauge and that there were different school textbooks for boys and girls.

Card 11 dealt with issues around Franco's mission to make Spain a unified and single nation. Many candidates had interesting and thought-provoking things to say and had evidently assimilated considerable knowledge in class. The element that was a little weaker here was the strong connection between Catalunya and the Basque Country with republicanism. These industrial regions were necessary for the economy but also heavily unionised and so a potential threat to the regime's authority.

Card 12 dealt with the idea of direct action taken against the symbols of Franco's Spain and candidates were able to speak about the Valle de Cuelgamuros, the exhumation of Franco, the changing of street names but also why some Spanish people feel that this is an assault on their heritage. The evolution of legislation was well known but fewer candidates were able to connect generational attitudes to what was taught in the classrooms of Franco's Spain and the enduring influence of Franco's propaganda.

Summary of key points

Five key messages for future candidates

1. Choose a research topic that is original and allows for analysis
2. In the presentation aim to make it clear that reading and research has taken place
3. In the IRP discussion make sure to show understanding, not just knowledge
4. In the card discussion summarise the card content and add extra to it in answer to the first question, paying attention to the country the card is set in.
5. In the card discussion, see both sides of everything and seek to reflect the motivation and beliefs of the people who have opposing views. Use a good range of up-to-date examples.

SPANISH

GCE A level

Summer 2025

COMPONENT 2 – LISTENING, READING & TRANSLATION

Overview of the Component

This component is comprised of three sections. Section A tests listening comprehension and the ability to summarise spoken language; this section tests AO1. Section B tests reading comprehension and the ability to summarise written language; this section tests AO2. Section C tests the ability to translate. In this section question 7 tests the ability to translate from Spanish into English and is deemed a reading skill and so tests AO2. Question 8 tests the ability to translate from English into Spanish and is deemed a test of language and is therefore part of the assessment of AO3.

There are 100 marks available for this paper and the mark distributions and allocations for each task are available on the front cover of the paper.

General trends

Examiners reported that the paper differentiated well and across the full grade range. Very few candidates failed to complete the paper or left questions unanswered. This was a positive sign. It was also noticeable that many candidates scored quite similar marks on the two translation pieces. In response to feedback from teachers, useful work has been done to bring the demand of these two questions more closely into line with each other and to design the mark schemes in such a way as to allow access to marks right across the ability range. The listening summary question is the only one where some further training from centres could help candidates communicate their answers better to examiners. More is said about this below.

Candidates have only one opportunity to communicate with the examiner. They should aim to make this communication effective by crossing out clearly any answers they do not want marked, making sure that their handwriting is legible and clear and using the number of printed lines in the paper as a guide to how much to write.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Topic coverage

The grid below provides information about the thematic coverage of the questions and the question types. Across the 8 questions, each theme is covered twice but targeting different subthemes; this means the whole specification is tested and it provides validity for the assessment. The number of marks for different question types is consistent year on year and this is maintained as a tool to generate comparable outcomes year on year. This helps provide reliability in the assessment.

Section A – Listening			Themes and sub themes
Q.1	Gap-fill – objective task		Spain – coming to terms with the past? • Los desaparecidos
Q.2	(a)	Open response questions	Regional culture and heritage in Spain, Spanish-speaking countries and communities • Historical sites
	(b)	Tick 5 boxes – objective task	
Q.3	(a)	Summary task	Discrimination and diversity • Life for those who are discriminated against
	(b)	Open response questions	
Section B – Reading			
Q.4	(a)	Synonym task	Cultural enrichment and celebrating difference • The positive aspects of a diverse society
	(b)	Summary task	
Q.5	(a)	Match two lists – objective task	Youth trends and personal identity • How young people respond to modern technology
	(b)	Open response questions	
Q.6	(a)	Multiple choice questions – objective task	Post-Civil War Spain • Daily life in Franco's Spain
	(b)	Open response questions	
Section C – Translation			
Q.7	Translation from Spanish into English		Media, art, film and music in the Spanish-speaking world • Trends in media
Q.8	Translation from English into Spanish		Education and employment opportunities • The education system and student issues

Overview of the Component

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1 This was an objective task where candidates needed to complete the statements from list A using the words from list B. A key strategy used by candidates who were successful with this task as to use their knowledge of Spanish grammar to help them narrow down the choices in each case, looking at gender and agreement. They had looked for a language-fit first and then a sense-fit based on the recording they heard. This is a strategy teachers can usefully embed for future series.

This was a task that was well answered by most candidates but *cunetas* and *fusiladas* were often mixed up and so not known as vocabulary items. It is important to ensure topic specific vocabulary is known. The content of the text could also provide a useful case study for Component 1 in future series and so may be worth further investigation by teachers.

- Q.2 (a) most candidates answered well and the responses were concise and clear, where they had understood.
- (b) most candidates scored well.

The task differentiated well and there are no particular action points for teachers here. Once again the content could provide useful case study for Component 1 for future series.

- Q.3 This question was in two parts and focussed on the difficulties faced by disabled travellers.

- (a) was a summary task. Many candidates scored well but there was a general tendency to write much more than was necessary to deal with the bullet points. The task here is to pick out key points or ideas and express them concisely. Answers that are over long or extended transcriptions of the audio mean that communication with the examiner breaks down and marks are lost. Examiners are looking for reliable evidence of comprehension. This means that they ask themselves two questions before giving a mark. Firstly, 'has the candidate understood?' and, secondly, 'can I understand the candidate's answer?'. The Spanish does not need to be perfect, just comprehensible but if communication breaks down marks may be lost, even where a candidate may have understood. Teachers can usefully work on producing comprehensible answers.
- (b) was an open response question and much better and more clearly answered.

Overall, the question differentiated effectively and there was evidence of the topic having been well taught at the level of topic-specific vocabulary.

- Q.4 (a) was a synonym task. There was generally good performance and evident use of strategies suggested in earlier reports. The task is vocabulary dependent but is set in such a way that the vocabulary item likely to be best known is on the question paper and the more challenging item in the text.
- (b) was a summary task. This was handled much better than the equivalent task in Section A and generally caused far fewer difficulties.

The tasks differentiated effectively and there are no particular action points for teachers. Again, the group mentioned in the text could provide useful case study and exemplification for Component 1 in future series.

- Q.5 This was the literary text. An effort was made to find text that is relevant and interesting to candidates and there was evidence that they had engaged well with the content. For teachers looking to find interesting content to support reading skills, Manuel Bartual's Twitter / X story is enjoyable. The novel from which this text was taken is semiautobiographical and also a recommendation for any sixth form readers who may be ambitious to read beyond the specification. The language is generally authentic and accessible, which could make it a suitable topic for research.
- (a) required candidates to match two lists.
- (b) was based around open response questions.

The question differentiated well and there are no particular action points for teachers.

Q.6 This question dealt with Eva Perón's uncomfortable visit to Spain. The themes within the text were press censorship, international isolation, the poverty of the early years of the dictatorship and the private pragmatism of Franco that contrasted with his public idealism. There is also a glimpse into Franco's personal life. By this point in the paper texts have additional layers of complexity. The complexity of this text is less at the level of vocabulary but more to do with engaging with the tone of the text, the key ideas and the inferences that need to be drawn to answer the questions.

- (a) was answered generally well but questions (b) and (c) challenged the most.
- (b) was more challenging and (b) was often not well answered – the question required candidates to process quite a long stream of text to find the answer.
- (d)(e) required inferential skills to understand that Carmen felt relief when Eva left and to understand that her behaviour likely to embarrass her husband indicated she had no fear of him.

The question worked well and there are no particular action points for teachers. Again, there are examples and themes in the text that could be the basis for case studies for Component 1 in future series.

Q.7 This question requires candidates to translate a passage in Spanish into English. Translation into English has two key elements; it begins with comprehension of the Spanish text and then moves into the expression in English of the messages from the Spanish. Candidates who have well developed comprehension strategies tend to produce more coherent translations. If a candidate does not know certain items of vocabulary in the Spanish text they need to use deductive skills to try to fill the gaps. These may or may not work in terms of guessing the word they don't know but they do help by preventing marks being lost in following segments. For example, if they see a plural verb but don't know the noun which is the subject of it, they should at least use a plural noun form to try to maintain the overall coherence of the sentence. It was noticeable that some centres had actively trained candidates to maintain the overall coherence of the passage they produced. Other candidates, however, wrote English that made no sense at all. Teachers can usefully work on this coherence building strategy. An example is 'blanco y negro' – in the context of film 'white and black' does not really mean anything to an English speaker but 'black and white' is instantly clear. The challenge was less in the vocabulary but more in the translanguageing skill. Even where candidates have not understood parts of the passage, they should produce a translation that makes sense to them.

The passage worked well and the mark scheme allowed access to marks for candidates of all abilities. Demand was spread through the passage, with harder sections followed by more accessible ones, to help maintain motivation to complete the translation and most candidates did keep going until the end.

Q.8 This question requires candidates to translate a passage of English into Spanish. The vocabulary, but for a few words, was mainly on the GCSE vocabulary list. Some sections challenged idiom and linguistic structure. Examiners do not expect professional quality translations, so some slight latitude is allowable, such as certain use of articles or tiny slips in linguistic control in subordinate clauses, for example. However, things that are grammatically incorrect cannot be given marks. Despite much of the vocabulary and many of the phrases in the translation being the kind of thing that GCSE candidates might write or speak about, 'libros de texto' and 'llevar/usar uniforme' were not always known.

The passage differentiated well and the segmenting of the mark scheme helped all candidates score some marks. The accessibility of the sense of the passage and the relatively simple vocabulary helped candidates to keep going to the end.

There was a small number of candidates who scored full marks and, whilst examiners cannot really tell, these candidates did not necessarily appear to be Spanish native speakers.

One possible action point for teachers of candidates in future series would be to train candidates to look at this translation at the very start of the exam and ask themselves what structures and vocabulary are being tested that they might struggle with. As they do the rest of the paper, they are quite likely to come across some of these structures or words. The texts in the paper are all adapted from authentic sources and so, whilst this is not intentional, some structures or vocabulary may appear which can support the translation.

Summary of Key Points

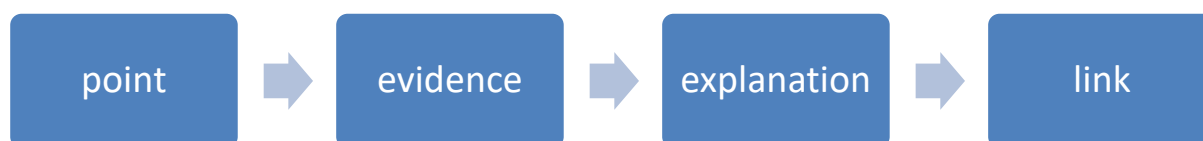
Five tips for future candidates:

1. Use the content of C2 papers to provide case studies for C1
2. Work on high-frequency vocabulary from the GCSE lists and add in topic specific items.
3. See translation into English as a two-step process – comprehension then coherence
4. Use the rest of the paper to support translation into Spanish.
5. Remember the two-step approach to comprehension. Examiners are looking for reliable evidence of comprehension – they need to think candidates have understood and see answers expressed in a way that they could understand as a sympathetic native speaker.

SPANISH
GCE A level
Summer 2025
COMPONENT 3

Overview of the Component

- This component assesses AO3, which involves accurate manipulation of written Spanish using varied vocabulary and grammar, and AO4, which tests knowledge and understanding of the studied literature and film. Candidates should respond critically and analytically, support their points with examples, and show awareness of the cultural and societal context of each work. This year, many essays were both well-structured and analytical, demonstrating strong knowledge and contextual understanding. Candidates who were awarded high marks effectively made points, supported them with evidence, offered analysis or evaluation, and clearly linked back to the title—often using techniques such as PEEL.



Less successful responses tended to be general and narrative in style rather than targeted and focused.

- More candidates are writing on alternate lines, as previously recommended, which greatly helps examiners.
- Though handwriting has improved slightly, legibility is still an issue in some cases. When using word processors, centres must ensure the correct cover sheet is completed.
- In terms of written Spanish, many candidates displayed excellent linguistic ability, using a wide range of lexis, grammar, idioms, and academic register. High-scoring essays included advanced phrases e.g. *pone de relieve*, *pongamos por caso*, *esto da a entender*, *cabe señalar que* strong verbs e.g. *destacar*, *desempeñar*, *subrayar* and *lograr* and strategic use of the subjunctive. Candidates should note that some impersonal expressions—remembered with the mnemonic VOCES (*es verdad que*, *es obvio que*, *es cierto que*, *es evidente que* and *es seguro que*)—do not require the subjunctive.
- Informal language e.g. *la peli* and referring to authors or directors by first names remain inappropriate for academic writing. Set idioms should be used carefully, as forced or incorrect usage can detract from clarity.
- Errors in subject-specific vocabulary persist; candidates are encouraged to review key terms in advance e.g. there were frequent misspelling of words such as *bastón*, *racionamiento* and *mandrágora*.
- All questions on the paper were attempted with the exception being numbers 21 to 24. This is in line with previous exam series.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Lorca's *La casa de Bernarda Alba* remains by far the most popular literary work, followed by *Las bicicletas son para el verano*, *Como agua para chocolate*, and *El otro árbol de Guernica*. Fewer centres studied *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba* and *Réquiem por un campesino español*. Overall, candidates are well-prepared, with strong contextual understanding, and teachers are to be commended for making the material accessible.

Federico García Lorca: *La casa de Bernarda Alba*

- Q.1 the most popular choice, asked whether Bernarda is simply a mother trying to protect her daughters. Most candidates disagreed, highlighting her excessive control and obsession with reputation. Stronger essays referenced her fear of gossip, gave relevant examples of *el qué dirán* and argued that, to some extent, she aims to shield her daughters from a patriarchal, hierarchical society—using examples like Paca la Roseta, la hija de la Librada, and Martirio's denied marriage to Enrique Humanes. Many criticised Bernarda's lack of empathy and failure to consider her daughters' mental health, ultimately linking this to the family's collapse and Adela's suicide. Some argued Bernarda's reaction to Adela's death was an attempt to protect her daughter's honour, while others saw it as further proof that her only concern was the family's reputation. Some candidates mistakenly believed the play is set during Franco's regime, a misconception noted by examiners.
- Q.2 addressed how men, though never seen on stage, are essential to the play. Most candidates agreed, citing Pepe el Romano's harmful influence over the daughters and the lasting impact of Antonio María Benavides' death, which prompts Bernarda's extended mourning. Essays scoring in the top band also discussed how other unseen men affect the treatment of characters like Paca la Roseta and la hija de la Librada. Some argued Bernarda's role was more important, but candidates should remain focused on the actual essay title to avoid overlooking the absent male characters.

Fernando Fernán Gómez: *Las bicicletas son para el verano*

- Q.3 chosen by most candidates, asked if Manolita's dreams become harder to achieve due to the play's sociopolitical context. The best essays mentioned how at the start of the play she is portrayed as an independent, free-spirited young woman aspiring to be an actress but as the war progresses, her pregnancy, status as a single mother after her soldier partner's death, and later Julio's death, her dreams become unattainable. Few candidates addressed her likely post-war position given her family's Republican ties, and some mistakenly believed she would achieve her dreams. Several also confused the Civil War with the post-war Franco regime.
- Q.4 which required an analysis of humour in the play—especially through Don Luis and Fernán Gómez's portrayal of Julio—was not a popular essay choice.

Laura Esquivel: *Como agua para chocolate*

- Q.5 a popular choice. Candidates demonstrated strong knowledge of the novel, focusing on Tita and Pedro's forbidden love, its emotional impact—especially through Tita's cooking—and its effect on family dynamics. Top band essays also mentioned Mamá Elena's past love for José Treviño, though few noted Tita's affection for her nephew Roberto and her sadness when he is sent away. It was encouraging to see many candidates show awareness of the novel's political context, highlighting that these works are not studied in isolation.

- Q.6 was less commonly chosen. Candidates who attempted it focused on the strained relationship between Tita and Rosaura, highlighting their contrasting attitudes. However, more emphasis was needed on how Tita still tries to support Rosaura as although their relationship is mostly marked by rivalry and conflict, particularly over love and tradition, Tita still displays moments of compassion, patience, and familial duty. While many contrasted Tita's more positive bond with Gertrudis, they often focused on character differences rather than the relationship itself. Few explored key moments of mutual support, such as Tita sending clothes to Gertrudis at the brothel or Gertrudis supporting Tita when she fears she is pregnant. Additionally, few mentioned Tita defending Gertrudis's honour after the birth of her dark-skinned child, revealing through Mamá Elena's diary that Gertrudis's biological father was José Treviño, not Juan de la Garza.

Luis de Castresana: *El otro árbol de Guernica*

It was encouraging to see several centres choose this novel despite its length and lack of an English translation, likely due to its accessible themes and appealing storyline.

- Q.7 was a popular choice, with most candidates demonstrating strong knowledge of the novel and making effective links to the question. Many cited pertinent examples such as Santi fostering unity through shared regional and national identity. Top essays referenced the *orfeón*, promotion of Spanish literature via the library, the symbolic "*otro árbol de Guernica*" in the patio of the Fleury, and football matches organised by Santi. Some confusion, however, arose around the two football-related examples: Santi unites Basque children with an Athletic Bilbao shirt to resolve a local rivalry and later renames the team "Spain" to reflect the wider origins of new arrivals.
- Q.8 once again showed that candidates generally knew the story well, with strong examples used to support their points. Many focused on Santi's emotional trauma after being separated from Begoña and placed with Raymond and Arlette Dufour. The best essays analysed how the couple's well-meaning but insensitive actions—changing his clothes, parading him around in front of their friends and family, arranging French lessons, and signing a bike gift from "*mamá y papá*"—lacked empathy for his situation. Candidates also highlighted Mlle Jacquot's cruelty, and the attitude of the history teacher at the Ateneo while stronger responses balanced this by noting empathetic Belgian characters like M. Bogaerts and Mlle Tys.

Gabriel García Márquez: *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba*

As in 2024, only a few candidates chose this novel, and those who did often struggled with in-depth analysis.

- Q.9 was the more popular of the two essay titles. However, responses to both tended to be narrative rather than analytical. In Question 9, candidates often failed to fully explore the impact of the colonel's refusal to face reality such as his refusal to compromise his principles or beg for help, even as he and his wife sink deeper into poverty and hunger. He continues to wait for the pension he was promised as a war veteran, despite years of silence from the government. His pride prevents him from seeking more immediate, practical solutions that might alleviate their suffering.

- Q.10 while the wife's stoicism was noted; she never abandons the colonel or loses faith in him completely as his pride and unrealistic hope make their situation worse, fewer analysed her growing scepticism and rebellion as the novel progresses.

Ramón Sender: *Réquiem por un campesino español*

- Q.11 was more popular and asked candidates to analyse Sender's criticism of the Catholic Church. While the best candidates demonstrated strong knowledge of the novel and its context, many responses were overly narrative and lacked clear links to the essay title. Stronger essays contrasted Mosén Millán's attitude with Paco's, especially during the cave visit, and highlighted the priest's betrayal leading to Paco's death. However, few mentioned Millán's failure to condemn the murder or the Church's alignment with wealthy landowners.
- Q.12 was less commonly chosen, despite focusing on Paco's character development. Stronger responses discussed his evolving relationship with Mosén Millán, his growing sense of injustice over the Church's inaction, and eventual turn to political involvement.

FILMS

This year the most popular film was once again *El laberinto del fauno* followed by *María, llena eres de gracia*. There were some essays on *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios* and *Las trece rosas* but as in recent years no candidate wrote about *El lobo* or *La caja 507*.

Guillermo del Toro: *El laberinto del fauno*

- Q.13 was a question that has not been targeted in previous exam series, but it was popular and well answered. Top band candidates clearly linked the postwar Franco era to food as a tool of control and propaganda. They referenced Vidal's conflict with the Maquis and his efforts to cut food supply lines and his storing of provisions in the outbuilding locked with what he thinks is the only copy of the key. They also contrasted the lavish welcome dinner attended by the '*tres pilares*' of the regime with ration card queues and highlighted the hypocrisy and greed. The best essays also analysed the symbolism in Ofelia's first two tasks—the parasitic toad destroying the tree representing the regime draining Spain of its resources, and the scene with the '*hombre pálido*' and his banquet representing temptation, brutality and power. Less successful responses showed context knowledge but lacked film-specific examples and clear chronology. Some chose to include the idea of milk in the film as a symbol of nurturing and life, seen when Mercedes offers milk and honey to Ofelia and the faun's mandrake in a bowl of milk helping to improve the health of Carmen until it is destroyed. Indicative content in the mark scheme is a guide; all well-argued relevant interpretations are rewarded.
- Q.14 was also popular, with varied success. The best essays portrayed the faun as a bridge between postwar Spain and Ofelia's magical world, highlighting his role in revealing her identity as Princess Moanna and setting her three tasks, guiding her journey. Fewer candidates, however, mentioned the faun's ambiguous and shifting morality and the difficulty in deciding whether he is good or evil thus mirroring the film's blending of fantasy and reality, innocence and brutality. Some argued the faun serves a paternal role, compensating for Ofelia's absent father and troubled relationship with Vidal, supported by examples of his advice, comfort, and reprimands. Also, some top band candidates mentioned the faun's rejuvenation as a powerful visual metaphor for hope, magic, and the complex interplay between reality and fantasy. Key vocabulary like *mandrágora* was often misspelt.

Pedro Almodóvar: *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios*

- Q.15 was generally answered very well. Candidates clearly had a very good understanding of the changes in 1980s post Franco Spain and found many examples in the film as evidence. In addition to the points highlighted in the mark scheme some candidates made good reference to the vibrant colours used, the dialogue and evidence of technology. It was also pleasing to note how candidates picked up on the taxi driver who although a relatively minor character, clearly reflects the spirit of post-Franco Spain, especially the cultural liberation and modernisation of the 1980s. They referred to how his taxi is decked out with kitsch curtains, music, lights, photos, and even feminist and pop-cultural references and how this customised space reflects the freedom of personal expression that flourished in Spain after the fall of the Franco dictatorship in 1975, when censorship and rigid social norms began to collapse. They also highlighted his non-judgmental and supportive attitude, how he listens, offers advice, and never mocks the emotional states of the female characters — contrasting with traditional machismo or patriarchal attitudes that dominated during the dictatorship. It is this sort of relevant and analytical detail that leads to candidates being placed in the top band for AO4.
- Q.16 was attempted by fewer candidates but again was well tackled. Candidates recognised the importance of Iván as a catalyst for the emotional chaos of the film and it was pleasing to see the accurate use of the term “*mujeriego*” by many candidates. This is a good example of a well-used key lexical item relevant to a specific work. The best candidates understood the idea of Iván representing a patriarchal throwback in a rapidly changing society where women are demanding emotional honesty, agency, and liberation.

Joshua Marston: *María, llena eres de gracia*

This was the second most popular choice of film. Candidates appear to engage well with the story and find the underlying themes accessible.

- Q.17 The best essays analysed María's behaviour by thoughtfully considering her circumstances in rural Colombia and the reasons that lead her into the world of drug trafficking even though on the surface they may appear irresponsible. However, some candidates confused the setting, mistakenly citing Spain instead of Colombia, and misrepresenting her motives e.g. suggesting she wants a better life for her child only because Juan refuses to marry her. The best responses highlighted her growing maturity and responsibility as the film develops—such as offering to help repatriate Lucy's body, seeking medical care for her baby, and deciding to pursue a better life in the US despite the many challenges ahead. Some essays, though, treated her final decision superficially, overlooking the difficulties she faces as an undocumented, pregnant single mother in a foreign country with no support, language skills, or resources. There were also a significant number of candidates who talked about *Columbia* throughout.
- Q.18 was attempted by fewer candidates, and overall, it tended to be done less well with fewer concrete examples given. The best responses however focused on the manipulative and sinister nature of certain male characters particularly Javier and his threats towards her family should she not deliver the goods. They also discussed the aggressive behaviour of the ‘*narcos*’ towards María and the other mules with some candidates successfully mentioning the violent and threatening language used.

Emilio Martínez Lázaro: *Las trece rosas*

- Q.19 Most candidates rightly highlighted prison overcrowding, poor sanitation, and food shortages but often missed the imposed National Catholicism seen within the prison—such as singing ‘*Cara al sol*,’ fascist salutes, mandatory mass, and Catholic registration. Some also overlooked the lighter scene where Virtudes and Carmen tap dance and sing ironic songs, highlighting the conditions they are subjected to while showing defiance and offering rare moments of joy and connection amid the oppression.
- Q.20 Most candidates successfully focused on the women’s strong human spirit, though some unnecessarily included counterarguments like Teo’s betrayal, which risked weakening their essays. The best responses gave examples that highlighted the women’s solidarity, dignity, and courage as powerful resistance—evident in scenes when some of the women are tortured by Captain Fontenla, singing and dancing despite harsh conditions, refusing to give the fascist salute or sing *Cara al sol*, protesting at the overcrowding and infant deaths, and their refusal to be quiet when sent to solitary confinement. Only a few mentioned the strength of human spirit when writing final letters to their families knowing they face imminent death, Julia’s bravery when faced with the firing squad, the women’s final embrace before being shot or Blanca’s forgiveness and lack of bitterness despite her execution and that of her husband, as seen in the letter to her son.

General observations and advice for future candidates

- **Read questions carefully** and focus on relevant content with evidence. Avoid including unrelated or pre-learned material.
- **Plan logically and chronologically.** Structure the essay clearly, use appropriate punctuation, and avoid overly long sentences.
- **Use the present tense** for analysis, unless discussing context. Avoid switching tenses or falling into narrative.
- **Proofread for AO3**—check grammar, agreements, verb conjugations, and tense consistency. Learn key vocabulary. Strong essays have a clear introduction, well-structured paragraphs with linking phrases, and a concise conclusion.
- **Essay length:** Aim for around 300 words. Too short lacks depth, overly long essays risk repetition and losing focus.

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