



GCE A LEVEL EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**SPANISH
A LEVEL**

SUMMER 2023

Introduction

Our Principal examiners' reports offer valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. They are written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and detail how candidates have performed.

This report offers an overall 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 goes on to look in detail at each question/section of each component, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.ⁱ

The information found in this report can provide invaluable 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 annual 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 6 months after the examination.	www.wjecservices.co.uk or on the Eduqas subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For unitised specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and unit level. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the overall 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 (eduqas.co.uk)

Exam Results Analysis	WJEC Eduqas provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	www.wjecservices.co.uk
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.	www.wjecservices.co.uk or on the Eduqas subject page.
Become an examiner with Eduqas.	We are always looking to recruit new examiners or moderators. These opportunities can provide you with invaluable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	Exam Marking jobs Examiner & Moderator Vacancies From Eduqas

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Subject Officer's Executive Summary

- This series there were examples of impressive language skills being employed by candidates. There was highly competent use of language demonstrating a thorough appreciation of idiom and register. Many candidates showed their excellent knowledge of the literary works and/or the film they had studied.
- Certain areas of language still present difficulties for some candidates and these are outlined in the main body of this report. Candidates benefit from considering questions carefully and should respond both critically and analytically to essay questions as set.

Areas for improvement / Guidance	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
Continued improvement of linguistic skills	Past papers Mark schemes OER (Online Exam Review) CPD materials Exam walkthroughs	Previous candidate responses/mark scheme
Preparation for Speaking	Examiner's report OER (Online Exam Review) CPD materials	Exemplar
Eduqas GCE Spanish		Subject page
Teacher-Examiner preparation for AS C1		Guidance for teacher-examiners C1 AS Speaking
Preparing Candidates for A Level Speaking C1		Guidance for teachers
Examiners' report for 2022		Previous examiners' report

SPANISH
GCE A LEVEL
Summer 2023
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.

Again in 2023, for many candidates this was their first experience of a public examination as we gradually transition back to normal patterns of assessment and a move back to the standards of the 2019 series after the disruption of the pandemic period.

The examiners' report from last year provides valuable information for teachers and this report aims to build on last year's report. 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.

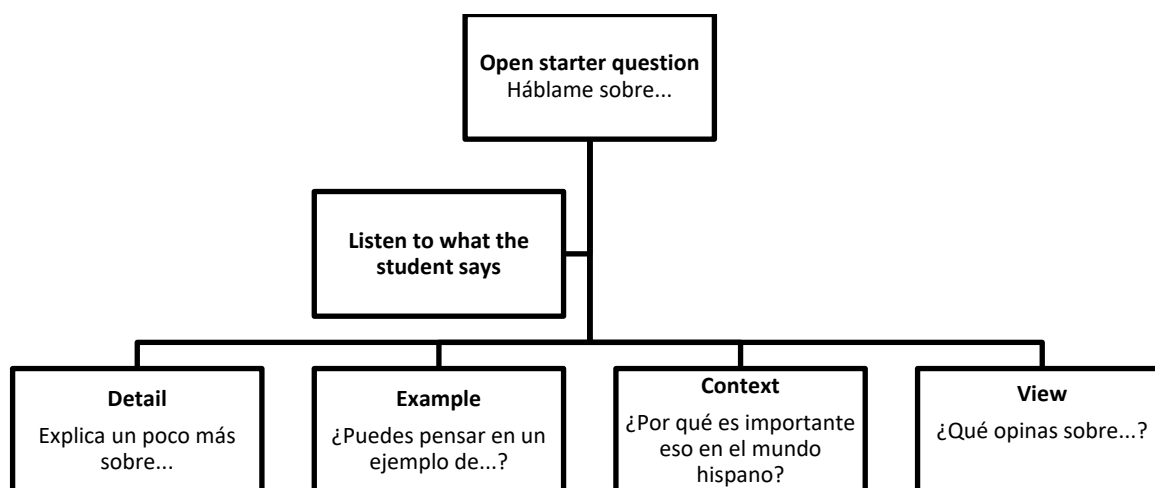
The approach of examiners and useful guidance for teachers

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.

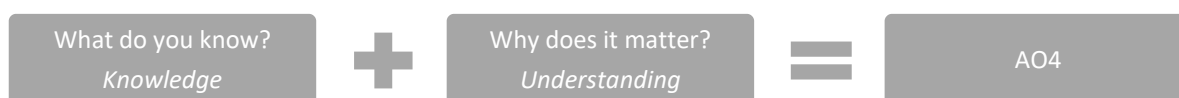
This is also good practice for teachers conducting practice tests with their students, because this broad approach across the whole of the discussion parts of the test allows for effective targeting of the marking scheme. Whilst the phrasing and order the questions may vary, the chart below is a useful 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 recognised the diligent and, in many cases, impressive work of candidates in preparing and researching their chosen topics.

These were often original and nuanced. They included historical topics such as *¿Hasta qué punto fue la Ley del Suelo responsable de la crisis económica de 2008?*, artistic topics such as *¿Por qué hay tanta polémica en torno a la muerte de Lorca?*, political topics such as *¿Juan Carlos – era un héroe o un villano?* and questions of medical ethics such as *‘La iglesia católica, el gobierno español y el uso de las células madre’*.

As mentioned in previous examiners’ reports candidates did best where they had chosen a topic with due consideration to its scope, so that it is not so wide or generalised that it becomes impossible to go into depth within the time allowed. Candidates should also aim to ensure that their topic has an element of contention, so that it lends itself to analysis. If there is potential for academic debate, the topic is likely to be suitable.

In line with the comments above about the way the AO4 marks can be targeted examiners sometimes found some topics overly descriptive. Here the knowledge part was demonstrated but the understanding and the connections to the culture and social dynamic of Hispanic society was missing.

Topics which worked well this year included:

- *¿En qué medida afectó la crisis financiera de 2008 a España financiera y socialmente?*
- *¿Hasta qué punto se puede considerar la sociedad española actual una sociedad feminista?*
- *¿En qué medida las sin sombrero ayudaron al desarrollo de la igualdad de género en España?*
- *¿Cómo ha cambiado la percepción de los españoles de la monarquía desde el fin de la dictadura?*
- *¿En qué medida contribuyó la guerra civil española al rápido auge del surrealismo?*
- *¿Hasta qué punto Frida Kahlo tuvo impacto en el movimiento feminista en México?*
- *¿Hasta qué punto es el Guernica de Picasso relevante hoy en día como testimonio de los horrores de la guerra?*
- *¿Hasta qué punto los homosexuales fueron reprimidos en Cuba durante el régimen de Fidel Castro?*

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?'.

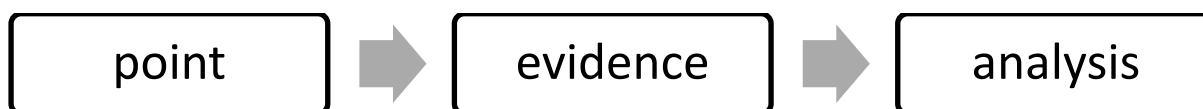
Approach this year

An issue that arose in earlier series related to the way in which candidates are expected to show that they have read and understood the information on the card in order to be awarded marks for AO2. In 2024 the same question format will be used as in the series from 2018 to 2022 but with an additional prompt, where necessary of *¿Qué dice el texto?* to ensure that candidates do what they need to do in order to gain the AO2 marks. All that is needed is a

brief summary response and perhaps a reaction to the text. 'I was surprised/interested/reassured to read in the text that...'.

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. The 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.

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.
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 examples.

SPANISH
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COMPONENT 2 – LISTENING, READING AND 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.

Comments on individual questions/sections

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. There was evidence that this work on the part of WJEC has paid off and provides a basis for the future.

Lifting from the texts and recordings

Where candidates are required to answer free-response style questions, be they summary tasks, questions with interrogatives or note-taking tasks, teachers at CPD requested clarity on how much linguistic manipulation is required and how much candidates are allowed to lift from texts or recordings. As made clear above in the overview, sections A and B do not give marks for AO3 (the ability to use Spanish); they test only the ability to understand it.

Because there are no marks for the use of Spanish, as long as the examiner is reasonably able to understand the answer that a candidate has given and that answer is unambiguous, then it can be marked. However, where an answer is so unclear as a result of poor use of Spanish, the question is deemed not to have been answered and marks cannot be awarded and nor can an examiner guess at whether the candidate has understood. For example, in question 3A: bullet point 3 the candidates needed to say that Panamá did not have an army. Creditable but imperfectly expressed answers included '*Panama es no tiene ejercito*', '*En Panamá no hay un ejercito*'. Here the meaning is clear enough for the examiner to be give marks. However, other answers such as '*Panamá no tiene éxcito militar*' obscured the meaning and could not score.

The candidates are warned in the rubrics that they should not lift whole sentences from the texts or recordings but are told that they can use some words. To be clear, there is no reason candidates cannot make a targeted lift of the words as short phrases needed to answer the question. They do not need to try to change these or manipulate the language. The targeting of the lifted phrase is evidence of comprehension. However, where candidates copy out or transcribe extended sections in the hope that the answer is there somewhere, they often produce answers that are ambiguous and unclear and so are unlikely to score. Examiners need to judge if comprehension has taken place from the way in which an answer is expressed. Where there is a clear and concise answer, that neatly answers the question marks are given. Where the answer is rendered unclear they are not.

One piece of advice here for teachers is to do some work on key vocabulary items that are useful for answering questions. These are often also useful for C1 but for some candidates marks are lost because they lack the range of key vocabulary needed for answering questions.

These could usefully include:

- verbs to describe trends (aumentar, crecer, subir, bajar, disminuir, caer)
- words to produce causal links (debido a, gracias a, a causa de, como resultado de)
- ways to express needs such as impersonal reflexives - se requiere(n), se necesita(n) and use of hacer falta
- ways to draw comparisons (más / menos ...que, no tan... como...)

Other matters

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

Question 1

This question was drawn from the theme *Being a young person in Spanish-speaking society* and the content was focussed on *Trends in fashion*. 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 (a) was commonly answered with 'novios' and (e) with 'mangas'. These are good examples of where the above strategy could have helped candidates answer more securely.

Question 2

This question was in two parts and was drawn from the theme of *Understanding the Spanish-speaking world* and the content focussed on *historical sites*. 2A was an objective task that was generally well answered, although (d) was quite often missed as a correct answer. In tasks of this kind it is important for candidates to be aware that there are elements of distraction in the incorrect options. These include words, phrases or ideas that are part of the recording but are not faithful to it in the phrasing of the options.

A useful strategy for teachers to use in training candidates for this kind of question is to encourage them to eliminate the incorrect answers before choosing the correct ones. If they find they have more than the required number of correct answers they need to look in more detail. It was not necessary for candidates to know what a transporter bridge is in order to engage with the text.

2B was a free response question in three parts. (a) was well answered and many understood the idea of the relevance of the song. (b) was also well answered and the marking scheme here included more ideas than were needed for full marks. Examiners accepted answers expressed as a single sentence, such as '*Se usa todo el día y todos los días*'. In (c) the 22 was well understood but many candidates did not express the idea that 7 of these kinds of bridge were still left in Europe.

Question 3

This question was in two parts and was drawn from the theme of *Diversity and difference*. The content focussed on *factors which make migration difficult*.

3A was a summary question and candidates were required to make brief notes with two or three details under each of the bullet points. In order to be successful in this task and the parallel one in the reading section, all that candidates need to do is to turn the bullet-points into a question in their minds and then answer that question. For example, BP2 would become: *¿Qué necesita Panamá para enfrentar los desafíos de la migración?* A concise answer with the three details needed then becomes 'información, cuotas y tiempo para prepararse'. In this task examiners saw candidates who often wrote far too much and did not make their answers clear. The strategy of converting the bullet-point into a question is one that teachers can usefully practise with candidates in future series. This part of question 3 differentiated effectively at the higher levels and only the most able candidates scored full marks.

3B was a free-response task and was answered generally well. We apologise for a typo that appeared in (b), where an extraneous 'se' appeared with *emigrar*, which is not a reflexive verb. This will be corrected for online publication of the papers but the question was very well answered by candidates and there appears to have been no distraction caused by this slip. The least well answered question was (c) where the idea of passing through lots of other countries was either missed or was poorly expressed and the alternative creditable idea of '*controlar la migración ilegal*' often missed the idea of illegal and so did not score as there was no mention of legal immigration routes in the text.

Question 4

This question was in two parts and was drawn from the theme of *Diversity and difference*. The content focused on *the positive aspects of a diverse society*. 4A was a matching task with two lists and was generally well answered. 1 and 2 were sometimes missed but 3 to 5 were understood by most. Similar strategies can be used as those described in question 1 but the idea of distraction can also be kept in mind by candidates here.

4B was a summary task and was better answered than the parallel one in listening. One point for teachers to discuss with future candidates here is that where two ideas are required it is often the case that each of these ideas has multiple facets but when answering candidates should avoid repeating the same information twice as if this were two separate ideas. For example, in the final BP there were a good many candidates who wrote things like '*mucho alojamiento – muchos hoteles*'. Whilst this may look like two details, it is the same idea rephrased and repeated.

Question 5

This question was in two parts and was drawn from the theme of *The two Spains: 1936 onwards*. The content focused on *la recuperación de la memoria histórica*. This was a literary text. 5A required candidates to find synonymous words or phrases in the text to those on the paper. Here it is useful for candidates to pay very careful attention to the grammatical forms of the words as well as their sense. The words provided on the paper should exactly substitute in sense and grammatically. Where errors were made we saw things like '*las ruinas*' offered for '*arruinado*' or '*dos semanas*' for '*esa quincena*'. In former case the words offered would not fit in place grammatically and in the second careless reading, missing the word '*esa*' lost marks for candidates. (c) was the least well answered and (d) and (e) were the best recognised. A useful strategy here would be for candidates to learn to identify the part of speech to help them find the synonym. For example (e) *feroces* = plural adjective = *brutales*.

5B was a free-response type task. (a) was well answered in the main, as was (c) but many candidates found it difficult to answer clearly and concisely in (b). This is a case in point where the ability to use comparatives effectively would support coherent responses.

Question 6

This question was in two parts and was drawn from the theme of *Being a young person in Spanish-speaking society*. The content focussed on *changing family structures*.

6A was a multiple-choice task where candidates needed to choose the correct word to fill the gaps in a summary of the first part of the passage. The task was generally well answered and only 1 and 2 caused some difficulties. Teachers can usefully draw candidates in future series' attention to the fact that all the alternatives fit grammatically and also make sense in the context of the overall sentence, so the key strategy is to choose the correct one and eliminate the other two, in each case.

6B was a free-response question and was generally well answered, although sometimes answers to (a) were unnecessarily wordy and short phrases would have been enough. In each case there were more ideas in the text and hence possible answers than were needed for the two marks each time.

Question 7

This question requires candidates to translate a passage from Spanish into English. The passage was drawn from the theme of *Understanding the Spanish-speaking world* and the content focussed on *music in the lives of young people*. The marking scheme was designed to cut the text in such a way as to produce segments targeted across the ability range. Nearly all candidates were able to score some marks and the lower targeted segments were spread across the piece. '*Ya para mediados de la década*' and '*miraban por encima del hombro*' were the segments that challenged most. But these were balanced by '*de los 90*' and '*la estrella máxima del reggaetón, en una entrevista*'. The passage differentiated effectively but many candidates were able to score marks in the mid-teens and almost none abandoned the task, as happened sometimes in earlier series. As this is deemed to be part of AO2 and, therefore, a reading task, examiners do not insist on perfect English. Many candidates who understood the word did not know how to spell 'chronicles' and were seldom able to use a synonym like 'stories' or 'tales'. Nevertheless, renderings such as 'cronicals' were accepted by examiners.

Candidates who scored highly produced coherent translations that read well in English and made sense. Sometimes these candidates missed the odd word and did not score but their overall passage showed signs of being proof-read and was good English. Teachers can usefully do some work with candidates on improving poor translations into English by giving them some poorly translated passages and using metacognitive approaches to see if they can work out why the translator made a bad job of it.

Question 8

This question requires candidates to translate a passage from English into Spanish. The passage was taken from the theme of *The two Spains: 1936 onwards* and the content focussed on *daily life in Franco's Spain*. The design of the task and marking scheme shares much with question 7 and many of the same comments apply. However, this task tests AO3 and the ability to write effectively in correct Spanish and so grammatical accuracy is needed here, as well as correct choice of vocabulary. It was noticeable that some key terms related to the topic were missing from some candidates' vocabulary, such as '*jefe de estado*' and '*atrasada*' but many candidates produced good translations with a good degree of accuracy. In line with comments made earlier about the key words needed to answer questions we often saw 'There were' incorrectly rendered. The uses of '*haber*' in this context in the various tenses would also be useful for candidates in future series to be able to use correctly. Allied to this were problems with compound past tenses and the use of the perfect instead of the pluperfect. The pluperfect is worth teachers working on because it is useful explaining narrative sequences in C3. The subjunctive caused some problems but many candidates were able to make the correct agreement with '*industrializada*' to connect it to '*sociedad*'. '*Gente*' with a singular verb caused problems for some but others has used '*personas*' and avoided this pitfall. There were also instances of very careless translation in some very simple segments, for example 'minister' being rendered as '*ministerio*'.

Overall, the passage worked well. In common with question 7, there were many candidates with marks in the mid-teens and, as mentioned earlier, often marks were quite similar between the two questions.

In terms of strategies for future series, it can be useful for candidates to try splitting the passage up into natural phrases before they start to translate. They may not exactly match the marking scheme but this can help focus on the detail of each little segment and the search for what is being tested. For example: '*Although many people do not believe / that the Caudillo and his government / were responsible for the economic success / ...*' Where this strategy was observed in use by candidates this summer, the results seemed to have paid off.

Summary of Key Points

Five tips for future candidates:

1. Harvest the content of all the texts in C2 papers and use these to help prepare for the speaking cards in C1. From this examination paper you can speak about: trends in fashion, the transporter bridge in Bilbao (which also features in the Netflix series *El silencio*), immigration into Panamá, the Gay Games in Valencia, Belchite as an example of a place that evokes historical memory, changes in the family in Mexico, the origins of reggaeton and the economy of Franco's Spain. Use these texts as a basis to find out more.
2. Work on 'words to answer comprehension questions' – these will help with good expression in Spanish.
3. Practise proofreading skills in English to improve the coherence of the question 7 translation.
4. Use strategic approaches such as finding the grammar-fit first with multiple-choice type questions.
5. Remember less can be more, so keep the answers to free-response questions as short as you can, but don't worry if you need to use some words from the text.

SPANISH

GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2023

COMPONENT 3 CRITICAL AND ANALYTICAL RESPONSE IN WRITING

Overview of the Component

- The skills assessed in this component include AO3 where candidates are required to manipulate written Spanish accurately using a range of lexis and grammatical structures and AO4 which requires knowledge and understanding of the chosen works of literature and film studied. Candidates should aim to respond critically and analytically demonstrating an awareness of context and aspects of the Spanish speaking culture and society in which each work is set.
- It was pleasing to note that following the difficulties posed by the pandemic, candidates performed well overall and there appears to have been a return to similar standards seen in 2019. Examiners commented however, that there is still an issue with poor handwriting among a significant number of candidates which is likely to be due to the increasing use of technology as opposed to writing by hand.
- Many candidates showed excellent knowledge of the works studied and an impressive understanding of context; they used very good examples to illustrate their analysis. Some candidates need to spend more time deconstructing the question and planning the essay carefully to avoid a general rather than a targeted response.
- With regard to the standard of written Spanish there were some excellent examples of high-level linguistic competence where candidates demonstrated an impressive range of lexis and grammatical structures alongside an awareness of idiom and an appropriate academic register. The verb '*morir*' however still causes problems for many, with confusion between '*muerto*' and '*muerte*' and many conjugation errors. The gender of common lexical items was also often incorrect including basic errors such as '*el mujer*' and '*los hijas*'. The use of '*por / para*' is problematic for many candidates and also a number of candidates are still reliant on English syntax particularly when placing prepositions at the end of a sentence.
- Candidates attempted all questions on the paper with the exception of 21 to 24.
- A general point applicable to many essays, concerns the use of quotations. Some candidates use quotes both accurately and aptly to illustrate a point but a significant number quote inaccurately. Candidates should remember that are not required to quote from the work they have studied. However, if they choose to do so they should ensure they do so accurately.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Literature

- The most commonly attempted literary work was, as in 2022, *La casa de Bernarda Alba* with question 1 proving the most popular choice. The other works *Las bicicletas son para el verano*, *Como agua para chocolate*, *El otro árbol de Guernica*, *El coronel no tiene quien le escribe* and *El coronel no tiene quien le esciba* were also studied by a range of centres and most candidates appear to have found all texts accessible. It is also pleasing to note how the literary works are not being studied in a vacuum as candidates, on the whole, showed good awareness of context and the societies at the time.

- There was however the occasional misunderstanding, the most common being that Bernarda Alba was set during Franco's regime.
- Question 1 on Lorca's *La casa de Bernarda Alba* was very well done overall. Candidates made excellent references to the play including some secondary characters such as Paca la Roseta and la hija de la Librada. Some candidates tended to concentrate on just the tragedy rather than the psychological impact of it and few referred to Bernarda's inability to respect the different characters of her daughters. Those who attempted question 2 also showed good knowledge of the dramatic effects used by Lorca, referring to the cyclical structure of the play, his use of staging, colour and the symbolism of water, thirst and the stallion. Some however approached it from too narrow an angle only focusing on one main aspect.
- Essays on *Bicicletas son para el verano* again showed good knowledge of the play and many candidates proved that they were aware of the wider context. Question 3 proved more popular and tended to be done better than question 4 where some candidates tended to drift off at a tangent, not sticking closely enough to the title given and this resulted in more of a narrative style, describing the events rather than demonstrating analysis. In question 4, only a few highlighted the liberal versus conservative views of the families but many successfully pointed out that although there existed a clear contrast of ideas between the two families, the war, in many scenes of the play, brought the two together during times of need.
- There were a number of essays on *Como agua para chocolate* where candidates were able to demonstrate an understanding of Tita's development during the course of the novel and in question 6 the use of magic realism as a literary device. In question 5 very few referred to the significance of Tita's relationship with Dr John Brown as an influence on her development as a character.
- Question 8 on *El otro árbol de Guernica* was chosen by most candidates who had studied this novel and it proved very accessible. Although it is a relatively long work, candidates seem to engage well with the themes and write well about them. They successfully talked about the impact of exile for these young children and how it affected their ability to relate to most of the adults they encountered. Specifically, was the attitude of Santi towards Raymond and Arlette Dufour, the conflict between the children and Mlle Jacquot and the subsequent rebellion and standoff with M. Fleury and Santi's reaction to the history teacher at the Ateneo. The best candidates also talked about Santi's growing disillusionment with adults and their constant warmongering.
- Question 9 was a more popular choice when writing about the novel *El coronel no tiene quien le escribe* and candidates showed excellent knowledge of corruption in Colombian society at the time and analysed the impact of the Colonel's whimsical but persistent nature in relation to the title. Those who attempted question 10 wrote well about the support shown between the colonel and his wife but also the wife's increasing frustration with her husband. Many could have emphasised more the difference in their characters.
- Both questions on *Réquiem por un campesino español* were attempted and there was a fairly even distribution. I would have liked to have seen better reference to the significance of Paco's role as a councillor in trying to advocate for the peasants and some candidates failed to make the link to the wider context of what was happening in Spain at the time. Further, a few candidates misunderstood question 12 and tried to argue that Paco didn't die for the sake of the other peasants because he shouted before he was killed that he didn't want to die.

Film

- The most commonly attempted film was, as in previous years, *El laberinto del fauno* but also there were a good number of essays on *María, llena eres de gracia*, some on *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios* and a few on *Las trece rosas*. As in 2019 no candidate wrote about *El lobo* or *La caja 507*
- Question 13 was the most popular choice of question on *El laberinto del fauno* and most candidates read the question as intended and wrote very effectively about how Vidal's attitude to the women contributed to his death. A few however, interpreted the 'su' as referring to the death of the women and wrote convincingly about how Vidal's sexist, egocentric and cruel attitude to Carmen and Ofelia led to them dying, indirectly in the case of Carmen and directly in the case of Ofelia. Aside, there was some confusion of characters by some candidates i.e., Carmen for Mercedes or vice versa which highlights the importance of proofreading, and a significant number of candidates wrote that Mercedes shot Vidal at the end of the film when it was, in fact, her brother, Pedro. Question 14 was attempted by fewer candidates and some of those wrote very well about the visual imagery seen in the three tasks and the visual impact of the monsters linking well to the context of the post-war period. Some however only thought about the cinematography and wrote a narrow and repetitive response focusing only on the use of colour. Candidates could also have mentioned the falangist symbols seen on the cars and the iconic image of Belchite at the start of the film linking them to context.
- Most candidates who had studied *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios* chose question 15 and wrote about the main points to do with 'el machismo' They demonstrated a good understanding of 'la movida madrileña' but not many thought to highlight the effective way in which Almodóvar presents a satirical view of male competence.
- *María, llena eres de gracia* was the second most popular film choice and most candidates chose question 17. The best essays talked of how María is objectified by her boss at the factory, – she is seen only as a 'machine' to dethorn as many roses in as little time as possible with scant regard for her wellbeing – her rather ineffectual and chauvinistic boyfriend who seems to only care about sex and later Franklin, Javier and the 'narcos' in New York who are clearly taking advantage of María's vulnerable financial position and lack of opportunity to firstly manipulate her and then to use her as a mere vehicle for the illegal and highly dangerous transportation of drugs. A pleasing number of candidates also highlighted the scene where Javier places his hands on her stomach without consent to 'acomodar las pepas' – the idea of consent being a very relevant point in today's society. The better candidates also presented the counter argument that not all men in the film were sexist using the examples of Don Fernando and Carla's husband who both show María kindness and respect. Question 18 was done less well with responses tending to be rather superficial and repetitive.
- *Las trece rosas* was not chosen by many candidates but both questions were answered. There were similarities between the two questions both requiring a knowledge of the climate of fear and resignation among many at the end of the Civil War, particularly in Madrid which had been under siege for most of it. In question 19 candidates rightly referred to the scene in which the elderly couple are targeted for not giving the fascist salute and how the man is beaten for being unable to sing more than the first two lines of the falangist anthem '*Cara al sol*'. It would have been nice to have mentioned the image of the saluting nuns in the same scene as a contrast. Again, there was the occasional confusion e.g., when Blanca retrieves the religious pictures that have remained hidden during the Civil War due to fear of reprisals from those fighting against Franco who, rightly, linked the enemy to complicity from the Catholic Church and, in contrast, how Julia has to dispose of Republican propaganda which could put her in danger. Question 20 also produced essays which referred to the violence and fear of the first few years of Francoism.

- The best essays mentioned how people would inform on family members or neighbours as a means of saving themselves using the examples of Juan Canepa's mother-in-law and sister-in law and Teo's betrayal of his friends. They also referred to the imposition of Catholicism as the state religion, the torture scenes and, in a couple of cases, rightly highlighted the futility of the 'Consejos de Guerra' where the fate of the 'rosas' and their male companions is sealed as a reflection of what happened to many during the early years of Franco's dictatorship.

Some general observations regarding the essays

- Many candidates would benefit from spending more time reading the question carefully and thinking about what it is asking for in terms of content and evidence.
- Writing on alternate lines aids examiners when marking and also allows candidate to read back through their work more easily and make corrections as necessary.
- A plan is advisable, as is using 5-10 minutes at the end of the exam to proofread their work. Many candidates could improve their mark for AO3 by carefully checking basic grammar, including common genders, all agreements, conjugation of verbs in all tenses and consistency of tense. The checking of spelling would also be beneficial.
- Given the frequency of the context of the Civil War and the Franco era in many of the works it is worth pointing out that many candidates still use the term '*nacionalista*' when referring to Franco's supporters. When referring to this period of Spanish history the correct term is '*el bando nacional*' and '*los nacionales*' whereas '*los nacionalistas*' would refer to the pro-independence ideology in areas such as Catalonia and the Basque Country.

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ⁱ *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.*