GCE A Level Examiners' Report

Spanish

GCE A Level

Summer 2026

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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.***

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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 2026 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. A reminder that sources should be authentic and in Spanish and that complete IRP pro-formas must arrive with the visiting examiner three weeks before the speaking assessment takes place, as per the specification. 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 continued to score quite similar marks on the two translation pieces for a consecutive year. 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.

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Areas for improvement	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
IRP research and title issues	Guidance on preparing learners for C1 via Guidance for Teaching. OER (Online Exam Review) CPD material via Portal	A website guide for teachers preparing candidates. Exemplar material.
IRP pro-forma completion	Eduqas A level Specification	Specification: section which gives advice on the IRP completion, declaration, bullet points and sources information.
Accuracy when producing Spanish.	Past Papers Mark Schemes OER (Online Exam Review) CPD material via Portal Exam Walkthroughs	Resources (eduqas.co.uk) Previous responses form candidates / mark schemes found on the website.

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EDUQAS SPANISH

GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2026

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. Where minor issues arose, these were escalated to WJEC and always dealt with quickly. We would reassure centres that our approach is always positive and focussed on ensuring that candidates are never unfairly disadvantaged.

The examiners' reports from previous series provide valuable information for teachers and this report aims to build on those. New teachers to this specification 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

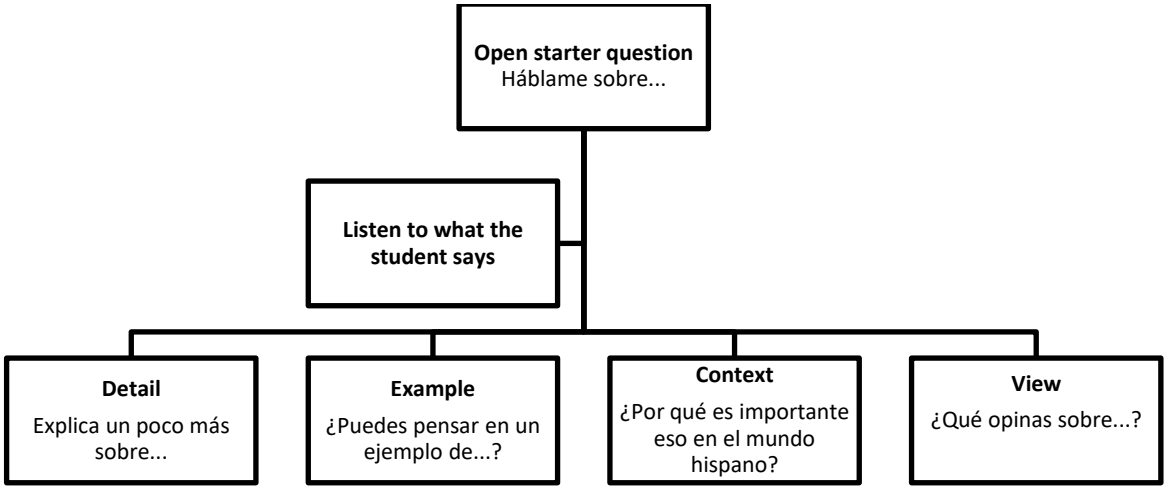
Examiners always aim to make candidates as comfortable as they can during the test and the questions asked aim to provide the candidates with the opportunity to lead the discussions and to showcase what they know and understand about the aspects of Hispanic society that they have studied.

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

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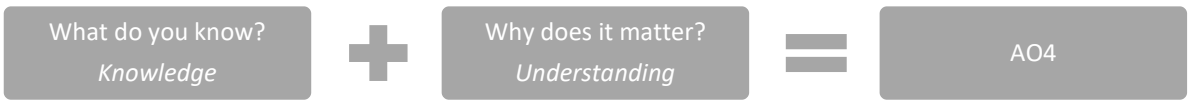
effective targeting of the marking scheme. Whilst the phrasing and order the questions may vary, the chart below, replicated from earlier series reports, remains a useful schematic representation of the approach.



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 the changing nature of marriage and mentioned the issues of Church doctrine, whilst noting that Pope Francis had changed views and perspectives, if not the underlying theology. This was excellent AO4 coverage because the example used was current and detailed and there was a connection made to the social backdrop of present-day Spain.

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 (except for the Spain only theme) and stretch and challenge can be added for the more able students by encouraging comparisons between countries within it.

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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:

- ¿Es verdad que el apoyo para la salud mental de los españoles ha ido mejorando en las últimas 10 décadas?
- ¿Hasta qué punto la política de selección del Athletic Club fortalece la identidad cultural vasca sin limitar el éxito deportivo?
- ¿Deberíamos cambiar el festival de 'Las Fallas' para que sea menos problemático para los perros?
- ¿Hasta qué punto la memoria de *Al Andalus* influye en la percepción del islam y la inmigración en la España contemporánea?
- ¿Es efectivo el sistema penitenciario de El Salvador?
- El racismo en España hacia los africanos
- El antigitanismo en la España de hoy

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, themself, 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.

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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 volvía 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,

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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. 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 attituded 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.

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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 2026

The main issue related to the card discussion is the way in which the candidates reference the text on the card. It is useful if they can aim to pick out about three key ideas from the text that connect it to the statement.

One simple way to do this is to respond to the statement as follows:

Examiner: There are lots of problems with immigration in the Hispanic world – do you agree?

Candidate: Yes, I totally agree and to support this point of view I would like to refer to the following three/four points in the text 1…2…3…. From my studies, I would add to this the fact that….

Typically, where candidates had a strategy ready to deal with this element of the test, they were more able to target the marks for AO2.

Card 1 dealt with changing attitudes to same-sex couples having children in the Hispanic world. Many candidates were able to talk about changes in legislation but were less informed about the religious or ethical aspects of the use of genetic material. One candidate pointed out that not everyone in the Hispanic world has Christian heritage and so there are other cultural layers. This was an interesting and perceptive take on the topic.

Card 2 dealt with the way influencers and YouTubers in the Hispanic world can gain fame and make money from their online presence. Many candidates spoke in quite a general way about this topic and did not build on the ideas in the text, for example the financial aspect. Further exemplification was also quite lacking. Teachers are reminded that a range of examples specific to the Hispanic world are useful in this topic area to help access AO4 marks. A good place to look is in the AS speaking cards, as this is a topic area also covered at AS level.

Card 3 dealt with the education system in Mexico and the inequalities faced by those who speak indigenous languages. Many candidates spoke about how this reflects wider societal issues but did not always connect the provision of quality education with the workforce development or national prosperity.

Card 4 dealt with historical sites and the birthplace of Simon Bolivar. Most candidates were able to connect the text to other historical sites and the ideas of learning about the past but only the best performing spoke about the controversy that some historical sites generate around themes like empire.

Card 5 dealt with the themes of a film about gender identity. Most candidates who chose this card were able to speak in a general way about Hispanic cinema as a means to generating debate but there was a lack of further exemplification. Whilst the independent research topic should not overlap with the films taught for Component 3, there is no reason not to use that learning as exemplification for card discussions in Component 1.

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Card 6 dealt with the commercialisation of music in the Hispanic world and many candidates were able to speak confidently about certain artists and their wealth and fame. There was less effective examination of the way in which music is a form of cultural expression or sometimes protest in the Hispanic world. Teachers can usefully explore these issues in a little more depth.

Card 7 dealt with the appeal of Spain as a retirement destination. This was effective in helping move away from the idea of immigration only being driven by poverty. Candidates were able to offer some thoughtful ideas on the topic but the context of *empty Spain* was not always understood. As we have seen with the topic of immigration in earlier series, there is sometimes a lack of awareness of geopolitics in the Hispanic world. This is an area teachers could usefully focus on a little more, so that examples are better contextualised.

Card 8 dealt with loneliness among the elderly or disabled. Many candidates missed key ideas from the text and their discussions were very generalised. There were relatively few deep connections made to other aspects of the topic, such as people moving away for work or the importance of the third sector providing support for marginalised groups. Examples of third sector organisations can usefully be taken from cards in earlier series.

Card 9 dealt with the societal benefits of workplace diversity. Many candidates were able to say that this is good for the economy but there were relatively few examples of Hispanic companies that actively promote diversity. In answer to the unseen question, the element of racism was often mentioned but only the best performing candidates really understood its drivers and how these may be connected to fear of job losses.

Card 10 dealt with the need to rebuild Spain after the Civil War. Some candidates were able to give good examples of infrastructure projects, such as railway development. They also dealt well with the idea of the evolution of the dictatorship in terms of living conditions. Candidates were also able to speak about topics like education and regional identity.

Card 11 dealt with day to day living conditions during the dictatorship. Many candidates were able to speak about rationing, agricultural policy and the gender specific impact of poverty. They were able to connect this all with the use of propaganda and the mismatch between the official versions of Spain and the lived reality.

Card 12 dealt with Spain's struggle to live with its own past. Candidates were able to speak about the lack of contemporary records, the need to open files and the value of historical education. However, only a few were able to deal with the notion of revisionism in Spanish history more widely or mention that Spanish history from the times of Franco was largely documented by foreigners.

Summary of key points

Five key messages for future candidates

1. Choose a research topic that is unconnected to the main themes
2. In preparing the presentation, use AI with caution
3. In the IRP discussion make sure to show understanding, not just knowledge
4. In the card discussion, answer the first question using a version of the suggested strategy
5. In the card discussion, build on two or three key ideas suggested by the text and then add your own concrete examples.

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EDUQAS SPANISH

GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2026

COMPONENT 2 – LISTENING, READING AND TRANSLATION

Overview of the Component

This component is comprised of three sections. Section A tests listening comprehension ant 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.

The listening summary question was also well answered this year and clearly the messages from earlier reports have been effective. There may be some further adaptation to the layout and format of this very long question in future series to provide a more negotiable task layout. Teachers can usefully remind candidates that question types and layout can vary a little series by series but that there should never be a totally new and unfamiliar question type. It is, therefore, important that candidates always read the rubric instructions before starting any task. Pleasingly this series, there appeared to be no issues with misapplication of rubrics.

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.

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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 in 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**
Question 1 Gap-fill – objective task	Youth trends and personal identity • How young people respond to modern technology
Question 2 **2A** – Open response questions **2B** – Tick 5 boxes – objective task	Migration and integration • Factors that make integration easy/difficult
Question 3 **3A** – Open response questions **3B** – Summary task	Media, art, film and music in the Spanish-speaking world • Trends in art
Section B – Reading	
Question 4 **4A** – Synonym task **4B** – Summary task	Regional culture and heritage • Festivals
Question 5 **5A** – Match two lists – objective task **5B** – Open response questions	Discrimination and diversity • Life for those discriminated against
Question 6 **6A** – Multiple choice questions – objective task **6B** – Open response questions	Spain – coming to terms with the past? • Los desaparecidos
Section C – Translation	
Question 7 Translation from Spanish into English	Education and employment • The education system
Question 8 Translation from English into Spanish	Post-Civil War Spain • Daily life in Franco's Spain

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Comments on individual questions

Question 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 *hablan* and *ignorancia* were often mislocated.

Question 2

In 2A most candidates answered well and the responses were concise and clear, where they had understood. Part (c) was the least well understood idea because a degree of inference was required.

In 2B 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.

Question 3

This question was in two parts and focussed on *Batman Day* in Madrid.

3A was an open response question and much better and more clearly answered than 3B.

3B was a summary task. Many candidates scored well but there was a general tendence 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.

Overall, the question differentiated effectively and there was evidence that many candidates had been able to follow and understand the entirety of the passage. As mentioned above, some further development of the layout of this quite long task may be considered for future series to help with access.

Question 4

4A 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. *Azar* was the least well-known item.

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4B was a summary task. This was handled much better than the equivalent task in Section A and generally caused far fewer difficulties. However, there was sometimes a lack of clarity in the answer to the final bullet point, where the idea of not being able to get into the city centre was not made clear enough.

The tasks differentiated effectively and the 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.

Question 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 contemporary and moving nature of the content.

5A required candidates to match two lists.

5B was based around open response questions with (a) and (b) well answered but (c) often lacking the clarity of context for the idea of hypocrisy. Inevitably, in any series, it is ne for there to be some challenging questions targeted at the most able candidates and this was one such.

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

Question 6

This question dealt with Emilio Silva, who coined the term 'desaparecidos'. This, again, would provide the basis for an excellent case study for discussion in C1 in future series and teachers are recommended to investigate him a little more, as well as the Priaranza 13.

6A was answered generally well but questions (b) and (c) challenged the most. By this point in the paper there is an expectation of higher levels of distraction in multiple choice questions, so the message is to read all the options carefully and consciously reject the wring answers, as well as choose the right ones.

6B was more challenging and (c) was often not well answered – the question required candidates to process quite a long stream of text to find the answer.

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

Question 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.

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. The least well-known item of vocabulary was *formar.* Some weaker candidates also confused *nuestro* for *nuevo*.

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Question 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 the GCSE vocabulary lists include or indeed come from Key Stage 3 the following items were often not known: *reducir* in the preterite, *agrícolos*, *aceite*, *arroz* and *huevo*.

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. The segment requiring the subjunctive *cultivara* was the least well answered.

As mentioned in the past, 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 they could understand as a sympathetic native speaker.

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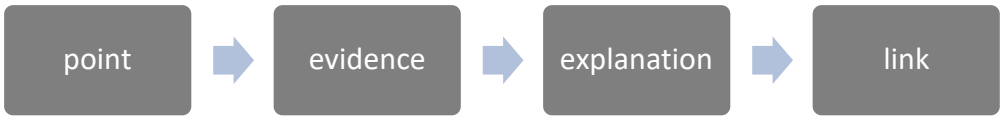
GCE A level

Summer 2026

COMPONENT 3 – CRITICAL AND ANALYTICAL RESPONSE IN WRITING

Overview of the Component

This component assesses AO3, which involves the accurate manipulation of written Spanish using a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical structures, and AO4, which tests knowledge and understanding of the prescribed works of literature and film. Candidates are expected to respond critically and analytically, support their points with relevant examples, and demonstrate an awareness of the cultural and societal context of each work. This year, there were many examples of well-structured, analytical essays that demonstrated strong knowledge and contextual understanding. Candidates who achieved the highest marks presented clear arguments, supported them with relevant evidence, offered thoughtful analysis and evaluation, and consistently linked their discussion back to the question. Many successful responses followed a clear line of argument, often using techniques such as PEEL to structure their essays effectively.



Less successful responses tended to be general and narrative in style rather than focused and analytical, with insufficient use of specific examples from the text or film to support points.

A significant number of candidates wrote on alternate lines, as previously recommended. This greatly assists examiners. However, there were still some examples of handwriting that, despite considerable effort, examiners found difficult to read. Centres are reminded that access arrangements are available for candidates with persistent legibility issues, allowing them to word process their responses.

Many candidates displayed excellent linguistic ability, using a wide range of lexis, grammatical structures, idiomatic expressions, and an appropriate academic register. High-scoring essays included sophisticated phrases such as *pone de relieve*, *pongamos por caso*, *cabe señalar que* and *hace hincapié en*; precise verbs such as *destacar*, *desempeñar* and *subrayar*; and the effective, well-judged use of the subjunctive. These candidates also demonstrated secure control of pronouns and prepositions.

Informal language, such as *la peli*, and referring to authors or directors by their first names remain inappropriate in academic writing. Idiomatic expressions should be used with care, as forced or inaccurate usage can detract from clarity. There were several examples of candidates attempting to incorporate idioms in ways that sounded unnatural or overly informal.

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Errors in subject-specific vocabulary persist. Candidates are encouraged to review key terms in advance, e.g. there were misspellings of common words such as, *consecuencias, (de)mostrar, fascista, optimista, soldados* as well as confusion between lexical items such as *ideología* and *ideológico, clave* and *llave, personaje* and *carácter, muerte* and *muerto/a* and the conjugation of the verb *morir* was an issue for many candidates.
All questions on the paper were attempted, with the exception of Questions 21 to 24. This is in line with previous exam series.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Although it was encouraging to see responses on all the prescribed literary works, Lorca's *La casa de Bernarda Alba* was once again the most popular text by a considerable margin. Overall, candidates were well prepared and demonstrated strong contextual understanding. It was also evident that centres had invested considerable time and effort in making the prescribed works accessible and engaging for candidates.

Federico García Lorca: *La casa de Bernarda Alba*

Question 1: Most candidates agreed with the statement, highlighting how Bernarda's fear of *el qué dirán* and her obsession with maintaining the family's reputation drive her authoritarian and excessive behaviour. Many recognised that these fears stem from concerns about both her daughters' conduct and the family's social standing. Stronger responses referred to a wider range of examples, including the daughters' fear of remaining confined and unmarried, and the way this shapes their relationships with one another; *la hija de la Librada*'s fear of being exposed as an unmarried mother and the tragic consequences that follow; and La Poncia's fear of losing her position within the household. Many candidates focused on Adela and María Josefa, although some argued that neither character experiences fear, overlooking the possibility that Adela's suicide is linked to her fear of a life without Pepe el Romano. As in previous examination series, some candidates mistakenly believed that the play is set during Franco's regime.

Question 2 proved more challenging. The strongest responses drew effectively on relevant contextual knowledge of the period in which the play is set and supported their arguments with well-chosen evidence. Many explored how the cultural and religious constraints, particularly those imposed on women, created tension between societal expectations and the individual desires of the characters.

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

Only very few candidates had studied this play, but both questions were attempted equally. Centres may find that this text offers a broad range of opportunities for candidates to demonstrate knowledge, contextual understanding, and critical analysis.

Question 3 required candidates to analyse how and why the relationship between the two main families changes throughout the play. Responses tended to focus on the opening and closing acts, with insufficient reference to the intervening events that demonstrate how the characters arrive at their final relationship.

Question 4 focused on the way Don Luis's family treat María and whether their behaviour could be considered unfair and hypocritical. Candidates focused on the bedroom scene between Luisito and María, but there was often insufficient analysis of the injustice of María losing her job. No candidates considered whether Don Luis could be viewed as cowardly for giving in to his wife. In addition, no candidates referred to María bringing food to the family at a time when scarcity has become a significant issue, which could have been used to support analysis of her character.

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Laura Esquivel: *Como agua para chocolate*

This proved to be a popular choice of set text. Both questions were attempted, although Question 5 was slightly more popular.

Question 5 focused on the theme of motherhood. Most candidates concentrated on Mamá Elena's lack of maternal love and care towards her daughters. The strongest responses, however, drew on a broader range of relevant examples, including Tita's maternal instincts towards Roberto and Esperanza despite being denied the opportunity to become a mother herself; Rosaura's difficulties in bonding with her children; and the close maternal relationship between Nacha and Tita.

Question 6 proved more challenging. There was a tendency for candidates to describe episodes of magical realism rather than analyse their significance. Stronger responses explained how magical realism serves as a vehicle for expressing Tita's emotions and inner conflict, reinforcing themes of love, repression, family tradition and the power of emotion, while presenting the magical as an accepted part of everyday life.

Luis de Castresana: *El otro árbol de Guernica*

It was once again encouraging to see that several centres had chosen this novel despite its length and the absence of an English translation, no doubt reflecting its accessible themes and engaging narrative.

Question 7 was the less popular option. Candidates who chose this question generally focused on Begoña at the beginning of the novel, when she is frightened and vulnerable, and at the end, when she speaks French confidently and appears much more self-assured. However, there was less discussion of her experiences with the Bogaerts family and the gradual way in which she adapts to life in exile in Belgium, both of which are central to her character development.

Question 8 proved to be the more popular choice, and candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the novel. The strongest responses highlighted how Santi's immaturity and emotions often get the better of him, while also recognising his developing leadership qualities and growing concern for others. These responses supported their arguments with a range of well-chosen examples, including his impulsive reaction to receiving the bicycle from M. and Mme Dufour, his response to Mlle Jacquot's bullying behaviour, his outrage at the History teacher's criticism of Spain, and his violent reaction towards Javier after being teased about Montse. Collectively, these examples demonstrate that Santi remains a child struggling to cope with the challenges of exile.

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

As in 2025, only a small number of candidates had studied this novel, although there were some strong responses to both questions.

Question 9 elicited more narrative than analytical responses. Although candidates generally demonstrated secure knowledge of the novel, there was sometimes a tendency to over-explain, particularly when discussing the concept of *tragedia*. The most common language error was the use of *optimístico* instead of *optimista*.

Question 10 produced, on the whole, more concise and focused responses. The strongest essays explored the significance of *el gallo* as a symbol while also considering other symbols, such as the letter, before arguing convincingly that the cockerel is the novel's central symbol. Some candidates could have strengthened their analysis further by exploring

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how the symbolism of the cockerel develops throughout the novel: initially as a reminder of Agustín, then as the Colonel's motivation to persevere through hardship, and finally as a symbol of enduring hope in the face of despair.

Ramón Sender: *Réquiem por un campesino español*

Question 11 was the more popular choice and asked candidates to analyse the importance of Mosén Millán's character in the novel. The best essays demonstrated strong knowledge of the historical and social context, although some candidates tended to make political observations without supporting them with evidence from the text. Stronger responses showed how Mosén Millán's character reflects the novel's critique of the Church's role during the Civil War and how his changing relationship with Paco helps to define and illuminate Paco's social conscience. Further analysis could have explored Mosén Millán's moral ambiguity and lack of courage: although he genuinely cares for Paco, he fails to oppose injustice and is ultimately complicit in his death. Candidates could also have commented on the way Mosén Millán provides the structural framework of the novel, with the narrative unfolding through his recollections during the Requiem Mass.

Question 12 was less commonly chosen, but the strongest responses were able to analyse Paco's good intentions and commitment to social justice while also considering how the entrenched power of the landowners, the Church, and the Civil Guard ultimately makes his defeat inevitable. These responses supported their arguments with detailed textual evidence and relevant reference to the historical context of pre-Civil War Spain.

FILMS

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

Guillermo del Toro: *El laberinto del fauno*

Question 13. This was the more popular choice of the two essays and produced some interesting and varied interpretations, although not all were fully supported by evidence from the film. Chronology was important here, as the nature of the title lent itself to analysing the three tasks in sequence. Some candidates moved between the tasks without a clear structure and consequently failed to address all aspects of the question, resulting in lost marks. Top-band candidates did not simply describe the tasks but analysed their symbolic significance in relation to the socio-political context of post-war Spain and Ofelia's development throughout the film, from an innocent and vulnerable child to a figure of moral courage and resistance. Candidates should ensure that they learn key vocabulary accurately, as there were several examples of imprecise terminology, including *hombre pallido* instead of *hombre pálido*, *rana*, *monstruo verde* and *animal* being used instead of *sapo*, as well as confusion between *clave* and *llave*, and *cuchillo* and *daga*.

Question 14 was also reasonably popular, with varied levels of success. The strongest candidates evaluated the contrast between Vidal's effectiveness and discipline as a Francoist soldier and his brutality as a human being, rather than simply describing his cruelty. They recognised that he is highly organised, methodical and committed to his role as a captain; he maintains strict routines, an immaculate appearance and expects absolute obedience from his soldiers. They also highlighted his success in tracking and pursuing the Maquis, demonstrating determination and strategic thinking, while noting that his obsession with order and control reflects the values of Francoist military authority. However, stronger responses also acknowledged that his brutality undermines his effectiveness: his violence is

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excessive and often personal, and his reliance on torture and intimidation reveals cruelty rather than true leadership. Furthermore, his inability to recognise the realities around him, such as Mercedes' role as an informer and Dr Ferreiro's support for the Maquis, ultimately contributes to his downfall.

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

Question15 was chosen by most candidates who had studied this film, and it was generally answered well. However, as with other character development questions in the examination, some candidates focused mainly on Pepa at the beginning and end of the film, providing plenty of examples from these stages but offering limited evidence of the progression between them. Stronger responses traced how Pepa gradually moves towards independence and greater self-awareness by the end of the film. They explored how she stops focusing solely on Iván and begins to take control of her own situation, while her interactions with Candela, Carlos and the other characters force her to deal with problems beyond her own heartbreak and demonstrate her growing ability to support others.

Question 16 was attempted by fewer candidates, but the strongest essays recognised how Pepa's frantic behaviour is used for dramatic effect and supported their analysis with other well-chosen examples from the film. However, candidates did not always explore the contribution of cinematic techniques such as colour, set design and dramatic music in creating tension and driving the plot forward.

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.

Question 17. Fewer candidates chose to analyse the importance of Lucy's character, but the strongest responses recognised her influence on María as a role model. They explored how María is struck by Lucy's apparent independence, confidence and material possessions after visiting her flat in Bogotá, particularly in contrast to her own precarious situation following her resignation from her job and the pressure of supporting her family. The best essays also highlighted Lucy's death as a stark reminder of the dangers faced by drug mules, and how this experience contributes to María's eventual decision to act responsibly by helping Carla repatriate her sister's body to Colombia.

Question 18 was attempted by most candidates who had studied this film and, although it was generally answered well, candidates should be cautious about making sweeping generalisations about Colombia rather than analysing the specific image presented in the film. The strongest responses evaluated the extent to which the film portrays Colombia negatively, focusing on issues such as the lack of opportunities available to young women like María in rural communities, the pressures she faces in trying to support her family, and the manipulative and threatening nature of certain characters involved in the drug trade, such as Javier and Franklin. They also recognised that the film presents a more nuanced picture through María's resilience, determination and desire to improve her circumstances.

Emilio Martínez Lázaro: *Las trece rosas*

Question 19 was another essay focusing on the development of a character, in this case Blanca. As with other character development questions, many candidates focused mainly on Blanca at the beginning of the film, describing her as devoutly Catholic, naïve, gentle and apolitical. Some responses referred to her growing resilience and increasing awareness of the injustices of the Franco regime, but only the strongest essays highlighted that, despite everything she experiences, her faith remains a constant throughout the film. Stronger

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responses also supported their arguments with specific examples, such as her refusal to participate in the singing of *Cara al sol* or give the fascist salute as a protest against the deaths of babies in prison, her attempts to advocate for the other women when she is granted special treatment, and her courage, solidarity and determination in the final scene when facing the firing squad.

Question 20. The strongest responses recognised that the statement presents a clear contrast between male cowardice and female courage but evaluated the extent to which this is true rather than accepting it without question. Many candidates focused only on Teo as an example of male cowardice, referring to his change of political allegiance in order to save himself, but stronger essays considered other male characters such as Perico, Adelina's father and Captain Fontenla. They explored how different forms of male weakness, fear, complicity and violence against the vulnerable are contrasted with the courage, solidarity and resistance shown by the women. The best responses also avoided presenting all male characters negatively and acknowledged the complexity of the film's portrayal of gender and courage, for example through the character of Blanca's husband, Enrique. Some candidates presented a particularly harsh interpretation of Juan Cánepa's suicide, viewing it as an act of cowardice, whereas stronger responses recognised that his decision can also be interpreted as an act of self-sacrifice, as he chooses death to avoid further torture and the possibility of betraying others under interrogation.

General observations and advice for future candidates:

- **Read the question carefully**. Focus on relevant content supported by detailed evidence from the text or film. Avoid including unrelated or pre-prepared material.
- **Plan your essay logically.** A clear structure, following the demands of the question will help ensure that all aspects of the title are addressed.
- **Use the present tense** when analysing literary works and films, unless referring to historical or contextual information. Avoid unnecessary shifts between narrative and analysis.
- **Proofread your work to improve AO3 performance**. Check grammar, agreements, verb conjugations, spelling, accents and tense consistency, and ensure that key vocabulary has been learnt accurately. Strong essays have a clear introduction, well-developed paragraphs linked logically, and a concise conclusion.
- **Essay length:** Candidates should aim to write approximately 300 words. Shorter responses often lack sufficient depth and development, while excessively long essays—some of which exceeded five pages in this series—frequently become repetitive and lose focus.

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