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# **GCE A LEVEL EXAMINERS' REPORTS**

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**SPANISH  
A LEVEL**

**SUMMER 2022**

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:  
<https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?l=en>

### **Online Results Analysis**

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### **Annual Statistical Report**

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

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**SPANISH**  
**GCE A LEVEL**  
**Summer 2022**  
**COMPONENT 1: SPEAKING**

**General Comments**

Examiners would 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.

This year, for the first time, some of the tests were conducted online. This was very successful and well received by candidates, who responded positively. Centres only needed to provide an invigilator to supervise the test room and a laptop with a good internet connection. WJEC set up the Teams meetings. One particular advantage was that candidates who were absent on the appointed day, for reasons of ill-health, were able to take the test easily at a later date.

For most candidates this was their first experience of a public examination, their GCSEs having been awarded based on teacher assessed grades. It was to their immense credit that they responded as calmly and as confidently as they did.

Examiners always aim to make candidates comfortable. However, teachers should brief future candidates that examiners, in their questioning, are seeking to identify a 'ceiling of performance' at certain points in the test. Where candidates are asked occasional questions that they find challenging to answer, perhaps needing to deal with new ideas or perspectives, they are being helped by examiners to move up the AO4 mark bands.

Examiners similarly may ask questions that give candidates the opportunity to use a wider range of grammatical features, such as past tenses or the subjunctive mood, thus helping to consolidate marks for AO3. Candidates are always welcome to ask for questions to be repeated or to check their understanding of what they have been asked and, in fact, doing so can also enhance marks for AO1, because they are interacting in a natural and spontaneous way.

A key message for candidates is that at the points in the test where they feel challenged, this is likely to be where they are being stretched and are doing best.

**Comments on individual questions/sections**

**Independent research project**

The choices of topic were wide and, in many cases, original. They included historical, artistic, political and scientific points of focus.

In choosing a topic candidates should consider its scope, so that it is not so wide that it becomes impossible to go into depth within the time allowed. They 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.

Overly descriptive topics can be limiting; this was sometimes seen when the topic choice was apparently driven by a candidate's personal interests, perhaps in a sport or hobby or a Spanish TV series. It was then harder for candidates to make analytical comments, argue points of view or draw conclusions.

It is important for candidates to be clear that the AO4 marks are given not just for showing knowledge but also for demonstrating understanding of the countries and communities where Spanish is spoken.

Care needs to be taken where candidates have used a TV series or film based on a real-life person or events as a basis for their topic. Firstly, what they reference in their presentation needs to have come from reading not viewing and, secondly, in the discussion, they need to be aware that what they have watched is an artistic representation of the historical facts and may contain sequences that were invented by the scriptwriters. Frida Kahlo, Che Guevarra and Pablo Escobar, for example, can be the basis for interesting research and discussion but only where real reading research has taken place.

Topics which worked well this year included:

- How far could women exercise free will in Franco's Spain?
- How has the lack of a majority government impacted Spain in recent years?
- How far have Franco's censorship laws left a legacy in modern Spain?
- Was Simón Bolívar a liberator or a tyrant?
- How has the role of Catholic nuns in Spain changed in recent years?
- Why has the life of indigenous Guatemalans changed in the last ten years?
- What was Policarpa Salavarrieta's most important impact on Colombia?
- Did the Cuban revolution change life for Cubans for the better?
- Why did Picasso's work become increasingly more abstract?
- What was Victor Jara's role in Chile in the 1970s?
- How have the inventors of the Hispanic world contributed to medical science?
- Is it worth conserving the co-official languages of Spain?
- Where does pride in your Autonomous Community end and aggressive nationalism begin?
- Mar adentro and its impact on the euthanasia debate in Spain.

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

### **The presentation and how marks are awarded**

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**

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.

Moving on now to AO4, candidates need to show knowledge AND understanding of the culture or society of the Hispanic world. They should show their understanding by arguing academic points of view, using appropriate evidence to support what they say, drawing conclusions, analysing and evaluating. Analysis and evaluation happen in response to the question 'Why does that matter?'. Candidates who did their research well, consistently showed that they had thought through the importance and consequences of the factual information that they had researched. For example, one high scoring candidate whose topic dealt with the changing role of Catholic nuns in Spain, spoke about why Sister Teresa Forcades has become well known as a Christian feminist and asked whether sexism continues within the Catholic church. Another high scoring candidate spoke about the government of Pedro Sánchez. He posed the question of whether, given Spain's history, the country is better off with a coalition government which is representative of a comfortable majority of the electorate, even if it means a lot of compromise on policy, rather than a single party government with a majority in the Cortes, elected by less than half of the electorate. This same candidate went on to discuss the effect of the Spanish electoral system on the outcome of elections and its impact on democracy in Spain.

Lower scoring candidates in AO4 often spent a lot of time describing and demonstrating knowledge but did not address the 'Why does that matter?' question. At times the factual information was also questionable.

Where there were attempts at analysis from lower-scoring candidates, this was often superficial, judgemental, or lacked context. For example, several candidates spoke about issues around gay rights in Franco's Spain but gave the impression that Spain was an international outlier and that that gay rights were well established elsewhere in the 1960s. Other candidates who spoke about abortion rights were unable to explain why the Catholic church opposes abortion or said that it was because of sexism, rather than understanding that the issue is theological and to do with the moment at which life is deemed to begin.

Examiners reported a lack of knowledge and understanding over the role/attitude/importance of the Catholic church, especially in Latin American cultures. A general response when pressed, was that most people thought the church was either important or irrelevant in their lives, but analysis of why was lacking, when many issues may be traced to faith within these cultures.

Candidates who do address moral or ethical issues should make sure that they have considered the opposing views in order to support their arguments.

The mean marks and facility factors across the Assessment Objectives covered by the Independent Research Project (IRB) were as follows:

	mean mark	facility factor
IRP P AO2	4.3	85.4
IRP P AO4	4.4	87.2
IRP D AO1	4.2	83.3
IRP D AO3	11.2	74.6
IRP D AO4	8.2	81.7

### **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?'.

Secondly, candidates are expected to show that they have read and understood the information on the card in order to be awarded marks for AO2. Future series will have more targeted questions that ask what the text says about a particular issue, which should help this to happen. 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...'.

One point to add about AO4 is that candidates do need to speak about the Hispanic world and locate what they say firmly there. When they speak about topics like technology, the need to be careful not to drift into generalities. At all times examiners are looking for evidence of learning about the Hispanic world.

In terms of card choice 'The two Spains: 1936 onwards' was a popular choice and the candidates mostly had a good range of things to say. 'Diversity and difference' was also popular but for Card 7 there was a lack of contextual information about immigration, along with a number of misconceptions, such as the idea that they speak Spanish in Morocco and that is why they go to Spain, rather than commenting on the geographical proximity. Many candidates were not aware that Ceuta and Melilla are Spanish enclaves and completely misunderstood the text reference to the delicacy of the situation. Examiners reported that discussion on this topic elicited stock responses about everyone needing to do more to help migrants leave their countries and make a new life in Spain.

Another issue that arose was that some candidates who chose Cards 4 or 6 did not have enough knowledge of historical sites or museums in the Hispanic world to sustain a good discussion. It could be useful for teachers to include a wider range of case-studies here, so that candidates have plenty to say. Higher scoring candidates knew, for example, about the Altamira Caves, the Alhambra, the Route to Santiago, La Recoleta in Buenos Aires, The Coto Doñana, The Albufera National Park, The Arica and Parinacota Region of Chile, The Guggenheim in Bilbao, the City of Arts and Sciences in Valencia, The Dalí Theatre Museum in Figueres, The Museo Nacional de Arte Romero in Mérida and so on. Some candidates had also taken the time to learn about smaller, less well-known historical sites and museums and reference to these yielded interesting discussions.

One final issue that is beginning to arise is that candidates are offering outdated information regarding certain issues. We cannot really continue to blame the 2008 financial crisis for unemployment in Spain in 2022, for example. We also need to remember that the immigration issue was impacted by the pandemic and so on. Teachers are advised to find ways to make sure that the AO4 case studies for the card discussions are reasonably current.

The mean marks and facility factors across the Assessment Objectives covered by the cards were as follows:

	mean mark	facility factor
Card AO1	3.9	78.1
Card AO2	3.9	78.6
Card AO3	3.7	74.6
Card AO4	3.8	76.8

## **Summary of key points**

### **Five key messages for future candidates**

1. Choose a research topic that allows for analysis and is not too wide
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 ask questions and refer to what is on the card
5. In the card discussion, have a good range of case studies to refer to and keep the focus on the Hispanic world and make sure what you say is current

## SPANISH

### GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2022

#### COMPONENT 2: LISTENING, READING AND TRANSLATION

##### General Comments

The evidence from the marking process indicated that this paper discriminated very effectively across the range of candidates. All the tasks worked as anticipated, and differentiation was achieved.

In sections A and B the free-response questions test only comprehension and therefore examiners do not withhold marks where the language used is sufficiently unambiguous for the message to be conveyed. This said, it is a good principle for future candidates to bear in mind that it is never the examiner's job to choose from a list of alternative answers offered or to guess what a candidate means. Teachers could usefully work on some specific points of exam-language with their students to help them to be able to produce clear and unambiguous responses.

By analysing past papers teachers could put together a list of key words and phrases to embed, focusing particularly on the cross-language thought processes that many candidates use to deal with comprehension.

Very often the non-native candidate listens to or reads the Spanish stimulus and then looks at the question, thinks about the answer in English and then translates their thought into Spanish to formulate their answer. Even where comprehension is achieved, some candidates then mis-translate their English answer and lose marks by producing ambiguous responses. Teachers should be alert to this behaviour and seek to mitigate it – 'es porque de' for 'es a causa de' is a good example and this has been noted in earlier reports. Candidates can also be trained consciously to stop and ask themselves: 'have I answered only by thinking in Spanish or have I used translation strategies?' Where the latter is the case, this is a flag for them to check that they have translated correctly.

In section C both translations differentiated well across the candidature. As may be expected, the overall performance on the translation into English was better than that on the translation into Spanish.

##### Comments on individual questions/sections

###### Section A – Listening

**Question 1** was a three-option multiple choice task where candidates needed to choose the correct word or phrase to fill the gaps in the passage, which was itself a summary of the recording that they had heard about the financial difficulties faced by museums in the Hispanic world. The task worked well and many candidates scored full or almost full marks. It is useful for teachers of candidates in future series to point out that the options all make sense and are possible, so that the correct answer can only be chosen based on the stimulus material. A useful classroom activity to develop the skills for this task is to take a recording or text and a summary of it. The students then identify 10 words that they want to test and think of the two alternatives. Students can do this individually and swap their devised task with a partner. The mean mark for this question was 5.6 and the facility factor was 79.6.

**Question 2** was in two parts. 2A was an objective task where candidates needed to match the start and the end of the sentence from two lists. The task was well answered by most and only number 5 caused difficulty. In developing exam skills for future candidates, teachers can ask candidates to begin by narrowing their options using grammar and sense. Number 1 from List A, for example, was a phrasal singular subject that requires a singular verb, so from List B (e) and (h) were the only grammatical possibilities. Number 3 from List A could fit grammatically with (a), (d), (e), (g), (h) and (i), however only (a) and (g) produce a sense-fit because the other options produce incomplete information. Students can usefully be given practice in deconstructing these tasks as a way of developing metacognitive approaches to exam skills. They can also be given a text or transcript of a recording from a different part of the exam and be tasked with designing a task like this one. The mean mark for this question was 4.3 and the facility factor was 85.7.

2B was a free-response task. In (a) a common error was to focus in a vague way on the idea of inclusion, but this was not accepted because this idea is part of the question and the rubric. In (b) many candidates transcribed sections of the recording. Where this was a very targeted and unambiguous transcription, marks were given because comprehension was demonstrated. However, too much information was offered by some candidates and errors of fact were introduced, such as incorrect rendering of the statistics. The three key ideas were that the LGBT community 'had money to spend', 'contributed to the tourist sector' and 'supported businesses'. Teachers can usefully practise skills in developing concise responses. Candidates should be clear that the questions are designed so that the response will fit on the line provided. Where only one mark is available, only one key idea is needed. The mean mark for this question was 3.9 and the facility factor was 77.3.

**Question 3** was in two parts. 3A was a summary question and candidates were required to identify key details from the recording. In this task candidates needed to aim for concise responses. A key strategy for candidates in future series is to try to turn the bullet points into a question in their mind and then write their answers as if in response to this question. For example '*Las dificultades por las que pasa el protagonista de la película*' could become '*¿Cuáles eran/son las dificultades por las que pasa el protagonista de la película?*' – candidates do not even need to make this strategic manipulation in Spanish. As mentioned earlier, targeted lifts from the recording are acceptable, but need to result in an unambiguous response in Spanish. In this task we have first person speakers and so verbs in the first person from the recording, would need to be manipulated in some way if they were necessary for an answer. The best answers were those which were concise and to the point, because these demonstrate precise comprehension. For example, in the second bullet point answers like '*Cruz interpreta la madre joven y Serrano la mayor*' were excellent because they showed very evident comprehension. However, responses such as '*Cruz es una madre joven y Serrano es mayor*' missed the ideas that were tested. In practising these kinds of tasks, teachers can usefully give students a similar task with pre-populated slightly wrong ideas like this and ask them to refine the idea to make it a mark-worthy response. In the example above just three words separated the two responses. The mean mark for this question was 5.6 and the facility factor was 62.7.

3B was a free response type task, where candidates needed to answer the questions in Spanish. It is not necessary to answer in full sentences. Some of these questions required candidates to draw inferences and avoid distracting ideas to reach the answer. For example, in (b) it was necessary to connect the idea of childhood games with the preparation for the role in the film. In (c) there was an inferential route to an answer 'muy diferentes' and also a comparative route focussing on the relative austerity of the two mother roles. In A level, candidates need to expect that there will be different routes to answer the same question and examiners will reward all valid answers that indicate comprehension. The mean mark for this question was 1.8 and the facility factor was 44.8.

## Section B – Reading

**Question 4** was in two parts. 4A required candidates to find the synonymous words or phrases in the text, matching the definitions given. The words best known were '*magnitud*' and '*exterminar*'. Least well understood was '*testimonio*'. This series there were two words that were deemed by examiners suitable for (e) '*concejal*' and '*alcalde*' and so either received a mark. In developing this skill, teachers can usefully take a text, choose some words and ask candidates to write a definition or synonymous phrase or idea. This can give students useful practice in dealing with this kind of 'dictionary speak' using '*... de algo*', '*... sobre algo*', '*acto de...*'. Students could also be encouraged to use a monolingual dictionary app on a regular basis. The Real Academia has an app available at <https://dle.rae.es/>. This is free to use and download and can be used in conjunction with the ideas above. Another approach is to use definitions as a starter activity in lessons to prepare a reading activity. Teachers can give students a text and each student takes a section of it, chooses five words and looks up a definition in Spanish. Each student then shares their definitions with the rest of the group and they all look to find the word defined. The mean mark for this question was 2.0 and the facility factor was 40.9.

4B was a free response question task. Here is worth noting that some candidates did not process the interrogatives and produced ambiguous answers. In (b), as is common with many, if not all, the two-mark questions there were several different routes to the two marks and candidates needed to give two different key ideas. Best answered was (a) but (b) challenged the lower-scoring candidates. The mean mark for this question was 3.6 and the facility factor was 71.0.

**Question 5** worked in the same way as question 1 and was generally well answered by most candidates. The same advice and teaching suggestions mentioned in question 1 apply here. The mean mark for this question was 8.7 and the facility factor was 86.8.

**Question 6** was in two parts. 6A was a summary type question and the advice and suggestions from 3A also apply. The key difference was that there was a wider range of possible ideas for inclusion. Again, candidates often wrote too much – a good concise answer, for example to the second bullet point, was something like '*en discursos políticos y en las imagenes publicadas*'. Clearly all candidates want to get the marks available, but it is helpful for teachers to keep reminding their students that most questions can be answered in a few words and also that where only one mark is available, only one key detail is needed. Candidates do not need to go into detail and can sometimes contradict themselves and lose a mark. The mean mark for this question was 4.0 and the facility factor was 66.6.

6B was a free-response task in Spanish. (a) caused the greatest challenge and (b) and (c) were generally well answered. As in all the other tasks, examiners adopted a positive marking approach and so not every mark-worthy answer will appear on the published marking scheme. The mean mark for this question was 2.8 and the facility factor was 69.1.

## Section C – Translation

Question 7 was a translation into English. The task is marked on a points-based marking scheme, dividing the passage into 20 separate segments. Each segment is marked separately by examiners. The positive marking approach that characterises the overall approach to marking is also applied here. The marks are given if the full message of the Spanish original is transferred into the English translation. This translation is marked for messages only and so no marks are withheld owing to spelling errors in the English passage, so long as the resultant translation is clear and unambiguous. Examiners also allow for the fact that different candidates may use a different order of phrasing from that in the published marking scheme. Overall, this passage differentiated well and many candidates scored well. No single segment defeated all candidates but there were some items of vocabulary that were poorly known. These included: '*empresa*' – on the GCSE vocabulary list, '*autónoma*', '*aguantarse*' and '*proscritas*'. There were also errors that came as a result of poor linguistic control of English, notably the parenthetic commas in boxes 17 to 19. Examiners saw many translations saying 'The man could, and in fact it was quite common to have one or several lovers...'. Candidates missed the comma and also rendered '*tener*' as '*to have*', without looking back to the modal verb '*could*...'. Clearly, we cannot say in English '*The man could to have*...'.

In future series, candidates do need to work to extract clear meaning from the overall piece. Although rules of capitalisation vary between the two languages, and candidates should be aware of those rules, punctuation is not tested as part of the translation task and crucially punctuation marks should carry across from Spanish to English in the vast majority of cases. In terms of the idiomatic use of the language, which examiners deem to be the areas where direct translation is not possible, '*tampoco*', '*poner en marcha*' and '*siempre que*' differentiated at the higher marks. The mean mark for this question was 13.5 and the facility factor was 67.6.

**Question 8** was a translation into Spanish. As is usual, this was the task that differentiated most effectively. Many of the comments made about question 7 also apply here. Once again, the published marking scheme is indicative rather than definitive, so examiners allowed a range of different renderings as long as the meaning was transferred. Examiners also overlook very minor errors of orthography provided the resultant translation is clear, for example non-critical accents missed off. However, there is an expectation that adjective agreements are correct and that verb forms are correctly rendered. This task specifically tests the ability to produce clear and accurate Spanish. The vocabulary items that caused the most difficulty were: '*valorar*', '*criar*' and '*priorizar*'. The notion of '*group-oriented*' also challenged all but the highest-scoring candidates but some candidates had found synonymous expressions such as '*sociables*' or '*muy de grupo*', which were worthy of a mark.

Useful ways to develop translation ability, in either direction, are orally using interpreting tasks and simultaneous translation activities.

Using websites like <https://www.newsinslowspanish.com/> can provide text and speech for oral translation. Oral translation games and tasks can be very helpful for teachers in seeing immediately where students struggle and providing formative feedback in the moment.

Teachers can also usefully use a set of pre-translation activities, where the passages for translation are minutely deconstructed to find out where the tests lie. The mean mark for this question was 9.1 and the facility factor was 45.3.

## **Summary of key points**

### **Five pieces of advice for future candidates**

1. Develop your exam technique by pulling apart each task type and charting the thinking processes you need to employ
2. Practise producing concise responses that focus on demonstrating your comprehension of key ideas
3. If you use 'think in English and then translate into Spanish' as a way to answer free-response comprehension questions, make sure that you check your Spanish is clear – it doesn't need to be perfect, though
4. Get to work with a monolingual dictionary app and try to look up words this way rather than finding the English meaning – this gives you regular practice for the definitions task and also helps you learn other related words in the same word family
5. Keep practising mental translation into Spanish as you go about your daily life, watch TV and in other school subjects. As you find out where you struggle, you will find out what you need to work on.

## SPANISH

### GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2022

#### COMPONENT 3: CRITICAL AND ANALYTICAL RESPONSE IN WRITING

##### General Comments

After the break caused by the pandemic, candidates performed really well on the whole. They attempted all questions on the paper with the exception of 23 and 24 and found the paper accessible. However, all examiners commented on the poor standard of handwriting of a large body of candidates, with a disregard for tidy presentation, paragraphing, and sentence structure in Spanish. It is likely that these candidates used PCs during lockdown and had few opportunities to hand in regular written assignments. Nevertheless, most scripts, but not all, were legible – at least to the Principal Examiner.

With regard to written Spanish, examiners were disappointed by the poor quality of some of the Spanish. This clearly does not apply to candidates in the 8/9/10 bands. I am not referring here to failing to write in a reasonable literary register but making bad mistakes in the fundamentals of the language. The gender of everyday words was frequently wrong, agreements between nouns and adjectives, and subjects and verbs were carelessly disregarded, and the conjugation of common verbs was erratic. For example, the following types of errors were too widespread: *el muerte* / *el muerto* for *la muerte*, *el mujer* / *un mujer* for *la mujer* / *una mujer* and the basic confusion of *ser* / *estar* in a sentence like *Bernarda está una mujer muy terca*.

Given that one of the commonest themes in all texts involves matters of life and death, is almost certain that candidates will have to use the verb *morir* in their essay/s. To put it bluntly, the conjugation of *morir* by candidates in bands 5/6 and lower was extremely poor. Remedial action on this point would improve the overall performance.

Finally, candidates should avoid making up words from English, e.g. *attemptar*, *reflectar*. Incidentally, many candidates confuse *reflejar* / *reflejo* with *reflexionar* / *reflexión*, and vice versa.

##### Comments on individual questions/sections

The most commonly attempted literary questions were in order of popularity *La casa de Bernarda Alba*, *Como agua para chocolate*, *El otro árbol de Guernica*, and *Réquiem por un campesino español*. The film most frequently chosen was *El laberinto del fauno*, followed by *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios* and *María, llena eres de gracia*.

Questions 1 and 2 on *Bernarda Alba* were well done, although in question 2 only the best candidates pointed out that the Moorish heritage in Andalusia might also have influenced social norms. Only a few pointed out that the attitude towards single mothers that doomed Adela existed throughout Franco's dictatorship (and in the United Kingdom until the 1970s too), and still exists in some countries today. By the way more than a few candidates persisted in calling *Bernarda*, *Bernada* or *Benada*.

In *El otro árbol de Guernica* candidates preferred question 8 to question 7. There were lots of apt references to the Civil War but only a few pointed out the relevance of the text to child refugees in the contemporary world.

Many of the texts on the specification are relevant to contemporary life and I feel that some candidates may be missing out if they have just studied in a vacuum. For example, this is applicable to questions 11 and 12 on *Réquiem por un campesino español* where the abuse of the underdogs in society or the abuse of power by an entitled elite was not just practised in pre-Civil War Spain. However, there were many excellent references to the socio-political crises (land distribution, for example) in the Second Republic. Some candidates also mentioned rural backwardness in their essays on Lorca.

With regard to the films, hardly any candidates could find positive characteristics in Captain Vidal – he **is** a Captain, not a General, as lots of candidates promoted him to be. I would ask those who found him totally vile, violent, self-indulgent, narcissistic etc. to consider whether his military discipline, loyalty to his beliefs – however much mistaken, attachment to his son and heir etc. are not ideologically sound *from his point of view*. Finally, there were lots of well-constructed and thoughtful essays on the same film.

Likewise, there was a good crop of essays on both questions on Almodóvar. Many candidates showed very good analytical skills and dissected the essay titles, not taking the statements for granted but submitting them to a sound evaluation. Some showed very clearly how the film exemplifies the *Movida Madrileña*.

*María, llena eres de gracia* was equally popular with question 17 the candidates' choice. The best candidates questioned whether the great American dream might in the end be the best bet for María's future.

The mean marks and facility factors for each question were as follows:

	mean mark	facility factor		mean mark	facility factor
Q1 AO3	7.1	71.0	Q13 AO3	6.0	60.1
Q1 AO4	7.1	70.9	Q13 AO4	5.8	57.8
Q2 AO3	6.8	68.4	Q14 AO3	7.0	69.6
Q2 AO4	6.5	65.5	Q14 AO4	6.4	64.3
Q3 AO3	6.3	63.2	Q15 AO3	7.6	76.5
Q3 AO4	5.8	58.0	Q15 AO4	7.5	74.6
Q4 AO3	5.1	50.7	Q16 AO3	6.8	68.2
Q4 AO4	4.7	47.1	Q16 AO4	6.3	62.7
Q5 AO3	6.7	66.9	Q17 AO3	7.2	71.6
Q5 AO4	6.7	66.8	Q17 AO4	7.2	71.7
Q6 AO3	7.3	73.1	Q18 AO3	7.0	69.5
Q6 AO4	7.0	70.0	Q18 AO4	6.6	66.2
Q7 AO3	8.3	82.5	Q19 AO3	7.1	70.8
Q7 AO4	7.6	76.4	Q19 AO4	6.8	68.4
Q8 AO3	8.1	81.3	Q20 AO3	7.5	75.0
Q8 AO4	7.8	77.5	Q20 AO4	7.0	70.0
Q9 AO3	6.6	65.7	Q21 AO3	7.0	70.0
Q9 AO4	7.0	70.0	Q21 AO4	7.2	72.0
Q10 AO3	6.0	60.0	Q22 AO3	8.0	80.0
Q10 AO4	4.5	45.0	Q22 AO4	7.0	70.0
Q11 AO3	5.9	59.2			
Q11 AO4	5.8	57.7			
Q12 AO3	6.1	61.2			
Q12 AO4	5.8	58.1			

## Summary of key points

1. It is advisable for candidates to spend at least five minutes on a simple plan, just writing their main points in Spanish. The majority of candidates do not apparently do this.
2. Teachers should remind candidates always to analyse or evaluate the question set. This will probably involve them reorganising what they might have practised.
3. If quoting from a literary text or film, candidates must always ensure that the quotation is accurate and relevant. Otherwise, **DO NOT USE QUOTATIONS**. No candidate will be “penalised” for not using quotations.
4. Advise candidates to leave one or two lines between paragraphs. This will enable them to read over more easily what they have written. It will also help them to correct or insert a word or words without crushing them in untidily.
5. Teachers should advise them to check basic grammar, including common genders, all agreements, verb tenses etc.



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