

GCE



Chief Examiner's Report Spanish

Summer Series 2017



Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of CCEA's General Certificate of Education (GCE) in Spanish for this series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's microsite on our website at www.ccea.org.uk.

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GCE SPANISH

Principal Moderator's Report

Assessment Unit AS 1 Speaking

Introduction

For the first and last time of this New Specification Oral there were no A2 entrants. I am satisfied that all candidates were examined consistently and to a very high professional standard. The changed examination format and in particular the new mark schemes were applied appropriately by all examiners, whether experienced or new and I can confirm that we achieved a remarkable consistency of approach across the board. There were 7 new examiners this year and they all displayed great empathy with the candidates and their marking was fair and accurate. The courtesy, sensitivity and skill of all examiners were exemplary and all candidates were given every opportunity to display their ability in spoken Spanish.

Before we embark on the specifics of this new, examination, we must keep reiterating the need for sympathetic collaboration between examinations officers, heads of department and visiting examiners during the period when examining visits are being arranged. Similarly we appeal for constant vigilance and care on the part of schools with regard to the perennial possibility of disruptions during orals which place examiners and candidates in very difficult situations. Finally a word on hospitality, which in most cases is excellent. Examiners are encouraged to bring a packed lunch and, if possible, a flask but most schools now seem to have a mobile tea/coffee station in the room, which enables the examiner to take helpful breaks from the demanding task of providing candidates with the best possible opportunity to showcase their talents.

Presentation

The dropping of the follow-up questions and the new AO4 stipulation on presentation content seem both to have been very warmly welcomed by candidates and examiners alike. All examiners reported enjoying a huge variety of fascinating topics from right across the Spanish-speaking world, a selection of which we include below for the purpose of exemplification, and also to salute the work being done and to inspire future candidates to communicate as impressively as this year's cohort. Candidates seemed to really enjoy having the opportunity to immerse themselves in aspects of Spanish and Central and South American culture. There is such a rich variety on offer and our candidates have really done it proud. We do not underestimate the enthusiasm which teachers and Spanish language assistants have contributed to this exercise. We should, of course, remind candidates of the 3 minute time limit. We are of course aware that candidates may speed up or slow down under examination pressure and the normal tolerances still apply. However candidates need to be aware that overshooting or undershooting set limits carry the risk of not gaining access to top band marks.

- La rivalidad entre Barcelona y Real Madrid
- Guillermo Del Toro
- La Alhambra
- Las Sanfermines
- Los Incas

- Asturias
- Frida Kahlo
- Javier Bardem
- El tiempo de la pantalla
- Las drogas en Colombia
- Alejandro Amenabar ¿el mejor director de cine en España y Chile?
- La guerra de las drogas
- El botellón en España
- La cultura mejicana
- Estrés para los estudiantes españoles
- Las drogas en Ecuador
- España – un país longevo debido a la dieta mediterránea
- La crisis española
- España y su lucha contra la talla “0”
- La educación bilingüe en España ¿éxito o fracaso?
- La fiesta de moros y cristianos
- ¿Es la liga española el mejor ejemplo para los jóvenes?
- La Tomatina
- La cocina regional de España
- La Navidad
- El día de los muertos
- ¿La dieta española / mediterránea atiende bien a los vegetarianos?
- El tráfico de las drogas ilegales en Latino América
- Las tapas en España
- Las Fallas
- La feria de Sevilla
- ¿El baile flamenco – un verdadero fenómeno?
- La música latinoamericana
- La civilización Maya – una civilización única
- Tauromaquia ¿Es una tradición obsoleta?
- Beneficios y desventajas del turismo en España
- Los conquistadores y la exploración, colonización y la conquista de la Americas
- Fumar en el año 2017
- El legado de Franco en el año 2017
- Los boxeadores mexicanos
- Los ciclistas colombianos
- Los festivales en España

- An unknown artist Javi Aznárez whom the candidate had had the opportunity to meet
- The rags to riches story of Carlos Costa, the most famous black ballet dancer
- The feminist group 'Ni una menos'
- Las tribus antiguas de Latinoamérica
- La emancipación de la mujer en España
- Pablo Escobar ¿Robin Hood o delincuente?
- Las Cholitas Luchadoras
- Los intérpretes influyentes de la música latinoamericana
- Una leyenda del golf español
- La Alhambra
- Zara

Conversation

There is very little new to report here because the New Spec conversation is broadly similar to its Legacy forerunner with only slight adjustments to the AS topics list. As ever there is a hugely impressive ability across the board to communicate effectively in Spanish at AS level but equally the same grammatical deficiencies persist. We have enumerated these repeatedly across previous reports and it seems unnecessary to relay them again but candidates need to be constantly encouraged to beware of the following:

- Using infinitives instead of correct verb parts;
- Incorrect use of GUSTAR;
- Ending sentences and clauses with a preposition;
- Incorporating the Saxon genitive into Spanish eg mi hermano's amigos;
- Making up their own vocabulary eg excitemento; and
- Incorrect use of the gerund after prepositions eg es posible pasarlo bien sin bebiendo o tomando drogas.

Chief Examiner's Report

Assessment Unit AS2 Listening, Reading and Use of Language

The new format AS examination which had a different distribution of marks, was well received by candidates. The mean mark for Section A was 15.8 while in Sections B & C it was 54.

Section A Listening

- Q1** The T/F/I question has been replaced with a set of 5 questions in Spanish. This question on the topic of 'La comida rápida en España' proved to be very accessible. Most candidates performed exceptionally well, scoring 7/10 to 10/10. Less able candidates lost some marks due to the omission of specific points mentioned in the mark scheme.
- Q2** This was clearly a very challenging question for most candidates, due to the questions being in English and obviously having to understand the topic, 'Treintañeros dependientes'. Marks tended to be very low.
- (a) Generally well done. The percentage 80% was necessary to gain the mark.
 - (b) Many failed to achieve the second mark by not highlighting the comparison with the rest of Europe.
 - (c) Generally well done.
 - (d) Less able candidates were unable to identify two difficulties to achieve full marks.
 - (e) The idea of having to spend more than half their salary was not understood by the majority of candidates.
 - (f) Numbers proved to be a real problem for most.
 - (g) 'Avergonzado' and 'amargo' were rarely understood.
 - (h) Generally well answered.
 - (i) Many candidates failed to narrow down the specific information needed to gain the 2 marks.
 - (j) Some failed to understand the necessity of 'por mucho tiempo' to gain the mark.

Section B Reading

- Q1** The reading comprehension on 'Las nuevas formas de comunicación-un dilemma para los padres' was well understood. With marks only available for AO2, candidates generally performed well, lifting the relevant answers from the text and gaining valuable marks with relative ease. Lack of precision prevented some candidates from accessing all the available marks. Some candidates experienced difficulties with:
- (b) They failed to offer the two strands of the answer: 'proteger a sus hijos y respetar a su privacidad a la vez'.

Q2 Translation

Examiners felt that the level of difficulty of the translation, 'La Tomatina de Buñol' was appropriate but what seemed an accessible piece proved to be quite challenging. It produced a good range of marks, the majority scoring at least 12/20. The following words proved difficult for many:

'desfile' 'especie' transcurría' 'se disparó' Scarcely anyone understood 'agacharse'.

Section C Use of Language

This new grammar section proved to be an important discriminator in the examination. A few candidates were very well prepared for all grammatical structures and gained full marks. On the other hand, some struggled with this section and only scored very few marks. Failing to perform well in this section can have a detrimental effect on the candidate's overall grade since there are 35 marks available.

- C1** Some candidates did not read the rubric and only wrote the verb for each answer. Teachers should remind students that they must write full sentences in Spanish in this section. It was pleasing to see that tenses were generally well known.
- C2** Most coped well with the 'ser/estar' question.
In (c) very few were aware that 'está' should be used with 'muy bien'. C3
Many candidates showed a lack of understanding of negatives. Very few gained full marks in this question.
- C4** Some were unaware that 'rosa' remains unchanged in the masculine form. The accent was frequently lacking in 'fáciles'. The majority did not know that 'ciento' needs to change to 'cien' before a noun in plural.
- C5** This question certainly separated the less able candidates from the more able. A few failed to score any marks while others scored 15/15. These sentences were a good opportunity for the more able candidates to show how firm their grasp of grammatical structures is. However, examiners expressed concern regarding the number of 6th year students who are still unsure of basic grammatical concepts, verb formation and the use of accents.

Assessment Unit AS 3 Extended Writing

Standard of candidate performance

Examiners found the examination performance of the candidates to be generally very good and in general the paper was seen as enabling. Examiners found a broad range of performance but pleasingly good or very good in the main. While there was satisfaction that the more able candidates scored well and the less able candidates produced good efforts, it was noticeable that in many cases there was evidence of learned material being produced, occasionally without due regard to the specifics of the question. One examiner referred to candidates who clearly wrote 'learned paragraphs which had little to do with what the question requested'. However, the structured nature of the questions was felt to be enabling especially for the less able candidates to score well in AO2.

Examiners were conscious that this examination was demanding for students just one year on from GCSE, and it was noted that there was a tendency for candidates to produce pre-learned material rather than address the question in a more spontaneous way. This is understandable but in some cases, it can lead to candidates failing to achieve higher marks as the focus of the answer veered off the precise points indicated by the bullet-points. It is hoped that candidates in the future, and the teachers preparing them, will have more confidence in encouraging them to address the questions in their own way, inspired naturally by the sources read. In some cases there was some imbalance in the space devoted to the different bullet points leading to uneven answers. Some on the examining team had strong feelings that candidates who did not address the bullet-points in the order in which they appear should be penalised. However, it should be borne in mind that the bullet-points have two functions: one to enable less able candidates who might struggle to structure their own response and two, to ensure that students show knowledge of requisite areas. A candidate who produces a well-structured essay covering all the points and addressing the question should not expect to lose any marks. However, candidates should ensure to address all the bullet-points. Some examiners felt that 'on occasions, the second and third bullet points in the different questions were inadequately addressed. At other times, referencing of the text/film was untidy and clumsy and some candidates also went off on a slight tangent and included material which was not totally relevant'. Some examiners noted a lack of knowledge of detail in the films, e.g. in *Solas*, the past of María in the *pueblo*, many candidates missed the detail and significance of the *ex-novio* and the best friend. In *El Bola* many students struggled to refer to details relating to aspects other than the main protagonists.

A perennial issue is that of quotations. Occasionally quotations from the films were either inaccurate or, at worst, invented. The advice with quotations is the usual one: they are not essential but above all they are never a substitute for analysis or comment on the part of the student. In fact, they have less value than the candidate's own formulations. Often, they only serve to interrupt the flow of the essay. They should if anything support or illustrate a point made by the candidate in their own words and be used sparingly. Candidates should not feel obliged to include quotations at any cost. Inaccurate or unrecognisable quotations are counterproductive.

Many examiners did note that the command of language was good in general and frequent signs of good use of vocabulary.

Choice of questions

Solas, Question 1 and *El Bola* Question 3 were the most popular questions, with Part (a) in each case being the most popular choice. There were some centres that chose *La lengua de las mariposas* (Question 2), and there was a reasonable distribution between Part(a) and (b) with Part (a) somewhat more popular. Some centres chose *Como agua para chocolate* with Part (a) being considerably more popular than Part (b).

Because some of the texts at AS now were part of the previous A2 syllabus, some examiners felt that teachers were still teaching e.g. *Solas* and *Como agua para chocolate* as they would for the A2. The specification states that AS candidates should be able to develop an argument but it is based more on knowledge of the text/film rather than a critical analysis.

Conclusion

Overall, the performance in the paper was good and set a good standard to this new paper. It is hoped that as teachers become more confident of the new texts and the new expectations for familiar texts that standards will continue to improve.

Contact details

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