AQA

A-level

SPANISH

Paper 1 Listening, Reading and Writing
Report on the Examination

7692
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General comments

In the first year of this new specification, it was pleasing that examiners felt that teachers had prepared their students well for the demands of this new paper. The paper discriminated well and allowed students of all abilities to score marks across the paper. The areas that provided most challenge and need further practice are the summaries and translations. The number of questions unanswered was concerning, and students should be encouraged to make sensible and educated guesses to questions, especially if the answer is a non-verbal response. There may also be some scope for ensuring that students have practice in structuring their time effectively in the exam. At times examiners struggled to decipher illegible handwriting and students should be encouraged to write their answers clearly to ensure examiners can be confident with the intended spelling.

Section A

Question 1

The first listening passage provided an accessible start to the exam for students. Over 90% of students achieved a mark for 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.5, with Question 1.4 being the most challenging part here. This may have been due to them not understanding the word *endurecer*. Any opportunities students have to practise independent reading and listening can only serve to broaden and deepen vocabulary knowledge and, as such, should be encouraged.

Question 2

Question 2 was generally well answered. Teachers need to be reminded that students do not have to use their own words to answer the questions as there are no marks for quality of language, but they must ensure their answer does match the phrasing of the question. The best answers were those which used the language from the passage and did not try and change the words too much as, when they did, answers sometimes become confusing. Some marks were lost for not being precise with the answer. For example, in 2.4 *hasta* was very important, and in 2.6 *benéfica* was needed as well as *organización* (otherwise it would be money donated to any organisation). Marks were also lost for untargeted lifting, eg for 2.4, if students wrote about another function in addition to the translation aspect, then this invalidated the correct part of the answer. Grammatical errors did not prevent students from achieving marks as long as the required information was still unambiguously communicated. However, some grammatical errors did mean the message was not communicated eg in response to 2.5 *lea persuadido* makes no sense. Similarly, the lack of an accent on *donarán* meant many students lost the mark as the answer created ambiguity and confusion with the imperfect subjunctive.

Question 3

Students seemed to cope well with this question, with over 30% achieving the full six marks. Students should be reminded to ensure the correct letters are written clearly to ensure the mark is awarded. There were instances of students leaving blanks. In a non-verbal response such as these, students need to check their paper at the end to ensure there are no blanks and, if needed, make educated guesses as a blank box can only lead to a mark of zero.

Question 4

There are general comments about the approach to summaries which are contained at the end of this report which can be applied to both the listening and reading questions in this exam. The listening summary, surprisingly, seemed to be more accessible than the reading and it was pleasing that the average mark for this question was 8.5 out of 12. Teachers have obviously done an excellent job in preparing students for this new style question. The majority of summaries were within the word limit, although it is recommended that students count the number of words as too frequently they lost valid content points by writing at excessive length. Students need to be aware that examiners will count the words and are instructed not to award content points beyond the word limit. Students would do well to maintain focus on the bullet points; some students were more verbose, sometimes using up to a third of the word count on the first bullet point. In these cases, the student often lost content marks at the end of their summary. The number of marks attached to each bullet point should be a good indicator to how many of the 90 words should be devoted to it.

Students need to be reminded that there is no need to find synonyms; they should focus on correct manipulation of language as this is what attracts higher language marks. For example, changing *feliz* to *contenta* would not gain additional marks in AO3. The language mark is awarded by looking at aspects such as at verb manipulation; therefore, the students' ability to change *me siento* to *se siente* and *me encanta* to *le encanta* were good indicators to examiners when awarding the language mark. Indeed, some students strayed from the meaning when they looked for synonyms such as changing *feliz* to *afortunada*, which inevitably meant they lost the content mark. Further practice of changing first to third person of the verb will ensure further success for students.

With regards to the bullet points, in bullet one many students lost the mark by confusing *sentirse* with *sentarse*. The content mark can only be rewarded if the idea is communicated unambiguously. Some students were not precise enough with their answers, some suggesting that Mireia Lalaguna was the first ever winner of Miss World. In bullet point 2, the omission of the *lo* when attached to *esperaba* was a frequent mistake, creating an ambiguity in meaning. The best students were able to change the first person to third with ease. In the final bullet, only the best students were able to write *le falta*, but it was pleasing to see many got around this by putting *no es inteligente.* Encouraging students to make positive statements negative in this way is an excellent strategy as long as the original meaning is kept.

Section B

Question 5

This multiple-choice question was generally well done by students, with over 70% achieving the mark for questions 5.1 to 5.5. The most challenging question was 5.6, maybe due to students not knowing the words *estafar* or *asequible*. As previously mentioned, any opportunity to allow students to broaden vocabulary independently should be encouraged.

Question 6

Generally, this question was well answered. Teachers need to remind students that they do not have to use their own words to answer this type of question as there are no quality of language marks, but they must ensure their answer does match the phrasing of the question. Some marks were lost for not providing enough information, eg omitting *apenas* and simply stating *un mes* in response to 6.3, which did not convey the meaning. Marks were also lost for untargeted lifting, eg

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answers to 6.9 which started with *se resistieron* did not make any sense in terms of the question asked. Students must also ensure there is no ambiguity in their answer, eg in 6.4 examiners needed to know that students understood who shot whom. A response such as *dispararon contra ellos* did not do that. Similarly, in response to 6.7, *quince veces menos* was not enough as students needed to make it clear that they understood it was *menos que hoy* and not the other way round.

Question 7

Students tended to find this summary question more challenging, and marks were lower overall. Students seemed to find it easier to write within the word limit, though the comment made in Question 4 with regards to the word count is relevant here too. Centres need to be aware that, at A-level, each bullet point requires some detail and precision; there were many half-correct answers.

With bullet point 1, as mentioned above, detail was required. Many students mentioned the c*astellers* but did not make it explicit either that Ana had gone there (eg *quería ir a los castellers*) or that she had wanted to capture the historic event (*torre de diez pisos*). With the second point, while most mentioned that a photo had been uploaded, it needed to communicate that the photo showed two men kissing. In bullet point 2, most students scored some, if not all, of the marks available. It was essential to use verbs in the third person plural here. A significant number of students found it difficult to manipulate and paraphrase the text while still conveying all the key messages. Virtually all students were able to express that the men were proud and gained a mark for this. Bullet point 3 proved most challenging. Again, many marks were lost due to trying to replace lexical items rather than manipulating the verb ending. For example, *querer* was not accepted as a substitute for *esperar.* To gain the final mark, it was necessary to convey that the men were prepared to be activists *if* it made people more aware. Both ideas were needed here, and few students were successful in gaining this mark.

Question 8

The literary text gap fill discriminated well, and an impressive 17.5% of students achieved full marks. Both the nature of the text and the question style were challenging, but the best students coped well with over 50% achieving seven or more marks. The best students were able to use both grammatical knowledge and their knowledge of vocabulary to ascertain the correct lexical item for each box.

Question 9

The synonym question seemed accessible for students. Surprisingly, *gremio* for *sindicato* was the best answered question, with many struggling to find synonyms for *enfrentamientos* and *lesionados.* Once again, examiners were surprised by the number of students leaving blanks. Most students coped well with the matching sentence exercise, with over 70% getting each part correct. Question 9.10 was the most challenging.

Question 10

The translation discriminated exceptionally well and seemed to be one of the most challenging aspects of the paper. The most common errors included:
- forgetting the *a* in *han comenzado a*…
- *se sienten* was not always known
- harmful was incorrectly translated

- *no hacen nada*: the no was often missed
- *empeorar* was not well known
- students struggled with *estos/ estas* and often put *estes*
- *comportarse* was not known or conjugated well and there were a lot of plural verb forms
- many used the plural verb form with *mucha gente*
- the infinitive was often used instead of *compartiendo*
- *luchar por* was often rendered as *luchar para*
- few students seemed to spot the simple subjunctive using *querer que*.

Students should be encouraged not to think just of the vocabulary needed, but also of the grammatical concept that each sentence is testing.

Question 11

Students coped better, understandably, with the translation into English, although at times poor English meant that the translation did not make sense. Students should be encouraged to reread their translations and also to pay careful attention to verb endings so they can correctly identify tenses. Few students correctly translated *antiguo* as *former.* Students need to read the sentence carefully as the *de* in *muchos de los problemas* was frequently missed out. *Rueda de prensa* was not commonly known, and numbers seemed to catch many students out, particularly thirteen and sixty, which is surprising at this level.

It must be remembered that the translations to and from Spanish in Questions 10 and 11 carry 20 out of the 100 available marks for the paper ,and as such regular classroom practice can only serve to improve outcomes on these sections.

Summary questions: Advice to students

Students should first read the task on the question paper carefully so they know what the item is about. They should listen to or read the stimulus material in its entirety, identifying which sections of the stimulus material correspond to each of the three bullet points. They should then listen to or read the stimulus material a second time, pausing as necessary to make notes on each bullet point. Students should look at the number of marks available for each bullet point and ensure they identify sufficient pieces of information.

Once they have noted the key information, students should look again at the wording of the bullet points and write their answer on the question paper in such a way as to answer the bullet points directly. This will normally require some manipulation of linguistic structures, such as changing from direct to indirect speech or changing from a subordinate clause to a main clause. However, it is not necessary to find synonyms for individual words or phrases.

Students should count their words and ensure that they stay within the word limit. Anything they write after the first natural break between 90 and 100 words will not be marked. Students should therefore avoid writing an introductory sentence or paragraph, as this would be likely to use up words without scoring marks. They should omit points of detail or examples unless these are specifically targeted by the bullet points.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website.