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AS

**SPANISH**

Paper 2 Writing

Report on the Examination

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## General comments

In the first year of the new AS specification examiners were extremely pleased with the level of student performance and teachers should be commended for the excellent way in which students had been prepared. This was particularly impressive given that students had little or no examination experience of translations or essays based on texts. Examiners are sure that, with further sustained practice, performance will improve further especially with regards to translations.

### Section A Question 1: Translation into Spanish

All of the sentences for translation allowed students to show their ability at different levels. The supporting passage was intended to help students, but some students seemed to think every piece of vocabulary could be found in this text, and in these cases the passage actually hindered students. It may well be useful to remind students that there will only be a few words for them to manipulate and then use in the translations. Overall, grammar was the area most students need further work on to ensure more accurate outcomes with their translations.

**1.1** This question proved the trickiest in terms of achieving the full three marks. Many students struggled with the word *bridge* and few students were able to remember the preposition after *asistir*. Many students chose the false friend *librería* to translate the word library.

**1.2** Many students failed to use the infinitive for *compartir*, often choosing to use the gerund despite knowing the verb. It was pleasing to see students successfully conjugating the irregular form of the verb *decir* in the preterite (*dijo*). This was in stark contrast to 01.1 where many students struggled to conjugate a regular *-ir* verb.

**1.3** This question was the most accessible for all students with the highest number achieving full marks. Students should be reminded about the importance of taking care of smaller words such as *mucho*, *estas* etc. It is a pity that students lose simple marks by choosing the incorrect grammatical formation. Students should be reminded to check their work thoroughly so that basic errors are eradicated.

**1.4** This question proved difficult for a lot of students, who struggled to identify the subjunctive clause or were overzealous in trying to make the second sentence a subjunctive. Some students struggled with radical changing verbs and only the best students seemed to realise the need to keep *lives* in the singular in Spanish.

**1.5** Students coped well with this translation. However, some struggled with the verb *encantar*. These impersonal verb constructions need to be practised regularly as they often provide challenges even for the best linguists.

### Section B Books and Section C Films

Once again examiners were extremely pleased by student responses in the essays. Many essays showed a cogent and thorough knowledge of the text alongside a capacity to use language spontaneously to answer the question directly. Some students needlessly spent the first paragraph informing the examiner about who the author or director of the text or film was; the story and its successes. Students need to ensure that their introductions are concise and to the point and that

every point made is relevant to the chosen title. Films were overwhelmingly more popular than texts, with almost 90% of the total entry answering on films. It was interesting to see a strong correlation between excellent performance on the translations and excellent performance on the essays. Although the use of the bullet points is not mandatory they helped students focus their essays and provided a good framework to follow.

The most popular literature text was *La casa de Bernarda Alba*, which made up almost half of all entries on literature. As with other well-answered literature questions, the best responses showed a critical response to the title. Students used examples to justify and explain their ideas. Few seemed to write a 'pre-learned' essay and this was pleasing. Unfortunately, at times examiners were disappointed by students who had some good ideas but whose grammar failed them and so were prevented from expressing themselves clearly. It is useful to point out that on this paper as a whole there are a substantial number of marks for language so students need to think carefully about verb conjugations, adjectival agreements and, in particular, pronouns.

The above recommendations are equally as valid for those students who chose to study a film. The most popular film, with almost 40% of the entry, was *El laberinto del fauno*, with most students choosing to compare Ofelia and Vidal. The best essays showed a clear contrast and critical exploration of the two characters. Weaker students chose to respond with a mere character exploration with little attempt to compare. Students need to read the question carefully and not write an essay they have prepared as they have seen a key theme or character in the title. It was really interesting to see original and insightful answers with some students successfully arguing that Vidal and Ofelia were actually very similar in some ways.

*Volver* was the second most popular film amongst students with almost 30% of the entry. Most students chose the essay on death and included the traditions of La Mancha and the deaths that occur in the film. It was interesting that some omitted the killing of Paco and concentrated on the superstitions and ghost element. Very few discussed the death of Paco, the implications of hiding the body and covering up the perpetrator of the killing, and the techniques used prior to his death. Answers to the other question, about the mother/ daughter relationship, were often very superficial and descriptive.

With those students who studied *Ocho apellidos vascos*, there were some good essays about whether the love theme was realistic, with good examples from the film. There were some excellent essays about Amaia and her father. However, many just told the story and this should be avoided at all costs.

With regard to *María, llena eres de gracia* most students chose the essay on whether it was a good decision to leave Colombia. Surprisingly, most students said that it was, ignoring the dangers and risks of the drug trafficking and focusing on the poor quality of life in Colombia.

Overall, this was an excellent first series showing great promise for further study and analysis in future years and for the A Level.

### **Use of statistics**

Statistics used in this report may be taken from incomplete processing data. However, this data still gives a true account on how students have performed for each question.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.