
AS

SPANISH

Paper 1 Listening, Reading and Writing
Report on the Examination

7691
June 2018

Version: 1.0

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General Comments

In the second year of the new AS specification, the number of students sitting the AS Level was smaller. However, the paper differentiated well to allow all students, regardless of their ability, to perform to their best. Teachers should be commended for the excellent way in which students had been prepared. They seemed well equipped to answer the varying question types. The overarching area for improvement across the paper would be grammatical accuracy, which at times hindered performance. This was especially notable in the summaries.

Section A

Question 1

The question provided an excellent easing in to the exam with nearly half of students achieving full marks. Students are obviously becoming more adept at listening carefully, avoiding distractors and inferring meaning. This question type is often difficult to replicate in class and as such teachers are to be commended in their preparation for this exercise.

Question 2

This question provided more of a challenge for students. It must be remembered that the mark can be awarded with misspellings as long as the misspelling does not create ambiguity for the examiner when marking. This was exemplified clearly in Question 2.5, where many students wrote *revelarse* instead of *rebelarse*. The teaching of phonics can be crucial here in ensuring accurate renderings of the Spanish students hear on the recording. As such, this sub-question provided the greatest level of challenge, with only 8% of students achieving the full two marks. Question 2.6 was the most accessible question with almost 90% of students achieving the full two marks. Question 2.1 was well answered when students understood the question. Both elements were needed for the mark – *jóvenes* and *gallegos*. The variety of spellings of *gallegos* seen by examiners highlights the needs for greater practice with transcribing. *Entre los jóvenes* was an important element of the answer to 2.2, and many students lost marks as a result. In the same question, *verdiendo* was seen quite frequently rather than *perdiendo*. In Question 2.3, *sencilla* caused more problems than anticipated given that it is a word well known at GCSE. Some students struggled with the idea of *poco materialista*, offering *un poco* as an alternative. Care must be taken when transcribing, and *superspectiva* written as one word was not credited. Question 2.4 was answered well, with almost 80% of students achieving full marks. *Divorcio* instead of *divorciados* was the most common error. *Corrupción* was also inaccurately spelt by a significant number of students, though this did not generally affect the mark awarded.

Question 3

Students seemed to cope well with this question, with 3.1 and 3.7 being the most challenging parts. Around 90% of students answered the other parts correctly. Students should be reminded to ensure that they use the correct letters and write them clearly to ensure the mark can be awarded.

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 summaries were generally better tackled than last year with more students scoring at the higher end of the mark range. The majority of responses were within the word limit, although it is recommended that students count the number of words as too frequently they lost valid content points due to the length of their summaries. 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 too verbose, sometimes using up to a third of the word count on the first bullet point, which was only worth one mark. In these cases, students often lost content marks at the end of their summary. With regards to the bullet points, the first was quite straightforward, though the use of pronouns sometimes caused issues. Students need to practise taking first person verbs and turning them into third person verbs; further practice with reflexive verbs would also be beneficial. Such was the case with bullet point 2, which required manipulation from the first to the third person singular. There were varying degrees of success with *recibió*. Many students found it difficult to render accurately the idea that Mario now feels more confident, with lots of *en su mismo* for *en sí mismo*. Students found it hard to manipulate *me siento* and attempts to change this verb often resulted in ambiguity, eg *se sienta*. Only the more able dealt well with bullet point 3. Again, there were some problems with verb manipulation and use of pronouns. Most conveyed the idea of being able to choose the name they prefer, but some missed the point of clothing which makes them feel comfortable. It was necessary to include the idea of the gender with which they identify rather than simply stating *pueden usar el baño*.

Section B

Question 5

The synonym question based on mobile phones was generally well done, with *adquieren* providing the greatest challenge. As a near-cognate, this surprised examiners. Question 5.1 was generally well done though some careless copying without the inclusion of the accent, which was essential, or with the inclusion of additional words from the surrounding language prevented students from achieving the mark. Accurate spelling is essential in this type of question, especially if misspelling changes the meaning as it did here. In Question 5.4 most students found the synonym, but centres should note that the reflexive pronoun was required here. With Question 5.7, some students seemed unfamiliar with the vocabulary. *Problemas* and *ciegas* were frequently seen. A number of students who selected the correct lexical item missed off the accent.

Question 6

The multiple choice question was done well by students. Question 6.7 was the most challenging part, but an average of 80% of students were able to get each question right.

Question 7

The literary text gap fill discriminated well and an impressive 20% of students achieved full marks. Both the nature of the text and the question style was suitably challenging, but the best students coped well, with over 70% achieving at least half marks. The best students used both grammatical knowledge and their knowledge of vocabulary to ascertain the correct lexical item for the box.

Question 8

Students tended to find this summary question more accessible, perhaps because it was a written source, and there were a number of examples of full marks. Students seemed to find it easier to

write within the word limit here, though the comment made for Question 4 with regards to the word allocation for the first bullet point is relevant here too. A lot of students tried to put everything into their own words; this needs to be done judiciously, however, since lexical items which are not synonyms can change the meaning. Sometimes students strayed too far away from the original meaning of the text in their ambitious attempt to render it in their own words. The content mark could not be awarded in these cases. It is worth pointing out that the language mark is awarded for manipulation of language rather than the use of synonyms and it is perfectly acceptable to use vocabulary from the text. In bullet point 1, most students understood the main ideas but both detail and precision were essential. Not all students included the important detail, the first Saturday after 15 August. A good number of students missed out the element of *el Día de la Virgen de Begoña* or failed to make it clear that this is celebrated on the same Saturday. Most students were successful with the third element regarding the rocket. In bullet point 2 most students scored some, if not all, points. Students are advised not to waste time, and more importantly words, by giving three elements when only two are required. Some students copied directly from the text and used the second person plural, which did not then answer the bullet point. In bullet point 3 there were occasional examples where the verbs were not manipulated. To gain both marks here, it was necessary to explain that *Marijaia* was taken to the Plaza Mayor and then burned. Issues surrounding pronouns caused some ambiguities.

Question 9

There were a lot of good responses to this question. It is important for students not to copy out everything and hope that the answer is in there somewhere as this is penalised as untargeted lifting. Question 9.1 was well understood, but there were often inconsistencies in execution. A number of students missed the crucial idea of *vuelos regulares*. There was also some careless copying, eg *vuelos* for *vuelos*. It was important to mention the length of the bus journey to gain the mark, but there were examples of indiscriminate lifting and including too much information, which were also penalised. In Question 9.2 there were misunderstandings of *dibujadas*, which was often treated as a noun. Students needed to read the question carefully and note the inclusion of *exactamente*. This proved the most challenging of all the comprehension questions, with only 30% of students achieving the mark. Answers such as *inmensas obras* were too vague. Questions 9.3 and Question 9.4 were well answered. In Question 9.5, while the vast majority of students identified the correct elements in the original text, there were varying degrees of accurate rendering. The second part proved trickier, with quite a few students starting their responses with ‘*Se sabe para qué...*’ which clearly gives the opposite meaning. In 9.6 there were a number of answers lacking precision, eg a number of instances of *agricultura* without *sistema*. In 9.7, which was answered well, problems arose when students chose to put the answers into their own words. *Ir* and *visitar* Machu Picchu did not transmit the same idea as *quedarse*.

Question 10

The translation exercise discriminated exceptionally well and seemed to be the most challenging aspect of the paper. Further practice of this in class will be essential for future improvement. Only 40% of students were able to access five or more marks so this really should be a focus for teachers. Some frequent errors included a number of students putting in for *en*, which did not work in this context. Students need to be aware of the need for good English and to ensure their rendering makes sense in English. Numbers proved surprisingly tricky for some. *Cuarenta* was sometimes translated as fourteen, and teachers should ensure students are confident with numbers. The structure with *hace* was often mishandled. *Intentando* was often mistranslated as ‘intending’ and could not be rewarded. *Sus*, *egoísta* and *los demás* caused problems for most students, and few students secured the mark here. Students should be reminded of the need to keep as close to the original text as possible, as straying can often lead to the loss of marks.

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 70 and 80 words (AS) or 90 and 100 words (A-level) 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.

The two marks available for the summary tasks - Content and Quality of Language - are awarded independently. For Content students will receive one mark for conveying each of the seven required pieces of information unambiguously. For Quality of Language students will receive a global mark out of five for the successful manipulation of the language. Anything that is lifted directly from the stimulus material cannot earn credit for Quality of Language. While students should try to use as wide a variety of structures as suits the task, they should also bear in mind the need to maintain accuracy.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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