



GCSE

SPANISH

8698/RF Paper 2 Reading Foundation Tier
Report on the Examination

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General comments

Changes were made to the 2023 papers to reflect the removal of the regulatory requirement to test vocabulary outside of the published vocabulary list.



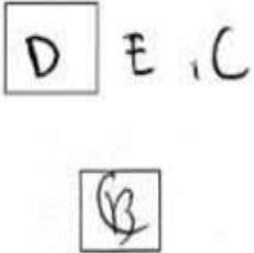
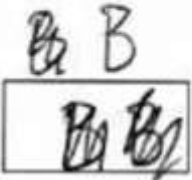



The mean mark for this exam paper was very comparable to the mean mark in 2019 which was really pleasing. Teachers had entered their students for the correct tier. All but the very weakest of students answered all of the non-verbal questions which was pleasing. It is always a good idea not to leave questions unanswered, especially if the answer is a letter.

The questions eliciting answers in English and Spanish continue to be the most challenging for students and differentiate well.

Overall, handwriting was poor and illegible at times. Where errors in spelling led to a failure to communicate the required information without ambiguity marks were not awarded. This applies whether the answer is in English or in Spanish. In Section B where spelling errors were minor, provided it was a recognisable attempt at a spelling in Spanish and created no ambiguity, the students were credited with a mark. Examples of these are given in the report on each individual question.

Students are advised to write letters clearly when answering questions requiring non-verbal responses. Students lost marks when their letters were ambiguous and when they changed their answers but did not cross out the letters that they did not want examiners to mark.

Here are some examples of good and bad practice which students might find helpful.

Good practice	Good practice	Bad practice
		
		
		
		

Question 1

As intended, this question was an accessible start to the exam paper for most students. The vocabulary relating to Theme 1, topic 4 (Customs and festivals in target language countries/communities) was very well known.

Question 2

The challenge to students increased with question 2 because the text was longer and required more careful reading. The question style of T/F/NM is also a little more challenging. That said, over half of the student cohort managed to link *lo odia* to *lava coches* to get the correct answer to part 1, showing good understanding of opinions, grammar and vocabulary. Part 3 was straightforward, possibly because of the number of near-cognates in the sentence that the students needed to understand, but they also needed to understand the word *cantante* which was well known. The NM parts of the question style tend to be the most challenging and this was indeed the case in part 4. Perhaps students mistook *el año pasado* for 'a year ago' because many students wrote T for this part of the question.

Question 3

In part 1 most students gave B as the answer. Perhaps they were distracted by the glossing and did not understand the preposition *de/* which invalidated B as a correct answer.

In part 2 all three ideas in the option boxes were referred to in the text and students had to understand the difference between *más* and *menos* as well as the relevant vocabulary to get the correct answer. Students did this well.

In part 3 students needed to identify the **best** thing from the three options and many were able to do so showing good understanding of *lo mejor*.

Overall, the vocabulary in Theme 2, topic 1 (Home, town, neighbourhood and region) was well known.

Question 4

Students are familiar with this question style because it has been used for several years.

Questions where students have to write in English or in Spanish are the ones that differentiate well and, as expected, this was the case here. What was surprising, however, was the level of difficulty that students had this year with the language and grammar that was tested in these three mini texts.

Students should use the example as a guide to how much information to include in their answers.

In part one many students did not give enough detail in their answers so responses such as 'July' were not given a mark because there was a detail missing. Many students either did not understand *al principio de* or did not include it in their answer and consequently lost a mark even though the example in part 2 showed that 'At the end of January' had more details than just the month. This was also the case in Manolo's section where many students just wrote 'Christmas' without the additional detail of a correct translation of *después de*.

In the sections asking what Sara and Manolo were going to do in Ecuador, the grammatical structure was too demanding for almost all of the student cohort. Some understood the verb *pintar* but were not able to link the pronoun back to *un comedor*.

In Manolo's case, slightly more students understood the verb *terminar* and a very limited number managed to link the pronoun back to *el parque infantil* but unfortunately some only mentioned a park without making it a children's park. This led to ambiguity and according to the marking principles for reading, if answers lead to ambiguity, they are not awarded a mark. (General principle 1 (a))

Question 5

This is the first of two literary texts in the exam paper testing a range of vocabulary over three themes and was well done. Students are not put off by the literature texts and are successful in this question style. Common verbs such as *leer*, *pensar* and *escribir* were well known as were jobs and

simple opinions. It was pleasing to see that many students understood *tan bajo* with reference to Fernando's salary.

Question 6

This set of questions was aimed at students working at the highest level on Foundation tier and yet a high percentage of the cohort were successful, especially in parts 2, 3 and 4. In part 1 most students gave A as an answer. Not many were able to understand the preterite *nací* and link it back to *la costa*. The distractor of 'living with his children' in A was too tempting for many students. This was quite a complicated text and students performed well. The vocabulary in Theme 2 under the topic area Home, town, neighbourhood and region was well known. In part 4 students needed to work out the difference between present, past and future activities and many were successful in doing so.

Question 7

Students should use the example answer as a guide to how much information to include in their answer. Students should also remember to answer in English and most do but occasionally students answer in Spanish and these are not given a mark, even if they are correct in Spanish. The vocabulary proved to be very challenging for most students in all parts of this question. *Cuidar la piel*, *perder peso* and *proteger el corazón* were not well known at all. In part 1 students wrote about vitamin C improving your concentration, in part 2 students wrote about vegetables being low in calories and in part 3 students understood the verb *proteger* but not *el corazón* which led to a range of possible but incorrect guesses.

Minor spelling mistakes such as 'loose' for 'lose', 'wait' for 'weight' and 'hart' for 'heart' were given a mark as there was no ambiguity in what was meant.

Students risk losing marks in questions where they must write in English or in Spanish when they include additional or alternative information. According to the General Principles of Marking 'any additional or alternative information which makes an answer ambiguous cannot be given a mark.' See general principle 1 (b). The General Principles of Marking appear on the first page of the mark scheme.

Students should avoid hedging their bets by using a solidus in their answer. For example, in 7.3 answers such as 'to protect the heart/liver' did not gain the mark. This practice should be avoided at all times.

Students should also avoid copying out whole chunks of the text in the hope that what they copy contains the correct answer.

Question 8

Students are getting better at answering questions testing opinions. However, this year in part 2 of this question more students gave P as their answer than the correct answer which was N. They found the vocabulary *poco creativa*, *me cuesta* and *estoy harta de* very challenging.

There was a similar result in part 4 where P+N was a more popular answer than the correct answer which was P. Students saw the negative phrasing of *no toleran el mal comportamiento* and were unable to work out that this was actually a positive opinion of the teachers on Rafael's part. Small words can make a big difference to meaning and are important to learn.

Question 9

Students ended Section A of the exam on a very accessible question. Theme 1 topic 3 (Free-time activities) was well known.

Question 10

Students started Section B with a short letter based on Theme 1, topic 2, Me, my family and friends. Students did well on this question, most scoring at least 1 out of 3 marks and many scoring full marks. This topic vocabulary along with verbs showing relationships is well known.

Question 11

This was a question designed to test Theme 3, topic 4, Education post 16. For some reason, some students answered with a % instead of a letter, but overall students found this text and question style very accessible, especially in parts 1 and 2. In part 3 more students wrote F as their answer, possibly because the profession *profesor* came almost straight after the ages in line 5 of the text.

Question 12

In this question students had to write in Spanish. This is a challenge for students who are working at the lower grades and in setting this question type we are aware of the difficulties that students face and aim to make the question as accessible as possible. However, this year the number of students getting correct answers was lower than in previous years. This year the text focussed on vocabulary from Theme 1 topic 4, Customs and festivals. That said, the question differentiated very well. As a general rule, when answering questions in Spanish, students should avoid copying out chunks of text in the hope that what they write contains the correct answer.

For example, in part 2 the answer was *vino*. Many students copied out the sentence *vino al castillo a caballo* which when translated into English means 'he came to the castle on horseback' and so it got zero marks. By copying out more than the one word needed for the answer, students failed to gain the marks.

Students should use the example answer as a guide to how much detail to include in their answers.

This year students needed only one word to answer correctly in all four parts of the question.

In part 1 many students were trying to write 'at night' and wrote *a noche*. When they wrote *anoche* this came to mean 'last night' so as the meaning was different it could not be awarded the mark.

In part 2 as previously mentioned many students lost a mark because they copied out too much information from the text (*vino al castillo a caballo*).

In part 3 a range of spellings for *mejoraron* were accepted, even if the misspellings changed the tense. Eg *mejoran* was accepted. However, adjectives were not accepted. Eg *mejor* was rejected.

In part 4 many students copied out the sentence *es emocionante ver a estos animales espléndidos* and this time they were given a mark because the additional information did not make the answer ambiguous. The fact that the animals were splendid did not distract from the key idea of the atmosphere being exciting.

Question 13

This was the second of the literature-based texts. This one was aimed at a higher grade than question 5 and differentiated well. Not understanding short phrases such as *más que otros* in part 1 meant that only the highest-attaining students got part 1 correct. *No puede parar* and *no ha conseguido decidir* were problematical for many in part 2. Very few answered part 3 correctly. Part 4 was the most accessible part of the question. This question style requires students to scan and check the text several times over and for many this skill is too demanding, but for those working at the highest grades at Foundation tier it is doable and those students are frequently successful.

Question 14

The last question before the translation gave students at all grades an opportunity to finish feeling confident. Students knew this vocabulary well, especially in parts 2 and 3 although in part 1 the word *postre* was not well known.

Question 15

In the translation exercise students need to show precise understanding of grammatical structures and vocabulary. The average mark was better than in 2022 but not quite as good as in 2019. This continues to be a challenging exercise for students but credit must be given to those students who do attempt the question. The table below shows the strengths and weaknesses of the 2023 cohort.

<i>Me encanta la informática.</i>	This section was well done by the majority of students. Some weaker students wrote about 'information' instead of IT or one of its many equivalents.
<i>Es una asignatura útil,</i>	<i>Asignatura</i> was not well known. Many wrote about 'assignments'.
<i>aunque puede ser bastante difícil.</i>	The link word <i>aunque</i> was often translated as 'but'. <i>Puede ser</i> was demanding for a lot of students who wrote 'it is' instead of 'it can be'. Some missed out the word <i>bastante</i> .
<i>La semana pasada tuvimos</i>	Understanding the preterite in the 1st p,pl differentiated well.
<i>un examen de matemáticas,</i>	Almost everyone got a mark here.
<i>pero no saqué buenas notas.</i>	As predicted, this section differentiated well because many students wrote about 'not having good notes'.
<i>Mi hermano mayor va a</i>	'Brother' became 'sister' and even sometimes the 'mayor'. The immediate future was well known by many students.
<i>ayudarme a repasar</i>	The verb <i>repasar</i> was not well known. It was often translated as 'to pass'.
<i>porque nos llevamos bien.</i>	It was a pity that a lot of students wrote about 'not getting on well', because they read <i>nos</i> as 'no'. Many references to 'wearing nice clothes' through recognising the verb <i>llevar</i> rather than the expression <i>llevarse bien/mal con alguien</i> .

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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