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# GCSE

# SPANISH

8698/RH Paper 2 Reading Higher Tier  
Report on the Examination

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**General comments**




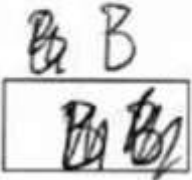



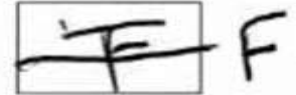
Changes were made to the 2023 papers to reflect the removal of the regulatory requirement to test vocabulary outside of the published vocabulary list.

The mean mark for this exam paper was lower than the mean mark in 2019. As at Foundation 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**

This question was an overlap question in that it appeared at Foundation tier as well as Higher tier. It was an accessible start to the exam paper for most students and, as such, a high percentage of the cohort were successful especially in parts 2,3 and 4. *Hacer falta* and the verb *augmentar* were

well known. Students were able to differentiate between three tenses in part 4 which was really pleasing.

### Question 2

Theme 2, topic 3, sub-topic 'The environment', can be daunting for some students yet this question was well done showing very good understanding of vocabulary in this part of the specification. Students paid careful attention to the emboldened word 'not' in parts 1 and 2 and were able to identify the correct answers in both parts. In part 3 students needed to understand *no tanto* and almost all the cohort were able to do this which was very impressive.

### Question 3

Higher tier vocabulary on Theme 2, topic 4, 'Travel and Tourism' was also well known. Students showed good understanding of high register adjectives and verbs used to express opinions and were very successful in this question especially in parts 1 and 4. In part 3 it is possible that some students read *nos apetece* as *no apetece* (this happened at Foundation in the translation). In the same section *No temenos ninguna queja* was understood as something negative and led students to think that Rosa and Carmen had a negative opinion of the campsite.

### Question 4

This was aimed at students working at the top grades in GCSE Spanish. It was an extended text but the context was a well-known one: Theme 1, topic 3, sub-topic 'Music'. As in Foundation tier, 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. Students had to understand fine details and give precise answers. High-attaining students were able to identify Rozalén's most recent award in part 1 by understanding *hace poco*, whereas those who were working at lower grades answered with the distractor. It is very pleasing that students were able to identify and then discount the distractor at this level.

In part 2 only the strongest students could understand the verb *fracasar* and again, the lower-attaining students were unable to discount the many distractors in the second paragraph. In part 3, having identified the correct Spanish *niños maltratados*, a lot of students wrote about 'malnourished' children which failed to gain them a mark.

In part 4 students translated the *intérprete de lengua de signos* in a huge range of English expressions, most of which were accepted if they included the key idea that someone other than Rosalén was doing the signing.

Overall, the question differentiated well.

### Question 5

This question tested vocabulary and structures in Theme 1, topic 2, sub-topics 'Social media' and 'Mobile technology'. Students did very well indeed in this question showing good knowledge of this theme and topic.

### Question 6

Students are very familiar with this question style. This year students were required to give fewer details than in previous years in all parts of the question, yet their answers had to be very precise

and had to include understanding of the Spanish in the questions in the entry form as well as the Spanish in Marcos's circled answers.

In part 1 the verb *medir* was not well known at all.

In part 2 unfortunately, many students wrote about running marathons more than once rather than a half marathon, so a lot of students did not score a mark here. In part 3 students had to know the verb *recoger* and many did not.

In part 4 students did not know *vecino*. Those who did know it, often did not achieve the mark because they said that Marcos would call his neighbour. Students needed to work out that someone else would call his neighbour and many were unable to do so.

Students working at the top grades were able to deal with the demands of this question which continues to differentiate well. There were some precise answers which were justly rewarded.

### Question 7

This was the first of two literature-based questions. This question was targeting students hoping to achieve the higher grades. The last paragraph of the text contained some particularly challenging grammatical structures. Students found parts 1 and 2 very accessible. Over half of the cohort got part 3 correct. The most challenging part was part 4.

### Question 8

This question tested students' ability to draw conclusions in a familiar context - Theme 2, topic 4, 'Travel and tourism'. Students did very well on this question. Of the vocabulary that was tested, *lo raro* was the most challenging, but *comprensible*, *la gran sorpresa* and *decepcionante* were well known.

### Question 9

This was an overlap question so the message to students is the same as at Foundation tier.

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 was not as challenging for students at Higher tier but similar incorrect answers appeared, especially in part 1 where 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 9.3 answers such as 'to protect the heart/liver' did not gain the mark. This practice should be avoided at all times.

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

## Section B

### Question 10

Students started Section B with a selection type question based on Theme 2, topic 3, sub-topic 'Poverty/homelessness'. Despite the amount of Spanish that the students had to read in the text and in the multiple-choice options, it was pleasing to see that this topic area was well known. Most students scored at least 1 mark in both parts of the question.

### Question 11

This was the second of the literature-based texts and was an overlap question targeting students working at the lower grades at Higher tier. As expected, students taking the Higher tier exam performed better than students at Foundation tier. Students are not daunted by the fact that the text is an adapted literary text.

### Question 12

This was a challenging question where students had to draw conclusions. It differentiated well in part 1. In part 3 the adjectives *sencillo*, *relajante* and *divertido* were well known and students could make the link to *fácil y entretenida* in option A. Some were distracted by *restaurantes* in option D but most answered correctly with option A.

### Question 13

Around half of the cohort were successful in all parts of this question which turned out to be a lot more accessible than originally intended, showing good understanding of a range of challenging verbs. Theme 3, topic 2, 'Life at school/college' was well known.

### Question 14

This was an overlap question. 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 numbers 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' which may have increased the challenge this year for some students.

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 14.2 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 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 15

In the translation exercise students need to show precise understanding of grammatical structures and vocabulary. The average mark was lower than in 2022 and lower than in 2019. This continues to be a challenging exercise for students but credit must be given to those students who do well. The table below shows the strengths and weaknesses of the 2023 cohort.

<i>Me gusta mi pueblo ya que hay mucho que hacer</i>	The opening line was well done by most students and for some this was the only section that they scored a mark in.
<i>y mis amigos viven cerca.</i>	Having understood ‘my friends live nearby’, unfortunately many lost a mark by not translating <i>y</i> .
<i>Sin embargo, cuando termine mis estudios,</i>	Understanding the subjunctive was not a challenge for the majority of students, but many students did not translate <i>sin embargo</i> correctly. ‘But’ and ‘although’ were more common than ‘however’.
<i>me encantaría trabajar en el extranjero,</i>	<i>me encantaría</i> was well known but the verb <i>trabajar</i> was often translated as ‘to travel’.
<i>donde el sueldo es muchísimo mejor.</i>	This section differentiated very well. Only the most able could convey the idea of <i>ísimo</i> . Most wrote about ‘a very good salary’ rather than ‘a very much better salary’.
<i>Lo gastaré en visitar países nuevos.</i>	Students had to show understanding of the future tense here. Many continued in the conditional and lost a mark.
<i>Hace años, mi padre siempre</i>	<i>Hace años</i> was translated as ‘last year’. <i>Padre</i> was translated as ‘parents’.
<i>nos llevaba a sitios diferentes.</i>	The imperfect tense was correctly translated by few.
<i>¡Qué bien lo pasábamos!</i>	This was a very challenging section for all but the most able students and differentiated very well. Many students gave a simple statement of fact (we had a good time) rather than an exclamation type phrase and had difficulties finding the appropriate words in English to express themselves correctly.

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

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