



---

# GCSE

# SPANISH

8698/SH Speaking  
Report on the Examination

---

8698/SH  
June 2023

---

Version: 1.0

---

---

Further copies of this Report are available from [aqa.org.uk](http://aqa.org.uk)

Copyright © 2023 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.  
AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

## General comments

The overall performance in the examination was better than last year, largely because of a general improved performance in the Photo card and in the General conversation. As with last year, students were very well prepared for the Role play and for the Photo card and, with less disruption this year, the increased opportunities to practise for the General conversation seems to have had a positive impact. Teachers are to be congratulated for the preparation of their students for the examination.

There was a wide range of quality in the tests of different students, but the vast majority were entered at the appropriate tier.

Conduct of the tests by teachers was very good on the whole, but there were still instances where teachers did not adhere to the guidelines and this sometimes resulted in a loss of marks for a student. This happened mainly in the General conversation, when the timing of one of the themes was shorter than the minimum two and a half minutes. In the Role play, teachers must keep to the script in their role. When this did not happen, the response of the student for that task had to be discounted. In the Photo card, where a paraphrase of the question is allowed, sometimes the teachers changed the question in such a way that it was not a true paraphrase and, again, the student's response was discounted.

Teachers are encouraged not to use English during the course of the test. The mark scheme says: 'If, in any part of the test, the teacher either asks a question or gives a prompt in English, you must ignore the student's reply'. In the Role play, it is acceptable for the teacher to prompt the question task by saying to the student: *¿Tienes una pregunta para mí?* or something similar in Spanish. However, if the teacher asks in English 'Have you got a question?', whatever the student says will score zero, as clearly stated in the mark scheme. This happened from time to time, but less frequently than last year.

Examiners had to use a Speaking Scoresheet in order to arrive at fair and consistent marks for all students. A copy of this can be found at the end of the mark scheme.

## Teacher-examiner Tester Performance records (TTPRs)

The information provided on the TTPR is intended to provide teacher-examiners with feedback on the conduct of the speaking tests to inform the conduct of future tests. It is not possible to provide more detailed feedback than the information on the TTPR form. The feedback is provided on the basis of need only and will not be necessary for every school/college.

A breakdown of marks for each section of the speaking test for each student in your centre is available free of charge in ERA (Enhanced Results Analysis). ERA is accessed via Centre Services.

## Role plays

Teachers should keep to the script of the Role play because failure to do so will result in a student's response to a particular task being discounted. It is not acceptable to repeat part of a prompt. For example, in Role play 10, the unexpected question was *¿Cuándo quiere ir?* If a student did not understand the question, it was fine for the teacher to repeat the full question.

However, it was not acceptable for the teacher simply to repeat the key question word *¿Cuándo?* Had this type of change to the prompt been accepted, it would have provided an unfair advantage to those students because it made the task easier. So, as always, teachers are reminded that they must keep to their script.

If there are two parts to a question in the teacher's script, it is advisable to ask the first question, wait for the answer, and then ask the second question. For example, the unpredictable task in Role play 18 was: *¿Cuándo quiere empezar a trabajar? ... ¿Cuántas horas a la semana quiere trabajar?* Some teachers asked both parts of such a task at the same time and, almost invariably, students requested a repetition.

If students prepared sufficiently well in the 12-minute preparation period, they should have had notes which they could read out once they moved on to the next task. They should be encouraged to use these notes during the test. Sometimes it seemed that they were not doing that or that they had not made notes.

The published mark scheme has more detail as to the kind of responses that were worthy of two, one or zero marks per task.

The mark for Knowledge and use of language usually corresponded with the mark for Communication. For example, 6 for Communication would usually result in a mark of 3 for Knowledge and use of language.

Below are some detailed comments on each of the Role plays:

## **Role play 10**

### **Task a**

The question-asking task within a Role play is usually the one that students find most difficult. This one proved more difficult than most. Students were often able to get one mark, but there was some lack of clarity which prevented them from getting two.

### **Task b**

Very well done.

### **Task c**

Although a verb was not needed in this unprepared task in order for students to score two marks, at least one of the questions was often not understood.

### **Task d**

On the whole this was done well, but there were some students who used the present tense.

### **Task e**

Weather expressions with *hacer* were often not produced accurately. However, usually they were accurate enough to communicate the message, even though there may have been an impact on the mark for knowledge and use of language.

### **Role play 11**

#### Task a

This was well done on the whole, although some students were only able to convey one detail.

#### Task b

Not many managed to score two marks here. They seemed to find this difficult conceptually rather than linguistically. Many tried to be too complex in the language they tried to produce and the message broke down. Others seemed not to understand the task.

#### Task c

This was done well, provided tense usage was good.

#### Task d

This was well done.

#### Task e

This was done well, the most common question being *¿Tienes (muchos) amigos en redes sociales/Snapchat, etc?*

### **Role play 12**

#### Task a

Very well done.

#### Task b

This was done well. A correct answer, which was quite common, was *No se puede usar el móvil.*

#### Task c

Students did well on the whole, although at times it appeared that *instalaciones* was not understood.

#### Task d

This was done well. Students handle the future time frame tasks well, through the use of *me gustaría* or the immediate future.

#### Task e

This was done well, where students tried to keep things simple by asking things like *¿Te gustan los deberes en España?* or *¿Tienes (muchos) deberes en España?* Some lost one mark by not mentioning *España*.

### **Role play 13**

#### Task a

This was done well, usually by saying something like *No me gusta porque es malsano.*

#### Task b

In this unprepared task, students sometimes found it hard to produce a reason. However, generally this was quite successful. *Hay muchas verduras/patatas fritas* was the most common type of reason given.

Task c

As with most other past tense tasks, this was done well where tense usage was good. If it was not good, students tended to get one mark.

Task d

Very well done.

Task e

Very well done.

### **Role play 14**

Task a

Occasionally this may have been conceptually difficult for students, but most got two marks here.

Task b

A surprisingly high number of students did not understand *¿Para cuántas personas?* and some confused *beber* with *vivir*. However, this was generally done well.

Task c

This was done well. There was no need for students to mention *comida vegetariana* in their answer. However, when they did, pronunciation was often poor.

Task d

Many seemed not to understand the vocabulary item *postres*.

Task e

This was done well.

### **Role play 15**

Task a

This was done very well, especially when simple language was used. For example, *Me gusta porque es grande*.

Task b

As with similar tasks, the key to getting two marks was how understandably a past tense could be produced.

Task c

Occasionally, students misinterpreted *medio ambiente* as 'weather'. However, this was usually done well and students seemed to be very aware of the vocabulary for environmental issues.

Task d

Well done on the whole, but sometimes students seemed not to understand *instalaciones* and did not give an answer.

Task e

Generally this was done well, but some students lost one mark because they did not mention *México*.

**Role play 16**

Task a

Students coped well with this. Any appropriate reason was accepted provided it matched the opinion.

Task b

Very well done.

Task c

This was often misunderstood and the question related to food in Colombia, rather than lunch time.

Task d

Well done if tense usage was good.

Task e

This was done well, although some students clearly did not realise what *director(a)* meant because the reason they gave was not an appropriate one.

**Role play 17**

Task a

Very well done if tense usage was good.

Task b

At least one of the two questions was often not answered or answered incorrectly. Overall, however, this was done well, mainly because any number was accepted for the age.

Task c

This was done well.

Task d

Very well done when students kept the reason simple. Sometimes students tried to overcomplicate the reason and this could lead to ambiguity.

Task e

This was done very well.

**Role play 18**

Task a

Very well done.

Task b

As with all past time frame tasks, the success of this task hinged on whether students could produce a past tense successfully.

#### Task c

This was done well.

#### Task d

Many students found this unprepared task difficult because they did not understand the key question words *¿cuándo?* and *¿cuántas?*

#### Task e

Most students found asking a question about *horas flexibles* very difficult and many did not score a mark for this task. Most successful questions were along the lines of *¿Hay horas flexibles?*

### Photo cards

Most teachers had once again prepared their students very well for this part of the exam. They had clearly read Appendix 4 of the mark scheme, which deals with the marking of the Photo card, and passed this information on successfully to their students. Any teachers who are not fully aware of how the Photo card is marked are strongly recommended to read Appendix 4 of the mark scheme and to look at the examples that are given for the award of different marks. The marks achieved by students in this part of the test were generally very high.

Teachers are allowed to paraphrase the questions in this part of the exam, but the same meaning must be maintained, or the student's answer is not credited. For example, the third question on Photo card O was *Describe un día especial que pasaste recientemente con tu familia o con tus amigos*. If a teacher paraphrased by asking *Háblame de un día especial que pasaste recientemente con tu familia o con tus amigos*, this was fine because exactly the same meaning was maintained. However, *¿Qué actividades hiciste con tu familia o con tus amigos en el pasado?* was not allowed because it is not a paraphrase and the question is a much easier one for the student to understand. Extra words such as *en el futuro* or *actividades* cannot be added to the printed questions, nor can words be repeated within the question, for example in the fifth question on Photo card M: *¿Dónde te gustaría trabajar en el futuro ... dónde?*

Questions differentiated well, with a wide range in the quality of answers, but there were some that were done noticeably less well than others. These were the ones which students found most challenging:

#### Photo card J

*Describe tu programa de televisión favorito.*

Many students clearly did not want to say the name of a programme in English. It is fine for students to give English names of TV programmes, football teams, films, etc and they should be made aware of that.

#### Photo card K

*Háblame de un sitio que visitaste en el pasado.*



Maybe because this was an unprepared question, many students struggled to find a suitable answer.

#### **Photo card L**

*Para ti, ¿es importante tener tu propio dormitorio?*

This was done well on the whole, but a good number seemed to misinterpret the meaning of the question, presumably because they did not understand *propio*.

#### **Photo card M**

*¿Qué ambiciones tenías cuando eras pequeño/pequeña?*

Many students found this difficult, mainly due to the requirement for the imperfect tense. The conditional was often used instead and this led to a lack of clarity in the response.

*¿Dónde te gustaría trabajar en el futuro? ... ¿Por qué?*

Students sometimes did not pick up on the question word *dónde*.

#### **Photo card N**

*Háblame de las reglas en tu colegio.*

Many students were unable to answer this question well.

#### **Photo card O**

*¿Crees que es necesario gastar mucho dinero en una boda? ... ¿Por qué (no)?*

This was probably the least well developed prepared question.

#### **Photo card P**

*¿Qué haces para prepararte para los exámenes?*

This seemed to be understood well, but students often found it difficult to answer well. *Repasar* was an item of vocabulary that many did not know and sometimes attempts to talk about revision were very unclear.

#### **Photo card Q**

*¿Te gustaría correr un maratón para una organización benéfica? ... ¿Por qué (no)?*

Some students answered this from a fitness point of view and others from a charitable perspective. Both were fine, but some had trouble expressing how it was good to help others.

#### **Photo card R**

*¿Piensas que podrías vivir sin Internet? ... ¿Por qué (no)?*

This was a prepared question, but some students struggled to answer this question.

## General conversation

As with all parts of the test, the General conversation showed an improvement on last year and most students had clearly benefitted from practice of this section of the exam.

As in previous years, there was a wide variety in the nature of the conversations, where some had a very pre-learnt feel and others were much more spontaneous, helped very much by teachers asking follow-up questions after a student's extended response. For those students who had clearly learnt extended answers to questions this had an effect on the spontaneity strand of the Spontaneity and fluency mark. It also often had a bearing on the mark given for Pronunciation and intonation because intonation was poor. In the worst cases, the pronunciation made the intended message incomprehensible and so the mark for Communication was also affected. On the other hand, students whose Spanish was quite inaccurate could still score highly for Pronunciation and intonation and for Spontaneity and fluency if their performance merited it.

Timing of the General conversation was often incorrect. The required length of the General conversation is between five and seven minutes. Each theme must last for a minimum of two and a half minutes and, if one or both are under that time, there is a penalty of two marks for Communication. Timing of the first theme begins when the teacher starts to ask the first question relating to that theme. The timing of that theme ends, and the second one begins, when the teacher asks the first question relating to the second theme. In other words, the changeover time between themes is added on to the first theme. Timing of the second theme ends when the teacher says 'End of test'.

The other time that a penalty of one mark for Communication is applied is if the student does not ask an understandable question of the teacher. It is advisable to try and get the student to ask a question during the first theme. In this way, if the question makes no coherent sense, the teacher can prompt another question later in the conversation. If the question is asked at the end of the conversation, time may be up and it is therefore too late. In this part of the exam, a student can be credited with asking the question by saying *¿Y tú?* if it is asked appropriately. For example, when asked, *¿Adónde vas de vacaciones?*, the reply is *Voy a Francia. ¿Y tú?* However, if the teacher prompts a question by asking *¿Tienes una pregunta para mí?*, merely to say *¿Y tú?* would not count as an appropriate question.

## Advice to teachers

### General

- Do a short test recording before the first student's test to check recording levels and clarity.
- Position the microphone or digital recorder so that it picks up both voices clearly.
- Make sure that your own and the students' mobile phones are switched off (not just on silent) before the recording begins. Students should not have access to their mobile during the preparation time or during the exam, in accordance with examination regulations.
- Make sure that you read the *Instructions for the conduct of examinations* document. It is essential that you follow the instructions in that document.
- In the Instructions document, you are told how to introduce each student in English. This is what you should say at the start of the recording for every student:

---

GCSE Spanish examination, June (*year of exam*). Centre number \_\_\_\_\_, candidate number \_\_\_\_\_, candidate name \_\_\_\_\_. Role play number \_\_\_\_\_, Photo card letter \_\_\_\_\_, General conversation theme chosen by student Theme (1, 2 or 3).

- Everything said by the teacher must be clearly audible. Instances of whispering will be referred to AQA, as will instances where it sounds as though something is being written down.
- Use Spanish throughout the exam once you have introduced the student and his/her Role play and Photo card combinations and the nominated theme for the General conversation in English.
- Respond positively to what students say, even if it is not very good. It will encourage them for the rest of the test.
- Practise pronunciation as often as possible. It can be a good use of the Foreign Language Assistant's time, if you have one.

### **Role play**

- Keep to your script as laid out in the Teacher's Role. Not to do so will mean that the student's response will receive a mark of 0 for Communication in that task.
- If you see that a student is starting to give the wrong answer to your question, stop him/her and repeat the question. Once the student completes an incorrect answer, a mark of 0 for Communication is given for that task, even if you repeat the question and a correct answer is given subsequently.
- If a student asks for repetition of your question or if there is no answer, you may repeat the question.
- If there is a two-part question in a task, ask the first question, wait for an answer, and then ask the second question. Failure to do so often leads to the student having to ask for repetition.

### **Photo card**

- You may paraphrase a question, provided the same meaning is maintained. However, be careful that that is the case or the student's reply will not be credited.
- Ask all five questions in the Teacher's Booklet, but do not ask any follow-up questions.
- Keep an eye on the timing. If a student's replies are very long and it looks as though you may not be able to ask the final question in the three-minute maximum time, you may be better to interrupt an answer and ask the next one.

### **General conversation**

- Encourage students to vary their language structures and vocabulary as much as possible. Opinions are the most obvious area to focus on – not everything has to be described as *interesante* or *aburrido* and there are other ways to say *me gusta*. In order to introduce some variety of language, ensure that students have a bank of adjectives such as *divertido*, *impresionante*, *maravilloso*, *estupendo*, *antipático*; and verbs such as *me encanta*, *me interesa*, *lo encuentro ...*, *odio*, *me molesta*.
- Train students to give and justify opinions without necessarily being asked to do so. This can form the basis of different starter activities.
- Be sensitive to the ability of the students – someone who struggles to describe his/her town is not going to be successful discussing more challenging aspects of the topic, for example the impact of global warming.
- Try to ask students questions that reflect their interests. Don't ask all students identical questions.
- In order to achieve a greater sense of spontaneity in the conversation, follow up a student's response by asking about what they have just told you.

- Announce the change of theme in Spanish: *Ahora vamos a pasar al tema número uno*, etc.
- Keep a close eye on the time. If one of the themes lasts for less than 2'30", there is a deduction of two marks for Communication.
- The maximum length of the General conversation is seven minutes. Everything after that will **not** be marked.
- Remember to prompt the student to ask you a question if they don't do it without being asked. It is better to get them to ask you the question in their nominated theme so that you don't forget to do it later on.
- If the first question the student asks you makes no sense, get them to ask you another one.

### **Advice to students**

- Use the 12 minutes preparation time wisely. You can write down exactly what you are going to say in the Role play tasks and in response to the three questions on the Photo card.
- For the Photo card questions, try to prepare answers of at least three sentences, using a verb in each one.
- Listen carefully to the questions that your teacher asks you for the unprepared questions in the Role play and Photo card and to all questions in the General conversation.
- Make sure you know common question words such as *¿cuándo?*, *¿cuántos?*, *¿dónde?*, *¿quién?*, *¿cómo?* and *¿qué?*
- You can ask for repetition of a question in any part of the test, but make sure it is in Spanish. You can say *Repíte, por favor* or *¿Cómo?*, for example.

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

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