
GCSE

SPANISH

8698/SF: Speaking Foundation
Report on the Examination

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General comments

As was to be expected, there was a wide difference in the level of performance in the tests at this tier, ranging from students who could say barely anything to those whose General conversations would have scored high marks at Higher tier. However, the latter were few and far between and students seemed to have been entered at the correct tier.

Conduct of the tests by teacher-examiners was generally very good, but there were a number of issues which prevented students from scoring the mark they deserved. These are mentioned below in the relevant section of the test. Teacher-examiners should also see the advice sections at the end of this report and incorporate the advice given there into their own tests for future series.

In the role-play and photo card sections, if a student gave a complete, although incorrect, answer to a question, the mark awarded was zero, even if the teacher-examiner then repeated the question and a correct answer ensued. As happened last year, some teacher-examiners kept asking the question again several times and this must have affected the confidence of the students concerned.

A copy of the Speaking Score Sheet used by examiners can be found at the back of the 2019 mark scheme. Centres are reminded that a breakdown of marks for each section of the speaking test per student is available free of charge in ERA (Enhanced Results Analysis). ERA is accessed via eAQA.

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. Feedback is provided on the basis of need only and not for every teacher-examiner.

Role-plays

Teachers should keep to the script of the role-play because failure to do so results in a student's response to a particular task not being credited. If students have prepared sufficiently well in the 12-minute preparation period, they should have notes which they can read from.

At this tier, there is no need to use any tense other than present in the role-play. Some tasks will still be fulfilled if a past or future reference is made, but this should be discouraged because errors which can impact on marks are often made when other tenses are attempted.

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

Below are more detailed comments on each of the role-plays:

Role-play 1

Task a

It was good to see that *¿En qué puedo ayudarle?* caused far fewer problems this year than last, with the vast majority of students not being confused by it. This was also true of Role-play 4. The pronunciation of *DVD* caused many problems.

Task b

Very few students knew *¿Cuánto es?*, which would have been the easiest way to ask a question here. Others still gained the two marks for Communication by asking something like *¿Qué es el precio?*

Task c

The word *quién* was not well known and so many students scored zero for this task.

Task d

This was done well, with most students being able to give an opinion, using a verb.

Task e

Cuándo was another question word which was not understood by many.

Role-play 2

Task a

The main issue with conveying the Spanish for a type of film was in the pronunciation of the key word, especially with *acción* and *horror*. Depending on how poor the pronunciation was, students were often awarded one or zero marks for this task.

Task b

This, like most opinion-giving tasks, was done well. The most common opinions were given by using *es* with an adjective, although other answers such as *me gusta la pantalla grande* were also heard.

Task c

Again, as in Role-play 1, task e, *cuándo* was often not known.

Task d

This was done well.

Task e

Many students tried but failed to ask *¿Quién es tu actor favorito?* The most common error was to ask *¿Qué es tu actor favorito?*, which scored one mark for Communication.

Role-play 3

Task a

The most common correct question was *¿Te gusta tu familia?*, although other questions relating to family members were also accepted, for example *¿Cuántos hermanos tienes?* or *¿Cómo se llama tu madre?*

Task b

This was done well, although a good number of students scored zero because they gave a physical description, such as *es alto*.

Task c

Edad in the Candidate's Role seemed not to be understood by many, even when the teacher's prompt was *¿Cuántos años tiene tu amigo/a?*

Task d

In reply to the teacher's question *¿Qué te gusta hacer con tu amigo/amiga?*, a first person verb or an infinitive scored two marks. The task was done well.

Task e

This was done well.

Role-play 4**Task a**

This was done poorly by the majority of students. Those who were successful tended to keep the question simple, by asking something like *¿Hay excursiones a Barcelona?*

Task b

This was done well, with the most common answers being *es (más) rápido* or *es (más) cómodo*.

Task c

This was done better than any other unpredictable task.

Task d

It was surprising how many students seemed not to understand the word *día* and who then scored zero marks as a result.

Task e

This was done well.

Role-play 5**Task a**

Any job was acceptable with or without a verb, as was a place of work if it was accompanied by a verb (*trabajo en un restaurante*, for example). If students used the wrong person of the verb, they scored zero marks. This usually happened when they repeated *trabajas* from the teacher's question.

Task b

Many students did not understand the question and so scored zero marks.

Task c

This task was done well on the whole. Sometimes students failed to convey the reason because they tried to make it too complex. The majority who were successful kept to a simple reason such as *es interesante*.

Task d

Again, some students tried to give quite complex opinions and failed to convey the message.

Task e

Successful questions tended to be more straightforward ones, such as *¿Hay mucho trabajo en España?* Sometimes only one mark was given for Communication because there was no mention of *España* in an otherwise appropriate response.

Role-play 6

Task a

This was done well, with the most common answer being *es grande*.

Task b

Overall, students found giving a time difficult. Common incorrect attempts were usually giving a number alone or a period of time, for example, *quince minutos*.

Task c

This was done well, although occasionally the student understood *inglés* to mean *Inglaterra*.

Task d

Unlike Role-play 4, task c, this was not so well done, even though fulfilment of both tasks relied on understanding the question word *¿Cuántas?*

Task e

The pronunciation of *Uruguay* caused some problems as far as conveying the message was concerned. Many students only scored one mark for Communication because they made no mention of *Uruguay* in an otherwise appropriate response.

Role-play 7

Task a

This was an example of a prompt on the Candidate's Role which was not interpreted as expected, but where the student's attempt was accepted. The intention was for students to say how they used their laptop. However, the student's prompt was sometimes interpreted to mean that an opinion was needed. An opinion, therefore, was also accepted.

Task b

This was done well, and two marks were awarded even if the verb used was *es*, rather than *son*.

Task c

In this unpredictable task, *¿Cuántas?* was understood well, but not as well as in Role-play 4 task c.

Task d

Many students correctly asked *¿Cuál es tu videojuego favorito?* and *¿Qué es tu videojuego?* also received two marks. However, many students could not ask an understandable question.

Task e

This was done well, with one of the most common correct answers being *(mi móvil) es un iPhone*.

Role-play 8

Task a

This was done well by many, with *juego a + a sport* being the most common correct answer.

Task b

This was another opinion-giving task that was done well.

Task c

There was often confusion here between *¿Cuántos?* and *¿Cuándo?*, with many students giving a response like *la próxima semana*.

Task d

Because two marks were awarded if a student pronounced four or more digits correctly, many got two marks here. A surprising number, however, did not attempt an answer. A correct response was *no tengo teléfono*.

Task e

As with Role-play 1 task b, *¿Cuánto es?* was not well known.

Role-play 9**Task a**

Instalaciones was often not known or not interpreted correctly. For the award of two marks for Communication, the student had to make reference to the facilities in the school, for example *hay una piscina*. No marks were given for a general description of the school, such as *es grande*.

Task b

Students often scored two marks, even if the verb used was *es*, rather than *son*.

Task c

Asignatura was often not known.

Task d

As with Role-play 6 task b, students regularly had difficulty telling the time.

Task e

The question-asking task is usually the one that students found most difficult and this was true here. Successful attempts included questions like *¿Hay muchos deportes en tu/el colegio?* and *¿Te gusta el deporte en tu/el colegio?*

Photo cards

It was clear that many centres had trained their students to talk about the photo and, in so doing, use several clauses. This is good practice, unless a student speaks for too long on the first question and runs out of time at the end of this section of the exam. When the fifth question cannot be asked before the two-minute point, it means that a mark in the top band cannot be awarded because all five questions must be answered clearly for that to happen. However, timing of the photo card was generally very good.

In order to score in the top band, students needed to answer all questions clearly and develop three ('most') answers by using several clauses. There was no extra credit given in this question, which is marked for Communication only, for complex language. While accuracy and pronunciation are important factors, in order to achieve clarity, the range of language is not. It was in the first three prepared questions that students were able to develop their answers more because of the extra time they have to consider possible answers.

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 last question on

Photo card D was *¿Qué piensas de hacer camping?* If a teacher paraphrased by asking *¿Cuál es tu opinión de hacer camping?*, this was fine. However, *¿Te gusta hacer camping?* was not allowed because it is not a paraphrase – it can be answered by *Sí* or *No*, which the aforementioned two questions cannot. In addition, extra words such as *en el futuro* or *actividades* cannot be added to the printed questions.

Questions discriminated well, with a wide range in the quality of answers, but there were some that were done noticeably less well than others as detailed below.

Photo card A

¿Qué te gustaría hacer para celebrar tu próximo cumpleaños?

This was done quite well overall, but many students used *me gusta*, rather than *me gustaría*, in their answer.

Photo card B

¿Qué tipo de música te gusta? ... ¿Por qué?

A significant number of students answered the first part of this question with *Sí*, as if they understood it to mean ‘Do you like music?’

¿Qué piensas de los programas como Britain’s Got Talent o X Factor?

It was common for students to begin their answer with the name of one of the two programmes, presumably because they thought they were being asked to give a preference. However, they often were credited with answering the question because they followed it up with an opinion on that programme.

¿Qué hacen tus amigos los fines de semana?

Many students used a first person verb saying what they themselves do, which was the wrong answer to the question. However, it was fine if they added *con mis amigos*.

Photo card C

¿Qué hiciste la semana pasada para proteger el medio ambiente?

There was often a lack of clarity in the response because of incorrect tense usage.

Photo card E

¿Qué haces normalmente durante el recreo?

Students often did not understand the question.

¿Piensas que es importante hacer los deberes? ... ¿Por qué?

Students found giving a reason for doing homework quite challenging.

Photo card F

¿Qué asignatura es más importante para tu futuro? ... ¿Por qué?

The word *asignatura* was often misunderstood.

¿Qué haces para sacar buenas notas en tus exámenes?

Students on the whole seemed to understand the question, but many found it challenging to give a clear answer. Common clear answers were *trabajo mucho; hago mis deberes; repaso mis apuntes/notas*.

Photo card G

¿Cuál es tu opinión sobre comprar en Internet?

The majority of students did not pick up on the word *comprar* and gave an incorrect answer by saying things like *Me gusta Internet porque es útil para mis deberes*.

En general, ¿tus amigos prefieren hacer deporte o jugar a los videojuegos? ... ¿Por qué?

Those students who repeated the infinitive phrase from the question did well. However, many preceded it with *Prefiero*; this was an incorrect answer to the first part of the question, although a subsequent reason was accepted.

Photo card H

¿Cuál es tu sitio favorito en tu región? ... ¿Por qué?

Sitio was often understood to mean 'city'. However, if this happened, credit was given because a city could be a favourite place in the region.

Photo card I

¿Qué necesitas hacer para tener un buen trabajo?

This question proved very difficult for most students, although there were some good answers such as *Necesito/tengo que estudiar mucho/ir a la universidad*.

General conversation

There was a wide range in quality in the General conversation, but the vast majority were able to score at least some marks. As last year, there was a pre-learnt feel to some of the conversations but by and large, some spontaneity was maintained.

Unfortunately, some teacher-examiners asked the same questions of all of their students on the three different themes. When this happened, the spontaneous feel tended to disappear because of a total lack of follow-up questions. It also tended to be the case that not all of the questions were suited to the ability of all the students and this also had an adverse effect on the marks.

On the other hand, there were many examples of teacher-examiners who conducted the conversation in an exemplary way, asking questions aimed at the ability of the individual student and following up with additional questions after an extended response. A mixture of more open with some more closed questions worked best because usually this meant the student was on familiar ground with the open questions and could extend answers, whereas the closed questions following up on what the student had just said gave a more natural feel to the conversation.

The required length of the general conversation is between three and five minutes. Each theme must last for a minimum of one 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-examiner 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-examiner says 'End of test'.

It is a requirement for students to ask an understandable question of the teacher-examiner. If this does not happen, there is a deduction of one mark for Communication. It is worth repeating what was said in last year's report, as 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-examiner 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-examiner prompts a question by asking *¿Tienes una pregunta para mí?*, merely to say *¿Y tú?*, it would not count as an appropriate question.

Advice to teacher-examiners

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.
- The *Instructions for the conduct of examinations* document is in the Secure Key Materials (SKM) area of e-AQA, available via the AQA website. If you do not have access to SKM, ask your examinations officer to download the document for you. 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 candidate Theme (1, 2 or 3).

- Everything said by the teacher-examiner must be clearly audible. Instances of whispering will be referred to AQA.
- 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 the 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 an unprepared 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 two-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. Do not 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 1'30", there is a deduction of two marks for Communication.
- The maximum length of the general conversation is five minutes. Everything after that will not be marked.

- Remember to prompt the student to ask you a question if they do not do it without being asked. It is better to get them to ask you the question in their nominated theme so that you do not 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 prepared 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 *Repíteme*, *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.