



GCSE

Spanish

8698/WF Writing (Foundation)

Report on the examination

Version: 1.0
June 2025

Further copies of this report are available from aqa.org.uk

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres 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 centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

General comments

This has been the last year of the current GCSE Specification, and the new Specification will be examined for the first time in 2026. This report comments on the questions from this year's examination and then gives advice to students for the 2026 paper, based on the experience of this year. Overall, the standard of students' performance was good and there was an increase in the mean mark for the paper.

Question 1

Students had to write four sentences about the photo and each sentence was worth a maximum of two marks. A conjugated verb was needed in order to score two marks. If the verb was omitted, or if an inappropriate infinitive was used, the maximum mark was one. The sentences could be very simple and repetitive in structure and score two marks each time. For example, *hay* + an understandable noun could be used four times and get two marks on each occasion. The most common nouns which students used in connection with the photo were *personas, mujer, hombre, chico, chica, niña, matrimonio, boda, mesa, chaqueta, camisa, pastel* and *árboles*. There were some spelling errors that appeared quite frequently, for example the misspelling of *pastel* and *matrimonio*. Sometimes the spelling was not accurate enough to give a clear message and this prevented the award of two marks for that sentence.

The whole of the sentence is assessed. So, if the student wrote *Hay un hombre y una mejor*, only one mark was given because the second part of the sentence makes no sense. *Hay un hombre* alone would have scored two marks.

Question 2

In this question there were 10 marks for Content and 6 marks for Quality of Language. Students were required to write approximately 40 words in total about four different bullet points. All bullet points were compulsory, but there was no need for equal coverage of the bullets.

Content

In order to score in the top band for Content, students had to give clear information in relation to all four bullet points. The bullet points were: *atracciones; casas; transporte público; tiendas*. Most students were able to write something about all four bullet points, but sometimes it appeared that the student did not understand *tiendas* because nothing was written about shops or tents. The mark awarded for Content was based on how many bullet points were conveyed successfully together with how clearly that information had been conveyed. Incorrect grammar and spelling had a negative impact on clarity.

Students who exceeded the recommended number of 40 words often lost marks because some of the extra information contained incorrect language which made the intended messages unclear.

Quality of language

In order to score well for Quality of language, students had to show a variety of vocabulary and structures, but there is no requirement for complexity of language in this question. It was

expected that students would use the present tense only in this question, but some used different tenses and this was fine. Using different verbs and adjectives when giving opinions was the main way in which students were able to vary the language they used. The second strand in the Quality of language criteria concerns accuracy and some students who far exceeded the recommended 40 words for this question made more errors and so received a lower mark than they might otherwise have done.

Question 3

For this question, there were 5 marks for Conveying key messages and 5 marks for Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures. Given that the level of demand of the messages was aimed at covering Grades 1 to 5, the question differentiated well with nearly all students able to score some marks. However, as always, there were a good number of students who found this question very challenging.

Conveying key messages

The sentences were divided into 12 key messages, as in the table below.

My friend is	This was done well.
very kind.	Generally, this was done very well, although sometimes <i>mucho</i> was used in place of <i>muy</i> and the message was not conveyed.
I use the computer	This was done well overall. Several words were accepted to translate 'computer'.
every day.	<i>Cada día</i> and <i>todos los días</i> were both accepted. Sometimes the message was not conveyed because the student wrote <i>todo el día</i> .
I hate to eat	<i>Odio comer</i> and <i>detesto comer</i> were both accepted, as was <i>no me gusta nada comer</i> . However, <i>no me gusta comer</i> was not accepted because it did not capture the meaning of 'I hate'.
unhealthy food.	This was reasonably well done, but a common mistake was to use <i>salud</i> as an adjective.
I am going to work	This was translated very well.
as a teacher	This was the task that students found the hardest. Although nearly all knew <i>profesor(a)</i> , the vast majority could not produce <i>de</i> or <i>como</i> , which was needed for the message to be conveyed.
in the future.	This was done very well.
I bought	This proved difficult, especially because the accent was needed on <i>compré</i> for the message to be conveyed.
a new mobile	This was done quite well, but it was common to see <i>nueve</i> , rather than <i>nuevo</i> , which meant that the message was not conveyed.
in January.	This was done reasonably well.

Application of grammatical knowledge of language and structures

There was usually a direct correlation between the mark for Key messages and the mark for Application of grammar. However, this was sometimes lower if the student had been allowed several key messages, in spite of an error of grammar and/or spelling; or higher, if the mark for Key messages had been lowered by several relatively minor errors.

Question 4

For this question, there were 10 marks for Content and 6 marks for Quality of Language. Students were required to write approximately 90 words in total about four different bullet points. All bullet points had to be covered, but there was no need for equal coverage of the bullets.

Students were able to achieve full marks by writing approximately 90 words. Many did this, but others lost marks for Content because they wrote around half that amount. Others wrote too much and made more errors in so doing. This affected the mark for Quality of language and also the mark for Content, when the language became unclear.

At this tier, it was usually the students who wrote concisely and accurately who scored the highest marks.

Content

The criteria for assessment focus on four elements: coverage of the bullet points, the amount of information conveyed, clarity of communication and expression of opinions. Coverage of bullet points was key, as misinterpreting or omitting even one meant that the award of a mark above 6 was impossible, given that for the award of marks in the range 7 – 10, all aspects of the task must be covered. In addition, although students had no difficulty in developing ideas and expressing opinions, there were occasions when inaccuracy led to a lack of clarity of communication (referred to as 'lapses' in the criteria) and this had an impact on marks awarded. Therefore, students who conveyed information in relation to all four bullet points did not necessarily score a mark of 9 or 10. Lapses in clarity may have been sufficient in number to mean that a mark lower than 9 was more appropriate. In order to score in the top band for Content, the criteria state that 'a lot of information is conveyed'. The recommended number of words was 90, so a student who wrote approximately that number of words, and who wrote clearly, had access to full marks. This was deemed to be 'a lot of information' for this question.

Question 4.1

Of the two optional questions, this one was by far the more popular choice, with around 75% of students choosing it. There was a wide range in the standard of the work produced. The first bullet point caused some difficulties when it came to using a past tense. The second and third bullet points were done very well and most students were able to give plenty of opinions here. The fourth bullet point was usually done well, but some students did not say what they were going to study, but where.

Question 4.2

Although only a minority did this question, the mean mark was very slightly higher than for question 4.1. The first and third bullet points were done very well. In the third one, any festival in any country was accepted, with two of the most popular choices being La Tomatina and Glastonbury. The topic of the environment is one which many students find difficult and that was sometimes the case here when the second bullet point was attempted. As with question 4.1, the past tense bullet point caused problems with tense formation.

Quality of language

The key features of the criteria for assessment here are variety of language, attempts at complexity, time frames and accuracy.

Each of the bullet points for both questions required students to use a variety of vocabulary because of the different nature of each task. Each one allowed students to choose language which they could use confidently.

In order to score in the top band for Quality of language, there had to be successful reference to events in the present, past and future. One task in each of the two questions required the student to refer to a past event and another one to a future event. The response to the past event task varied, according to how well the student could communicate using a past tense or tenses. Usually this was done successfully through use of the preterite tense. As far as the future events were concerned, each one asked what the student was going to do and included a phrase in the immediate future with a time marker (*el año próximo* and *en el futuro*). The majority of students were able to change the person of the verb and begin their response to this task by saying: *El año próximo/En el futuro voy a* plus an infinitive.

Complexity at this tier was achieved through the use of subordinate clauses; infinitive constructions; longer sentences formed by using connectives; negatives; the use of *lo* in phrases such as *lo bueno/malo es que* which was used by some of the better students.

As far as variety of language was concerned, many students enriched their writing by using idiomatic phrases such as: *es pan comido*; *somos uña y carne*; *es la leche*. This is to be encouraged, provided such phrases are used sparingly and in an appropriate context.

The other strand in Quality of language is the accuracy of the writing. The more common, major errors were with verbs, either with the wrong person or the wrong tense of the verb. Inaccurate tense formation was an issue for many students, in particular with the present being used instead of the preterite tense in the first and fourth bullet points of the respective questions. At this tier there were a high number of minor errors, which cumulatively contributed to a lower mark for Quality of language. Sometimes inaccurate spelling also had an effect. Illegible handwriting often made it impossible to tell with any certainty how a word was spelt.

The 2026 examination

The new Specification brings some changes to the Foundation Writing examination. The exam will be of 1 hour 10 minutes duration, as opposed to the one previously. One of the main differences is that all instructions and question rubrics will be in English. However, there are a lot of similarities between it and the 2025 paper. This is what the 2026 paper will look like:

- Question 1. A photo about which students write five sentences. This is very similar to the 2025 question 1, but five sentences are needed, rather than four.
- Question 2. Five short bullet points about which students write a total of approximately 50 words. This is very similar to the 2025 question 2, but there are five bullet points, rather than four, and approximately 50 words are required, instead of 40.

- Question 3. A gap fill, where students choose the correct word missing from a sentence. There are three words per sentence and the student chooses the correct word and writes it in the gap.
- Question 4. A translation from English into Spanish of sentences totalling a minimum of 35 words. This is also what happened in 2025 in question 3.
- Question 5. Three bullet points, each one targeting a different time frame, about which students write a total of approximately 90 words. This is similar to the 2025 question 4, but three bullet points, rather than four.

Apart from Question 3, the new examination has a very similar feel to the 2025 paper, as regards layout. What follows is advice to students when they answer each of the questions in the 2026 paper.

Question 1 (2026)

- Include a simple verb in each sentence.
- Keep each sentence short.
- Choose the items in the photo that you are most sure that you know in Spanish.

Question 2 (2026)

- Aim to write roughly ten words per bullet point. If you can write a little more on one and a little less on another, that is acceptable. However, try to keep to approximately 50 words in total.
- Attempt to write something about all the bullet points, rather than leaving any out. If you miss out a bullet point entirely, you automatically lose a mark for AO2.
- Tick off each bullet point on the question paper once you have covered it.

Question 3 (2026)

- Read each sentence carefully and look at the three choices you have for the missing word. Think about what kind of word is missing. If it's a verb, try to choose the one with the correct verb ending. If it's an adjective, look at what it is describing: is that word singular or plural, masculine or feminine?
- Always copy the **one word** that is missing from the sentence into the space provided and be sure to spell it correctly, including any accents.

Question 4 (2026)

- Check carefully that you do not miss out any parts of the translation by accident.
- If you are not sure how to translate something, have a go as it may score you a mark; leaving it blank will not.
- Check verb tenses and endings.

Question 5 (2026)

- Aim to write roughly the suggested number of words.
- Mention all of the bullet points. Attempt to write something about them rather than omitting them. Tick off the bullet points on the question paper once they have been covered.
- Identify which bullet points target the different time frames and check that your verb formation is accurate.

- Write clearly, so that the examiner can read exactly what you have written.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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