



GCSE **Spanish**

8698/RH Paper 1 Reading Higher Tier

Report on the Examination

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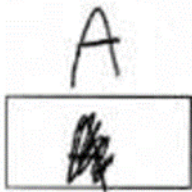
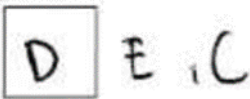
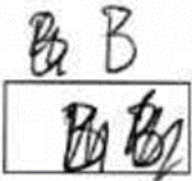
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General comments

Students and teachers are to be congratulated on dealing so well with the paper. The mean mark was only very slightly down on 2023. The vast majority of students seemed familiar with the style and nature of the questions and were well prepared for what was expected of them. Just occasionally, students answered in English in the section where responses in Spanish were needed but these occasions are becoming increasingly rare. Spelling is a problem when it leads to ambiguity, in both sections A and B. Some students are still copying too much information from the text when answering in Spanish and should be encouraged to follow the example provided as guidance to how much information to include. The shorter lines also indicate that a short answer will suffice. All students should be encouraged to work through the whole paper as it does not increase steadily in demand. It is designed to follow a series of peaks and troughs within a steady incline of demand to encourage students of all attainment levels to attempt all questions within the paper.

As mentioned in last year's report, 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 poor practice which students might find helpful.

Good practice	Good practice	Poor practice
		
		
		
		

When students have to write in English or in Spanish they should avoid hedging their bets, for example, *Old/second hand toys*. Another example is when students use **or** in their answer, for example, *Second hand toys or games*. These answers create ambiguity. These types of answers will almost always be marked wrong, and students should be strongly discouraged from answering in these ways.

Question 1

This was an overlap question and so was aimed at the lower end of the Higher tier cohort. It set out to test students' ability to understand Spanish in different tenses. This year there were no time phrases in the text and yet Higher tier students coped well with the added demand, in fact much better than the Foundation tier students, which is as one would expect. It was really pleasing to see that students could use their verb endings to correctly answer all parts of the question. Almost 80% of the student cohort answered all parts correctly.

Question 2

2.1 of this question was aimed at the lower grades and over 99% of students scored a mark. 2.2 and 2.3 were aimed at the middle grades and were obviously more challenging. That said, almost 90% got 2.2 correct and almost 70% scored on 2.3.

Question 3

This was another question which targeted the middle grades. This question proved more accessible than its equivalent in 2023. Over 80% of the cohort got 3.1 and 3.2 correct but 3.3 and 3.4 proved to be more challenging. There was a lot to read, and students did really well in this question, especially as a lot of the focus was on the environment rather than music.

Question 4

This question was targeting the higher grades and differentiated well. Students need to give precise answers from an extended, complex text. *La escasez* was not the only challenge in 4.1. *Ayudas del gobierno* was also challenging for all but the most highly attaining students. Many opted for the distracters and wrote about unemployment.

Well done to those students who learnt and remembered the word *herramientas*. There were many intelligent guesses but only about 20% actually scored a mark here.

In 4.3 many students wrote about the elderly being vulnerable or suffering from **high** temperatures. Less than 10% picked out the *falta de formación* and translated it correctly. 'Lack of form' and 'lack of formation' were also incorrect answers.

In 4.4, almost 45% identified the second-hand toys but students tended to introduce ambiguity by using a solidus. For example, they wrote 'second-hand toys/games'. Students should be discouraged from using the solidus as it more often than not leads to ambiguity and will not be awarded a mark.

Question 5

This question targeted the middle grades towards the centre of the question paper. Over 80% got a mark in 5.1 and 5.33 here and it was only 5.2 where just under half of the cohort scored a mark.

Question 6

This is a familiar task type from previous exams. Students have to use the information in the question part of the questionnaire as well as the information in the circled answer when they are writing their answer. Answers need to be precise as this question targets the higher grades.

The percentages of students getting a mark in all parts of this question this year were higher than in 2023 and yet it continues to differentiate well despite the reduced amount of information required for a mark. In 6.1 the word *enseñanza* was the challenge and approximately 25% of the students knew this piece of vocabulary. In 6.2 the verb *entregar* was known by only 25% of the cohort. Many students wrote about Estefanía ‘having time to do her homework’ or ‘doing her homework all of the time’. In 6.3 the vast majority of students translated *parientes* as ‘parents’ and were not awarded a mark. In 6.4 *Seguir + infinitive* proved challenging for a lot of students. A popular answer was that ‘Estefanía did not know **what** she was going to study’ which was not awarded a mark.

Question 7

This question targeted the higher grades and was really well done. Percentages ranged from 75% to just over 90% throughout the questions. This topic area continues to be very well known.

Question 8

This was the first of the two passages based on a literary text and was aimed at the middle grades. It was a little more challenging than its equivalent in 2023. That said, over half of the cohort got 8.1 and 8.4 right and over 70% got 8.3 right. Well done! All of the options were mentioned in the passage and students had to read very carefully to get the right answer. 8.2 was the most challenging, perhaps because the majority of students linked the *café y chocolate* to answer A before they realised that what the *Red de Apoyo* really offered was ‘advice and a warm welcome’. (Answer B)

Question 9

This was an overlap question and not surprisingly students at Higher tier did much better than those at Foundation tier. More referred to ‘keeping dry’ in 9.1, while in 9.2 over 80% correctly translated *traer* and were not distracted by the glossing as the Foundation students had been. So many students ended Section A positively.

Question 10

This was the first question in Section B where the students have to answer in Spanish. The average percentages were higher in both parts of the question than in a similar question in 2023. Students were able to identify **two** positive things in Dani’s grandparents’ lives in 10.1 and at least **one** thing in which they had lost interest in 10.2, showing good understanding of the difference between the imperfect tense and the present.

Question 11

This was the second passage based on a literary text and aimed at the lower grades at Higher tier. Student performance was better than at Foundation tier and also better than in 2023.

Question 12

Students are familiar with gap fill questions at Higher tier, and this targeted the higher grades at this level. 12.1 differentiated very well with approximately 35% getting a mark here. The negatives *sino* and *tampoco* did not appear to be very well known. However, students are used to using the expression *ya que* in their speaking and writing exams and this was reflected in the high degree of success in 12.3 where almost 80% of the cohort scored a mark. Very well done to students who scored in these questions for being able to use knowledge over a range of skill areas.

Question 13

Although this was a shorter text than in 2023 and so potentially more accessible students found the vocabulary in the option boxes A – E challenging. A mere 30% got 13.2 correct where students needed to know the verbs *suspender* and *aprobar*.

Question 14

This was a question targeting the lower grades and was a good way to end Section B of the Higher tier. Overall, students' performance was better than in 2023. As usual, some Higher tier students answered with sophisticated language in this question and did not copy words from the text. These answers are accepted if they are correct, but students need to know that copying words from the text is a perfectly acceptable way of answering this question. For example, in 14.4 some students wrote *barato* and this was given a mark.

The same message applies here as in Foundation tier in that students should follow the example answer and write only what is required for the answer. They should avoid copying out chunks of text. This is less common at Higher tier than at Foundation, but some students still copy out too much and in doing so create ambiguity which means they can't gain any credit.

For example, in 14.2 students who copied the passage from *nunca encuentran ropa de moda* were rewarded with a mark because Pablo's friends 'never found fashionable clothes'. However, those students who copied the passage from *encuentran ropa de moda* could not be awarded a mark because it led to an incorrect answer.

Unfortunately, inaccurate spelling can lead to students losing marks. For example, some students wrote about *tiendas solitarias* in 14.1 which was incorrect. Students should take care to copy correctly from the text.

Section C - Translation

It is very pleasing to report that the mean mark for the translation at Higher tier was slightly higher than in 2023. The translation is designed to test grammatical structures and vocabulary and, despite the increased mean mark, it was felt that many students did not have grammatical accuracy when translating. Students should be aware that verbs may be tested in all parts of the verb and not just in the first-person singular.

The table below shows more information on performance in this year's translation.

Desde hace años usamos tecnología en clase.	The expression <i>hace + a length of time</i> is much more widely known than <i>desde hace + a length of time</i> which meant that lots of students translated this incorrectly as <i>years ago...</i>
Cuando mi móvil dejó de funcionar,	<i>Dejar de + infinitive</i> was another challenge for some students.
me di cuenta de que	<i>Darse cuenta de algo</i> was again challenging for some.

no puedo vivir sin él.	This part of the translation was well done except when students put the verb in the wrong tense. Eg <i>I couldn't live without it</i>
Lo necesito para mis estudios	The direct object pronoun was being tested here so the mark scheme insisted on <i>I need it</i>
y para escuchar música también.	This part of the translation was very well done, and most students scored a mark here.
Mi cantante favorita es Shakira.	This was another very accessible section of the translation. Some lost a mark by writing <i>mi</i> favourite singer is Shakira which was probably due to writing at speed
Hay que admirarla	Students know <i>hay</i> and start with <i>there is</i> Then they struggle and go on to say <i>there is that admiration</i> . <i>Hay que</i> is generally known only by higher attaining students, so this section differentiated very well. Knowing the difference between <i>hay</i> and <i>hay que</i> is similar to knowing the difference between <i>hace</i> and <i>desde hace</i> and this helps to differentiate between students.
por lo que consigue gracias a su organización solidaria.	This section was quite long and targeted the higher grades. There were some pleasing translations and some where students almost got the mark but lost it by translating <i>organización solidaria</i> as <i>a solitary organisation</i> .

Advice to students

Keep going to the end of the exam.

Answer all questions, especially the ones where you have to write a letter.

Write clearly.

Do not give alternative answers by using the oblique/forward slash as the examiner will not award a mark.

Follow the example.

Do not copy any more from the text than is absolutely necessary.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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