General Certificate of Secondary Education

Spanish 4695
Specification

46952   **Reading**

Report on the Examination

2011 examination - January series

General Comments

The January 2011 Reading paper saw candidates produce performances across the mark range. Overall the questions were accessible to most candidates, although at Higher Tier answering the questions in English clearly and in sufficient detail proved to be a challenging task for many candidates.

Foundation Tier

Many candidates scored well at this tier. Most [CR1]questions proved to be accessible to candidates. Many[CR2] tasks required non-verbal answers and were supported by icons, which assisted candidates in their understanding of the task. Many candidates, however, were less successful when answering in English.

Question 1

Question 1 required a written response in English and was well done.

Question 2

Question 2 required written responses in English. [CR3] 2a was answered correctly by the majority of candidates, although in 2b understanding the question *¿A qué hora van a llegar?* proved to be more challenging.

Question 3

This question tested the recognition of opinions which proved to be very demanding for some candidates. Candidates should be made aware that in this type of question P, N, P+N they must read and understand the whole text and not simply base their answer on isolated words. In item (a), for example, the majority of candidates opted for P, which related to *divertidas* and *tranquilo*, but failed to recognise the negative connotations of *necesita más* and *es demasiado*.

Question 4

Question 4 was a matching task. Most candidates were able to identify *camarero*, but *repartir periódicos* was less well known.

Question 5

Question 5 was a matching exercise with items written in English. The majority of candidates were able to identify the correct item. *Sala de juegos* was more readily identified than *tienda* or *servicios*.

Question 6

Candidates were required to answer in English. Many candidates understood parts of the text but failed to understand the entire sentence, leading to incorrect answers or answers which were too general, such as *use organic products.* Candidates need to be directed to take careful note of the example given. *Basura* was well known but *cajas* was not. *Bolsas* were often identified as 'bottles'.

Question 7

Question 7 required a written response in English and was well done by most candidates. *Dormir ocho horas* proved to be more demanding and a number of candidates answered incorrectly e.g. *had to go to bed at 8.*

Question 8

This question required the candidates to identify the correct activity and place from a series of icons. The majority of candidates identified at least one activity in item (a). Item (b) was answered less successfully. Candidates need to be able to link key structures in the text with the required element in the question, particularly when all of the icon options are mentioned e.g. *me gusta más* relates to *prefer.*

Question 9

Question 9 was a variant on a multiple choice task which some candidates at Foundation Tier found quite demanding as they had to understand and compare the information in each set of texts. [CR4]9a was answered most successfully.

Question 10

This question was a matching activity. The adjective *habladora* proved to be a lot more accessible than *gracioso.*

Question 11

In this question candidates had to select the three correct options from a list in English. *Latas, botellas* and *paquetes* appear to be less well known than anticipated.

Question 12

Question 12 required written responses in English. Item (a) was well done, but in (b) and (c) incorrect answers often arose because candidates sought answers in the wrong part of the text, mentioning *electronics/emails* for (b) and *visiting grandparents* for (c). Many candidates also failed to realise that it was *his friend's birthday* he was going to celebrate, not his own.

Question 13

This question was a multiple choice task which most candidates able were to answer correctly.

Higher Tier

General Comments

Higher Tier candidates scored well overall on the questions common to both tiers. Some questions proved to be less accessible than anticipated, particularly those requiring a response in English.

Question 1

This question tested the recognition of opinions which proved to be quite demanding for some candidates. Candidates should be made aware that in this type of question P, N, P+N they must read and understand the whole text and not simply base their answer on isolated words. In item (a), for example, the majority of candidates opted for P, which related to *divertidas* and *tranquilo*, but failed to recognise the negative connotations of *necesita más* and *es demasiado*.

Question 2

In this question candidates were required to answer in English and to identify specific details from a stimulus involving questions and answers, which was a new style of task. Candidates should be made aware that the questions in the questionnaire are a part of the text, not just the responses to the questions. For example, in response to *¿Hubo variedad de comida?*, common answers were simply little or small. Many candidates failed to give the exact details needed as they had not understood, for example, the difference between *poca* and *un poco de.* Similarly in (c) *quite easy* was a common incorrect answer as the element *to understand* was also required.

Question 3

Question 3 was a multiple choice task which proved to be accessible to most candidates.

Question 4

This question required the candidates to identify the correct activity and place from a series of icons and multiple choice tasks. The majority of candidates answered items (a), (b) and (d) correctly. Item (c) was answered less successfully which required understanding *me molesta* and *no tengo confianza en ellas.*

Question 5

Question 5 was a variant on a multiple choice task which some candidates at Higher Tier found more demanding than anticipated. They had to understand and compare the information in each set of texts. [CR5] 5a was answered most successfully.

Question 6

Question 6 was a new style of question which required candidates to make deductions as to which alternative was preferred by the person writing the text. It proved to be quite a challenging question as many candidates failed to justify their choice accurately or were unable to express the reasons clearly in English. Candidates should be advised to base their answers clearly on evidence from the text, not just their own opinions. Common incorrect answers were*:* 6a: *you can choose the film, you can pause the film, you can talk during the film* (with no reference to talking about the film); 6b: Shopping centre: *you have no difficulty finding what you want.* Some candidates wrote their chosen option in Spanish e.g. *Centro comercial, Piscina* followed by the correct justification in English. Normally answers in Spanish would not be

credited. It was decided, however, to be lenient for this year as the question style was new. In future, answers in Spanish cannot be awarded any marks.

Question 7

This was a multiple choice question which most candidates answered successfully.

Question 8

Question 7 was a matching task. Most candidates were able to answer (a) and (c) correctly, but (b) and (d) were found to be more demanding. This is perhaps due to the vocabulary used, which reflects the slightly more sophisticated topics this GCSE specification is designed to include.

Question 9

Candidates were required to answer in English, identifying specific details from the text and drawing conclusions. This question proved to be very demanding as many candidates understood parts of the text but failed to understand the entire sentence, leading to incorrect or incomplete answers. In [CR6]9a the time reference was often misunderstood and a common incorrect answer was *arrives 2½ hours before work.* The idea of being able to work was also often ignored and there were many vague references to the train – and the plane – being *quicker* or *easier*. In 9b *entre un tren* was often thought to be about access and getting on to the train, or the need for more entrances. *Cómodo,* in this text meaning 'convenient', was confused with *comida* or produced responses about the need for more comfortable trains.

Question 10

Question 10 also required answers in English. [CR7]Items (a) and (c) produced the most correct answers, whereas the others were found to be very challenging. Candidates did not know where to locate the information they required and many seemed unaware that the order of questions follows the order of the text. They had little idea about the content of the text as a whole or the relationships of the people involved.

Question 11

Candidates had to identify the correct person[CR8]. Items (a) and (c) were quite challenging.

Question 12

This was a multiple choice question which proved to be more demanding than anticipated. The structures *acaba de* and *lo mejor* were not widely known.

Question 13

Question 13 required written responses in English. Item (a) was well done, but the others less so. Incorrect answers often arose because candidates sought answers in the wrong part of the text, mentioning *electronics/emails* for (b). Many candidates also failed to understand the finer details of the text, such as realising that it was *his friend's birthday* he was going to celebrate, not his own.

Advice to teachers

- Encourage candidates to highlight the key question words in English.

- Train candidates to spot the distracters in a text.

- Advise candidates to read the whole sequence of language before answering the question so that they can see if there is a distracter.

- Make a bank of small but important words, especially negatives and intensifiers and test them regularly.

- Practise texts which elicit opinions, (P/N/P+N) especially expressions which may lead to a negative meaning e.g. *demasiado* and *poco* + an adjective. There are many examples of this question style in legacy examination papers.

- If a question asks for the **most** important thing, there are likely to be a few options to choose from in the text. Train candidates to look for several options and then pick out the right answer.

- Train candidates to follow the example. In Foundation Question 6 the example elicits an action + a noun to give the expected answers of *separate the rubbish, use boxes etc.*

- Note that some vocabulary items which were Higher Tier words in the legacy specification are now on the Foundation Tier vocabulary list, particularly words relating to social and environmental issues. It is advisable to check the new vocabulary lists to ensure that they are included in teaching programmes.

Advice to candidates

- Ensure your writing is clear and legible. Do not use stylised or unusual letter formation in the examination as examiners may not be able to read your answers.

- Always answer in English if the question requires you do so.

- Read the questions first as they will give you an idea of what the text is about.

- Read the question carefully. Underline the key question word.

- Practise spotting the distracters in a text. Perhaps write your own short texts with them in so that you can get used to them.

- Keep a list of small but important words and phrases such as *más que nada*, *nunca*, *siempre* and learn them regularly.

- **Always** follow the example – if the example is a one word answer, **ONLY** write one word.

- If an answer asks for **two** points, only include two points. You will not gain any extra marks by writing more because the examiner will only mark the first two.

- If a word is written in bold in the question it means that you must focus on that word and take account of it when giving your answer.

- If a question has **exact** or **exactly** in it this means that you must give full details or give a longer answer to be awarded the mark.

- The questions normally relate to the order that the information is given in a text, especially if the questions relate to a longer text and you are required to answer in English. This means that the first questions will most probably relate to the first part of the text.

- **Never** leave a gap. Have a guess – you may be right!

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the **Results statistics** page of the AQA Website.