



## External Assessment Report 2013

Subject(s)	Spanish
Level(s)	Standard Grade

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published question papers and marking instructions for the examination.

# Comments on candidate performance

## General comments

This year saw a sizeable increase in the number of candidates being presented, from 3263 last year to 3814 in 2013.

Results in Speaking were very good. A total of 58.3% of candidates achieved a Credit award in this element, compared to 57.3% last year. In contrast the numbers achieving a General award show a slight drop (Grade 3 down from 20.8% to 19.4%; Grade 4 down from 12.8% to 12.7%). There was an increase of 0.5% in the numbers achieving Grade 5 (up to 7.2% from 6.7%), and the Grade 6 figure was identical to last year (2.3%).

In Writing, 15.3% of candidates achieved a Grade 1, well below the 19% of 2012. 22.5% of candidates achieved a Grade 2, with a cumulative total for Credit 2.2% below achievement in 2012. Overall, the numbers achieving Grades 1–4 have fallen 2.9% from last year (67.3% down to 64.4%). It follows that the numbers achieving a Foundation Level award have risen (Grade 5 10.2% from 9.1%; Grade 6 4.6% from 3.8%).

In Reading, the cumulative total for Credit awards was down marginally (from 38.3% to 37.2%). Awards for General also showed a slight decrease from last year (from 23.3% to 23.2%). There was a notable increase in the numbers achieving a Grade 5 (from 6% to 9.6%) and a drop at Grade 6 (4.3% to 1.9%).

In Listening, the numbers achieving a Credit award increased by 3.5% (from 23.7% to 27.2%). General Listening was not well done, as reflected in a drop in Grade 3 from 34.3% to 26.8% and from 23.5% to 18.6% at Grade 4. The cumulative total at Grades 1-4 was therefore well down from 2012 (81.4% last year compared to 72.6% in 2013). There was a sizeable increase of 5.4% at Grade 5 (from 4.5% to 9.9%) and a similar change at Grade 6 (from 9% to 12.4%).

When all these elements are combined, results show that, cumulatively, the percentage of candidates achieving a Credit Level award has remained the same as last year (44.2%). There is a fall at Grade 3 (26.7% to 24.2%) and an increase at Grade 4 (17.7% to 19.4%). 9.6% of candidates achieved a Grade 5 (up from 7.3%), and 1.9% were awarded a Grade 6 (compared to 2.4% last year).

## Areas in which candidates performed well

### Reading – Credit Level

Question 1 Candidates were able to cope well with the interview style of text.

Question 2 Was very well done.

### Reading – General Level

Question 1 Candidates were able to deal well with question words.

Question 3 Household chores was clearly a familiar topic for most candidates.

- Question 4 Candidates were comfortable with physical descriptions.
- Question 7 Most candidates did reasonably well here (although some struggled with 'medio ambiente').
- Question 9 Most candidates managed 2 marks out of 3 in this question.

### **Reading – Foundation Level**

In general this paper was well done.

### **Listening – Credit Level**

- Question 1a Most candidates recognised the single word 'matemáticas'.
- Question 9 The majority of candidates recognised 'abuelo' and were able to deal with the 'vosotros' form in Question 9(b).

### **Listening – General Level**

- Question 2 Most candidates managed to choose two items from the four.
- Question 5 Most were clearly familiar with items of clothing.
- Question 8 Activities clearly recognised.

### **Listening – Foundation Level**

- Question 2 Candidates did well with question words.
- Question 6 Most recognised the number 'cincuenta'.
- Question 7 Food items clearly familiar to most.
- Question 10 Places — most managed to gain 3 marks out of 4.

## **Areas which candidates found demanding**

### **Reading – Credit Level**

- Question 1a A number of candidates failed to recognise that 'sueño' was a verb, not a noun.
- Question 1b Many candidates rendered 'marcado' as 'strong'.
- Question 3a Many failed to recognise the superlative 'más peligrosa' and also translated 'vivido' as 'vivid'.
- Question 3b A large number of candidates were unable to render 'titulado' into English.
- Question 3c Many failed to grasp the concept that the dive would be *like* being in open water.
- Question 3d 'Acompañante' caused problems.
- Question 4a Many candidates failed to locate the correct part of the text and included irrelevant information, much of which was wrong.
- Question 4b Candidates struggled with the concept of financial independence.
- Question 4d Very few candidates understood 'temas de actualidad'.

### **Reading – General Level**

- Question 2a Many did not understand 'me duelen los oídos'.
- Question 5 Although most managed to gain 2 marks, many failed to read part 3 properly, concentrating on the word 'Lisboa' instead of 'comenzaba'.

- Question 6a It was disappointing that so many failed to recognise ‘pilotar’, ‘apagar fuegos’ and ‘ser periodistas’.
- Question 6b A number of candidates confused ‘niños’ with the number nine.
- Question 8a Large numbers of candidates did not understand ‘saca su lengua’.
- Question 8b Many failed to see the comparative ‘más grande que’.
- Question 8d Similarly a large number of candidates failed to recognise the superlative ‘más ruidosos’.
- Question 9 The vast majority of candidates failed to check the meaning of ‘recordar datos importantes’ and simply translated it as ‘record important dates’ without recognising that this made no sense in the context of the question.
- Question 10a Many candidates overcomplicated the response to this question by failing to locate the correct part of the stimulus.
- Question 10b Many candidates failed to recognise ‘tocar la batería’.
- Question 11a This was very poorly done all round. Many assumed that ‘arena’ meant arena and not sand.
- Question 11b Some very poor English let candidates down here, and a failure to include the detail ‘in the car/while driving’ cost many the final mark.

### Reading – Foundation Level

- Question 5a Many candidates lost the mark here by attempting to translate ‘en plena naturaleza’, which was not necessary.
- Question 5b Many candidates failed to locate the correct part of the text, concentrating on the idea of ‘she loves’ and not ‘in her free time’. Consequently many gave the answer ‘romantic films’ instead of ‘painting’.
- Question 5c A large number of candidates mistranslated ‘dar la vuelta’ as ‘turning back’.

### Listening – Credit Level

- Question 1b Many candidates did not understand ‘no entiendo’.
- Question 2 The structure of the questions caused problems.
- Question 3 Many candidates mistranslated ‘emocionante’ as ‘emotional’.
- Question 5 A large number failed to hear ‘con’ and mistranslated it as ‘and’ — the correct answer ‘an attic *with* two bedrooms’ became ‘an attic *and* two bedrooms’.
- Question 6 Very few candidates mentioned ‘satellite TV’.
- Question 8 Again candidates struggled with questions.
- Question 10 Many candidates failed to mention the details ‘a las diez’ and ‘merendar’, losing 2 marks.

### Listening – General Level

- Question 1a Many candidates failed to recognise ‘primavera’ and instead translated ‘abrió’ as April.
- Question 1b A large number of candidates did not understand ‘vegetariana’ and rendered it as ‘Italian’.
- Question 3a Many failed to grasp the concept of *inventing* a dish.
- Question 3b There was confusion surrounding the word ‘conmigo’, with many hearing ‘amigo’ instead.
- Questions 6 and 9 Again questions caused problems.
- Question 10 Few candidates recognised ‘ositos de peluche’.

Question 11 Candidates encountered real problems with this question. Many associated 'montón' with mountains and 'acostar' with the coast.

### **Listening – Foundation Level**

Question 1a A number of candidates failed to gain the mark in this question'. Many perhaps were unfamiliar with 'ustedes'.

Question 3a A disappointing number of candidates failed to understand 'sábado'.

Question 5a Candidates struggled again this year with the names of countries, many failing to recognise 'Alemania'.

Question 8 Very few candidates managed to understand the word 'tenedor'.

Question 11a Many candidates did not understand the word 'cocinero'.

Question 11b It was disappointing that many did not know 'pasatiempos'.

Question 13a Very few candidates managed to gain the mark for 'autocares', translating this as 'cars'.

### **Writing**

Some essays were too long, resulting in less accuracy. Choice of essay topic was also an important factor. For some candidates, traditional topic areas would have been more appropriate.

## **Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates**

### **Reading and Listening**

Much of this advice will be familiar to centres but is useful to emphasise.

The importance of reading both stimuli and questions cannot be stressed enough. Many marks are lost because candidates have not taken the time to work out exactly what is being asked and where in the text the answer is to be found.

Candidates should not overcomplicate their responses.

Candidates should be made aware that in many cases it is in the detail of answers that marks can be gained or lost, particularly at Credit Level.

Candidates must take the time to read over their answers to ensure that their English expression is clear.

Misuse of the dictionary is a real problem — candidates have a tendency to write down the first definition they find without considering other possibilities. Candidates should be aware of the importance of context in finding the correct meanings.

Candidates should not assume that because items of vocabulary resemble English words they actually are the same ('arena', 'recordar', 'datos').

Much of the vocabulary being tested in both Reading and Listening papers is basic — numbers, food, clothes, weather, family, etc — and candidates should be encouraged to learn this.

Question words occur regularly in external assessments, and centres should reinforce them at every opportunity.

Once again marks were lost to the Extraneous Rule. Centres should ensure that candidates are aware of this.

## **Writing**

In Writing, it is important that tasks and topics chosen should be appropriate to the level of ability of the individual. For example, topics such as 'Myself' will not necessarily provide sufficient scope for more able candidates. On the other hand, there were instances this year where candidates struggled to cope with topics on film.

Centres should also be aware of asking candidates to write too much. Many candidates were disadvantaged by excessively long pieces which effectively self-penalise — generally, the more candidates write the more errors they make.

Finally centres must ensure that materials which may be required for evidentiary purposes accurately reflect the demands of the course. Prelim papers must contain the correct number of supported marks; total marks for papers should match the final exam; there must be at least one passage on the world of work at every level in Reading; and Reading texts must be composed of continuous prose (lists of recipe ingredients, place names, etc are not suitable). More importantly, the level of demand must be appropriate: stimuli must be of adequate length; answers in Spanish are not appropriate ('fiesta', 'paella', 'chorizo', 'sombbrero', etc).

For further guidance on this, centres should consult the Specimen Question Papers available on SQA's website. It is also of fundamental importance that marking instructions are adhered to, and that all the required evidence (including Listening Transcripts) is submitted when required.

**Statistical information: update on Courses**

**STANDARD GRADE**

<b>Number of resulted entries in 2012</b>	3263
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<b>Number of resulted entries in 2013</b>	3814
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**Statistical Information: Performance of candidates**

**Distribution of overall awards**

Grade 1	16.6%
Grade 2	27.6%
Grade 3	24.2%
Grade 4	19.4%
Grade 5	9.6%
Grade 6	1.9%
Grade 7	0.0%
No award	0.6%

**Grade boundaries for each assessable element in the subject included in the report**

Assessable Element	Credit Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		General Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		Foundation Max Mark	Grade Boundaries
		1	2		3	4		5
R	26	18	13	32	19	13	33	20
L	25	15	10	26	13	10	27	15