

OCR Report to Centres

January 2012

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of candidates of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, OCR Nationals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new specifications to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support, which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

© OCR 2012

Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications
PO Box 5050
Annesley
NOTTINGHAM
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 770 6622
Facsimile: 01223 552610
E-mail: publications@ocr.org.uk

CONTENTS

Advanced GCE Spanish (H477)

Advanced Subsidiary GCE Spanish (H077)

OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

Content	Page
F721/01, 02, 03 Speaking	1
F722 Spanish: Listening, Reading and Writing 1	4
F724 Listening, Reading & Writing 2	8

F721/01, 02, 03 Speaking

General Comments

The overall standard of candidates' performance was encouraging for this series.

In Section A, teachers should allow and encourage a real exchange to develop so that the task goes beyond a series of comprehension questions and answers. The initial questions asked by the candidate were done somewhat better and candidates generally transmitted essential content well.

There was evidence that a real attempt had been made to widen and encourage the use of higher-level structures – including subjunctives – particularly in Section B.

Section A

The majority of candidates correctly identified the principal points and, at a higher level, specific points of detail.

Response to examiner was variable. Many candidates tailored the information to the actual needs of the examiner in client role and remembered to recommend, suggest or reassure, and gained credit accordingly. Those who relied on the teacher / examiner to maintain momentum or who recited some prepared answers or read literal translations from the text did not achieve higher marks on Grid B.

Most candidates responded satisfactorily to the two extension questions on themes relating to the role play. Those who had used the preparation time well to consider the issues showed imagination gave appropriate examples and justified opinions.

Role play A:

The context and the content of stimulus material were well understood. Many candidates worked through the information in the order it appeared and covered a high proportion of the content points.

Nearly all candidates mentioned the transformation of industrial wasteland to a new park and most gave a good account of the various areas of the park. The information that you could watch events free on the large screens provided was not always given.

Some prompting was needed to clarify those events taking place away from London, though once these were established the majority of candidates grasped the opportunity afforded to explore other areas.

Most candidates included the point that more than eight million tickets would be available, though there was some difficulty with *millones de* ..., and some hesitated over *mil / millón / millones*.

Although most candidates warned against bogus web sites, they did not always stress the existence or advisability of using official agencies.

Ways of getting to the site were generally covered, though the fact that the public transport links had been improved or that the cycle routes were safe proved to be a good discriminator. Most candidates mentioned the fact that parking would be difficult or **restricted; better candidates** linked this to persuasion that public transport / walking / cycling might be an appropriate option.

The extension questions were done competently.

Role play B:

The nature of the switchover was generally understood and conveyed. Discriminating information proved to be that the timetable would vary according to region and the fact that you could check the actual date on a web site.

The benefits of a greater choice of programmes were clearly conveyed and candidates used a number of ways to express successfully the new features such as on-screen information and subtitles.

Not all candidates included that you would have to pay for certain facilities.

The need to convert all sets was generally covered but not necessarily that *todo pasará sin problemas*.

Prompting was sometimes needed to get information about the help available to certain categories of people (elderly, with disabilities) and about radio / satellite reception. Most candidates were able to give at least essential information regarding these and the clarity with which the points were made was a useful differentiator.

The extension questions about candidates' views on television allowed scope for a range of answers.

Although the context of the role play may have seemed more challenging at first sight, linguistically this did not prove to be so. Inconsistency where present was in general accuracy rather than in context-related lexis: numbers – 2016 (*dos mil y dieciséis*, even *veinte dieciséis*), genders (*programa, televisión, radio*); how to convey to work (use of *trabajar* rather than *funcionar*).

Role play C:

Nearly all candidates said where the festival was held but not all conveyed that it was an annual event, or that it had been taking place since 1995. Most grasped the combination of food and having a good time but the festival's essential purpose of promoting local produce / producers was not always clear.

The main attractions were correctly given. Some points of detail were sometimes missing, for example, that certain routes were signposted or that the exhibitors were essentially small or independent concerns.

All candidates mentioned transport options and the information about the availability or convenience of combined rail and festival tickets proved to be a good discriminator.

The general questions about organising the day and the importance of the quality of food gave a selection of answers and views.

Language challenges included numbers (1995, 130 – use of *cien / ciento*); *y*; stall (*puesto*) – *tienda* being the default option and occasionally – castle. Where candidates did not know 'demonstration', 'talks' or 'open-air' they nevertheless offered suitable periphrases to convey the idea.

Section B

Candidates were generally well prepared and usually had plenty of essential information. There were very few instances of topics that did not refer to a Spanish-speaking context.

Interaction with the examiner is important and the discussion should be encouraged to develop: all candidates should be given the opportunity to respond to the unexpected to gain access to the full range of marks available for Grid E1.

Grid D assesses relevant ideas and the candidate's ability to put the information to good use to develop or substantiate a point of view. Many candidates had given attention to this and could focus on the points that gave rise to opinions. Occasionally, there was over emphasis on factual content or description, to the detriment of a more discursive approach. Readiness to deal with more abstract concepts was an important differentiator.

The pronunciation of many candidates was good or very good. Intonation and stress sometimes suffered, particularly if candidates were giving prepared answers.

Quality of language was generally competent. Range of structure is improving, but there is still a need for candidates to concentrate on accuracy in the more basic language: verb endings, agreements and genders sometimes caused problems for otherwise quite good candidates.

F722 Spanish: Listening, Reading and Writing 1

General Comments

The mixed skills paper provided opportunities for candidates of varying levels of ability. Candidates understood the spoken and written texts and displayed knowledge of vocabulary and structures appropriate to this level of examination, although correct usage was not always maintained in written answers.

There were very few signs that candidates experienced difficulties with time management. Candidates were able to communicate ideas effectively especially in the transfer of meaning exercise in Task 4, and also in Task 7.

Task 7 was not always answered as required. 7(a) is a test in paraphrasing the stimulus text, and it is in 7(b) that the candidate should respond with personal ideas and opinions to the question which has been asked.

Answers were generally well presented, but there were some instances of inconsistent spelling and punctuation. Some candidates offered alternative answers, particularly in objective tests and this should be discouraged.

Comments on Individual Questions

TAREA 1

This task required candidates to read carefully the gapped text before listening. Applying grammar rules might have led to improved marks for some candidates. There was confusion between *pasado* and *último*, and *próximo* in (a). The only verbs available for (b) were all in the past tense. The correct responses and distractors *torneo* and *trofeo*, and *obtuvo* and *no tuvo* gave good discrimination between candidates, as did *mente*.

TAREA 2

Candidates did well on this task. Statements (c), (j) and (s) caused some difficulty.

TAREA 3

Candidates responded well to the less formal nature of the recorded message and appeared to relate well to the subject matter. Candidates needed to respond in clear, unambiguous English as the mark scheme did not allow vague and imprecise answers.

(a) This was answered successfully; most candidates got the two marks.

(b) This was also done well, and precise answers were needed for the second mark. An answer such as 'How much does it cost to study at a Spanish university?' was not sufficient.

(c) Candidates who got both marks on this question did not confuse 'school' with 'university' and correctly stated that 'parents like children to continue living with them'.

- (d) A full response with three elements, ('sharing', 'rented accommodation', 'expensive'), was needed to get the mark.
- (e) Candidates did well when they gave a suitable English word for *solicitudes*, and established the link between 'subjects' and 'job'.
- (f) Candidates were able to state correctly that there was a lot of unemployment in Alicia's country but they also needed to add the all important fact that these were unemployed people with educational qualifications.
- (g) This question proved to be accessible to most.
- (h) To get the three marks for this question, candidates needed to recognize *moda* correctly in *pasados de moda*, that *relación* had the meaning of 'ratio' and to express *no son pocos* correctly.

TAREA 4

Candidates were able to transfer the meaning of the essential points of the message successfully. The everyday English expressions 'Lovely to hear from you' and 'Let me know how you get on' proved to be good discriminators, whereas all candidates were successful in communicating, often ingeniously, the notion of 'gap year'.

The message offered opportunities for candidates to use more complex structures, e.g. the subjunctive after 'I hope that' and 'my parents want me to', and also a gerund after *seguir* or *continuar*. Common points of confusion included *lo siento* being the same as *siento que*, *llama* being used for *llamada*, *dígame* for 'let me know' in an informal message, and *prefería* for *prefiero* / *preferiría*.

TAREA 5

Candidates got good marks on this objectively tested reading comprehension exercise. Performance on this task was often a good indicator of performance on the whole paper.

TAREA 6

This was an excellent test of candidates' linguistic progress; it tested reading comprehension and the grammatical skills needed to construct an accurate answer. Answers required an element of language manipulation. Language from the text can be used to form an answer if appropriately manipulated.

- (a) Most candidates got the mark; an appropriate verb was needed to accompany *única*. There were also some excellent paraphrases, e.g. *opinó que no hay otra experiencia igual*.
- (b) Good answers here used a simple infinitive construction, e.g. *para hacer un curso allí* to express comprehension.
- (c) This proved to be much more of a challenge and, therefore, a good discriminator, with *acceder* and *socios* causing difficulties of understanding.
- (d) There was confusion of *hace cuatro años* for *desde hace cuatro años*.

- (e) Candidates who had fully understood were able to give a correct answer, containing variations on *mandar / mandó un correo*.
- (f) There were many excellent answers to express the notion of 'no time at all'.
- (g) Many candidates got the two marks for noting that Hernán's holidays coincided with the dates of the course.
- (h) Candidates readily identified the reference to the *colega* in the text, but were not always able to give a coherent reason as to why this person was mentioned. Difficulties may have stemmed from the need to form a passive construction such as *el colega fue el otro seleccionado por el círculo*. Although this was avoidable, e.g. *el círculo seleccionó a otro colega también*.
- (i) Candidates who gave precise answers about how the sporting press of Argentina was compared with that of Uruguay got the mark here.
- (j) Most candidates were rewarded for noting that Hernán learnt about the culture of Cuba, but they needed to note also that he made friends with other foreign journalists.
- (k) This was a challenging question and it could be answered by a simple manipulation of the phrase in the text: *que la experiencia se le presentará otra vez*.
- (l) This was a demanding and discriminating two mark question. Candidates needed to note the requirement of 'being a good sports journalist', and qualify this with the necessary 'experience'.

TAREA 7

To answer (a) a paraphrase is needed of those parts of the stimulus text which the question targets. There is no need to attempt to interpret the text, draw conclusions or offer any personal opinions. In (b) candidates are free to express as many ideas and viewpoints as they can which are relevant as a response to the question.

7(a)

Candidates were able to show good understanding of this problem page scenario. There were numerous essential points to communicate about the difficulties that Ignacio was having with his parents and in the solution suggested by the psychologist.

As with Tarea 4, candidates could communicate their understanding of the text, even though their language may have been inconsistent. Difficulties were in converting the verbs to the third person form necessary for the summary, and vocabulary errors such as *sentido* for *sentimiento* and *letra* for *carta*.

7(b)

It is always a good technique to jot down a rough plan before writing the personal response. The best approach is to consider both sides of the argument and then decide which one should be favoured.

Candidates showed considerable agreement in their views on the need for parental boundaries and how these should be put into practice. Most started by explaining why such boundaries are necessary, especially at an early age when children are at risk and need to be protected from danger.

The subsequent views were that: boundaries should be relaxed with age, so that the child can learn for him or herself, and also from making mistakes, that adolescents should be given further independence, but should also conform to certain family rules and that rules were necessary to encourage study, future employment and generally fulfilling a role in society.

There was similar widespread agreement that an absence of control, or indeed an excess of it, as in the case of Ignacio would lead to lack of respect for parents, social problems, and ultimately to drink, drugs and crime.

A number of candidates quoted relevant experiences from within their own families to illustrate their points of view. Marks were awarded to those who offered a range of views and those who were able to develop their opinions.

Quality of written language was assessed for accuracy and range over both (a) and (b). In (a) good responses were fluent, third person summaries. The personal response in (b) offered candidates the main opportunity in the examination to show the full extent of their written Spanish capabilities. Many took this opportunity and included more complex structures e.g. *es importante/necesario que*, conditional clauses after *si* etc. and to use vocabulary and phrases appropriate to developing, supporting and linking arguments. Many candidates produced pieces of extended writing which were a pleasure to read.

F724 Listening, Reading & Writing 2

General Comments

There was a relatively small number of candidates for this series. In Section A Listening and Section B Reading, there was a wide range of performance. There was evidence that some candidates had been entered for this paper without a full experience of practice of similar question types from past papers; the synonym exercise and the transfer of meaning exercise produced some surprisingly low marks. There was a pattern of candidates' reproducing the original text – whether heard or read – as the answer to a question, rather than reading the question and selecting the appropriate information needed for a relevant answer. In Section C Writing performance was generally not good.

Tarea 1

- (a) Correct answers mentioned the lower price.
- (b) Some candidates did not find the correct English for '*ingresos limitados*'. A pensioner cannot be said to live on 'limited incomes'.
- (c) A few answers missed the negative.
- (d) Generally good answers, although not all recognised the Spanish for glasses or an optician.
- (e) The idea of '*campaña*' was sometimes misinterpreted as a protest in favour of prices being lowered.
- (f), (g) and (h): generally correct answers although not all candidates recognised the Spanish for unemployed people.
- (i) To get the mark here, candidates needed to understand that it was the only one to have the offer. Incorrect responses concentrated instead on the size of the shop.

Task 2

- (a) Correct responses included the two verbs and a reference to the jeans
- (b) The idea of using the stones and sand in a process to produce the effect was needed here.
- (c) The idea of absenteeism from work was needed to get the mark.
- (d) Transcription of '*este método*' was not sufficient to answer the question; an adjective such as '*tradicional*' was needed.
- (e) This presented few problems.
- (f) The passive was needed here and the correct spelling or transfer of the original sound.
- (g) and (h) These presented few problems; some candidates resorted to partial transcription (e.g. using '*energético*' as a noun) which did not work.
- (i) Generally sound, but again there was inaccurate transcription, e.g. '*jamón, japon*' or '*carbón* for *jabón*'.

- (j) The question required a response about the end of the process only.
- (k) This was usually answered well, although extraneous information was given.
- (l) Generally good responses.

Tarea 3

- (a) Correct answers required the word 'en'.
- (c) This question discriminated well as not all candidates knew the vocabulary.
- (b) and (d) were generally answered well.

Tarea 4

This exercise is essentially one to test comprehension of part of the passage. It usually requires the verb forms to be correct and in an appropriate tense, as dictated by the passage.

If candidates did not get marks, it was because verb endings were incorrect either through tense choice or grammatical error. Performance varied considerably.

Tarea 5

Candidates who read the text with care were successful in this exercise.

Tarea 6

- (a) and (b) generally presented few problems.
- (c) The point here was to detect evidence of the importance the president gave to the task.
- (d), (e) and (f): There were generally sound answers although the glasses and the videos seemed to be a source of difficulty for some candidates..
- (g), (h) and (i) were challenging questions requiring close reading of the text and rephrasing to produce the clearest answers.

Tarea 7

The text contained a range of different challenges, from the simple to the demanding. This is an exercise type where regular practice produces noticeably improved results.

Tarea 8

Candidates were successful in this task when they gave an explanation in Spanish without using the original words in the phrase given; so it was necessary to find alternatives particularly for 'país', 'temperaturas', 'consecuencias'.

Tarea 9

Generally candidates succeeded in providing the correct information in a form which followed grammatically from the stem.

- (a) and (b) were generally sound, error came from using present participles after the verb *ser*.
- (c) Correct responses used an appropriate verb; error came from using the verb '*serán*' followed by a place.
- (d) Successful candidates here used an appropriate future tense or a present tense in a phrase referring to the future.

Tarea 10

Answers were generally good, but candidates who copied an inappropriate part of the original text did not get a mark.

- (a) The idea of not being prepared was necessary here.
- (b) It was important to include 'Spain' in the response.
- (c) The full response including the emission of gases was required.
- (e) The ecosystem specifically needed to be mentioned here, not the whole Mediterranean.
- (f) A suitable verb was needed in order to have an answer with a clear meaning.
- (g) A paraphrase and not a direct transcription was needed to get the mark here.
- (h) Correct answers reflected the idea that this action would cause a rise in temperatures.
- (i) This was a challenging but reasonable question which discriminated well between candidates.

Section C

The value of good essay planning skills was obvious in the better essays, where a small amount of relevant knowledge was put to good use to answer the question set, with specific examples from a Spanish context. Some candidates appeared to ignore the question, writing either about the topic area in general or relying heavily on work prepared before the examination.

Achievement in the quality of language in the essay was very varied. Some candidates produced better language in Sections A and B than in Section C.

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

Education and Learning

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored

Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations
is a Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered in England
Registered Office; 1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU
Registered Company Number: 3484466
OCR is an exempt Charity

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
Head office
Telephone: 01223 552552
Facsimile: 01223 552553

© OCR 2012

