

2012 HSC Notes from the Marking Centre – Spanish

Contents

Introduction	2
General comments	2
Dictionary use	2
Self-identification	2
Word limits	2
Use of prepared material	3
Use of Notes column	3
Beginners	3
Oral examination	3
Written examination	3
Section I – Listening	3
Section II – Reading	4
Section III – Writing in Spanish	5
Continuers	6
Speaking skills	6
General comments	6
Written examination	7
Section I – Listening and responding	7
Specific comments	7
Section II – Reading and responding	7
Section III – Writing in Spanish	9
Extension	10
Speaking skills	10
General comments	10
Section I – Response to prescribed text	11
General comments	11
Section II – Writing in Spanish	12
General comments	12

Introduction

This document has been produced for the teachers and candidates of the Stage 6 courses in Spanish. It contains comments on candidate responses to the 2012 Higher School Certificate examinations, indicating the quality of the responses and highlighting their relative strengths and weaknesses.

This document should be read along with the relevant syllabuses, the 2012 Higher School Certificate examinations, the marking guidelines and other support documents developed by the Board of Studies to assist in the teaching and learning of Spanish.

General comments

Questions will sometimes require the direct translation of material, while other questions will ask for information to be interpreted in some way. In every case, it is essential that candidates answer the questions and refrain from including large amounts of extraneous and repetitive material.

Candidates need to be aware that the marks allocated to the question and the answer space (where this is provided on the examination paper) are guides to the length of the required response. A longer response will not in itself lead to higher marks. Writing far beyond the indicated space may reduce the time available for answering other questions.

Candidates need to be familiar with the Board's [Glossary of Key Words](#), which contains some terms commonly used in examination questions. However, candidates should also be aware that not all questions will start with or contain one of the key words from the glossary. Questions such as 'how?', 'why?' or 'to what extent?' may be asked, or verbs that are not included in the glossary may be used, such as 'design', 'translate' or 'list'.

Dictionary use

Poor use of dictionaries was an issue. Candidates need to contextualise the meaning from the choices given in the dictionary. When looking for an English equivalent, candidates must ensure that they choose the correct equivalent part of speech as well as most appropriate meaning. Candidates are reminded to cross-reference words from the English–Spanish dictionary with its complement in the Spanish–English dictionary.

Self-identification

Candidates must not identify themselves, their school or their teachers in their written responses. If the question asks you to thank a teacher, describe a school or draft a letter to a friend, you should not include any identifying detail.

Word limits

Candidates are reminded that it is possible to gain full marks within the prescribed word limit for a writing task. Nothing is gained by unnecessarily long responses which often contain irrelevant material, are poorly structured and repetitive. Candidates are reminded of the importance of taking time to prepare and structure their written responses in Spanish. This is far more important than writing excessively beyond the word limit.

Use of prepared material

Careful and intelligent inclusion of prepared material directly relevant to the writing task can be very effective. Material, however, must be relevant to the task's purpose, context and audience. The inclusion of material that is irrelevant is a waste of candidate's time and is disregarded by markers.

Use of Notes column

Candidates must ensure that all relevant information contained in the Notes column is transferred to the lined section of the examination paper if they want this information to be considered as part of their response.

Beginners

Oral examination

Most candidates were able to sustain a five-minute conversation during which they answered a variety of questions related to their personal world. In better conversations, candidates conversed effectively, providing in-depth answers, used a range of vocabulary and controlled a variety of tenses (present, past, future and conditional). These candidates maintained fluency/flow of conversation, when the examiner changed topics, without demonstrating much hesitation. In some instances, candidates provided prepared responses that were unrelated to the questions asked by the examiner. Frequent errors were poor/incorrect verb usage and incorrect noun-adjective agreement. Candidates seemed to be challenged by questions using *vosotros*.

Written examination

Section I – Listening

Question 1

Most candidates identified that the siblings were talking about what gift to buy for their father's birthday. In weaker responses, candidates were confused with who *papá* was.

Question 2

Most candidates identified that Mrs Garcia was changing her mind about buying fruits. However, in weaker responses, candidates did not specify the reason why she took the pears instead of the apples.

Question 3

Most candidates provided some relevant information, eg 'the train was delayed'. However, many did not explain the purpose of the text, which was to inform passengers of the delay.

Question 6

Most candidates identified that the association provided help for the newly arrived migrants by offering English classes and social activities. However, in weaker responses, candidates did not state that the association also helped the migrants with finding a job.

Question 7

Most candidates identified that Rocco's band had achieved fame and that they had had humble beginnings. In better responses, candidates picked up on the music teacher's scepticism and the speed of the band's success.

Question 8

In better responses, candidates gave a perceptive analysis of the incompatibility in Lucia and Ricardo's relationship. However, in weaker responses candidates listed details, such as that Ricardo was late and they were unable to see the movie.

Question 9

Most candidates identified that Pablo was envious of Victor's work situation. However, only in the better responses did candidates demonstrate that they understood that Victor had made the decision to quit his job in order to travel the world.

Question 10

In weaker responses, candidates identified Monica's situation, for example, she is a violin student who needs to practice her instrument during the day. In better responses, candidates identified the context of the telephone conversation – that Nestor would not ring Monica back as she would not make a good flatmate.

Section II – Reading

General comments

Students are reminded to take care in the use of dictionaries. They are advised to read the individual texts and all the accompanying questions before consulting a dictionary. Reading the questions carefully, taking note of the marks and number of lines allocated for each question and then identifying the required information in the text itself, before starting to answer questions, is the best way to ensure that responses are relevant.

Question 11

Most candidates identified all the relevant details.

Question 12

Most candidates matched all four reactions with the judge's comments.

Question 13

- a. Most candidates identified that Luisa and Margot were friends. In better responses, candidates stated that they were in fact also neighbours.

- b. In better responses, candidates developed both the literal and the metaphorical meaning of the sun shining after the rain.

Question 14

- a. In better responses, candidates identified the fact that Carla could also ignore the people who were going to attend that she did not like.

In weaker responses, candidates identified some of the reasons used by Gabriela to convince Carla to go to the school reunion, such as that her best friends would be there as well as her favourite teacher, Mr Tito.

- b. Most candidates identified one experience from Carla's school life, such as wearing a uniform had taught her about the fact that you need to obey rules in life, even if you do not like them. However, in better responses, candidates clearly tied up the reasons for her positive outlook on life with many of her school experiences.

Question 15

- a. Most candidates identified the reasons why Josefina wrote the letter to Sole.
- b. Most candidates identified the reasons why Josefina moved to Veracruz.
- c. Many candidates identified that Josefina was not happy in Veracruz. However, only in better responses did candidates contrast many of her expectations with the reality of her current life situation.

Part B

Question 16

In better responses, candidates clearly addressed audience – members of the community, context – an advertisement on a community noticeboard and purpose – selling an item, describing it and leaving contact details.

Section III – Writing in Spanish

General comments

In better responses, candidates showed an ability to move between tenses very effectively and to use other language structures successfully. The word limit was generally respected and all the requirements of the questions were addressed. Candidates responded creatively and did not submit rote-learned answers. They adhered to the text format and organised information accordingly.

Question 17

In better responses, candidates clearly developed the following points to address the task: the text type – an informal email, the audience – a friend, the context – finding an old photo of yourself and a childhood friend and the purpose – remembering childhood memories.

Question 18

- a. In better responses, candidates wrote to their aunt in a Spanish-speaking country about what they would like to do when they go over to visit. In weaker responses, candidates wrote to a friend and did not necessarily detail what activities they wanted to do while visiting.
- b. In better responses, candidates wrote to a friend to tell them about the festivities they were planning to celebrate the end of year 12. In weaker responses, candidates tended to not necessarily centre on the celebrations but more on what they were going to do after they finished school.

Continuers

Speaking skills

General comments

Candidates need to be prepared to discuss and elaborate within each topic, showing some depth and a range of ideas rather than simply answering *sí* or *no*. In better responses, candidates conjugated verbs in the conditional tense correctly and used the subjunctive mood and hypothetical verb forms well.

Candidates should expect to be asked questions that seek to elicit a response in the X forms of conjugations in all tenses and not just expect to speak in the first person singular form.

Most candidates maintained a ten-minute conversation and provided responses to a variety of questions about their personal world. These candidates interacted confidently with the examiner and expected to be redirected by the examiner in order to cover a range of topics relating to their personal world.

In better responses, candidates elaborated confidently and fluently, showing an ability to manipulate language structures correctly in most situations. These candidates used complex language structures correctly to express their ideas, support their opinions and at times express original thoughts and ideas. They also demonstrated an ability to respond to a wide range of questions especially when a topic was explored in some depth. In better responses, candidates expressed opinions, reflections and comments on a range of topics in an authentic and spontaneous way using correct intonation and pronunciation in Spanish.

Candidates are reminded that adjectives must agree in number and gender with nouns.

In weaker responses, candidates limited their responses to learnt and prepared responses without tailoring these responses to the specifics of the question. Others simply provided a list or responded with a statement in the affirmative or the negative. These candidates often resorted to using dialect and/or English words or syntax. Candidates are reminded they should be prepared to add depth to a topic by justifying and/or expanding on their comments and opinions.

Written examination

Section I – Listening and responding

Specific comments

Better responses were concise and specific. Candidates need to read each question carefully and pay attention to answering what has been asked, not just providing detail from the text. It is important that students answer all questions in Section 1 – Listening and Responding in English. Candidates need to be aware that the Notes column is not part of the answer and they must transfer any relevant information in it to the answer space.

Question 1

Some candidates answered part of the question in Spanish.

Question 3

For some candidates, the expression *correo electrónico* led to confusion and resulted in answers identifying electronics as something that could be won.

Question 6

In better responses, candidates explained the changes in Miguel's tone rather than listing how Miguel felt. These responses also included adequate reference from the text explaining the change in Miguel's tone.

In weaker responses, candidates based their answer solely on the voice of the speaker in this item and were not able to interpret the language material.

Question 7

In better responses, candidates answered the question and gave supporting details to illustrate the likelihood of Christina getting the job.

In weaker responses, candidates responded to this question by describing language techniques as form of justifying their response with reference from the text.

Question 8

Most candidates identified details providing at least a partial response to the question.

In better responses, candidates moved beyond the listing of information by analysing the language and outlining the process that has taken place for the speaker.

Section II – Reading and responding

Candidates are advised to read all the questions before responding. They are encouraged to highlight key words from a question as well as the sections of the text that are pertinent to a question before answering. Many candidates included evidence from the texts, but this must be relevant and paraphrased or translated in order to demonstrate a candidate's full understanding of

the material. Candidates are reminded that responses in the Section II – Reading and Responding, Part A are in English.

In better responses, candidates expressed themselves concisely, providing clear links with the texts and supporting their responses with appropriate and unambiguous examples drawn from them.

In weaker responses, candidates translated parts of the texts and did not always show a sufficiently deep understanding of the content in relation to what was being asked in the questions.

Question 9

a. Most candidates identified all relevant information.

In weaker responses, candidates did not grasp the concept of a ‘catchy’ name.

b. In better responses, candidates identified the relevant achievements, especially the fact that Dora Diva has won a singing/music competition.

In weaker responses, some candidates did not understand Dora Diva had published a novel. The expression *me convertí* was translated literally which did not make sense in this context.

c. In better responses, candidates articulated the idea of change in the interview due to the comment.

d. In weaker responses, candidates presented their ideas in an unorganised way. Responses lacked adequate reference to the text and did not identify the idea of change in the interview.

Question 10

a. In better responses, candidates clearly all identified relevant information.

In weaker responses, candidates did not identify the fact that Luis Galán was also an actor.

b. In better responses, candidates clearly identified Anton’s criticism.

In weaker responses, candidates did not identify the hypocrisy of asking people to respect their privacy after having reached fame due to exposing their private lives to millions of viewers.

c. In better responses, candidates clearly compared and contrasted Bruno’s and Cecilia’s opinions and also identified the common ground of their points of view.

In weaker responses, candidates resorted to a translation of the relevant parts in the text and lacked interpretation of the ideas

d. Most students identified the correct answer.

e. In better responses, candidates interpreted the text and identified the element of compassion/sympathy/respect added to the discussion by Daniel and Eva.

In weaker responses, candidates did not answer the question and recounted the text without linking their ideas. They did provide an analysis of how the contributions of Daniel and Eva had contributed to the blog.

Part B

General comments

Candidates are reminded that this question is a reading as well as a responding task that requires them not only to identify and respond to specific cues, but to show a global understanding of the text. Candidates are advised not to transcribe sections of the text but respond to the task using their own words and expressions.

Candidates are reminded to learn key phrases of opinion such as ‘to agree/disagree’, ‘to be of the opinion’ as well as others that can be useful for pieces of writing, eg ‘to change one’s mind’, ‘to make a decision’, ‘to have a discussion’ or ‘to leave a place/someone behind’.

Question 11

Most candidates demonstrated an understanding of the stimulus text by responding in an appropriate manner to the key points.

In better responses, candidates manipulated language creatively and authentically, and included all key points in the text:

- following parents’ advice to travel to Guadalajara to take up scholarship
- taking a gap year to travel to Europe with friend Camilo
- staying with his new love Marcela.

They also included a clear, in-depth explanation of the reasons for the decision taken. Ideas were well organised, a range of tenses were used and there was adherence to the word requirement. These responses were characterised by the use of a varied vocabulary and a range of expressions.

In weaker responses, candidates tended to focus on fewer aspects of the text and did not respond in depth to explain the reasons for having made the decision. These responses lacked variety, did not include correct vocabulary, syntax and grammar, and displayed a lack of good dictionary skills. These responses also contained errors in gender/number agreements, conjugation of verbs and the use of appropriate tenses and register.

Section III – Writing in Spanish

General comments

Candidates are reminded that the suggested word length is part of the task requirements. It is not advantageous to write more than is required. The best responses did not exceed the word length; they were succinct, to the point and relevant. Emails that were too long demonstrated inadequate planning and poor selection of material that often was not relevant to the question.

Candidates are reminded that they specifically need to address the task with well-selected information. Many responses that demonstrated an extensive knowledge of Spanish had; however, some parts which were irrelevant to the question.

Question 12

Better responses were thoughtful, planned, well-structured, logically developed and met required word length. Candidates clearly described their experience at the farewell luncheon rather than just recounting the event. They demonstrated an accurate and authentic use of structures and a

variety of vocabulary and expressions. They wrote effectively in relation to the audience, purpose and context.

In weaker responses, candidates relied on a physical description of the food eaten or the people at the farewell party, but had difficulty describing their own experience in terms of emotions. These responses presented common grammatical errors that included mistakes in verb and noun agreement, word order (especially in subordinate clauses) and past participles.

Question 13

In better responses, candidates addressed the requirements of both questions. They demonstrated an ability to construct variety of sentence structures and tenses (eg *si* clauses, expressions in the subjunctive mood, rhetorical questions), appropriate idioms and expressions, and use a broad range of relevant vocabulary.

In weaker responses to part (a), candidates did not fully refer to how the readers' lives would be affected by travel to a Spanish-speaking country, but instead merely described the advantages of going to a Spanish-speaking country. Similarly, in weaker responses to part (b), candidates did not fully reflect on 'the skills and values' acquired at school that could be of use in the future. Among the most common grammatical mistakes were: the inconsistent use of *tú/usted*, basic conjugation of verbs in the present tense, incorrect use of prepositions and basic errors with adjectival agreements.

Extension

Speaking skills

General comments

In better responses, candidates presented and developed a logical and well-structured argument, supported by a range of relevant examples, and demonstrated a sophisticated vocabulary and range of grammatical structures, using correct intonation and pronunciation. These candidates planned their argument, made reference to the question being answered as often as appropriate and addressed all parts of the question.

In weaker responses, candidate responses were simplistic. Candidates talked about different types of technology without explaining how technology makes meaningful communication more challenging. They did not structure their responses effectively and often repeated themselves.

Candidates are advised to clearly state their position in the introduction and support their argument with a range of relevant, well-developed examples. Candidates are also advised to use linking words to connect ideas in order to present a coherent monologue.

Question 1

In better responses, candidates discussed a range of ideas and linked them sequentially and logically.

In weaker responses, candidates discussed the issue in a very simplistic way, using examples such as ‘having friends from different cultures’ and confusing ‘refugees’ with ‘immigrants’. These candidates displayed a limited understanding and knowledge of the issue.

Candidates are advised to clearly state their position in the introduction and support their argument with a range of relevant, well-developed examples. They are advised to use a variety of synonyms and avoid the repetition of the same word, expression or grammatical structure throughout the monologue.

Question 2

In better responses, candidates addressed all parts of the question, focusing on the key words, eg social media, meaningful communication or challenging. These candidates presented and supported their point of view in a logical, sequential way. They understood communication as not simply staying in contact, but also understanding one another on a deeper, philosophical level. In the better responses, candidates provided focused and relevant examples to effectively illustrate their argument.

In weaker responses, candidates discussed social media, but were unable to link it effectively to meaningful communication. Some candidates misinterpreted the term ‘social media’ and only discussed media in general.

In the case of a question with multiple parts, candidates are advised to address both parts in order to provide a comprehensive response.

Candidates should avoid the repetition of ideas and examples.

Section I – Response to prescribed text

General comments

Candidates should ensure that they are thoroughly familiar with the details of the extracts and that they have a good understanding of the characters and the motives for their behaviour. Before beginning their responses, candidates are advised to take time to plan its content and structure.

Most candidates demonstrated an understanding of the film’s prescribed issues as well as the settings and the characters. This was evident in their perceptive interpretations and analyses of the extracts. However, in general, relevant examples to support their answers were lacking.

Better prepared candidates demonstrated the ability to make the link between both parts of the question; in this case, between the visual effects and the director’s purpose.

Question 1

- a. In better responses, candidates provided sufficient evidence to show that they understood the question, but many candidates failed to clearly interpret the real purpose behind Ernesto’s questions to Alberto.
- b. In general, in better responses, candidates clearly contrasted Ernesto’s privileged background with the existence of the couple looking for work in the mines.
- c. Better prepared candidates showed a very good understanding of the social justice issues but weaker candidates were unable to express how the issue was presented in the scene.

Some candidates did not compare the reasons for the couple, and Ernesto and Alberto being in the same place.

- d. A few candidates did not have a clear understanding of ‘visual’ (light, shots and colour) and answered generally about the techniques used instead of specifically analysing the lighting. Most candidates limited their response to include a mention of the light and one or two shots, but failed to address the visual effect of ‘colour’.

Question 2

In better responses, candidates provided a perceptive response, reflecting on Silvia and her reaction to her encounter with Ernesto, using appropriate language, tone and accurate references from the text. These candidates demonstrated originality and flair as well as the ability to manipulate language.

In weaker responses, candidates relied on retelling the movie, sometimes using references from the text incorrectly. A few candidates appeared to be writing about a different character. In these responses, it was evident that some candidates had only a limited knowledge of the movie and issues connected with the characters.

Section II – Writing in Spanish

General comments

Most candidates demonstrated wrote interesting articles that adequately met the demands of the task; however, some candidates did not write for the required audience.

While most candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the prescribed issues, the conventions of the essay text type proved to be challenging for some. Some candidates were unclear about the differences between an article and an essay.

Question 3

In better responses, candidates demonstrated a very good interaction with the audience through the use of rhetorical questions and sophisticated language, showing depth in their responses, ie giving informed explanations and examples to support their opinions. In weaker responses, candidates included some examples, but without sufficient depth and breadth of discussion.

In weaker responses, candidates relied on translations from the text rather than explanations.

Question 4

In better responses, candidates presented and developed a sophisticated, coherent argument to present their point of view. They supported their argument with relevant examples and explanations, while addressing the youth audience (for a youth magazine), purpose (essay) and context (the topic) appropriate to the question.

In weaker responses, candidates relied on learned material, without linking their ideas with the question. A number of responses did not adhere to the convention of the text type nor to the required word count.