



A-level Spanish Feedback on AS

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Autumn 2013

Structure of the session

Tackling the paper

Time allocation

Discussion of a listening and a reading question

Discussion of the grammar section

The Essay – some suggested teaching approaches

Break

Discussion of the essay question

Marking

Look at exemplar responses

Key issues for this web conference

- The listening and reading sections work well and are accessible to students.
- The grammar section (Q9) is not answered as well as perhaps it should be.
- The essay – how do my candidates get access to the highest marks?

Summer 2013 data

Grade	Boundary mark
Max	110
A	83
B	74
C	65
D	56
E	47

- Remember the grammar and essay questions together are worth 45 marks
- A perfect score on questions 1-8 will only reach grade C

Tackling the paper

- How do you advise your students to tackle the paper?
- Start with the listening, reading or essay?
- How much time do you allocate? 30/45/45?
- Paper allows for roughly one mark per minute – Important not to dwell too long on short answer questions.

Time allocation & the 20/80 rule

- time is not normally an issue for candidates on SPAN1
- there is a nominal 'advisory allocation of time' advice given
- 30 mins listening/ 45 mins reading/45 mins essay
- the essay needs the most planning
- the 20/80 rule

Listening/reading exercises – Q & A

- No need to manipulate the text – just lift.....
- ...but answer must be relevant to question – scatter gun approach won't work
- Numerals acceptable, no need to write out the word in full
- Comprehension exercises, so spellings do not have to be totally accurate
- Do we need to teach the skills?
- Which different types of exercise are set?

Listening/reading exercise types

- Q & A in English
- Q & A in Spanish
- Tick phrases from a list that correspond to text e.g. 7 from 14
- Recognition of numbers
- Vocabulary e.g. Shops where articles may be bought etc
- Synonyms
- Multiple-choice
- Cloze/gap fill exercise
- V/F/N True/False/Not mentioned
- ???

How can we best prepare our students for these exercises?

- Practise listening regularly
- Teach them the skills needed for different exercises, e.g.
 - use of highlighter
 - answers are usually chronological
 - synonyms aren't necessarily word for word
 - close your eyes when listening
- Give them reference materials to revise from
- Get them to devise exercises for themselves/each other
- Try the exercises in English first
- Read the rubric
- ?????

Listening question from summer exam (extract)

- a) ¿Quiénes han sido acusados de dañar computadoras?
- b) ¿Qué pudieron hacer con el virus?
- c) ¿Qué te enseñan los 25.000 videos en *YouTube*?
- d) ¿Por qué hizo la empresa española el experimento?

Listening question from summer exam (extract)

a) ¿Quiénes han sido acusados de dañar computadoras?

tres/3 argentinos (que viven en Barcelona)

b) ¿Qué pudieron hacer con el virus?

robar números de tarjetas de crédito

dañar (13 millones) de ordenadores/computadoras

c) ¿Qué te enseñan los 25.000 videos en *YouTube*?

explorar la información privada

hackear los ordenadores/computadoras

d) ¿Por qué hizo la empresa española el experimento?

estaba tan preocupada (por la situación) *estar needed/pres tense accepted*

Reading question from summer exam (extract)

a) ¿Cuáles son tus vicios personales cuando usas Internet?

A	No me siento tan implulsiva con la ropa y los zapatos que llevo ahora mismo
B	Compro cosas en línea que no consideraría si estuviera en las tiendas reales
C	Sólo gastaron dinero en cosas inútiles que no necesita nadie

b) ¿Haces todas las tareas de la casa al estar navegando tanto tiempo?

A	Sí. Echo de menos a mis padres y hermanos pero lo compartimos igualmente.
B	Afortunadamente, hay mucho que planchar urgentemente este año.
C	No hay duda de que hago menos ahora con respecto a la limpieza del hogar.

Question 9 – Grammar Exercises

- What are the issues here?
- Why do many candidates perform poorly?
- What is the marking policy?
- What types of questions are set?
- How can students be best prepared?

Question 9 – Grammar (extract)

- a. Si tienen tiempo mañanaal gimnasio después de terminar sus clases.
(ir)
- b. ¿..... veces has comido en McDonalds esta semana? **(Cuánto)**
- c. Muchas personas se casan muy jóvenes y pronto se sienten
(infeliz)
- d. Mi abuelo quiere que todos sus nietos le en Marbella este verano.
(visitar)
- e. Cuando éramos jóvenes mis hermanos y yotodos los días **(pelear)**
- f. Elena y Pablo han de su luna de miel. **(volver)**

Question 9 – Grammar (extract)

- a. Si tienen tiempo mañana, **irán/van a ir/van** al gimnasio después de terminar sus clases. **(ir)**
- b. ¿**Cuántas** veces has comido en McDonalds esta semana? **(Cuánto)**
- c. Muchas personas se casan muy jóvenes y pronto se sienten **infelices**. **(infeliz)**
- d. Mi abuelo quiere que todos sus nietos le **visiten/visitemos** en Marbella este verano **(visitar)**
- e. Cuando éramos jóvenes mis hermanos y yo **(nos) peleábamos** todos los días **(pelear)**
- f. Elena y Pablo han **vuelto** de su luna de miel. **(volver)**

The SPAN1 essay question

1. Choosing the right essay – Essay styles
2. Planning & Content
 - How much to write?
 - How should it be structured?
 - Introductions and Conclusions
3. Vocabulary, Structures, Accuracy
4. How does one teach candidates to write essays?
5. Marking! Ticks
6. Exemplars

1. Choosing the right essay

- Students will have a choice of titles on three out of the four topic area studied.
- At 35 marks the essay is worth 4 grades, so choice of title is important
- How to choose: have I enough ideas to write 200+ words on this topic?
- Can I think of plenty of examples to illustrate my points?
- Have I a broad range of topic vocabulary for my chosen essay question?

Essay Styles

Two main styles of essay:

1. Opposing arguments with straightforward structure:

¿Cuál es lo bueno y lo malo de nuestra dieta hoy en día?

2. Discussion of a topic or current issue – structure not as obvious:

**En tu opinión, ¿qué tipos de problemas existen en las familias de hoy?
¿ Hay soluciones?**

2. Planning and content

- How much should be written? How many paragraphs?
- Developing ideas
- The planning sheet
- Securing the ticks
- Facts, evidence, examples, personal opinions
- SDOR (FJ)
- Depth of treatment and justification of ideas.

2. Planning and content

- How much should be written?
- A minimum of 200 words, no maximum
- Everything written will be marked
- What is an optimum length essay?
- ???
- How should an essay be structured?
- 5/6 paragraphs?
- Introduction & Conclusion

Introductions and Conclusions

- What is an introduction?
- Brevity: avoid specific information
- What is a conclusion?
- Brevity: avoid repetition or new ideas
- End with a sentence that forms a clear summary of what student thinks
- OR, end with a rhetorical question?

The Essay Planning Sheet

- Is provided for every candidate
- Is not marked nor looked at by examiners
- What is its purpose then?
- It should be used by all candidates
- Why don't they use it?
- How can we train them to use it?
- What is in it?

What is a paragraph? How important is it?

S
D
O
R

State
Develop
Opinion
Reason

S
D
O
R
F
J

S tate

D evelop

O pinion

R eason

F act

J ustification

The Content Mark

“The content mark is determined by the candidate’s response to the task, i.e. the specific question set. It is clearly necessary to show a knowledge of the topic studied in order to give examples and evidence to support points, but no credit will be given for simply showing knowledge of the topic which is not relevant to the task.”

The Content Mark

- Answer the question
- Answer the question
- ...the whole question
- ...and nothing but the question



Good Content

- Facts (Statistics)
- Evidence
- Examples
- Opinions

Good Structures

- A range of tenses (where relevant)
- Gustar
- Personal 'a'
- Prepositions + infinitive
- ?????

Good Vocabulary

- Topic-specific vocabulary
- Good general vocabulary
- Some post-GCSE vocabulary

Good Accuracy

Accuracy or lack of accuracy is noted throughout the essay but is always seen in simple aspects of language such as:

- lack of accents / incorrect accents
- gender of nouns
- lack of adjectival agreement
- misunderstanding of the meaning of tenses
- incorrect use of capital and small letters

What candidates frequently get wrong in the AS essay

no... ni...ni

ojalá + subjunctive

irregular preterites

at!!!!

pero / sino

gustar especially
with named people

formation
of tenses

capital letters

personal 'a'

preterite of ir
radical-changing
verbs

there is / there was etc
(hay había hubo habrá)

tal / tales

y/e

prepositions +
INFINITIVE

there is / there was etc
(hay había hubo habrá)

accents

más que /
más de

this / that /
these/ those
+ esto / eso

gender of nouns:
(clima, agua, mano)

If !!

tan / tanto / tantos

orthographical changes
(llegar, empezar, etc)

o/u

Essay writing practice

- What experience of writing do AS MFL students have?
- When should students start to write essays?
- What's a paragraph?
- 100 words max for first term?
- How often?
- How does one develop essay writing skills?
- ??.

Marking

- A tick ✓ is placed in the text for a **relevant** point made
- e.g. Hay muchas problemas con la familia = NO ✓ (ignore grammar)
- **BUT** el alcohol hace mucho daño en la vida familiar = YES ✓ (“)
- the more ticks the better, BUT no numeric correlation between ticks & marks
- NR = irrelevant material
- rep = repeated point
- ? = lack of clarity
- do you use this method to mark your students' essays?

What qualities characterise a top band response?

- a relevant, well-structured essay that answers the question set
- a number of valid points, clearly expressed and expanded, with reasons, opinions and justifications
- a wide range of topic-specific vocabulary
- a very good variety of grammatical structures
- the Spanish is largely accurate although there may be a few basic errors

What students did less well

- Wrote essays which had not been thought through
- Did not answer the question set and sometimes appeared to write pre-learnt essays
- Made few valid points or did not express points clearly
- Did not offer enough topic specific vocabulary
- Showed an inability to use appropriate structures and linking words.
- Used inaccurate Spanish or used English or made up words.

Mid level students

What advice would you give these students?

- Praise the positives e.g. trying to answer the question set, essay structure, use of good expressions and vocab, correct verb forms and adjectives
- Give constructive advice for improvement
 - Write less to avoid rushing and waffling
 - Leave time for proof reading to improve accuracy
 - Use lots of topic specific vocabulary
 - Use synonyms to avoid repetition

Implications for teaching

- It should now be apparent how important it is to supply students with ideas, vocabulary and structures to include in their work
- For each of the sub-topics in the specification, students should prepare a bank of useful words, expressions and structures
- They should be encouraged to make notes in class so that they have a clear and comprehensible list of arguments on a variety of topics which they are then able to develop
- They need to know how to make the right essay choice!



Raising performance in class

- Ask students to research a sub-topic (they bring in items to discuss with the group and then identify useful vocabulary/expressions)
- Collaborative writing - students choose from 3 essays, then write an essay or part of an essay in pairs/small groups
- Students annotate their essays SDORFJ before handing in
- Students mark each others' essays before teacher using ✓ **etc**
- Examples of students' work (available on the AQA Website) can be discussed in class, examining strengths and weaknesses





A resource for knowledge / skill development

- The Post-conference Handbook contains:
- A selection of questions and essays with the marks given and a commentary.





Thank you
