



A-level Spanish

Skills & Strategies for the Speaking Tests

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Today's Programme

1. Conduct of Speaking Examinations
2. AS Oral Part 1 – Stimulus Cards
3. Part 2 – Nominated Topic
4. Part 2 – Other 'non-nominated' topics
5. Good classroom practice for the Oral Exam
6. Break
7. A2 Oral – Contents
8. Part 1 – The 'debate'
9. Part 2 – discussion of Cultural Topics
10. Classroom Strategies for A2 Oral work
11. Close



Unit 2: SPA2T/V

- 35 minutes (including 20 minutes preparation time), 50 marks
- **Part 1: Discussion of a stimulus card**
- 5 minutes
- 10 marks
 - 5 marks for response to stimulus questions
 - 5 marks for more general discussion
- **Part 2: Conversation**
- 25 marks
 - Fluency = 10 marks
 - Interaction = 10 marks
 - Pronunciation & Intonation = 5 marks
- Knowledge of grammar = 15 marks overall

Covering the 4 topics

- Know your topics and their specific sub-topics
- Starting point for ensuring coverage of all 4 topics is the nominated topic in Part 2
- The two stimulus cards must avoid overlap with the candidate's nominated topic
- Then cover the remaining two topics



Part 1 (AS): Discussion of stimulus card

- Stimulus cards based on AS topics, each dealing with a specific sub-topic (5 minutes : 2½ + 2½)
- Candidates have 20 minutes to choose one of two cards offered by the examiner and prepare it. They may make unlimited notes for use in the test.
- Must use printed questions: confident start to the test
- A very brief first answer may require a supplementary question
- Otherwise deal with all printed questions in sequence (approximately 2 - 2½ minutes) before exploring the wider **sub-topic** area further (approximately 2 - 2½ minutes)



Part 2 (AS): Conversation

- Clear indication by examiner in the target language of transition to Part 2, the Conversation (10 minutes)
- Conversation will cover the 3 remaining AS topics (approximately 3 minutes on each topic)
- Fewer than 2 minutes on any topic and the candidate's mark for Interaction is reduced by one band.
- It is essential that teachers are aware of which sub-topics belong to which topic areas. Failure to cover any topic area results in the candidate's mark for Interaction being reduced by one band.
- No candidate will be penalised twice for Interaction.
- Examiners will not mark anything which is produced after 15 minutes.



Part 2 (AS): Conversation

- First topic for discussion nominated by the candidate. This can be any topic or sub-topic(s) of his/her choice, but must be taken from the AS topic list (and must remain within the same topic if it covers more than one sub-topic)
- Candidates will have a prompt card for their nominated topic containing up to 5 short headings (no full sentences or conjugated verbs). A copy of this prompt card should be given to the examiner before the test
- Not all points need to be covered (nor in the same order as on the card) but the points on the card must be the steer for the examiner
- No aspects outside the headings on prompt card will be covered



Part 2 (AS): Conversation – final 2 topics

- Aspects of the remaining two topics will be chosen by the examiner from the AS topic list, avoiding overlap with the Part 1 stimulus card and the candidate's nominated topic
- Examiner is free to use any or all sub-topics within the topic-area: good strategy if candidates are struggling. Covering too many sub-topics may result in lack of opportunity for candidates to develop answers fully.
- No requirement to cover all three sub-topics within a topic.



Part 2 (AS): Conversation

- No visual material allowed for the nominated topic
- Important to follow up on candidate responses rather than a ‘question and answer’ session
- Candidates must develop ideas and show spontaneity to access highest marks for Interaction
- Delivery of mainly pre-learnt material will adversely affect the marks awarded
- Suggested “starter questions” provide guidance on appropriate questions – not prescriptive / exhaustive



Speaking Test Grade Boundaries

| | |
|--------------|----|
| A* (A2 only) | 46 |
| A | 43 |
| B | 38 |
| C | 33 |
| D | 29 |
| E | 25 |

Part One AS – Mark Scheme

| Mark | In response to the stimulus material | Mark | In the face of challenges by examiner |
|-------------|---|-------------|---|
| 5 | Develops a wide range of relevant points | 5 | Responds to all the opportunities to express & develop ideas & opinions |
| 4 | Develops a number of relevant points | 4 | Some evidence of developing ideas & opinions |
| 3 | Some relevant points made but with little development | 3 | Ideas & opinions are simplistic and under-developed |
| 2 | Responses brief & lacking in development | 2 | Meaningful ideas & opinions are rarely expressed |

Question 1 ¿De qué trata esta tarjeta?

- Pay attention to the subtopic, the visuals, the title and any captions
- Sentence 1: say what you see: *es una foto, un dibujo, un gráfico...*
- Sentence 2: Explain the specific message or slant of the stimulus
- Question 1 is about the stimulus, not the questions
- Look for key words in questions
- Why? – think of a number of reasons
- How? – think of a number of ways
- What are the advantages / disadvantages – as many as possible.



How do you get 5 marks for this first question?

‘Develops a wide range of relevant points’

- What is a **point**?
A specific piece of information that answers the question
- What is **relevant**?
Information that relates directly to the stimulus and not to the general subtopic
- What is a **wide range**?
In this case 5 or more. Answers should contain different information for each question.
- What is a **development**?
Something extra that goes beyond the minimal response: elaboration, examples, opinions, justification

Second section of Part 1 (AS): Discussion of a stimulus card

- Supplementary questions generated by each candidate's response
- Don't work from a set of pre-prepared questions
- Discussion must stay within the confines of the sub-topic specified on the card
- Discussion should flow naturally from the stimulus material and into the wider discussion of the sub-topic
- Student must respond to all opportunities to express and develop views and opinions
- Examiner must provide opportunities to express and develop views and opinions
- Lengthy pre-learnt responses about the general subtopic will limit the mark to 2

Question 5 ¿En tu opinión...?

Advice to Students...

- this is a more general question to open up the wider subtopic area
- it is your chance to mention something that your examiner can later pick up on
- think about where you would like the discussion to go
- think about the views and opinions you can express



AS Part 2 Conversation 10 minutes

- 3½ minutes on the Nominated topic
- Must be one of topics on AQA list
- Cue card with 5 bullet points
- Discussion, not presentation
- 3 - 3½ minutes each on remaining 2 topics
- Penalty for spending less than 2 minutes on any topic.



Prompt card

Example 1

Topic – Cinema

cine ¿cultura o diversión?

mis películas favoritas

las películas de terror

la influencia del cine

el futuro del cine

Example 2

Topic – Sport

el fútbol

Manchester United

David Beckham

la camiseta

mi partido favorito

Example 3

Topic – Health

??

??

??

Question types for AS Conversation

- Describing and defining
- Explaining and exemplifying
- Comparing and contrasting
- Giving opinions directly
- Balancing pros and cons/merits and pitfalls
- Giving reasons why/why not
- Operating in hypothetical mode (What if?)



Mark Scheme – AS Part 2

| Mark | Fluency | Mark | Interaction |
|-------|---|-------|---|
| 9 -10 | A generally confident speaker demonstrating a good pace of delivery, with some slight hesitation between & during utterances | 9-10 | Sustains a meaningful exchange; takes the lead on occasions. Responds well to regular opportunities to react spontaneously in developing ideas. |
| 7 - 8 | Prompt to respond but hesitating regularly between & during utterances | 7-8 | Reacts reasonably well with some, but infrequent evidence of spontaneity in response to opportunities to develop ideas. |
| 5 - 6 | Inappropriate pace of delivery (fast, slow or erratic) adversely affects the natural flow of conversation | 5-6 | Tends to react rather than initiates, but attempts to give additional info. Little evidence of spontaneity and much use made of pre-learned responses |
| 3 - 4 | The pace of delivery (either hurried and garbled or slow and halting) is such that the flow of communication is severely impaired | 3-4 | Generally dependent on the examiner. Volunteering little additional info. Excessive use made of pre-learned responses. |
| 0 – 2 | Little or no fluency | 0 - 2 | Little or no significant reaction |

Mark Scheme – AS Part 2

| Mark | Pronunciation & Intonation |
|------|----------------------------|
| 5 | Good |
| 4 | Fairly good |
| 3 | Intelligible |
| 2 | Poor |
| 0-1 | Barely intelligible |

Mark Scheme – AS Part 2

| Mark | Knowledge of Grammar – over both Parts 1 & 2 |
|-------|--|
| 13-15 | A variety of linguistic structures used generally effectively; limitations in the use of more complex structures & more sophisticated vocab. Errors generally minor but some more serious ones in complex structures |
| 10-12 | Reasonable performance; tending to use unsophisticated constructions & vocab. Grammar errors don't generally interfere with communication |
| 7-9 | Generally comprehensible to native speaker; Limited range of constructions, vocab, sentence patterns. Serious grammar errors may cause difficulties to understanding |
| 4-6 | Very limited range of constructions & vocabulary. Influence of English is intrusive, recurring serious errors. |

Mark Scheme Fluency

9 – 10

A **generally confident** speaker
demonstrating a **good pace of**
delivery with some **slight**
hesitation between and during
utterances

Achieve this by:

- Good preparation
- Secure basic grammar
- Relevant vocabulary
- Ideas and opinions
- Stay calm and alert

Mark Scheme Interaction

9 -10

Sustains a **meaningful exchange**; takes the **lead** on occasions. Responds well to regular opportunities to react **spontaneously** in developing ideas

Be prepared to:

- Listen to the examiner
- Show interest
- Think on your feet
- Don't rely on pre-learnt responses

Mark Scheme Pronunciation

5
Good

VOWELS:

Clear and precise

CONSONANTS:

c, g, j, ll, q, r, z

STRESS:

In right place

INTONATION:

Hispanic

Mark Scheme Grammar

13 – 15

- Variety of linguistic structures

Range of tenses, irregular verbs, coherent sentences

- Generally effective

Clear, succinct, not over elaborate, avoid “fillers”

- Complex structures

Subordinate clauses with/without subjunctive

- Sophisticated vocabulary

Topic specific, able to express abstract ideas and opinions

- Errors minor

Gender, agreement of adjectives, pronouns, prepositions

Teaching Strategies

S
D
O
R



State
Develop
Opinion
Reason



Teaching Strategies

- TTL
- Games
- get them talking/listening
- get them into a conversation
- get them out of their comfort zone
- get them in charge
- exam practice not too early
- Fun!



Teaching Strategies

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS YOU MIGHT RECEIVE

Something for school

A book

Dull but useful

Exciting but pointless

Clothes

A subscription

Money

A surprise

Teaching Strategies

| | |
|----------|--|
| 1 | Television is pointless and stupid |
| 2 | You should try extreme sports |
| 3 | Too many young people prefer the cinema to the theatre |
| 4 | Computers have made everyone unfit |
| 5 | Young people today don't read any more |
| 6 | At night, the little people under my bed play cricket |

Unit 4: SPA4T/V

- 35 minutes (including 20 minutes preparation time), 50 marks
- **Part 1: Discussion of a stimulus card**
- 5 minutes
- 15 marks
 - 5 marks for response to stimulus card
 - 10 marks for response to challenges by examiner
- **Part 2: Conversation**
- 10 minutes - 5 minutes discussion on each of two cultural topics
- 20 marks
 - Fluency = 5 marks
 - Interaction = 10 marks
 - Pronunciation & intonation = 5 marks
- Knowledge of grammar = 15 marks overall

Part 1 (A2): Discussion of a stimulus card

- Candidates choose **one** of two cards offered by the examiner for discussion (5 minutes)
- Cards selected from a choice of 6 covering the A2 topics of Environment, the Multi-cultural Society and Contemporary Social Issues
- Two cards will be set on each topic area covering different sub-topics
- Examiners **may** use the suggested points which form part of the examiner's assessment material to oppose the candidate's viewpoint and to counter the candidate's arguments



First section of Part 1 (A2): How it works

- Candidates choose **one** of the two points of view during the 20 minutes preparation. They may make unlimited notes during the preparation for use in the test.
- Candidates inform the examiner at the start of the test which point of view they have chosen
- Brief uninterrupted presentation of the candidate's viewpoint (maximum 1 minute)



SPA4 Part 1 Ideas for candidates

- The title of the card states the specific issue for discussion
- The discussion should remain within the sub-topic of the card
- Study both opinions carefully
- Look for key words
- You must defend **one** of the opinions
- Think of it as a role-play



One minute “presentation”

- Introduction is a waste of time
- Don't read out what is on the card
- Make clear points, ideally 5
- Focus on content
- Offer points for discussion
- Avoid repetition
- Keep language simple
- Avoid linguistic “fillers”



First section of Part 1 (A2): what is expected of the candidate

| Mark | In response to the stimulus material |
|-------------|---|
| 5 | Develops a wide range of relevant points |
| 4 | Develops a number of relevant points |
| 3 | Some relevant points made but with little development |
| 2 | Responses brief and lacking in development |
| 0 – 1 | No or very little meaningful response |

¿Qué causa la delincuencia?

El alto nivel de delincuencia es el resultado de la **falta de disciplina** en los colegios. Se necesitan castigos más estrictos

Un individuo se convierte en delincuente por razones sociales. Es una **víctima** que necesita comprensión y ayuda.

Points that could be used in support of Opinion1

- Los alumnos llegan al colegio sin formación moral ni valores religiosos
- Los profesores disponen de pocas sanciones
- Los padres no apoyan a los profesores
- Los colegios tienen miedo de pleitos maliciosos
- Los alumnos tienen demasiados derechos
- Los que sufren intimidación en los colegios son susceptibles a intimidar a otros
- Los jóvenes de hoy no aprenden el respeto



First section of Part 1 (A2): what is expected of the candidate

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Second part of Part 1 (A2): challenging the candidate

- Candidates are required to develop, defend, and justify their views during the following discussion
- Examiners are required to listen carefully to candidates' ideas and opinions in order to develop the discussion
- Examiners need to give candidates opportunities to defend and justify their opinions



Hints for examiners – how to challenge in a non-threatening way

- When you say..., what exactly do you mean?
- But some people believe ... What do you think of that? How do you react to that?
- What about the situation in ...? How do you feel about that?
- If that were to happen, isn't there a danger that ...?
- What are the implications of doing what you suggest?
- Would it really be possible to do what you suggest? What about ..., for example?



Part 2: Discussion of two Cultural Topics – 5 minutes on each topic

- A target language-speaking region/community
- A period of 20th century history from a target language-speaking country/community
- An author from a target language-speaking country/community
- A dramatist or poet from a target language-speaking country/community
- A director, architect, musician or painter from a target language-speaking country/community
- A candidate who spends less than 4 minutes on one of their Cultural Topics will have their mark for Interaction reduced by one band, eg a candidate who is judged at 8 marks would have the mark reduced to 6.
- Examiners will not mark anything which is produced after 15 minutes.

Part 2 (A2): Conversation – hints for examiners

- Clear indication by examiner in the target language, of transition to Part 2, the Conversation (10 minutes)
- Candidates are required to develop ideas and counter views in order to gain the highest marks
- Examiners are required to challenge the candidate's responses where appropriate
- Factual knowledge alone limits their Interaction mark to a maximum of 6
- Examiners need a few “starter questions” to introduce each topic and get the discussion going
- Examiners **must** respond and **react** to what the candidate says
- Examiners should intervene to avoid ‘prepared speech’ mode

Question types for A2

- Describing, defining, explaining, exemplifying
- Comparing, contrasting, giving opinions
- Operating in hypothetical mode
- Questions that probe further candidate's responses
- Questions that challenge the candidate's responses
- Implications, consequences, other viewpoints
- What about? What if? Questions
- Evaluating another stand-point



Successful examining techniques

In each part, encourage the candidate to reach his/her linguistic ceiling within the allotted time by:

- giving the candidate every opportunity to sustain the discussion in a relevant and meaningful fashion
- listening carefully to the candidate's responses and remembering that a candidate's response can generate a productive line of questioning to demonstrate evidence of interaction
- framing open questions that extract the best performance from the candidate
- intervening promptly to discourage delivery of "pre-learnt" material

Successful examining techniques

- ✓ avoid inviting a spoken essay
- ✓ avoid inviting narrative/description
- ✓ 'describe' – not a useful command word here
- ✓ encourage personal response and reaction whenever possible
- ✓ do challenge and interrupt
- ✓ don't allow monologues
- ✓ thinking pauses are not a bad thing
- ✓ whole topic does not need to be covered

It's not all black and white

- Depende de la persona, de la situación
- Por un lado... por otro lado...
- Es un tema bastante complicado
- Me falta la experiencia
- Me gustaría ver las estadísticas
- La verdad es que no entiendo
- Son los políticos los que tienen que buscar soluciones

Grammar: Good things to include

- Personal opinions
Opino que, me parece que, no creo que
- Value judgements
Es importante, esencial, imprescindible, aconsejable, difícil etc.
- Impersonal expressions
Se dice que, se supone que, se calcula que etc.
- ??????



Final Q&A





Thank you
