

GCSE SPANISH

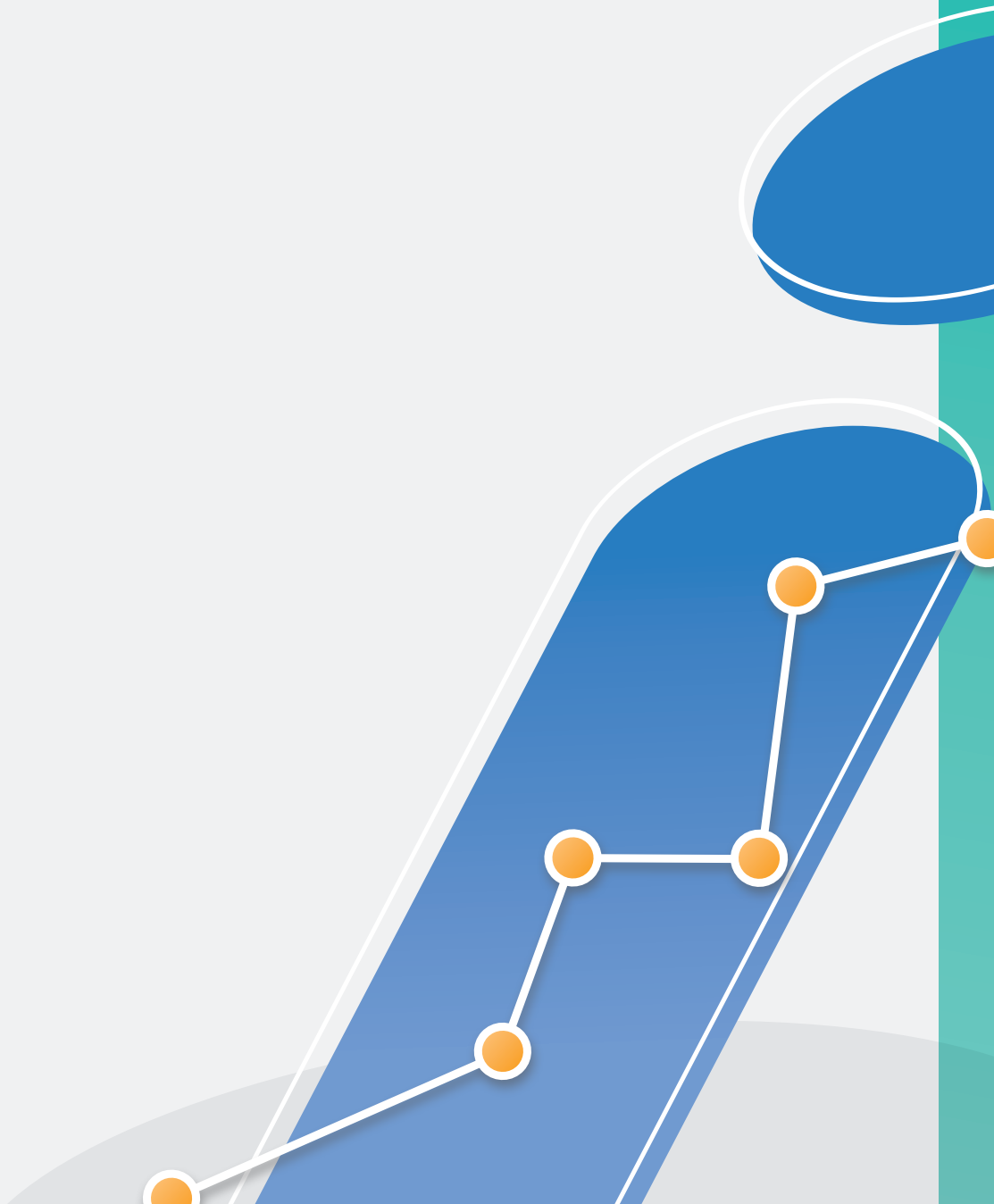
Insight report:
2019 results at a glance

September 2019

2019

aqa.org.uk

insights



How to use this report

This report provides a snapshot of this summer's results. It contains information on grade boundaries and performance by paper. This report is part of our full results insight series. For extra information on results:

- Access our free Enhanced Results Analysis tool. We've created [two-minute tutorials](#) to show you how.
- Navigate to [e-AQA](#) to download the full report on the exam for a detailed breakdown.
- [Book on](#) to one of our Live lessons webinars. The Head of Curriculum for your subject will take you through this year's results and answer your questions.
- [Book on](#) to a Feedback event. See examples from real scripts from the summer to highlight common areas where students did well and where there's room for improvement.

Contents	Page
Qualification summary	4
Grade boundaries	7
Foundation tier	9
Paper 1 insights	10
Paper 2 insights	11
Paper 3 insights	12
Paper 4 insights	13
Higher tier	15
Paper 1 insights	16
Paper 2 insights	17
Paper 3 insights	18
Paper 4 insights	19
Next steps	21

Qualification summary

Foundation tier

Paper 1

Students found the papers accessible in general and were clearly well-versed in the question styles. They knew what was required in the tasks and attempted questions across the paper. Just occasionally, students used the wrong letters or misinterpreted the situation of the dialogue. Both issues can be resolved by careful reading of the introduction to each question.

Paper 2

There was a wide range of performance. Conduct of the tests was generally very good. All Foundation Tier role play tasks can be accomplished with the present tense and students are encouraged to adhere to that to avoid the errors that can occur when other tenses are attempted. It was clear that schools and colleges had trained their students well for the photo-card task. Range of language is not a factor in achieving clarity of communication but accuracy and pronunciation do affect communication. Teacher-examiners are allowed to paraphrase the questions in this part of the exam but the same meaning must be maintained. In the general conversation, there was a pre-learned feel to some of the conversations, but some spontaneity was maintained. Questions should be tailored to the ability of the individual students.

Paper 3

There was evidence that exam technique had improved, with students becoming more familiar with question styles and their requirements. Marks were awarded where the key idea was conveyed intelligibly and without ambiguity; where spelling, punctuation or grammar led to a failure to communicate the key idea, credit was not given. Students need to be careful to use the available letters ie not incorrect letter combinations. Students should be discouraged from giving additional or alternative information in their answers. The translation in Section C proved to be more challenging than in 2018.

Paper 4

The paper discriminated well and the performance of students on each question covered the full range of marks. The quality of the work showed an overall improvement on last year. The majority of students were able to score marks on Questions 1 and 2, even if they struggled with the greater demands of Questions 3 and 4. There were some excellent responses from students who exceeded the requirements of the assessment criteria but these were the exception.

Higher tier

Paper 1

Students found the paper accessible in general and were clearly well prepared for the question styles. They knew what was required in the tasks and attempted questions across the paper, just occasionally using the wrong letters or misinterpreting the situation of a dialogue. Both issues can be easily resolved through careful reading of the introduction to each question.

Paper 2

The majority of the students were able to cope well with the demands of the test at this tier, though a few were unable to fulfil the criteria for 1-2 band for the General conversation. Conduct of the tests was usually very good. Students generally did well on the role play, even if they did less well on the other two sections of the test. It was clear that schools and colleges had trained students for the demands of the photo card and timing was generally very good. Questions discriminated well and there were some excellent answers to both the prepared and the unprepared questions. Whilst accuracy and pronunciation affect the clarity of communication, range of language does not. Teachers are allowed to paraphrase the questions in the photo card task but the same meaning must be maintained. There were some excellent general conversations where the teacher-examiners followed up students' answers in an interesting way, creating opportunities for students to show some spontaneity which was pleasing to listen to.

Paper 3

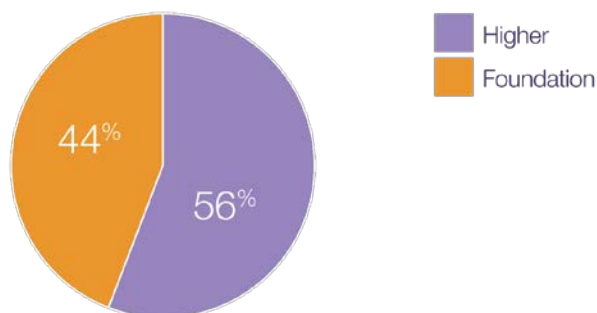
It was clear that students are becoming familiar with the style of the questions and their requirements, with fewer cases of students leaving answers blank. Marks were awarded where the key idea was conveyed intelligibly and without ambiguity; where spelling, punctuation or grammar led to a failure to communicate the key idea, credit was not given. Students need to be careful to use the available letters ie not incorrect letter combinations. Students should be discouraged from giving additional or alternative information in their answer. Students generally did the translation well and it was clear that they had practised this skill in class. There were few un-attempted translations and very few unfinished answers too, which was pleasing.

Paper 4

There was some excellent work from the more able students at this tier. They showed accuracy, precision, complexity of language and dealt with some challenging themes in Question 2, which was the question that discriminated most effectively across the ability range. There were, however, students whose written Spanish was poor and this was reflected in all three of the questions they attempted. Where students far exceeded the suggested length, they tended to make significantly more errors and this affected the marks for language.

Entry volumes, Foundation vs Higher tier

74,563 entries



Entry volumes, Foundation vs Higher tier

This graphic shows how entries were split between the two tiers.

See also: our [guidance on choosing tiers](#).

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Conduct your own analysis using data relevant to you. Watch short [tutorials](#) on using Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA) for school, subject, group or student performance; or log straight in through aqa.org.uk/log-in

Grade boundaries

Subject or paper	Max mark	Summer 2019 grade boundaries								
		9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Spanish 8698F (Foundation)	240	-	-	-	-	163	144	105	66	28

Subject or paper	Max mark	Summer 2019 grade boundaries								
		9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Spanish 8698H (Higher)	240	205	181	158	138	119	100	90	-	-

How to interpret grade boundaries

In this linear specification, students must be entered for Foundation or Higher tier across all four skills. Their final grade is based on the total scaled marks achieved across the four components.

Grade boundaries are set using a mix of statistics and expert judgement

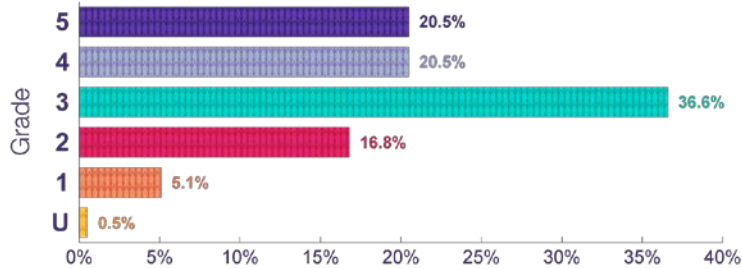
Our research team uses a range of statistics to make predictions that suggest the most appropriate grade boundaries. The statistical evidence considers the prior attainment of the given cohort as well as the distribution of marks. Senior examiners then review a script sample to confirm the statistically recommended marks are sensible for the grade.

Boundary setting is overseen by Ofqual. To find more grade boundaries and learn how they are set, visit aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/results-days/grade-boundaries-and-ums

Watch our two-minute team stories to find out more about how we set grade boundaries and ensure fairness. Visit aqa.org.uk/team-stories

Grade summary: Foundation

This shows the percentage of students achieving each grade.



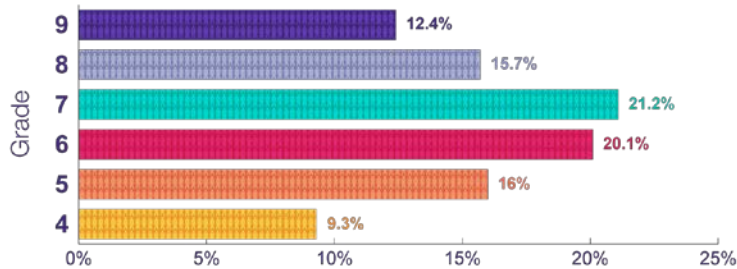
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Grade summary

This shows the percentage of students achieving each grade. Each colour represents a grade.

Grade summary: Higher

This shows the percentage of students achieving each grade.



Total achieving (3-U = 5.3%).

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Grade summary

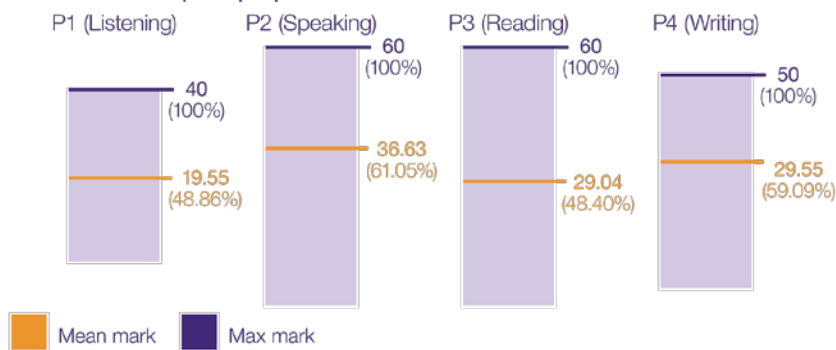
This shows the percentage of students achieving each grade. Each colour represents a grade.

Foundation tier insights

This is a snapshot. Learn more about every question from the summer 2019 series in the reports on the exam. Visit [e-AQA](#), log in and follow:

e-AQA > Secure Key Materials > GCSE > Languages > Spanish(8698) > Reports on the exam

Mean mark per paper: Foundation



Mean mark per paper, Foundation tier

AQA GCSE Spanish

Paper 1

Areas where students did best	Areas where students could improve
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Questions 1 and 2 were an accessible start to the paper with over 90% of students able to score one or two marks on the festival events.• Questions 6 and 7 were tackled well in general and students are clearly well versed in listening with care to pick out details.• Questions 14 and 15 were well done by students who had a good knowledge of the vocabulary of family and character descriptions.• Questions 20 and 21 differentiated well, as students not only had to choose the right occupation but also had to pair it with the right timeframe; around half of students scored one or two marks on this question.• Question 22 proved an accessible end to the paper and over 99% of students managed to score at least a mark on this question.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question 5: <i>río</i> was not well known and not many students gained this mark.• Question 11: less than a quarter of students managed to identify the correct answer in 11.2. The majority of students selected option D; perhaps thinking they were hearing <i>amor</i> when in fact it was <i>humor</i>.• Question 16: only a small minority managed to produce 'too young' or the acceptable 'very young'.• Questions 18 and 19 were targeted at the top grades for the paper and did prove challenging. Knowledge of the verb was usually what let students down and many turned <i>lista</i> into a verb.

Paper 2

Areas where students did best	Areas where students could improve
<p>Role Play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role Play 2 Task B: this, like most opinion-giving tasks, was well done. The most common opinions were given by using <i>es</i> with an adjective. Role Play 3 Task B: this was done well, though some gave a physical description and scored zero. Role Play 4 Task E was well done. Role Play 5 Task C was well done on the whole, with those who were successful keeping to a simple reason eg <i>es interesante</i>. Role Play 9 Task B: students often got two marks even if the verb used was <i>es</i> rather than <i>son</i>. <p>Photo Card</p> <p>It was clear that schools and colleges had trained their students in this task and timing was well-handled, with students understandably giving more developed answers to the prepared questions.</p> <p>General conversation</p> <p>There was a wide range in quality but the majority were able to score some marks. By and large, some spontaneity was maintained. A mix of more open questions with some closed questions worked best, as students could extend their answers to the open questions – using familiar material – and give shorter answers to the follow-up closed questions, giving a more natural feel to the conversation.</p>	<p>Role Play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role Play 2 Task A: the main issue with conveying the Spanish for a type of film was the pronunciation of the key word eg <i>acción</i> and <i>horror</i>. Role Play 2 Task C: <i>Cuándo</i> was often not known. Role Play 4 Task D: it was surprising that students did not understand the word <i>día</i>. Role Play 6 Task B: overall, students found giving a time challenging. Common incorrect attempts were usually because a number alone had been given or a period of time eg <i>quince minutos</i>. Role Play 9 Task E: the question task was often the one that students found the most demanding – as in this task. <p>Photo Card</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photo card C – there was often a lack of clarity in the responses because of wrong tense usage. Photo card F – students often misunderstood the word <i>asignatura</i>. Photo card G – the majority of students did not pick up on the word <i>comprar</i>. <p>General conversation</p> <p>In some cases it was clear that teacher-examiners were asking the same questions of all their students. In these instances, there was a total lack of follow-up questions and the fact that not all of the questions were suited to the ability of each individual student had an adverse effect on the marks.</p>

Paper 3

Areas where students did best	Areas where students could improve
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question 5 was very well done showing a good knowledge of the jobs and careers section of the specification.• Question 7 was designed to test tenses and this year's students performed better than those in 2018.• Question 13: students understood opinions well and this question was generally well done, especially Part 2 where over 90% of students answered correctly.• Question 14.1 and 14.2 were also well done, showing a good understanding of the healthy living topic and the family topic respectively.• Students found the translation more challenging than in 2018. A wide range of spellings were accepted for 'geography'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question 4: the verb <i>correr</i> was challenging for many students and it was clear in Part 2 that basic numbers continue to create problems for some. In Part 3, <i>hablar</i> caused problems for many students and in Part 4, <i>triste</i> was not well known.• Question 9 was challenging for some students, especially the difference between <i>esta semana</i> and next week in Part 1 and the word <i>camionera</i> was not well known although students could have used communication strategies to work out its meaning.• In Question 10 in Section B where students were operating in Spanish, a very large number of students did not know the difference between <i>histórica</i> meaning 'historical' and <i>historia</i> meaning (in this case) 'story'.• Section C: students found the translation more challenging than in 2018. Vocabulary which proved challenging included <i>barrios</i> (often translated as 'bars' or 'barriers'), <i>aprender</i> (often missed out) and <i>como</i> (often confused with <i>comer</i>).

Paper 4

Areas where students did best	Areas where students could improve
<p>Question 1</p> <p>The most successful answers tended to come from students who kept things simple, often by forming sentences which used the same verb eg <i>hay</i> or <i>veo</i> and keeping to items in the photo, for which they knew the vocabulary. Students were given credit if they imagined they were in the photo and used the first person.</p> <p>Question 2</p> <p>Giving information about teachers and uniform proved straightforward. It is perfectly acceptable, and indeed advisable, to present information in the present tense in this question. Using different verbs and adjectives when giving opinions was the main way in which students were able to vary the language they used.</p> <p>Question 3</p> <p>It was pleasing to see that students made good attempts at the translation sentences and, in particular, ‘on my mobile, ‘in the future’, ‘I like’, ‘to play basketball’ and ‘in the summer’ were well translated.</p> <p>Question 4</p> <p>Question 4.1 was by far the more popular option. The first two bullet points were handled well. Most students were able to convey something about the holiday and whether they prefer to go with friends or family. In Question 4.2 the third and fourth bullet points were generally well done and the first two bullets less so.</p>	<p>Question 1</p> <p>The main problems with regard to spelling were with <i>móvil</i> and <i>guitarra</i>. No marks were awarded for an opinion of the photo or for referring to what is not in the photo. The use of the second person was awarded a mark of zero.</p> <p>Question 2</p> <p>Giving information about lunchtime and homework proved less straightforward than about teachers and uniform. A significant number of students thought <i>deberes</i> meant sports. Students who exceeded the suggested number of words often included incorrect language, which made messages unclear.</p> <p>Question 3</p> <p><i>Mensajes</i> was known but often misspelt. ‘I do’ was not translated well and few students used <i>hago</i>. <i>Muy</i> and <i>mucho</i> were commonly used for <i>más</i> in ‘more sport’ but were not accepted. Relatively few students knew <i>plaza de toros</i>.</p> <p>Question 4</p> <p>In Question 4.1, the fourth bullet posed the most problems as the verb <i>ayudar</i> was not well known.</p> <p>In Question 4.2, the verb <i>ganar</i> was not well known, often being confused with <i>gastar</i>. Students’ answers to bullet two often did not stand alone without reference to the prompt.</p> <p>References to the past were less successful than references to the future, especially in</p>

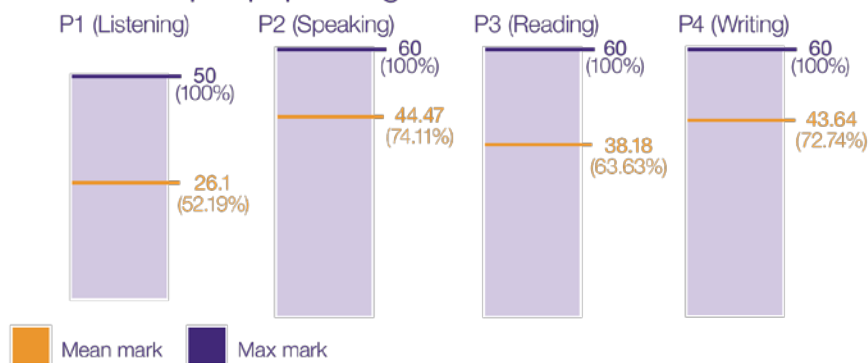
<p>In both questions, there was a lot of successful use of the immediate future tense. Complexity was achieved through the use of infinitive constructions, subordinate clauses, connectives, comparatives and negatives. The subjunctive was also used, probably having been learnt as a set phrase.</p>	<p>Question 4.2.</p> <p>The more common major errors were with verbs, either with the wrong person or the wrong tense. If students repeated the possessive adjective <i>tu</i> or <i>tus</i> from the bullet point, this could not be credited.</p>
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Higher tier insights

This is a snapshot. Learn more about every question from the summer 2019 series in our reports on the exam. Visit [aqa.org.uk/log-in](https://www.aqa.org.uk/log-in) and follow:

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Mean mark per paper: Higher



Mean mark per paper, Higher tier

AQA GCSE Spanish

Paper 1

Areas where students did best	Areas where students could improve
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Questions 3 to 7 were aimed at the top grades but were well handled by those students who coped with the distractors. The phrase <i>sin techo</i> was very well known and <i>incendio</i> was picked out by over three-quarters of students.• Questions 8 to 10 were handled well at this level and students understood the details well enough to rule out the incorrect answer and select the correct one.• Questions 13 to 15 proved to be an appropriate challenge for a high demand question. Students had to understand three or four specific details in order to rule out the wrong answers and arrive at the correct one. Around half the students managed this in Questions 13 and 14 and almost three quarters were successful in Question 15, which was pleasing.• Questions 27 and 28 achieved a fair level of success, with many students choosing both the correct occupation and timeframe.• Questions 31 and 32 were handled fairly well, with between half and two-thirds of students choosing the correct answers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question 12 turned out to be one of the most challenging questions on the paper, as all but a few students had forgotten the lexical item <i>estuche</i>.• Question 17 was an example where many students gave only half the information required, usually the information about needing a quiet place for students to work.• In Questions 20-22 the main problem occurred when students did not read the scene setting and did not notice that the interview was about a festival. As a result, many failed to gain a mark in Question 20 by referring to a party. <i>Vale la pena</i> produced many answers that referred to a dance (<i>vale/baile</i>). In Question 21, <i>extranjero</i> was not widely recognised and in both Question 21 and Question 22 the future tense was often missed.• In Questions 29 and 30 there were a few problems with students writing down all the weather conditions they heard and students should be reminded to look at the example before answering, where it is made clear that only two words are required.

Paper 2

Areas where students did best	Areas where students could improve
<p>Role Play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students generally did well on the role play task. Most noted the number of details they were asked to give in each task and kept to that, which was pleasing.• Role Play 10 Task C: this two-part type of unpredictable task does not require verbs for the award of two marks. For that reason, the task was done well.• Role Play 10 Task E: this task was done well when students realised they needed to use a past tense verb. When two details are required, it does not mean that two verbs are needed.• Role Play 12 Task A: the present tense was acceptable in this task and, as a result, it was well done. <p>Photo Card</p> <p>It was clear that schools and colleges had trained their students for this aspect of the test. Timing was generally good and there were some excellent answers, not only to the prepared questions but sometimes to the unseen questions as well.</p> <p>General conversation</p> <p>There were some excellent conversations where the teacher-examiner followed up answers in an interested way and where the extended sequences of speech were interspersed with more closed, follow-up questions.</p>	<p>Role Play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where students said more than was required for the task, they risked losing clarity in their response and this, in turn, adversely affected their marks.• Role Play 12 Task C: the main problem here was the pronunciation of <i>hijos</i>, which was sometimes so poor that no mark could be awarded.• Role Play 12 Task D: this unpredictable task caused problems, especially in the second of the two questions, where a significant number answered by saying either <i>el padre perfecto</i> or <i>la madre perfecta</i>.• Role Play 18 Task C: some students attempted to talk about a rule that required complex language and were often unsuccessful. More straightforward responses tended to gain two marks eg <i>Tengo (que llevar) uniforme</i>. <p>Photo Card</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Photo Card J: some students thought that <i>boda</i> meant partner; a large number did not understand the word <i>regalos</i>.• Photo card N: many students did not understand <i>a favor</i> and/or <i>en contra</i>. <p>General conversation</p> <p>This year, there seemed to be a greater incidence of conversations that were entirely pre-learnt and, in the worst cases, where all students were asked the same questions on the themes.</p>

Paper 3

Areas where students did best	Areas where students could improve
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question 6 was well done and it is pleasing to see students coping well with texts from literary sources.• Question 9 tested the topic of the environment, which students traditionally find challenging; but pleasingly, this was well answered, especially Parts 1 and 3.• Question 10 was very accessible to the majority of students; students were generally very good at identifying opinions.• Section C: there were some excellent translations and it was clear that students had practised this skill in class. Many understood the conditional tense in <i>te gustaría</i>, and only a few failed to make this into a question.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question 2 required students to understand the verb <i>esperar</i> and very few gained the mark.• Question 3.2 asked for the greatest concern, so a single answer was required and students who wrote a list of concerns did not get the mark.• Question 12.3: many students did not recognise the verb <i>empleados</i>.• Section C: many students did not know the word <i>gambas</i> and students should be reminded that Key Stage 3 vocabulary can be tested at Higher Tier.

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Paper 4

Areas where students did best	Areas where students could improve
<p>Question 1</p> <p>Question 1.1 was by far the more popular of the two options and was very well done overall.</p> <p>In Question 1.2, each bullet point produced some good responses. There was a lot of evidence in responses to the final bullet, of good teaching about topics like homelessness, poverty, voluntary work and charity.</p> <p>Students evidenced variety of language and attempts at complexity, using infinitives, adjectives, connectives, intensifiers, negatives, subordinate clauses, relative pronouns and even subjunctives; as well as successful references to two or three timeframes.</p> <p>Question 2</p> <p>The quality of work varied enormously with some far exceeding the requirements for full marks. Students took advantage of the open-ended nature of the task, while ensuring that what they wrote was relevant to the question.</p> <p>Many students were able to produce a good range of connectives and added to the complexity of their language by using subordinate clauses and/or infinitive constructions. Many students used a wide range of tenses as they developed their response. There was some excellent use of verb forms.</p> <p>Successful use of object pronouns was less common, but added precision to the writing when used well.</p>	<p>Question 1</p> <p>In Question 1.1 in particular, there were occasions where, in responses to the first bullet, the inaccuracy of the writing had a negative impact on the content mark as well as on the quality of language mark.</p> <p>The fourth bullet was the least well done in Question 1.1, because some students did not know <i>ayudar</i>.</p> <p>Occasionally, students failed to fulfil a bullet point because they kept the possessive adjective <i>tu</i> or <i>tus</i> from the prompt and the message of the bullet point was not conveyed.</p> <p>Sometimes students attempted to refer to a past event and used the present tense to do so, or conjugated the verb incorrectly.</p> <p>Question 2</p> <p>Unfortunately, for many students the inaccuracy of their language had a detrimental effect on the mark for content, as well as on the language marks, as it failed to communicate.</p> <p>In Question 2.2, those who could handle past tenses did well, but a lack of clarity was evident where they could not.</p> <p>Major errors often occurred when students tried to write things that were grammatically too complex for them. This was especially true of the first bullet point in Question 2.1 and the second bullet in Question 2.2.</p>

<p>Question 3</p> <p>This year's translation differentiated well with the vast majority of students able to score some marks. There were a good number of excellent translations, which were error-free.</p> <p>Examples of key messages which were translated well included 'I like school because', 'I get on well with my teachers', 'a film about', 'a festival in Valencia' and 'I would like to visit'.</p>	<p>Question 3</p> <p>If one of the key messages contained a minor error or errors, it was still credited. For example, <i>professores</i>. However, an accumulation of such errors had an overall effect on accuracy which, could be reflected in the mark for application of grammar.</p> <p>Examples of key messages not translated well included 'I am going to recycle more' (where the spelling of <i>reciclar</i> was often too far away from the Spanish to be accepted), 'my subjects are interesting (in cases where <i>asignaturas</i> was not known) and 'it is a city that' where <i>que</i> was sometimes omitted.</p>
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Contact us

T: 01423 534381

E: mfl@aqa.org.uk

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