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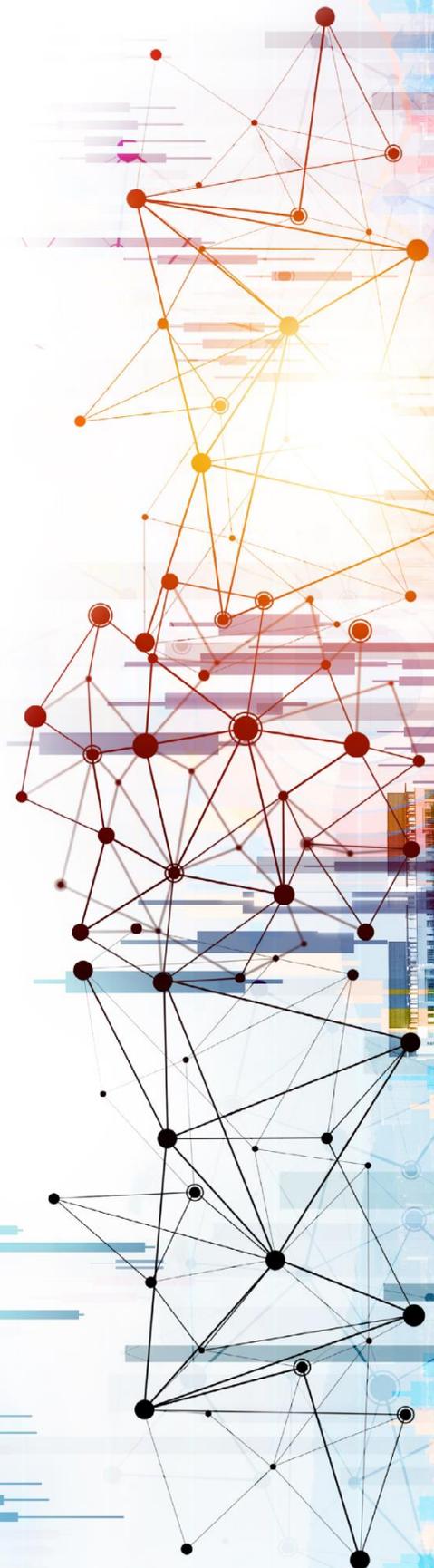
# GCSE SPANISH

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Insight report: 2018 results at a glance

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Published: October 2018



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## Responsible for multiple languages?

Results insights are available for other GCSE specifications:

- [French](#)
- [German](#)

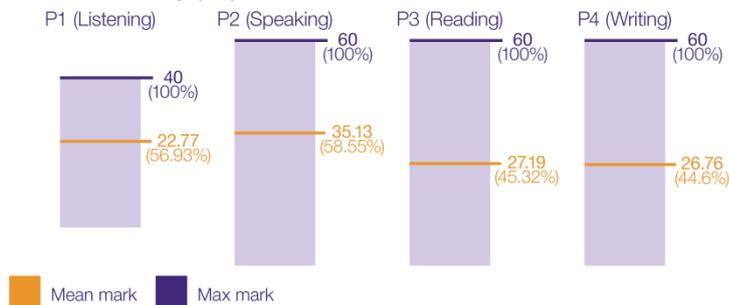
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# Foundation tier analysis

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](http://aqa.org.uk/log-in)

Mean mark by paper – Foundation

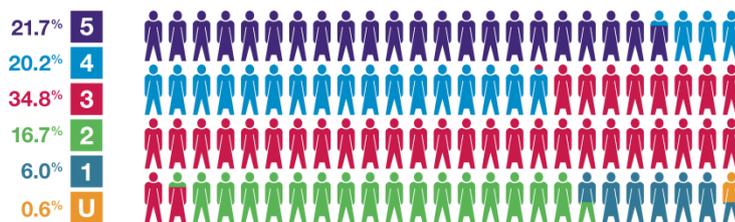


Mean mark per paper, Foundation tier

AQA GCSE Spanish

Grade summary – Foundation

This shows the percentage of students achieving each grade.



AQA GCSE Spanish

Grade summary

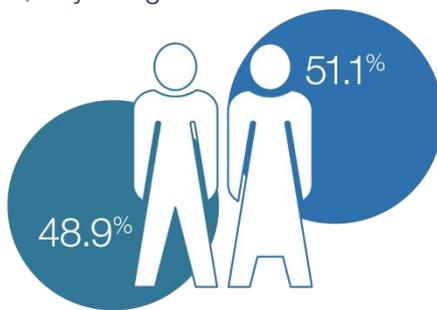
This shows the percentage of students achieving each grade. Each colour represents a grade.

**Watch [tutorials](#) on using ERA for results analysis, or log straight in via [e-AQA](#).**

# Foundation tier analysis cont.

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](http://aqa.org.uk/log-in)

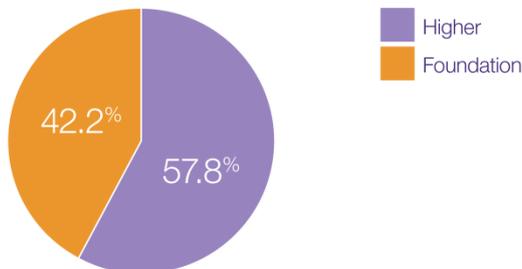
Entry volumes, boys vs girls – Foundation  
29,042 entries



AQA GCSE Spanish

Entry volumes, boys vs girls

Entry volumes, Foundation vs Higher tier  
68,863 entries



AQA GCSE Spanish

Entry volumes, Foundation vs Higher tier

This graphic shows how entries were split between the two tiers (and is [repeated on p.13](#)).

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

**Watch tutorials on using ERA for results analysis, or log straight in via e-AQA.**

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# Grade boundaries

Subject or paper	Max mark	Summer 2018 grade boundaries								
		9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Spanish 8698F (Foundation)	240	-	-	-	-	159	140	102	65	28

## 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 Centre for Education Research and Practice (CERP) 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.

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## Qualification summary

### **Paper 1**

Students handled this paper well and had no difficulty grasping what the questions demanded of them. Almost all remembered to answer Section A and Section B in the appropriate language.

### **Paper 2**

Students were able to communicate something over the three parts of the test. There was a noticeable improvement in pronunciation compared to last year. Recordings were generally clear and tests mostly well-conducted but poor question technique and timing hampered some tests.

### **Paper 3**

Students should be advised to answer every question, especially non-verbal questions. They should be trained to spot distractors and should practise. As the new GCSE builds on knowledge from KS3, it is important to revisit this vocabulary.

### **Paper 4**

The paper discriminated well with most students able to gain marks in all questions. It was pleasing to see most students had a good knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar required for the tasks.

***Feedback on the exam*** courses use student responses to explore what happened in each exam series. Visit [aqa.org.uk/spanish-cpd](https://www.aqa.org.uk/spanish-cpd)

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# Paper 1, Foundation

This is a snapshot. Learn more about every question from the summer 2018 series in our reports on the exam. Visit [aqa.org.uk/log-in](http://aqa.org.uk/log-in) and follow:

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

## Highlights from summer 2018

Students should be reminded to maximise the 5 minutes reading time by, for example, highlighting key words in the rubrics and questions, identifying questions which have two parts and signposting Section B as answers in Spanish are required. Students should also be reminded that the papers are structured in peaks and troughs within a steady incline of difficulty and not to give up if they find a particular question or part question challenging. It is also recommended that students look carefully at the questions to ensure the **specific** information required is given in their answers.

Some items of key vocabulary were not well known eg *nublado*, *rotos*, *hacer intercambio*, *repasar apuntes*.

### Questions 9-11

This set of questions required written answers in English. Students are advised to look carefully to ensure they are providing the information required by the question. For example, an activity was required so 'electronic books' on its own was not accepted for Question 9.

### Question 17

In this question, the key phrase *energías renovables* proved challenging.

### Question 18

This was the most challenging question on the paper. There were many interpretations of *rotos* and when students understood *buenas condiciones* or *rotas*, they did not link it to *videojuegos*.

### Questions 20-21

Students should be advised to use the examples given to show them the length and style of answer required; many tried to write far too much in this set of questions.

*Reports on the exam* are written by senior examiners who see more responses than anyone else. Access full reports via [aqa.org.uk/log-in](http://aqa.org.uk/log-in)

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# Paper 2, Foundation

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

## Highlights from summer 2018

### Part 1 – role play

The role play tended to be done reasonably well even by students who performed less well in the other two sections. The use of cognates and/or very accessible vocabulary in the prompts usually enabled students to give an answer that could be credited for Communication. Teachers are reminded of the need to keep to the script provided in the *Teacher's booklet*; failure to do so regularly meant that a student response could not be credited.

### Part 2 – photo card

This part of the test discriminated well. As expected, there was a big difference in quality between the responses to the first three questions and the other two unseen questions. The students who fared best were those who had prepared straightforward answers with several clauses. Centres are reminded that there is no extra credit in this task for complex language and those who tried to use it often did so at the expense of clarity and so marks were affected. In some cases, teachers had added to or changed the question in a significant way and the student's response could not be credited. For example, it was acceptable to change the last question on Card F from '*en otro país*' to '*el extranjero*' but the addition of '*por ejemplo, España*' gave an unfair advantage as far as comprehension was concerned.

### Part 3 – general conversation

The centres who conducted the tests most successfully asked different questions of different students, reflecting their abilities and interests. There were however some teachers who had a set list of questions per topic and kept to it for all students. This usually had a negative effect on the marks, especially for the less able students. However, many teacher-examiners pleasingly conducted conversations that had a natural feel. In order to score in the top band at Foundation for Spontaneity and fluency, students had to show some spontaneity even though there was some reliance on pre-learnt responses. The teachers who asked follow-up questions after a pre-learnt response had the greatest success in getting the best marks for their students at this tier.

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# Paper 3, Foundation

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

## Highlights from summer 2018

Students should be reminded, as in Paper 1, that the papers are structured in peaks and troughs within a steady incline of difficulty and not to give up if they find a particular question challenging. In particular, students should be encouraged to tackle the translation as parts of this task will be more accessible than some of the earlier questions in Section A and Section B.

Some items of key vocabulary were not well known eg *bombero, conocer, equipo, prueba*.

### Question 1

Students answered well, especially parts 2 and 4. In part 1, the most popular answer was A, showing that students were misled by the distractor *flores*.

### Question 5

In this question, students were given an example but only 4.6% were able to give both the correct noun **and** adjective in part 1. In part 2, *alojamiento* was not well known.

### Question 7

In part 1, the most popular answer was N because students failed to recognise the immediate future tense in line 2. In parts 3 and 4, over half the entry showed a good ability to recognise the relationship between the three time frames and got the correct answer.

### Question 13

Students who copied out partial sentences here made their answer ambiguous. For example, in 13.2 the response *falta clases de apoyo* was made ambiguous by the inclusion of *falta*.

### Section C (translation)

It was pleasing to see a range of performance with 33.5% scoring 5 marks or more. Stumbling blocks included *la gente, calle* and *mandar*. Students are reminded that the precise meaning of the whole phrase must be translated and to take care with tenses and pronouns.

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# Paper 4, Foundation

This is a snapshot. Learn more about every question from the summer 2018 series in our reports on the exam. Visit [aga.org.uk/log-in](http://aga.org.uk/log-in) and follow:

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

## Highlights from summer 2018

### Question 1

Students who were most successful were those who used simple language, usually with a verb like *hay* or *veo*, followed by something they could see in the photo. Sometimes students wrote too much and thereby caused a delay in communication, for example *Hay una familia y comen chica* scored one mark whereas *Hay una familia* scored two marks.

### Question 2

The bullets relating to *deportes* and *televisión* were well done but some students omitted reference to *redes sociales* and sometimes *centro comercial* was understood to mean the town centre. Clarity of communication is important and there were often lapses when students tried to use tenses other than the present. Although students have to show a variety of structures, there is no requirement for complexity. Where students gave opinions for each aspect, they could vary the language eg (*no*) *me gusta*, *me encanta* and *odio*, and adjectives such as *divertido*, *emocionante* and *aburrido*.

### Question 3

The spelling of *fruta* varied enormously. *Descargar* and *bajar* proved challenging for most students and some found it difficult to conjugate the third person of *vivir*. *Calle* was also not well known. 'I am going to study Spanish' was done very well, even by students who struggled with more straightforward messages.

### Question 4

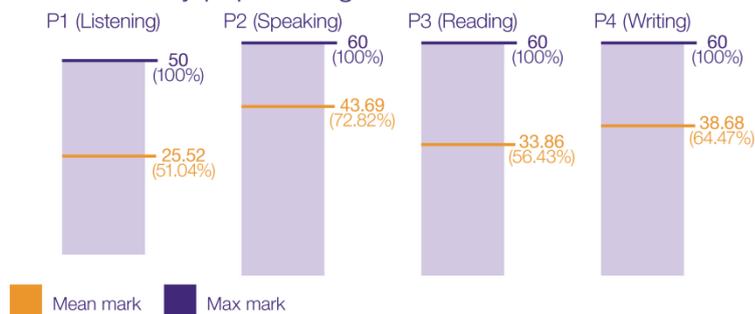
Students who wrote concisely and accurately scored the highest marks. Coverage of every bullet is key, as a mark above 6 cannot be awarded if a bullet is omitted or misinterpreted. Where inaccuracy led to a lack of clarity of communication ('lapses'), marks were affected. Question 4.1 was the more popular question. In both options, knowledge of different time frames was not always shown successfully. Apart from errors with verbs, another major error which prevented a bullet from being accomplished was the repetition of 'tu' from the prompt eg *tu pueblo es ...*

**Reports on the exam are written by senior examiners who see more responses than anyone else. Access full reports via [aga.org.uk/log-in](http://aga.org.uk/log-in)**

# Higher tier analysis

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](http://aqa.org.uk/log-in)

## Mean mark by paper – Higher

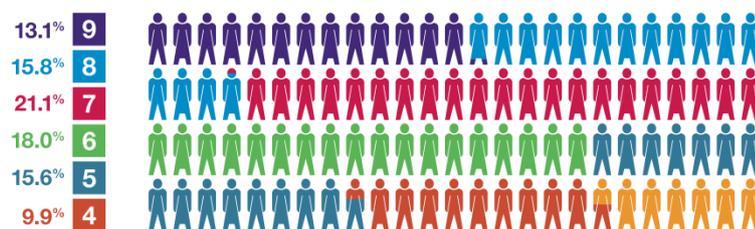


## Mean mark per paper, Higher tier

AQA GCSE Spanish

## Grade summary – Higher

This shows the percentage of students achieving each grade.



\*The yellow figures represent the remaining grade levels 3-U.

AQA GCSE Spanish

## Grade summary

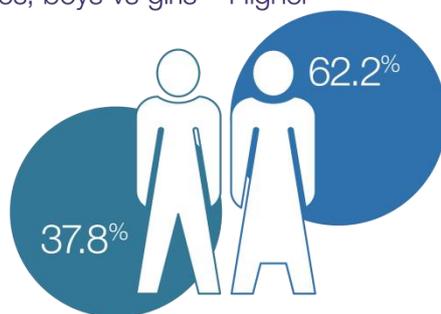
This shows the percentage of students achieving each grade. Each colour represents a grade.

**Watch tutorials** on using ERA for results analysis, or log straight in via **e-AQA.**

# Higher tier analysis cont.

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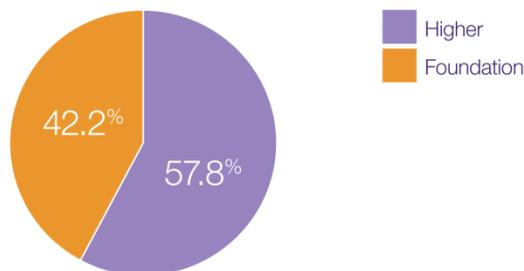
Entry volumes, boys vs girls – Higher  
39,821 entries



AQA GCSE Spanish

Entry volumes, boys vs girls

Entry volumes, Foundation vs Higher tier  
68,863 entries



AQA GCSE Spanish

Entry volumes, Foundation vs Higher tier

This graphic shows how entries were split between the two tiers (and is [repeated on p.5](#)).

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

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# Grade boundaries

Subject or paper	Max mark	Summer 2018 grade boundaries								
		9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Spanish 8698H (Higher)	240	198	172	146	126	106	86	66	-	-

## How to interpret grade boundaries

In this new 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.

For 2018, Ofqual agreed that all exam boards should widen the allowed grade 3 boundary for the Higher tier. This means that the distance between the allowed grade 3 and 4 is the same as the distance between 4 and 5. Ofqual acknowledged that with the structural changes like the removal of untiered controlled assessment – tiering decisions were more complex this year. This decision ensured that Higher tier students who would have been better suited to the Foundation tier were not disadvantaged. Ofqual have indicated this won't be repeated in future, so schools should consider their entry policy carefully for summer 2019.

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

Our Centre for Education Research and Practice (CERP) 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](http://aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/results-days/grade-boundaries-and-ums)

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## Qualification summary

### Paper 1

Students handled the paper well and had no difficulty in understanding what was required. At Higher tier as expected, students had greater success in answering the overlap questions than at Foundation tier.

### Paper 2

There was a noticeable improvement in pronunciation compared to last year. Recordings were generally clear and tests generally well-conducted but some students were hampered by poor question technique in terms of demonstrating aspects of the higher mark bands.

### Paper 3

The paper discriminated well across the ability range. Students should be advised to answer every question, especially multiple-choice questions. They should be trained to spot distractors and to give only the information asked for – if the question asks for **one** reason they should give only one.

### Paper 4

Most students coped well with the paper and scored high marks on Question 1 with Questions 2 and 3 discriminating well. More able students applied their linguistic knowledge effectively in responding to unexpected tasks and could use a wide range of structures and vocabulary.

***Feedback on the exam*** courses use student responses to explore what happened in each exam series. Visit [aqa.org.uk/spanish-cpd](https://www.aqa.org.uk/spanish-cpd)

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# Paper 1, Higher

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## Highlights from summer 2018

Students should be reminded to maximise the 5 minutes reading time by, for example, highlighting key words in the rubrics and questions, identifying questions which have two parts and signposting Section B as answers in Spanish are required. Students should also be reminded that the papers are structured in peaks and troughs within a steady incline of difficulty and not to give up if they find a particular question or part question challenging. It is also recommended that students look carefully at the questions to ensure the **specific** information required is given in their answers. Students should use the rubric, question title and any examples given to make the context clear. Some items of key vocabulary were not well known for example *actuación, aumento, dejar de fumar, repasar, apuntes*.

### Questions 15-16

These questions were aimed at the highest grades and did discriminate successfully. For example in 15.1, it was not enough to say Adela visited schools to talk about the environment; students had to convey that Adela explained the best ways to look after the environment. The most accessible part was 16.1 (38% scored the mark) and in 15.2, only 8% produced all the details required.

### Question 23

This was one of the most demanding questions on the paper with a small number of able students gaining marks here.

### Questions 27-28

Students had to deduce the lesson from the recording, the instructions and the example. Some did not use the information provided and produced unconnected guesses such as 'camping' from *campo*. A common error was when students picked up on *agua* and *nutrientes* but not *árboles* and produced *tecnología de comida*. Just over half of students scored both marks in these questions.

### Question 29

72% gained two or three marks. The most popular wrong answer was D as students heard *guapo* and *rico* in the recording.

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# Paper 2, Higher

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

## Highlights from summer 2018

### Part 1 – role play

The majority of students did well in this part of the test, though there were some who would have been better suited to the Foundation tier test. The greatest difficulty arose when students had to make reference to a past event, as verb formations were often incorrect. Where two details were required in a prepared task, it was acceptable for there to be just one verb. Although awarded independently, the mark for Knowledge and use of language usually corresponded to the mark for Communication.

### Part 2 - photo card

The most able students were able to give extended responses to all five questions, though the requirement is to develop three. This part of the test discriminated well. Some of the answers were excellent and contained a lot of information in response to the questions. The available three minutes proved ample, with only those students who had considerable hesitation in their replies going over the time. As at Foundation, sometimes the way a teacher paraphrased a question meant that the meaning was changed and the student answer had to be discounted.

### Part 3 - general conversation

Most students were able to score well. However, there were some who failed to reach the standard required at Higher tier and would have benefitted from being entered at Foundation tier. It was encouraging to see many centres embracing the new exam and asking different questions of different students according to their abilities and interests. Students who scored in the top band for Communication developed their answers consistently and the meaning was always clear in spite of errors. The majority of teachers gave students the chance to demonstrate all three time frames. Pronunciation was generally good. There had to be balance between the two strands of Spontaneity and fluency. Teachers who followed up on students' responses encouraged evidence of spontaneity.

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# Paper 3, Higher

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## Highlights from summer 2018

Students should be reminded, as in Paper 1, that the papers are structured in peaks and troughs within a steady incline of difficulty and not to give up if they find a particular question challenging. In particular, students should be encouraged to tackle the translation as parts of this task will be more accessible than some of the earlier questions.

Some items of key vocabulary were not well known, eg *olvidar*, *comprender*, *despedir*, *dar la bienvenida*.

### Question 4

Here, small items of vocabulary make the difference and test students' ability to show precision in their understanding. Over 50% answered parts 1, 2 and 4 well, but in part 3, less than 15% of students understood the word *olvidar*.

### Question 6

This question proved less accessible than intended with only 29.5% scoring a mark in part 1. Students should be encouraged to read the whole of the short text in order to identify the correct answer and to look closely at the link words to make sure they have fully understood the texts.

### Question 7

This question differentiated well with some excellent answers from the most able students. The mark scheme insisted on a level of detail that only the most able students could provide, as appropriate in a question targeting the highest grade. The most able students answered with precision, deducing information from unfamiliar material and inferring meaning from context.

### Section C (translation)

It was clear that students had practised and been well prepared for translation and 10% scored full marks. Precision was the key to high marks in this task where the precise meaning of the whole phrase must be translated, particularly the little words which can be easily missed.

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# Paper 4, Higher

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

## Highlights from summer 2018

### Question 1

The standard of work at this tier was generally very good, with most students able to refer to past, present and future events successfully. Lapses in accuracy which affected communication could contribute to lower marks for Content. Question 1.1 was by far the more popular choice. The first and last bullets were well done while some students misinterpreted bullet two and in bullet three some did not say what they did to protect the environment. In Question 1.2, the first bullet was sometimes incorrectly interpreted to mean a festival. For Quality of language, less successful language included some confusion over tenses and verb endings and problems with possessive pronouns where 'tu' was retained in the response.

### Question 2

Whereas many students were able to write fluently in response to the bullet points, using language that was largely accurate and varied, there were some who found great difficulty in addressing the more open-ended tasks. In both Question 2.1 and Question 2.2, there were cases where students wrote material that was not relevant, possibly reproducing pre-learnt material, especially in the case of the first bullet. Students who wrote far more than the recommended word count usually made more errors and so the language marks were affected. Serious errors regularly had a major impact on the amount of information successfully conveyed. Such errors often occurred when students tried to write things that were grammatically too complex for them.

### Question 3

This question differentiated well, with the majority of students scoring some marks. *Hice* caused a problem for many students. Various renderings were accepted for 'charity shop'. The third person of the verb 'works' often caused problems. Students should be advised to practise high frequency words and phrases to check no part of the translation has been accidentally missed and to check verb tenses and endings.

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# Notes

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# Notes

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## Notes

‘No school should be without Teachit!’

Vivienne Neale, Teacher

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‘Sample questions for each skill, excellent for assessment and building confidence in lessons. Fantastic tool as questions can be sorted by theme which means staff can decide how and when to use. Definitely recommend.’

Alex Brown, Subject Leader for MFL

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## Contact us

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[aqa.org.uk/spanish](https://www.aqa.org.uk/spanish)

### Responsible for multiple languages?

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- [French](#)
- [German](#)