2019 Spanish Continuers Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the previous year’s assessment cycle, gives an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Folio

Interaction

Students interact with others to exchange information, ideas, opinions, and experiences in spoken Spanish. Students may participate in, for example, conversations, interviews, discussions, forums, or debates, or give multimodal presentations or talks to specific audiences and respond to questions in Spanish (5 to 7 minutes).

The more successful responses commonly:

* provided extensive and non-predictable responses, demonstrating a range of accurate and sophisticated language and vocabulary
* included personal opinions and comparisons between lifestyles in Australia and Hispanic countries
* demonstrated spontaneous interaction, often facilitated by the interlocutor asking open-ended questions and changing the direction of the conversation
* demonstrated a genuine interest in the chosen topics through discussions that reflected a true conversation
* provided depth and breadth in the treatment of a variety of topics
* were consistently fluent and used an extensive vocabulary
* demonstrated the ability to be fluent in Spanish and to expand on their ideas, the teacher asked good questions with depth and reflection taking the conversation in interesting directions
* demonstrated clarity and coherent responses with a range of connectives used effectively to move smoothly between ideas
* maintained the conversation by asking for clarification with confidence if needed.

The less successful responses commonly:

* lacked evidence of preparation — students struggled to elaborate on their answers, lacked confidence and were not clear in their responses
* relied on pre-prepared (often memorised) responses rather than spontaneous discussion
* demonstrated limited knowledge of appropriate Spanish grammar, spelling, and vocabulary to fulfil the demands of the tasks
* exhibited a lack of interest and variation in responses throughout the interaction
* were limited by the task design (for example: the interaction consisted of a presentation with only a few questions at the end, which did not allow achievement at the highest level)
* discussed very similar topics to those presented in the text production, often reproducing the same information
* used poor sentence structure, omitted verbs or displayed only limited understanding of basic grammatical structures, especially with the use of different verb tenses
* relied too heavily on prepared responses
* demonstrated no natural flow to the conversation with long pauses
* showed a lack of correct pronunciation and used wrong intonation or stress.

Text Production

Students create a text, in which they express ideas and/or information and/or opinions and/or feelings in written Spanish.

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated complex grammatical features, like the use of subjunctive, conditional and formal language to write letters
* demonstrated depth, breadth, detailed content, a variety of expression and justification of opinions
* demonstrated a wide range of evidence in a variety of text types, including letters, emails, articles, diary entries, and blogs
* responded to well-designed tasks, which allowed students to articulate their understanding of texts, language features and show depth of ideas
* demonstrated a complex variety of vocabulary, sentences and ideas
* demonstrated comprehensive evidence of planning.

The less successful responses commonly:

* included a range of basic errors which may have been corrected through proofreading
* showed a lack of depth and breadth in the treatment of the topic. Teachers need to ensure that videos, songs, or articles that are used, allow students to highlight a contemporary issue which can be related to and discussed from a student’s local and community perspective.
* used simple ideas or opinions
* needed to provide detail and depth in the response
* needed to use supporting evidence from texts.

Text Analysis

Students analyse and interpret texts that are in Spanish with a response or responses in Spanish and/or English.

The more successful responses commonly:

* when analysing films, demonstrated not only an in-depth understanding of the language used but also the themes, content and context of the film
* focused on the analysis of the linguistic, cultural, and structural features of the text
* clearly demonstrated an understanding of culture (for example, indigenous groups in South America) and were able to make comparisons with other cultures (for example, indigenous groups of Australia)
* provided detailed and appropriate use of evidence from the text(s) to support conclusions
* identified and explained the concepts, perspectives, and ideas of the text(s)
* were evident in tasks that had very clear guidelines and allowed for students to perform well against the performance standards
* showed that students could interpret meaning and draw conclusions about the purpose, style, and language of a text or texts effectively
* reflected and interpreted a range of content and textual features.

The less successful responses commonly:

* lacked reflection on, and interpretation of, content and textual features
* responded only to the content of the text(s)
* did not support responses with evidence from the text(s)
* were general rather than specific
* needed to provide examples to substantiate opinions or conclusions.

Teachers need to provide students with authentic types of texts from different sources rather than use the same texts from past examinations.

Assessment Type 2: In-depth Study

Students undertake an in-depth study demonstrating research and personal reflection on an aspect or aspects of a topic associated with ‘The Spanish-speaking Communities’ or ‘The Changing World’ themes. The in-depth study is intended to be more than learning a body of facts and reporting on them. It requires analysis and reflection.

The more successful responses commonly:

* conveyed ideas clearly in a consistent and organised manner
* included not only a substantial amount of information about the topic of choice using a high standard of Spanish, but also showed a sound understanding of the influence, importance, and/or nature of the topic
* presented detailed information about aspects of the topic
* showed evidence through insightful and sophisticated reflection on how the in‑depth study contributed to the students’ understanding of themselves and their understanding of Spanish-speaking communities
* allowed for personal reflection and opinion
* analysed the researched information rather than simply describing it.

The less successful responses commonly:

* relied too much on notes (for the oral presentation), thus not demonstrating an ability to engage the audience
* included limited personal reflection
* focused on the content of their research in the reflective response in English, rather than on their understanding of cultures and values, learning, beliefs, and ideas, and how these have changed or been enhanced through their learning
* contained limited, if any, reflection on cultures, values, beliefs, practices, and ideas
* focused primarily on the research process, not the impact of the research on self and others.

If teachers choose the topic of the in-depth study for the class, then each student should research a different aspect of this topic. It is important that there is some individuality in the research focus, so that students bring their own knowledge, insights, and opinions to their study. Students should participate as much as possible in selecting their own topic, so that they take ownership and view the study as a personal investigation of relevance and meaning to them.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Examination

The examination consists of two assessments: an oral examination and a written examination.

Oral Examination

The oral examination of 10–15 minutes comprises a general conversation and a discussion of the student’s in-depth study. In the conversation, students converse with the examiners about their personal world. Topics covered include life, family and friends, home, local environment, school, hobbies, interests, aspirations, and travel.

Section 1: Conversation

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated the ability to hold a conversation on a variety of topics and to interact and maintain a conversation
* provided extensive and non-predictable responses, demonstrating a range of accurate and sophisticated language and vocabulary
* were consistently relevant to the questions asked and topics discussed
* presented a very good range of information, opinions and ideas
* developed ideas on comments made by the examiners and used correct tenses and connectives to create an interesting conversation
* demonstrated culturally appropriate behaviours, and used conventional greetings
* showed evidence of preparation and confidence in interacting in Spanish
* had prepared well and responded effectively to questions about their personal world.

The less successful responses commonly:

* relied too much on prepared responses and this affected the natural flow of the interaction, especially when the answer required extra and/or more nuanced information
* lacked flexibility, including the ability to rephrase, and struggled to elaborate on their answers, indicating a lack of preparation
* generally included appropriate information but lacked depth
* regularly required the examiners to repeat a question before providing a response
* demonstrated difficulty structuring sentences and finding suitable vocabulary, particularly when using the masculine gender or plurals
* used a limited range of vocabulary and were often slow to respond
* used simple and repetitive cohesive devices
* had frequent silences because of lack of comprehension

Section 2: Discussion

The topics discussed were very interesting and varied. For example: ‘Conflicto entre el gobierno chileno y el pueblo Mapuche’, ‘La influencia de Frida Kahlo en el mundo Hispano’, ‘Turismo sostenible en Venezuela’, ‘el arte Inca y el arte Aborigen Australiano’, ‘La obesidad en Chile’, ‘La educación en España’, ‘La importancia del Fútbol en Latinoamérica’, ‘Los efectos del cambio climático en países hispanohablantes’ and ‘La violencia contra la mujer en Guatemala’.

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated that they were familiar with their topic and understood the content in depth
* demonstrated the ability to reflect and comment on significant learning that had been undertaken
* showed evidence that the students investigated a new perspective
* demonstrated an appreciation for what was learn
* provided in-depth explanations about how the chosen topic impacted on the life and future of the student, showing an ability to make a personal connection with the in-depth study
* created interest and engaged the examiners
* demonstrated outstanding mastery and knowledge of the basic tenses and were at ease using technical and subject-specific vocabulary
* demonstrate higher order thinking to the best of their ability and gave opinions
* brought visual material to support their chosen sub-topic, which worked very well

The less successful responses commonly:

* were unable to express their in-depth knowledge on the topic for discussion
* were unable to provide personal opinions about the topics discussed or reflect upon the research
* lacked evidence of research
* did not carry the conversation forward with spontaneity and provided one-sentence answers, expecting assessors to keep asking questions
* were related to topics that were too challenging for the language skills of the students, they had a limited range of vocabulary and were unable to advance the discussion

Written Examination

Section 1: Listening and Responding

There were four texts in Spanish, all of them varying in length and nature. For all texts, the questions and answers were in English.

Question 1

The more successful responses commonly:

* identified the purpose of the text, encouraging people to adopt a dog
* identified of the two benefits that could be brought to a person’s life, according to the text.

The less successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated confusion identifying the purpose of the text
* did not provide the two benefits required by the question.

Question 2

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated a good understanding of the text and were able to interpret the key ideas
* provided comprehensive evidence from the text to support the tour guide’s statement.

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not provide evidence from the text to support the response
* did not identify why the tour guide asks participants to greet the Australian animals in Spanish.

Question 3

The more successful responses commonly:

* displayed comprehensive understanding with supporting evidence of how the attitude of Ms Ríos changes during the telephone conversation
* identified why the interviewer insists on speaking with Ms Ríos
* identified what conclusion can be drawn about the interview’s expression at the end of the conversation.

The less successful responses commonly:

* provided general responses unrelated to the specifics of each question part
* provided limited or no evidence from the text to support responses.

Question 4

The more successful responses commonly:

* displayed comprehensive understanding of how the first circumnavigation of the globe affected Europeans’ understanding of the world, according to the text
* fully identified what could attract students to participate in the competition.

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not identify how the first circumnavigation of the globe affected Europeans’ understanding of the world, according to the text
* provided a partial explanation of what could attract students to participate in the competition.

Section 2: Reading and Responding

Part A

Question 5

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated a thorough understanding of the information in the text
* provided a comprehensive explanation of the meaning of expressions in the text
* provided comprehensive understanding of the title in the context of the article.

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not include enough detail to provide complete responses to the questions
* provided limited evidence from the texts to support their answers.

Question 6

The more successful responses commonly:

* displayed comprehensive understanding of how La Piedra del Peñol changed from being an obstacle to being a major tourist attraction
* provided a comprehensive explanation of how Clara feels about her visit to La Piedra del Peñol
* demonstrated a strong understanding of linguistic devices used by Clara to convey her feelings about her trip.

The less successful responses commonly:

* lacked depth and detail
* provided limited evidence from the texts to support their answers.

Part B

Question 7

(Your teacher brought this newspaper article to your class for discussion. You have a very strong interest in this issue. Write a letter to the editor of the newspaper in which you address the points made in the article and give your own opinion.)

The more successful responses commonly:

* used the correct text type required, letter (to the editor)/formal letter
* demonstrated comprehensive understanding of the issues raised in the text
* composed a coherent argument demonstrating comprehensive understanding of the use of mobile phones
* organised information and ideas logically and coherently to meet the requirements of the task
* addressed the points made in the text as support for own opinions.

The less successful responses commonly:

* lacked depth, grammatical correctness, and detail
* demonstrated limited understanding of the requirements of the task
* demonstrated limited evidence of the ability to organise information
* used repetitious vocabulary and sentence structures
* reproduced lengthy sections of the stimulus text
* only partially adhered to the conventions of text type.

Section 3: Writing in Spanish

Three questions were provided in 2019 and students were required to write 250 to 300 words in Spanish on one of the questions. Each question required a different text type and style of writing. Students were required to write an email (Question 8), an article (Question 9), or a diary entry (Question 10).

The more successful responses commonly:

* discussed their own responses in Spanish, with fluency and creativity
* were able to demonstrate extensive knowledge and understanding of vocabulary and sentence structures, manipulate language authentically and creatively to meet the requirements of the task
* demonstrated effective use of cohesive devices to connect ideas and paragraphs
* demonstrated a good command of syntax and a sound knowledge of the conventions for each text type
* conveyed information accurately by using different structures, such as subjunctives, comparatives, and connectors.

The less successful responses commonly:

* lacked depth and breadth
* used simple grammatical structures and vocabulary that was often incorrect
* demonstrated variable accuracy, with some basic errors (for example: use of gerund instead of the infinitive, grammatical agreement between subject and adjective)
* demonstrated difficulty with some of the basic uses of present tense and preterit tenses
* demonstrated a degree of inconsistency in register and/or tone
* attempted to use cohesive devices to link paragraphs.