2020 Spanish (continuers) Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2020 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:

* used a range of tenses and vocabulary appropriately and expanded their answers beyond simple responses
* used correct pronunciation and intonation. Students sounded natural and comfortable with the language.

The less successful responses commonly:

* relied on pre-prepared (often memorised) responses rather than spontaneous discussion
* demonstrated no natural flow to the conversation
* did not know how to ask questions to the interviewer.

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
* lacked detail and depth in the response
* did not provide supporting evidence from texts.

It is recommended to keep within the task word limit. When students exceed the word limit of a task, they risk the chance of making more mistakes and being repetitive.

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:

* provided a good range of details with supportive evidence from the text
* demonstrated good interpretation of meaning

The less successful responses commonly:

* were short and incomplete.
* demonstrated lack of ability to justify opinions.

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:

* used a PowerPoint presentation with few notes on it to support the oral presentation, instead of long texts on each slide.

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
* Were extensive and non-predictable, demonstrating a range of accurate and sophisticated language and vocabulary
* were consistently relevant to the questions asked and topics discussed
* presented a 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
* were well-prepared 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 interesting and varied. For example: ‘El Flamenco,’ ‘Corridas de Toros,’ ‘Frida Kahlo,’ ‘Pablo Picasso,’ ‘El Calentamiento Global,’ ‘El autismo y la discriminación,’ ‘El origen de la Paella,’ ‘La revolución Cubana,’ ‘La pintura aborigen,’ ‘La donación de órganos en España,’ ‘El impacto de la pandemia en España.’

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated familiarity with the topic and in-depth understanding of the content
* demonstrated the ability to reflect and comment on significant learning that had been undertaken
* showed evidence that the student had investigated a new perspective
* demonstrated an appreciation for what was learnt
* 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
* demonstrated higher order thinking and gave opinions
* brought visual material to support their chosen subtopic.

The less successful responses commonly:

* were unable to express 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, who had a limited range of vocabulary and were unable to advance the discussion.

It is recommended to guide students to choose their topics to help them to fulfil the assessment criteria successfully. Topics such as leaders who promoted violence and bad influence in the world are challenging for students and thus make it more difficult for them to express in-depth knowledge, opinions, and reflection.

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:

* correctly identified that the special event was the 90th anniversary of the World Cup
* identified the two prizes that could be won (flight tickets to the 2022 World Cup and football team uniforms).

The less successful responses commonly:

* misunderstood what the prizes were.

Question 2

The more successful responses commonly:

* fully identified the purpose of the news item (informing listeners about the objectives of a student environmental group)
* identified the four objectives that the group wanted to achieve – extend tree-planting to all Spanish educational institutions, broaden students’ activities to include reforestation programs, develop students’ awareness and concern for the environment, make the young generation more responsible for the environment.

The less successful responses commonly:

* identified some or none of the objectives that the group wanted to achieve.

Question 3

The more successful responses commonly:

* displayed a comprehensive understanding of the financial, physical, and mental benefits of ecotourism, according to the text (financial benefit – not paying for fuel on excursions, physical benefit – strengthening legs by walking and breathing pure air, mental benefit – feeling happy and relaxed thanks to contact with nature).
* Identified and provided comprehensive justification of why the woman chose the Iguazu Falls holiday plan (accommodation in a small town – would meet her need to ‘disconnect from the craziness of the big city,’ local gastronomy and interaction with indigenous communities – would meet her desire ‘to lean how other people live’).

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not support answers with evidence from the text
* provided only partial justification of why the woman chose the Iguazu Falls holiday plan.

Question 4

The more successful responses commonly:

* fully identified the purpose of Camilo’s app – to take beginning runners through a 12-week program with the end goal of running non-stop for 20-minutes.
* displayed a comprehensive understanding of what the interviewer thought about the app.
* provided evidence from the text to support responses.

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not provide evidence from the text to support the response to what the interviewer thinks about the app.

Section 2: Reading and Responding

Part A

Question 5

The more successful responses commonly:

* provided comprehensive evidence from the text to justify the statement: ‘Lupita’s grandmother is an inspiration in her life’

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not use evidence from the text to justify the statement: ‘Lupita’s grandmother is an inspiration in her life’
* provided a translation into English from the text without interpreting the question properly.

Question 6

The more successful responses commonly:

* displayed comprehensive understanding of the title in the context of the article
* identified six techniques that Ramón used to engage the reader and/or support his argument.

The less successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated partial understanding of the title in the context of the article
* did not identify some or no techniques that the writer used to engage the reader and/or support his argument.

Part B

Question 7

After reading this blog, you decide to respond to Joselito’s request. Evaluate Joselito’s job-seeking strategies and provide him with constructive advice.

The more successful responses commonly:

* used the correct text type required – blog post
* addressed the points that Joselito had made as support for own opinion
* composed a coherent argument demonstrating comprehensive understanding of the ways that Joselito could improve his job-seeking strategies
* encouraged Joselito by pointing out some positives in what he was currently doing.
* organised information and ideas logically and coherently to meet the requirements of the task

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, Questions 8, 9, and 10, of varying nature were available for the students to choose.

Most students chose Questions 8 (script of a speech for your year 12 class reflecting on how a study exchange program in Spain for a year changed your life).

This was followed by Question 9 (a letter to the mayor of your city in support of the initiative — a day without technology).

Question 10 (creative writing – write a story on the theme ‘Quien tiene un amigo tiene un tresoro’) was the least popular.

The more successful responses commonly:

* wrote their responses in Spanish, with fluency and creativity
* demonstrated extensive knowledge and understanding of vocabulary and sentence structures and, manipulated 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.

It is recommended to give students the opportunity to write different types of texts during class time.