2023 VCE Spanish written external assessment report

General comments

In the 2023 Spanish examination students displayed varying levels of proficiency in different areas. The following sections provide an in-depth analysis of their performance, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.

Vocabulary and grammar:

* Students who scored highly demonstrated a consolidated use of basic vocabulary and grammar, along with accurate accents and orthography. These students effectively employed appropriate vocabulary and demonstrated mastery of complex sentence structures.
* Low-scoring responses revealed a need for further consolidation in vocabulary and grammar. Students struggled with accurate accentuation and made frequent spelling errors. They often used simplistic sentence structures and lacked precision in their word choices.
* To improve their vocabulary and grammar skills, students should emphasise the consolidation of basic vocabulary and grammar rules. Students should be encouraged to practise using accents correctly and reinforce orthographic principles. Exercises should focus on sentence structure and offer opportunities for students to expand their vocabulary in various contexts.

Text type structure:

* A strong understanding and effective use of text type structure was evident in high-scoring responses. These students organised their responses coherently, utilising appropriate language features for each text type.
* It was evident from low-scoring responses that the respondents had difficulty adhering to text type conventions. Students struggled with organisation, resulting in incoherent and confusing responses. They failed to incorporate appropriate language features and lacked a clear understanding of text structure.
* Students should be guided to study, understand and practise the text type structures as outlined in the study design. Examples and exercises should help students grasp the unique requirements of each text type, and feedback and guidance should help them improve coherence and clarity in their written responses.

Translation skills:

* Answers that scored highly demonstrated an understanding of the importance of avoiding literal translations and employing contextual understanding. These students utilised the dictionary appropriately, and accurately conveyed meaning by considering context.
* Low-scoring responses often relied on literal translations, resulting in inaccuracies and misunderstandings. Students struggled to grasp the nuances of language and overused dictionaries without understanding the subtleties of meaning.
* To develop students' translation skills, it is recommended to emphasise the importance of understanding context and meaning rather than relying solely on literal translations. Students could be provided with strategies for effective dictionary use, such as identifying cognates and being aware of potential pitfalls. Students should practise translating accurately while considering context through practice exercises.

Specific information

Section 1

Part A – Listening and responding in English

This section assessed the students’ capacity to understand and convey general and specific aspects of texts.

Question 1a.

* The radio program was aired on a weekly basis / every Sunday.
* The dance originated in the 18th century.

Question 1b.

The dance

* was introduced by Spanish immigrants/people
* was adapted with the use of local instruments.

Question 1c.

The dance is so challenging to perform because performers need to dance, sing and play an instrument at the same time.

Responses needed to include ‘at the same time / all at once or simultaneously’ to receive the second mark.

Question 1d.

Events where the dance is performed:

* at weddings
* at folk/traditional festivals.

Question 1e.

The program’s title is related to the purpose of the radio program because

* it highlights lesser-known examples of Spanish art forms
* this dance (jota) can often be hidden behind more known art forms (such as flamenco).

Part B – Listening and responding in Spanish

In this part of the examination students were assessed on their understanding of the listening text and their ability to accurately convey appropriate information from the text in Spanish. The information presented in the response needed to be relevant to the question. Students were not awarded separate marks for content and language. Responses that included the relevant information and were expressed clearly in Spanish were awarded full marks.

Question 2a.

The great advantage of the AR glasses is that:

* Permiten total libertad de movimiento y no requieren el uso de cables, ordenadores o cascos. (They allow complete freedom of movement and do not require the use of cables, computers or helmets.)
* Usan sensores/cámaras, algoritmos de visión para seguir/rastrear/identifica/ reconocer objetos del mundo real y sobreponer imágenes en ellos. (They use sensors, cameras and vision algorithms to track and recognise real-world objects and superimpose images over them.)
* Los micrófonos, audífonos/altavoces y controles (incorporados en la montura de las gafas), permiten interactuar con el contenido virtual. (Microphones, speakers and touch controls built into the frames of the glasses will allow you to interact with the virtual content.)

Question 2b.

Augmented reality glasses have impact in the fields of:

Medicina/Salud (Health):

* La anatomía humana se puede ver en 3D con modelos virtuales de órganos y sistemas corporales que pueden ayudar a los estudiantes a comprender conceptos biológicos complejos. (Human anatomy can be viewed in 3D with virtual models of organs and body systems to help students understand complex biological concepts.)

Language learning:

* Las gafas RA pueden mejorar el aprendizaje de idiomas para practicar cómo pedir comida en un restaurante virtual donde se pueden ver menús, meseros y clients. (AR glasses can enhance language learning as you can practise ordering food in a virtual restaurant where you can see menus, waiters and customers.)

Question 2c.

Incentives to attend the event:

* Todos los asistentes al evento tendrán la oportunidad de experimentar/usar/probar el uso de las gafas RA/el producto/esta tecnología. (All attendees will have the opportunity to experience the AR glasses.)
* Todos los asistentes al evento pueden participar en un recorrido interactivo. (All attendees can participate in an interactive tour.)

Question 2d.

Para ingresar tiene que (To enter, you have to):

* hacer una reserva en la página web de la empresa (make a reservation on the company's website)
* descargar la aplicación en su teléfono móvil (download the application on your mobile pone)
* aceptar las condiciones (accept the conditions).

Section 2

Part A – Reading, listening and responding in English

In Section 2, Part A, students were required to carefully use both the reading and listening texts to produce the required response.

Question 3a.

Europe’s current challenges:

* climate change
* social inequality
* technological transition
* divided political landscape / countries
* generational transformation/transition
* low birth rate / change in demographics / ageing population

Question 3b.

Consequences of a change in demographics on society in Europe:

* The cost of living will increase due to the lack of economic growth caused by labour shortages.
* More human and economic resources will be required for public health.

Question 3c.

Benefits of remaining healthy during the ageing process:

* Late appearance of chronic diseases / illnesses.
* More individuals will be able to continue participating in the labour market.

Question 3d.

This is how initiatives from the government and social organisations will benefit these generations:

* older generations: gives them a purpose
* younger generations: support and wisdom / experience of the older generation.

Question 3e.

These are the similarities between the characters in both texts:

* both help him with his homework
* both do not work anymore / are at home all the time.

Question 3f.

Examples of intergenerational experiences:

Report

* games nights
* dance clubs
* cooking lessons

Classroom lesson

* young and old living together
* grandparents helping grandchildren with homework
* old and young doing activities (watch football/tennis) together

Part B – Reading and responding in Spanish

Students were required to demonstrate an understanding of the stimulus text/texts and to address the requirements of the task by conveying the relevant information from the text/texts that was appropriate for the audience and the prescribed writing style and text type.

The reading text included a visual stimulus. Students who scored highly were able to successfully incorporate information from the visual stimulus in their response.

Student responses were assessed holistically according to the assessment criteria and the expected qualities published on the VCAA website. Students were not awarded separate marks for content and language accuracy; however, language accuracy was an important expected quality that was considered in the assessment.

It was possible to achieve a high score for this question without exceeding the specified word/character limit, which is shorter than the limit specified for Section 3.

Question 4

Your high school celebrates World Refugee Day. Using the information from the article, write the script of a speech that you will deliver at the school assembly, informing the audience about the experiences of your grandfather, who left Spain to seek asylum in Mexico as a child.

Text type: script of a speech

Kind of writing: informative

Audience: students and teachers at a school assembly

The informative speech provides readers with information about the experiences of people leaving Spain and moving to Mexico at the beginning of the 1940s. It was expected that students used this information to write a biography of the Mexican grandfather.

Objective: to provide information about the student’s grandfather to commemorate World Refugee Day.

Structure: introduction, body and conclusion (summarising the main points of the speech and reinforcing the purpose)

Neutral tone: informative speech should be neutral and unbiased, avoiding personal opinions and emotions. (Note that marks were not taken off if response displayed some emotional language.)

Engagement: an informative speech should engage the audience and keep them interested, using examples, anecdotes or humour where appropriate.

Suggested points students may include in their response:

* an overview of his biography (mention that he was a child at the end of the 1930s and who accompanied him)
* the reason(s) for leaving Spain and seeking asylum in Mexico
* description of one of the ships used to cross to the continent (from the visual stimulus)
* the city he arrived in
* growing up in a new country and adjusting to a new culture (challenges and obstacles and how he overcame them)
* the contribution that he made to Mexico and to his community.

Section 3 – Writing in Spanish

Question 5

The students were asked to write a short story for a teen magazine about what happens next after purchasing an object at a second-hand shop, only to discover it is a pre-Columbian artefact of significant value.

Expected features and skills:

* creativity in crafting an imaginative and engaging narrative
* descriptive writing to establish the value of the artefact and portray the protagonist's emotions
* plot development with tension, obstacles and threats
* characterisation of a curious and determined protagonist and dangerous collectors
* resolution or open-ended conclusion to leave the reader intrigued.

Characteristics of a high-scoring response:

* engaging introduction highlighting the artefact's importance
* well-developed protagonist with curiosity and determination
* suspenseful plot with obstacles and threats
* descriptive language creating vivid imagery
* satisfying conclusion or intriguing open-ended resolution.

General strengths:

* demonstrating creativity and descriptive writing
* effective building of tension and engagement.

Areas for improvement:

* developing the antagonists and their pursuit of the artefact
* improving resolution or open-ended conclusion
* strengthening plot development with additional obstacles.

Question 6

This task asked students to write an email persuading the student’s older sister to improve the balance between her studies and personal life.

Expected features and skills:

* observation of excessive studying and concern for sister's lack of balance
* providing specific ideas for balancing studies and personal life
* use of persuasive language
* writing in a personal and informal tone.

Characteristics of a high-scoring response:

* genuine observation of sister's excessive studying and genuine concern
* specific and appealing ideas for achieving balance
* effective use of persuasive language and techniques
* consistent personal and informal tone.

General strengths:

* demonstrating empathy and understanding
* practical and appealing ideas for balance
* effective use of persuasive language.

Areas for improvement:

* providing more specific suggestions for balance
* strengthening persuasive language and techniques
* maintaining a consistent personal and informal tone.

Question 7

In this task, students had to write a post on their personal experience observing small communities lacking basic facilities and resources during their trip to Latin America.

Expected features and skills:

* introduction of the overall trip experience, including food, scenery and interactions
* mention of the lack of facilities and resources in small communities and its impact
* writing in a personal and informal tone with interaction with virtual followers
* friendly opening and closing salutations.

Characteristics of a high-scoring response:

* engaging introduction capturing trip experiences
* effective observation and reflection on underserved communities
* maintaining a personal and informal tone with interaction
* including friendly opening and closing salutations.

General strengths:

* descriptive storytelling skills
* conveying emotional impact of observed communities
* using informal language and engaging with readers.

Areas for improvement:

* providing more specific details and descriptions
* deepening personal reflection on thoughts and emotions
* strengthening genuine connection with virtual followers.

Question 8

Students had to write a formal letter to the organising committee of a youth function organised by the Hispanic community that they attended in their city.

Expected features and skills:

* acknowledgment of event success
* clear suggestions for improvement
* use of evaluative language
* writing in a formal tone with proper formatting.

Characteristics of a high-scoring response:

* acknowledgment of event success
* concrete improvement suggestions
* balanced evaluation with evaluative language
* consistent formal tone and formatting.

General strengths:

* understanding of formal letter conventions
* practical and relevant improvement suggestions
* balanced assessment of the event.

Areas for improvement:

* providing specific details on event success
* offering more detailed and actionable improvement suggestions
* maintaining consistent formal tone and formatting.