

# 2021 VCE Spanish written external assessment report

## General comments

Most students were able to identify general information from both listening and reading texts. However, only a limited number of students were able to clearly express their answers and expand their responses when the questions required specific information or increased complexity.

In order to successfully complete the different sections of the exam, it is essential that students pay attention to questions and note whether they require responses in full sentences. It is also important that, while listening to the texts, students take notes in the spaces provided. Students generally demonstrated an understanding of the requirements of the writing tasks, such as structure, text types and their characteristics, but needed to pay more attention to details, particularly basic grammar.

## Specific information

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

## 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.

Closing times for the bank:

- For lunch: 2:00 pm
- For the day: 7:00 pm

#### Question 1b.

- Helped with digestion.
- Provided an opportunity to rest / for resting.
- Provided energy for the afternoon shift / work / going back to work.

### Question 1c.

Two of the following:

- obsession with money
- work addiction / addiction to work / work obsession / too much work
- people have forgotten about resting.

### Question 1d.

- Martín wants to take a siesta/nap (just like his Grandma does).
- Because he says he has been convinced / he thinks taking a nap/siesta is a good thing/idea / will be beneficial / benefit him.
- He has had too many late nights / he is tired.

## 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.

*El podcast solamente habla sobre líderes latinoamericanos del siglo 21 y Pepe Mujica es un líder latinoamericano del siglo 21.* (The podcast only discusses / talks about Latin American leaders of the 21st century and Pepe Mujica is a Latin American leader of the 21st century.)

### Question 2b.

- El siguió viviendo en su casita del campo. (He continued to live in his small country home.)
- *El No quiso recibir un salario.* (He did not want to receive a salary.)
- *El escribía sus propios discursos.* (He wrote his own speeches.)
- *Jamás usó corbata.* (He never wore a tie.)

### Question 2c.

*Durante su mandato, mejoró la calidad de la educación, las condiciones de vida de los agricultores y logró legalizar el matrimonio igualitario/entre dos personas del mismo sexo.* (During his mandate, Mujica improved the quality of education, the working conditions of farmers and managed to legalise same-sex marriage.)

### Question 2d.

Correct responses included:

*Por ser considerado un ser humano honesto, empático y al servicio de los demás. Por su lucha por la igualdad y los derechos humanos como base de sus decisiones.* (For being considered an honest and empathetic human being and at the service of others. For his fight for equality and human rights as the foundation of his decisions.)

## Section 2

### Part A – Reading, listening and responding in English

#### Question 3a.

Factors which increase Central America's risk with respect to climate change are:

- its frail/vulnerable geographical location
- insufficient economic resources in the region
- poor living conditions of the majority of its population.

#### Question 3b.

- The climate has changed as a result of the rise in atmospheric temperature, variations in sea temperature and change in rain patterns.
- Consequences: (any two of) frequent cyclones, torrential rains and droughts.

In some cases, students confused causes with consequences when answering this question.

#### Question 3c.

The destruction of ecosystems will impact on agriculture either because there will be a lack of water or because extreme weather might make agriculture unreliable.

#### Question 3d.

- incentivises tourism
- generates wealth for the country's economy
- helps protect against the negative effects mass tourism can have on nature / doesn't have negative effects on the environment

#### Question 3e.

Costa Rica received the award because the government placed its concern for the environment and the cultural resources at the centre/heart of their political and economic strategies.

Some students made reference to climate change, which was inaccurate as this was not mentioned among the reasons Costa Rica was given the award. Some students also incorrectly referred to natural resources instead of cultural resources.

### Question 3f.

- offset carbon footprint by proclaiming the Pledge of Pure Life
- invest in renewable energy
- maintain or begin a new project
- protect its natural and cultural heritage

The majority of students found it difficult to compare the two texts and determine what Costa Rica has done to address climate change. In some instances, they only used information from one of the texts and not both. Taking accurate notes in these instances was essential.

## 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. Responses that scored highly successfully incorporated information from the visual stimulus.

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.

Correct responses included:

- *Del gráfico: estabilidad económica, opción de vivir con amigos, vivir con pareja, o Frágil relación con los padres.* (From the graph: economic stability, the option to live with friends, live with a partner, or fragile relationship with parents.)
- *Del mensaje de Elena: comodidad de vivir en casa, precios de los alquileres, contribución económica en el hogar, familia, trabajo/estudios.* (From Elena's message: comfort of living at home, rental prices, economic contribution at home, family, work.)

## Section 3 – Writing in Spanish

### Questions 5–8

Students must allow themselves sufficient time to complete the assigned tasks. Many of the responses lacked appropriate syntax. It is common for students to adopt anglicisms or translate directly from English to Spanish. In spite of being able to apply idiomatic expressions and complex grammatical features, many students did not understand basic grammatical rules, such as gender/number agreement and verb conjugations.

Some examples of this:

- using the word *findes* for 'weekends', *mobil* for 'mobile' or *professor* for 'teacher'
- the incorrect use of cognates such as *dispositivos* when referring to devices
- the incorrect use of words such as *mente*, which is a noun in Spanish, but in English is also used as a verb (for example the correct English sentence would be 'She doesn't **mind** walking to the station', but *Ella no tiene **mente** para caminar a la estación* translates to 'She doesn't have a mind to walk to the station'.

In terms of popularity, Question 5 was most popular, followed by Question 8 and Question 6.

## Question 5

Students were required to write a personal journal entry about enrolling in an online university course that led to substantial changes in their daily lives.

Responses that scored highly may have included the following points:

- differences between online and offline courses
- changes to daily routine
- benefits and challenges, for example:
  - savings on transport and time, cheaper tuition, easy accessibility
  - technical issues, disruption by online outage, interruption by family members, battery shortage, levels of motivation
- how to overcome the challenges.

## Question 6

Students had to write a persuasive letter to the mayor, outlining the advantages of providing sufficient outdoor playgrounds and their benefits to the health of families.

Responses that scored highly may have included the following points:

- advantages of children's outdoor playgrounds
- benefits of children's outdoor playgrounds to their physical and mental health
- attempts to persuade the mayor using a number of convincing arguments.

## Question 7

Students had to write an imaginative short story from the perspective of Pablo about his early days in Australia.

Responses that scored highly may have included the following points:

- differences in the landscape, sounds, smells, climate, lifestyle and people
- cultural shock
- beginning of an adventure, development of events, climax.

## Question 8

Students were asked to write an evaluative article in which they presented the advantages and disadvantages of the school board considering cutting the number of museum excursions by 50 per cent, as many museums can now be visited virtually.

Responses that scored highly may have included the following points:

- context: reducing by 50 per cent the number of museum excursions
- two or three advantages, for example:
  - visiting anywhere, anytime, easy accessibility (improved access to the collections)
  - flexibility in learning, learning at one's own pace
  - savings on transportation and time
  - protecting the places and artefacts; the space is meant to be preserved and safeguarded for future generations
  - keeping the original collections in perfect condition, out of sight of the public

- two or three disadvantages, for example:
  - no direct contact with teacher
  - less experience of sharing the same place and event among classmates, where students often learn from one another
  - poor reproduction of the original (works of art, artefacts and historical collections)
  - diminishes the overall experience / cannot match the atmosphere of a live experience as students can't see any surface, can't tell if this is gloss or matte, can't tell the texture, the colours look different, etc.