



2003

LOTE: Spanish GA 3: Examination

Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Students demonstrated an understanding of all the requirements set out in the Spanish Study Design. The oral component of the LOTE examination has two sections. Section 1: the Conversation (approximately 7 minutes) is about the student's personal world; for example, school and home life, family and friends, interests and aspirations. Section 2: the Discussion (8 minutes) has as its focus to explore aspects of the language and culture of Spanish-speaking communities using the student's sub-topic for the Detailed Study. The students of Spanish together with their teachers chose topics that were relevant to their age group and therefore their knowledge and performance was of a high quality. Some topics were, 'The rights of children in the Spanish-speaking world', 'Music and Social Issues in the Spanish-speaking world' and 'Childhood and Poverty'. Students displayed great enthusiasm when talking about their topics.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

Most students were able to converse fluently about their personal world. They were well prepared to discuss topics such as families, schools, hobbies and future aspirations, which are detailed in the Study Design. Students are advised to prepare a variety of topics with respect to their personal world.

There were some excellent students who advanced the exchange appropriately and effectively when open-ended questions were asked. They were capable of discussing any issue that came up in the conversation. A few students answered with monosyllables which did not enable them to fulfil the criterion 'capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively'.

Many students were accurate in vocabulary and grammar but a few still made mistakes in conjugating verbs and had difficulties using the subjunctive mood.

Most students demonstrated clarity of expression and corrected their own mistakes and were ready to use sound repair strategies. Students should learn to use appropriate strategies to correct their own mistakes, especially when referring to the different subjects they study at school. It is important that students find out the appropriate translation for subject areas so that when they discuss their subjects with the assessors they know how to refer to them in Spanish.

Most students used the correct greeting and farewell to the assessors and it was pleasing to see demonstration of such knowledge.

Section 2 – Discussion

The main focus of this section is to discuss and explore aspects covered in the texts studied in the 15 hours of the Detailed Study. Students have to indicate to the assessors the sub-topic chosen for their Detailed Study and, in no more than one minute, briefly introduce the main focus of their sub-topic, alerting assessors to any objects brought to support the discussion. While most students started their Detailed Study discussion by making great use of their minute, a few were not well informed about this requirement. Teachers should make sure that students prepare themselves to state what their topic is, indicate the texts they have used and also indicate what they have studied. Most students demonstrated that they had carefully rehearsed this part of their Detailed Study.

Capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively

The choice of the topic is very important. Fifteen hours of class time needs to be devoted to the Detailed Study and students should be able to discuss the texts studied. They need to study at least three different texts, each in different text types and all the texts should be in Spanish. Most students were capable of discussing the different texts they had studied in their Detailed Study. They also demonstrated the capacity to maintain and advance the exchange presenting different points of view and knowledge of the texts and at the same time ideas and opinions that made the discussion interesting. Very few students were unable to engage in a meaningful discussion on the Detailed Study, despite the fact that their limited language and pronunciation made it difficult at times to have a comprehensible discussion. It is important for students to practise possible questions that may be asked during the examination. Most students could respond to the assessors' questions with lengthy utterances, demonstrating their knowledge of the different texts they had studied in their Detailed Study.

Relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas

Many students discussed the advantages/disadvantages of the topic they were discussing and this gave opportunities to show that they had carefully analysed and prepared some ideas and opinions about their topic. Students chose appropriate texts giving a lot of scope and opportunities to demonstrate their points of view, in some depth. Students were good at interpreting the texts studied but a few were unable to discuss their topics in depth and express a variety of ideas and opinions. Overall, students made sure that during their discussion they referred to the texts studied in their Detailed Study.

Accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

Most students demonstrated that they could use the vocabulary relevant to their topic in a very successful way although a few used the incorrect tense when discussing the topic. Several times students were more interested in getting their point of view across than being accurate in Spanish. The present tense was much used, instead of the simple past or subjunctive. Some students were well prepared to paraphrase or express themselves in a simpler way in order to communicate their message. It is a good idea for students to prepare and express an idea in simple terms instead of stopping altogether when they try to express complicated ideas. Students performed very well when they had prepared their topics adequately.

Clarity of expression

Many students achieved success by speaking fluently, rephrasing and giving interesting details with excellent ideas and opinions about their chosen topic.

Written component

Generally, most students understood the requirements and were well prepared for this examination. Some sections of the paper required a response in English and others in Spanish. Most students responded in the appropriate language, although some responded in the wrong language and did not gain any marks for that particular question. Teachers should make sure that students read and follow instructions carefully. Teachers should also make sure that students are aware of the following:

- if a student makes minor errors in English and yet produces a correct answer, they still gain full marks
- if the meaning is not conveyed then marks will be lost
- students should attempt every question
- responses in the wrong language receive no credit and, in questions where word limits are given, excessively long pieces are penalised
- in Section 3 if a student answers a question completely different from those set, or they appear prepared and memorised, students will not be assigned any marks
- any work 10 per cent over the word limit will be disregarded (including sentences that begin thereafter)
- no credit/marks will be awarded for notes or drafts
- marks will be awarded for answers in the answer space only.

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Part A

In the Listening and Responding section most students managed to answer questions accurately after listening to the texts. Students are advised that taking notes during the first and second listening will assist them to complete the answer including all the details required.

Some possible responses included:

Text 1

Question 1

Colombian educators are concerned about the popularity of the computer.

Question 2

One of:

The area of literacy skills (the word *literacy* was not required), both reading and/or writing/handwriting was accepted for one mark.

Question 3

If students make a mistake the computer doesn't tell them off, it can correct the mistakes.

Question 4

These teachers want to make students improve their handwriting skills.

Text 2

Question 5

The last soccer World Cup was played in Japan/Korea.

Question 6

1. the impact of the most recent World Cup
2. Soccer is already being played in most schools more than other traditional sports.
3. Australians could watch the soccer on TV.

Question 7

1. Many of their players are outstanding.
2. Both Argentina and Brazil were among the best.
3. The quality of South American soccer was seen once again.

Text 3

Question 8

- by air
- by train.

Question 9

- wildlife
- You can visit the beautiful Lake Titicaca.
- mountaineering
- see the jungle
- no serious health problems
- fishing.

Question 10

When Andres Felipe says:

- Fantastic I love fishing.
- I always wanted to see Lake Titicaca.
- I like mountaineering.
- Heights do not affect me.

Question 11

- Yellow fever shots are recommended for travelling to jungle regions.
- Cholera shots are recommended for travelling to jungle regions.
- avoid if suffering from high altitude sickness.

Part B

Students demonstrated an excellent command of the language in this question, although some used very simple language constructions. There were some very good results in this part of the examination but a few students had difficulty in writing full sentences, using the appropriate verb forms and word order. There are still students who invent their own answers instead of referring to the text. Students should understand that it is important to use only the information given in the oral text and that their responses should not include additional information.

Answers in Spanish

Text 4

Question 12

- Mum
- Today I heard this ad and it would be great if we could do this.
- We can turn our organic waste into cheap compost for the garden.
- We could have the best garden in the neighbourhood.
- We need to buy a long-lasting compost bin being advertised that is easy to install and to maintain. At the showroom you can also buy plants, watering cans and gardening tools.
- The shop where you can buy all these things is in the shopping centre near our house.

Text 5

Question 13

Students were not to be penalised for writing only four sentences.

First possibility

- Maria Clara did a two-week online course followed by two weeks with a home-stay program.
- The advantages of this course are that she was able to go at her own pace and did not have any timetables to follow.
- There were audiovisual programs to do online and a teacher corrected them for her.
- They give you a password to get into the webpage.

2nd possibility

- Another course is based on home stays.
- Students live with a Spanish-speaking family for 15 days.
- Students are obliged to speak the language.
- It is interesting because in addition to the language, students learn a little about Latin American culture; for example, food and family customs.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Part A

In this section most students demonstrated the capacity to convey general and specific aspects of the text. They understood what was required of them and passed on the information in English. Although their English was not always accurate they managed to write enough to demonstrate that they had understood the task and found the answer to the questions. Students should be aware that sometimes there is more than one correct answer. Most students responded accurately.

Answers in English

Text 6

Question 14

Any six of the following would be correct:

- there are no breaks
- it is hard to rest for lunch
- more stressful
- it is hard to separate work and rest (if there are young children)
- work is isolating with no colleagues/co-workers with whom to chat
- more gas is used
- more electricity is used
- the house becomes an office
- it is not a peaceful place anymore.

Question 15

Three of:

Advantages

- they save money on childcare
- they save money in transport costs
- women can work while taking care of their children
- gives more flexibility.

Question 16

The change in some people's opinions is that they used to think that working at home was a great advantage but now it has been found that it is not as good as it was thought to be.

Text 7

Question 17

The article that Elena is going to write is about his experiences with the Diaguita Indians from Argentina.

Question 18

- lack of government support
- health problems
- high infant mortality
- local ignorance of their needs
- education problems.

Question 19

She says it seems to her that this group has an excellent way of living.

Question 20

- The land is terraced.
- They look after the land to ensure the soil does not deteriorate so they can keep on producing their food.
- They never pollute the environment.
- They never kill or hunt more than they need.

Part B

For this task students needed to write between 150 and 200 words in Spanish. They had to understand the text appropriately and demonstrate the capacity to understand themes and ideas and be able to identify, explain and create a new text. In this part students were asked to write a message which included several aspects of the text provided. Some students failed to include all characteristics of a message but managed to write about most points expected in this message. The conventions are:

- greeting
- well-developed body of message
- farewell.

Also looked for: clear sequence of ideas, good organisation, and variety and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar, including punctuation.

Answers in Spanish (150-200 words)

Text 8

Question 21

Dear Julia

I have just heard from our friend Enrique. He has been doing very well in Mexico, he has to study very hard as he has to prepare many reports and essays.

I think you should go to Mexico to study.

Enrique has made a lot of friends and he also said that they are very happy people.

When he is not studying he is dancing, going to the cinema and meeting friends.

He has visited the tourist attractions of that city.

He is living in the residence halls and though he finds the food delicious now, he thought it was rather spicy at first.

He is learning to cook to save money.

You could also save on transport by living in the Halls of Residence.

You will soon get used to the spicy food as Enrique did.

See you soon,

Luis

Section 3 – Writing in LOTE

A number of students performed satisfactorily in the 'Writing in Spanish' section. Some students lacked preparation in time management. For this section students are encouraged to practise different styles for different kinds of audiences and be familiar with the techniques for different kinds of writing. They also need to learn how long it takes to write between 200 and 250 words. Students are advised to allow sufficient time to correct simple mistakes. Students should also plan to make sure they include all the aspects that the task requires.

Question 22

Relevance, breadth and depth of content

Students were asked to write a letter to a friend in a Spanish-speaking country sharing the student's feelings about living in this new country. The student should offer details of students, meeting their family while overseas, getting to the new home, relationship with new family, how they greet him/her, what their feelings were about the new city and how they feel in the new environment. This was a popular task for students but some failed to include all the points required.

Appropriateness of structures and sequence

Conventions of letter:

1. name of city and date
2. greeting
3. well-developed body of letter
4. farewell.

Accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

Clear sequence of ideas and well-organised content. Accurate use of past tense, correct use of first person and adjectives.

Question 23

Relevance, breadth and depth of content

Students were asked to write a persuasive article for a school magazine, stating why we should be working to achieve world peace. Some students conformed to the conventions of an article, but failed to include the importance of working towards world peace.

Appropriateness of structures and sequence

Students were expected to write the article following the appropriate style. The article should have had the following structure:

1. name of article
2. introduction
3. well-developed body of article, good sequencing of ideas
4. logical conclusion.

Accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

Students were expected to choose appropriate adjectives and logical structure. They were required to use the imperfect tense, sequence their work logically and use a range of vocabulary and grammar.

Question 24

Relevance, breadth and depth of content

Students were asked to write an imaginative story, beginning as follows:

Last weekend I went with some friends to a camping ground by the sea to relax after the final exams. It was a very dramatic weekend ...

Students needed to have a good opening for the story, clear imaginative writing, good sequence of ideas, and an effective conclusion. Although this question was very popular, many did not pay much attention to the sequence of ideas and did not have a good/creative ending.

Appropriateness of structures and sequence

Students were expected to have a structure for the story. For example: title of the story, introduction, body, and conclusion as appropriate to text type, organisation and sequencing of ideas within and between paragraphs. Cohesiveness of writing within and between paragraphs was important for gaining high marks.

Accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

Students were expected to show accuracy of vocabulary and grammar and to use a variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

Question 25

Relevance, breadth and depth of content

Students were asked to write a review of a play or a film they had recently seen for their school magazine. Students were required to include a summary of what happened and their opinion of the quality of the play or the film. This was not a very popular choice.

Appropriateness of structures and sequence

These students who wrote a review used evaluative writing, had a clear beginning, middle and end and good links between ideas. However, a concluding statement was often not included.

Accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary and grammar

Students were expected to write using the past tense, adjectives and turns of phrase such as:

en mi opinión... según lo que he visto.... Desde mi punto de vista... Some students who wrote this review lacked sophistication in the language, used simple vocabulary and made some mistakes in grammar, mainly in the use of verb forms.

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Published by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
41 St Andrews Place, East Melbourne 3002

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