

Advice for SPAN1 Exam



General

- There are three things you need to have done in order to do well on this paper:
 1. revised the vocabulary on each of the topics studied
 2. learnt all of your grammar
 3. recapped on ideas from the topics studied (advantages, disadvantages etc.).
- Remember that you have two hours for this paper. You should spend just over one hour on the listening and reading (about 30 minutes each) and then one hour on the writing.
- Always answer in the same language that the question is asked in.
- Look carefully at the number of marks. Ensure that you give enough points to get the marks.
- Read the questions carefully (especially question words):

¿Cuándo?	When?	¿Qué?	What?
¿Dónde?	Where?	¿Por qué?	Why?
¿Adónde?	Where to?	¿Cómo?	How?
¿De dónde?	From where?	¿Cuál?	Which?
¿Cuánto/a?	How much?	¿Cuáles?	Which ones?
¿Cuántos/as?	How many?	¿Quién? / ¿Quiénes?	Who?
- The questions are always asked in the order in which the information appears in the text (i.e. the first question will relate to the start of the text/extract).

Dealing with Specific Types of Question

Choose the ONE correct statement

Listening / Reading

For these activities pay particular attention to the tense used in the statements. For example, one statement might say *"la fiesta ya se celebró"* which uses the preterite to indicate that the action has already happened. The listening/reading text may say *"la fiesta se celebrará la semana que viene"*, in which case it will be false (the future tense was used).

Also, pay attention to little words such as negatives which examiners might throw in to confuse you.

Choose several relevant statements from a long list

Listening / Reading

Always start by reading all of the options before reading the text or listening to the extract. Then, cross out those which are obviously wrong to limit your options.

As per the previous activity, focus on the tenses and the minor details.

Fill boxes with data

Listening

This activity requires you to fill in a table with information which you hear in the text.

- Look in the questions for key words such as *año*, *porcentaje*, *década* which indicate the sort of number you need to listen out for. For example, if you are looking for a percentage then you should be listening out for "porcentaje".
- Use common sense. If the question asks how many babies were born in Spain last year then you are expecting a large number.
- Examiners love this activity as a lot of AS candidates still have problems with their numbers (particularly large numbers and 60/70). There are lots of good pages on the web to help you practise numbers (such as www.spanishspanish.com).

Answering questions in Spanish**Listening / Reading****Reading Section**

- You do not have to put the answer in your own words – just copy and paste the relevant part of the text as your answer. Make sure that you don't copy more than you need as this may lose you marks!

Listening Section

- As per the reading section, you just have to note down the information which you hear which is relevant to the question. You do not need to use full sentences but will often be required to note down the verb in the right tense.
- Learning to write down what you hear is a useful skill for this part of the exam. You can often work out which word(s) you need to include in your answer but once you have written them double check that they look like real Spanish words and that they follow the Spanish spelling rules which you know. For example, an answer in a past paper mentioned CDs which many candidates transcribed as *cedes* which clearly lost them the mark.

Answering questions in English**Listening**

- Always look carefully at the number of marks available and ensure that you give enough points to get full credit.
- Ensure that the answers you give are as specific as possible. For example, in on past paper about holidays to Cuba the question asked for three attractions to Cuba, one of which was white sandy beaches. *Beaches* on its own was not specific enough to get the mark.
- You do not have to write in full sentences. Just bullet point the key information.
- Read back what you have written to ask whether it makes sense and sounds like good English, or whether it is a literal translation of the Spanish which sounds odd.

Fill in gaps with a missing word from a given list**Reading**

This activity consists of a text with gaps which you have to fill from a list of words which are given to you.

- Focus not only on the meaning of the words but also the grammar. Think about which type of word you need (noun, verb, adjective etc.) to narrow down your options. For example, in the sentence *el año pasado un _____ número de espanoles ...* the missing words has to be an adjective which describes the masculine singular noun 'número'.

Grammar Gap Fill

- Don't just rush into this activity. Read the sentences carefully and remember to for through the WACA progress to work out each blank.
- **What sort of word** do you have (verb, adjective, adverb)
 - **Action** – what might you have to do with this word? If it is an adjective you need to make it agree, and if it is a verb then you need to put it in the correct tense.
 - **Clues** – are there any clues to help you make the change? For example time markers (*ayer, mañana*), who is the subject, what is the gender of the noun etc.
 - **Answer** – make the change and double check it!
- Remember not to fall into common traps:
- Nouns ending in *-ma* (*problema, sistema* etc) are masculine.
 - Nouns ending in *-ción* (*estación, contestación*) are feminine.
 - Appocopated adjectives (*grande* becomes *gran* before a singular noun, and *primero, tercero, bueno* lose the *o* before a masculine singular noun).
 - Clauses starting with *Cuando* which refer to the future require the present subjunctive (*cuando tenga 18 años voy a ir a la Universidad*).
 - Accents are needed on the verbs otherwise you won't get the mark! Remember that totally irregular verbs in the preterite don't have accents (e.g. *habló* but *dijo*).

Writing Section

- Read the question carefully and make sure that your answer is 100% relevant to what is being asked. It is a good idea to highlight the key words in the question before you start planning.
- Planning is essential if you want to get a good grade. You will need to make about four points in your essay (e.g. two advantages and two disadvantages, two points for and two against etc.). For each of your points do a PEE plan:
 - Point. Outline the point you want to make.
 - Example. Give an example of what you mean to illustrate your point. You might want to use a past tense to talk about something that happened to you in the past.
 - Explanation. Discuss the issue further and give lots of options. This is a good place to get the subjunctive in (e.g. *no creo que esto sea bueno....*).
- A good way to do your introduction is by rephrasing the question as a rhetorical question. However, remember not to address the examiner directly – keep the essay impersonal.
- The ingredients of a good essay are:
 - Relevant points
 - Development and discussion of points with lots of opinions
 - A range of tenses and grammatical structures
 - Higher level vocabulary
- Make sure that you put some time aside for checking for PABLOVA.
 - Personal A
 - Adjectives
 - Be (ser, estar, haber)
 - Leave no gaps
 - Object pronouns (direct vs indirect)
 - Verb endings
 - Any subjunctive
- Do not misspell words which are given to you in the question (this is a common mistake which drives examiners mad).