



National
Qualifications
2026

2026 Spanish

Reading

Higher

Question Paper Finalised Marking Instructions

These marking instructions have been prepared by examination teams for use by Qualifications Scotland appointed markers when marking external course assessments.

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General marking principles for Higher Spanish Reading

Always apply these general principles. Use them in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidates' responses.

- (a) Always use positive marking. This means candidates accumulate marks for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding; marks are not deducted for errors or omissions.
- (b) If a candidate response does not seem to be covered by either the principles or detailed marking instructions, and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your team leader.
- (c) Award a mark for each answer. Marks are not transferable between questions and the answers for each question must come from the item.
- (d) Marks are available as follows:
 - (i) The first set of questions (worth 18 marks in total) asks candidates to provide answers based on comprehension of information from the text. There are generally 1-3 marks available for each question.
 - (ii) The penultimate question is the overall purpose question, and candidates must identify the overall purpose of the text and draw meaning from their overall understanding of the text. There is a maximum of 2 marks available for reference to the text and detailed comment. Pegged mark descriptors (2/1/0) and associated commentary are available, along with further guidance, in the detailed marking instructions.
 - (iii) The last question is the translation. For this question, candidates must translate the underlined section of the text. The section for translation is divided into five sense units. For each sense unit, award 2, 1 or 0 marks: 2 marks for a full translation, 1 for partial translation, and 0 for an unsuccessful attempt.
- (e) Award marks according to the accuracy and relevance of the candidate's answers. Award marks where the answer is accurate but expressed in their own words.

Marking instructions for each question

Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
					Do not accept:
1.	(a)		- group of pupils sitting in traditional class - taking notes - raising hand to answer questions Any 1 from 3	1	
	(b)		- we acquire knowledge and skills/abilities more easily easily/ most easily/easier - the human brain is programmed to learn from birth Any 1 from 2	1	
2.	(a)		how quickly/the speed at which his granddaughter learns/ assimilates three languages at the same time	1	
	(b)		she knew more words than him	1	
	(c)		- correcting his grammar mistakes/errors/faults - telling jokes in German	2	

Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
					Do not accept:
3.			• I don't understand anything in maths/I don't understand maths at all /I understand nothing in maths • what's the point/the use of science? • I could never/I'll never be able to play an instrument Any 2 from 3	2	I can't play an instrument (present tense)
4.	(a)		• fear of making mistakes • looking/feeling ridiculous in front of others	2	feel/being ridiculed (by others)
	(b)		• people not achieving their potential because of a lack of confidence	1	lack of self-esteem/lack of self-belief
	(c)		• consider factors which can impede/prevent/get in the way of learning	1	apprenticeship
5.	(a)		• he did not know what to study • he did not have good enough/sufficiently good grades	2	he did not have good notes enough/sufficient grades
	(b)		• he got a job delivering fast food • he went to classes	2	
	(c)		• adviser/advising/supporting those (who have lived or are living) with similar situations	1	orientating those...
6.			• people who change career • retired people who take up diving/parachuting • we/people never stop learning Any 1 from 3	1	

Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
7.			Assertion: Each stage has different challenges and opportunities, so understanding how we learn helps us overcome them. The article gives examples from childhood, school, adulthood, and retirement to show learning is lifelong. The article argues that learning is shaped by confidence, support, and personal circumstances at every age. Justification - possible answers: Early Childhood • Paula says early childhood is crucial because children acquire knowledge and skills more easily • The brain is “programmed to learn from birth,” showing learning starts immediately in life • Amaya’s ability to pick up three languages at once shows how quickly young children can learn School Years • Paula notes that many pupils struggle because they fear making mistakes • Some learners feel embarrassed in front of classmates, which stops them progressing • School subjects like maths, science, or music can cause frustration, showing learning isn’t always easy • Expressive subjects such as drama can be especially difficult	2	Award 2 marks where the candidate provides a clear answer, with justification that shows an accurate reading of the text. Award 1 mark where the candidate provides an answer which may contain some degree of misreading, but which offers evidence of some justification. Award 0 marks where the candidate simply provides information to be found in the text by simply re-stating answers to previous questions.

Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
			Adulthood • Raúl's story shows adults may need to return to learning later in life to change their direction • Adults can face barriers such as poor grades or unclear goals, but determination can help them succeed • Evening classes helped Raúl improve his qualifications, showing adults can re-enter education successfully Later Life/Old Age • Paula says learning continues into old age, showing it never stops • Retired people take up new activities like diving or parachuting, proving older adults still learn new skills • People may change career later in life, demonstrating that learning adapts to life changes		

Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
8.			Translate into English: <i>“Gracias a su determinación . . . le resulta muy gratificante.”</i> lines 44-46)	10	The translation into English is allocated 10 marks. The text for translation is divided into a number of sense units. Each sense unit is worth 2 marks. Award marks according to the quality and accuracy of the translation into English. Award a mark for each sense unit, as follows 2 marks - good The candidate understands and conveys essential information and relevant details, clearly and accurately, with appropriate use of English. 1 mark - satisfactory The candidate understands and conveys essential information clearly and comprehensibly, although some of the details may be translated in an imprecise or inaccurate manner. They convey the key message in spite of inaccuracies and weaknesses in the use of English. 0 marks - unsatisfactory The candidate fails to demonstrate sufficient understanding of the essential idea.

Text	Good - 2	Satisfactory - 1	Unsatisfactory - 0
Unit 1 <i>Gracias a su determinación y la ayuda continua de su familia y amigos,</i>	Thanks to his determination and the continuous/continued help of his family and friends,	. . . and the continual help of his family and friends, . . . and the support of his family and friends	thanks to his dedication their determination
Unit 2 <i>Raúl ha sido capaz de superar sus dificultades.</i>	Raúl has been/was able to overcome his difficulties/troubles/issues.	Raúl has been/was capable of overcoming his difficulties Raúl has gained the ability to overcome Raúl has been/was capable of getting over his difficulties.	Raúl is now able to overcome his difficulties.
Unit 3 <i>Logró obtener las cualificaciones adecuadas para encontrar un trabajo</i>	He managed to obtain the suitable/right/appropriate qualifications to find a job	he managed to obtain the adequate qualifications to find a job	*absence of <i>logró</i> obtaining the suitable qualifications to find a job
Unit 4 <i>que empezó hace un par de meses</i>	that (he) started a couple of months ago that (he) started a few months ago	that (he) started some months ago	

Text	Good - 2	Satisfactory - 1	Unsatisfactory - 0
Unit 5 <i>y que le resulta muy gratificante.</i>	and which he finds very rewarding/ is very rewarding for him. and that he finds very rewarding for him. and he finds it very rewarding.	and which he finds rewarding. has been/is rewarding for him. has turned out to be very rewarding.	and the result is very rewarding.

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]