# Spanish (continuers) Subject Assessment Advice

## Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the previous year’s assessment cycle, gives an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

# School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Folio

Interaction

The more successful responses commonly:

* provided extensive and non-predictable responses, demonstrating a range of accurate and sophisticated language and vocabulary
* included personal opinions and comparisons between lifestyles in Australia and Hispanic countries
* demonstrated spontaneous interaction, often facilitated by the interlocutor asking open-ended questions and changing the direction of the conversation
* demonstrated a genuine interest in the chosen topics through discussions that reflected a true conversation
* provided depth and breadth in the treatment of a variety of topics
* were consistently fluent and used an extensive vocabulary.

The less successful responses commonly:

* lacked evidence of preparation - students struggled to elaborate on their answers, lacked confidence and were not clear in their responses
* relied on pre-prepared (often memorised) responses rather than spontaneous discussion
* demonstrated limited knowledge of appropriate Spanish grammar, spelling, and vocabulary to fulfil the demands of the tasks
* exhibited a lack of interest and variation in responses throughout the interaction
* were limited by the task design (for example: the interaction consisted of a presentation with only a few questions at the end, which did not allow achievement at the highest level)
* discussed very similar topics to those presented in the text production, often reproducing the same information
* were between two students (rather than a student and a teacher); in some instances, one student dominated the conversation, leaving the other student without an equal opportunity to converse enough to demonstrate their oral skills
* used poor sentence structure, omitted verbs or displayed only limited understanding of basic grammatical structures, especially with the use of different verb tenses.

Text Production

The more successful responses commonly:

* were original, interesting and creative. For example: writing a CV, and applying for a job, giving a speech as ambassador of a Hispanic country or giving a speech as an exchange student encouraging other students to study Spanish.
* demonstrated complex grammatical features, like the use of subjunctive, conditional and formal language to write letters
* demonstrated depth, breadth, detailed content, a variety of expression and justification of opinions
* demonstrated a wide range of evidence in a variety of text types, including letters, emails, articles, diary entries, and blogs.

The less successful responses commonly:

* lacked the use of connective devices to link paragraphs and add flow and cohesion to the piece
* demonstrated difficulty with subject–verb agreement, syntax, and adjective endings
* included a range of basic errors which may have been corrected through proofreading
* showed a lack of depth and breadth in the treatment of the topic. For example: the writing of diary entries sometimes limited students to only writing on personal reflections.

Text Analysis

The more successful responses commonly:

* when analysing films, demonstrated not only an in-depth understanding of the language used but also the themes, content and context of the film
* focused on the analysis of the linguistic, cultural, and structural features of the text
* clearly demonstrated an understanding of culture (for example, indigenous groups in South America) and were able to make comparisons with other cultures (for example, indigenous groups of Australia)
* provided detailed and appropriate use of evidence from the text(s) to support conclusions
* identified and explained the concepts, perspectives, and ideas of the text(s).

The less successful responses commonly:

* lacked reflection on, and interpretation of, content and textual features
* responded only to the content of the text(s)
* did not support responses with evidence from the text(s).

Assessment Type 2: In-depth Study

The more successful responses commonly:

* conveyed ideas clearly in a consistent and organised manner
* included not only a substantial amount of information about the topic of choice using a high standard of Spanish, but also showed a sound understanding of the influence, importance, and/or nature of the topic
* presented detailed information about aspects of the topic
* showed evidence through insightful and sophisticated reflection on how the in‑depth study contributed to the students’ understanding of themselves and their understanding of Spanish-speaking communities.

The less successful responses commonly:

* relied too much on notes (for the oral presentation), thus not demonstrating an ability to engage the audience
* demonstrated superficial treatment of well-known topics, e.g. Frida Kahlo’s biography, descriptions of La Alhambra, or celebrations for Mexican Día de los Muertos
* chose a topic for their in-depth study that limited opportunities for reflection and analysis, such as ‘My Family’, which does not lend itself to the prescribed themes from which a topic can be chosen — please refer to the subject outline for more information
* included limited personal reflection
* focused on the content of their research in the reflective response in English, rather than on their understanding of cultures and values, learning, beliefs, and ideas, and how these have changed or been enhanced through their learning.

Assessment Type 3: Examination

The examination consists of two assessments: an oral examination and a written examination.

Oral Examination

The oral examination of 10–15 minutes comprises a general conversation and a discussion of the student’s in-depth study. In the conversation, students converse with the examiners about their personal world. Topics covered include life, family and friends, home, local environment, school, hobbies, interests, aspirations, and travel.

Section 1: Conversation

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated the ability to hold a conversation on a variety of topics and to interact and maintain a conversation
* provided extensive and non-predictable responses, demonstrating a range of accurate and sophisticated language and vocabulary
* were consistently relevant to the questions asked and topics discussed
* presented a very good range of information, opinions and ideas
* developed ideas on comments made by the examiners and used correct tenses and connectives to create an interesting conversation
* demonstrated outstanding mastery and knowledge of the basic tenses and were at ease using more complex structures such as the subjunctive
* understood and responded to all questions in a manner that was consistently relevant to context, purpose, and topic, including in depth and breadth
* demonstrated culturally appropriate behaviours, and used conventional greetings
* made a conscious effort to interact positively with the examiners providing appropriate details and information and, when appropriate, posed their own questions to the examiners
* showed evidence of preparation and confidence in interacting in Spanish.

The less successful responses commonly:

* relied too much on prepared responses and this affected the natural flow of the interaction, especially when the answer required extra and/or more nuanced information
* lacked flexibility, including the ability to rephrase, and struggled to elaborate on their answers, indicating a lack of preparation
* generally included appropriate information but lacked depth
* regularly required the examiners to repeat a question before providing a response
* demonstrated difficulty structuring sentences and finding suitable vocabulary, particularly when using the masculine gender or plurals
* used a limited range of vocabulary and were often slow to respond.

Section 2: Discussion

The topics discussed were very interesting and varied. For example: "La independencia de Cataluña", "El desastre minero en Chile”, "La Corrupción de la policía mexicana” "La revolución cubana” and "Inmigrando a Australia".

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated that they were familiar with their topic and understood the content in depth
* demonstrated the ability to reflect and comment on significant learning that had been undertaken
* showed evidence that the students investigated a new perspective
* demonstrated an appreciation for what was learnt
* provided in-depth explanations about how the chosen topic impacted on the life and future of the student, showing an ability to make a personal connection with the in-depth study
* created interest and engaged the examiners
* demonstrated outstanding mastery and knowledge of the basic tenses and were at ease using technical and subject-specific vocabulary
* used photographs and other objects as support.

The less successful responses commonly:

* relied heavily on memorised responses and were not able to respond effectively when asked unexpected questions, particularly those that deviated from the examples available on the SACE website
* used structures that were based on word order derived from English when attempting to elaborate. For example: Yo tengo acaba de visitar
* were unable to express their in-depth knowledge on the topic for discussion
* were unable to provide personal opinions about the topics discussed or reflect upon the research
* were too brief and did not allow for the ideas and/or argument to develop in any depth or breadth, often resulting in a limited capacity for interpretation and reflection
* lacked evidence of research
* were inhibited by a limited vocabulary
* demonstrated incorrect pronunciation that impeded meaning on occasion
* did not bring the In-depth Study Outline for Oral Examination form (found on the SACE website).

Written Examination

Section 1: Listening and Responding

There were five texts in Spanish, all of them varying in length and nature. For all texts, the questions and answers were in English.

Question 1

The more successful responses commonly:

* showed good interpretation of meaning of the text, providing two features of each of the properties discussed

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not provide all of the information required
* were ambiguous, often responding to an incorrect keyword in the text.

Question 2

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated a good understanding of the text and were able to identify and interpret the key ideas
* provided detailed and appropriate evidence from the text to support the explanation of how Rafa felt about the issue.

The less successful responses commonly:

* were unable to identify why, according to the text, many people in Argentina do not obey the driving rules
* incorrectly interpreted Rafa’s feelings about the issue
* did not provide evidence from the text to support the response.

Question 3

The more successful responses commonly:

* addressed what each specific question part required, and provided not only relevant supporting evidence from the text, but also some degree of elaboration and synthesis
* Provided relevant examples of linguistic techniques used in the text.

The less successful responses commonly:

* provided general responses unrelated to the specifics of each question part
* provided limited or no evidence from the text to support responses.

Question 4

The more successful responses commonly:

* correctly identified all of Pomona’s symptoms
* provided an insightful explanation of the doctor’s comment, based on evidence from the text

The less successful responses commonly:

* identified some of Pomona’s symptoms
* provided a partial explanation of the doctor’s comment
* misinterpreted the meaning of the doctor’s comment.

Question 5

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated good interpretation of, and reflection on, how Paco’s attitude changes during the conversation
* provided comprehensive examples of evidence from the text to support the answer
* successfully explained the use of the term ‘ojalá siga perdida mucho tiempo!’ in the context of the text.

The less successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated limited understanding of how Paco’s attitude changes during the conversation
* provided limited or no evidence from the text to support the answer
* explained the meaning of the term ‘ojalá siga perdida mucho tiempo!’ but not in the context of the text
* incorrectly explained the meaning of the term ‘ojalá siga perdida mucho tiempo!’ in the context of the text.

Section 2: Reading and Responding, Part A

For both texts, questions and answers were in English.

Question 6

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated a thorough understanding of the information in the text
* were able to draw appropriate information from the text to correctly respond to each specific question
* correctly interpreted the role of the golden rod.

The less successful responses commonly:

* struggled to discriminate between relevant and irrelevant information
* correctly interpreted the role of the golden rod in the sense of helping to find a place to settle, but failed to answer that the golden rod magically inserted itself into the ground
* did not include enough detail to provide complete responses to the questions.

Question 7

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated excellent comprehension skills by comprehensively justifying the statement ‘Nadie quedó indiferente’ in the context of the text
* demonstrated a strong understanding of literary style and technique by providing an insightful comparison of the purpose and style of the two texts
* supported arguments and conclusions with appropriate evidence from the text.

The less successful responses commonly:

* provided some justification of the statement ‘Nadie quedó indiferente’ in the context of the text but did not provide enough detail
* misinterpreted the meaning of the statement ‘Nadie quedó indiferente’ in the context of the text
* were unable to clearly identify the purpose and style in the two texts
* struggled to make connections within and between Text 6 and Text 7.

Section 2: Reading and Responding, Part B

Question 8

The more successful responses commonly:

* showed a clear understanding of the kind of writing, text type, purpose, and audience – a letter applying for a job at Empresa Crucito, addressing the selection criteria
* demonstrated an ability to identify the required information from the reading text and present their writing in an appropriate way for the task
* produced original ideas, based on the information in the text, creating interest to engage the reader
* made appropriate use of paraphrasing to avoid copying information directly from the stimulus text.

The less successful responses commonly:

* lacked depth and breadth (often well under the suggested word limit)
* used simple grammatical structures and vocabulary that was often incorrect
* reproduced lengthy sections of the stimulus text
* did not follow the correct conjugation for ‘tú’ and ‘usted’.

Section 3: Writing in Spanish

Three questions, Questions 9, 10 and 11, of varying nature were available for the students to choose from. Most students chose Questions 9 and 10.

The more successful responses commonly:

* used the conventions of a review to evaluate an experience at a restaurant and include details of something, or a number of things, that happened unexpectedly
* discussed that the use of apps to learn a language only helps to build up vocabulary, but not fluency in the language
* discussed their own Spanish language learning journey, with fluency and creativity
* demonstrated effective use of cohesive devices to connect ideas and paragraphs
* demonstrated proper organisation of a story - all stories were very descriptive and imaginative using the topic of family and relationships
* demonstrated a good command of syntax and a sound knowledge of the conventions for each text type
* conveyed information accurately by using different structures, such as subjunctives, comparatives, and connectors.

The less successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated variable accuracy, with some basic errors (for example: use of gerund instead of the infinitive, grammatical agreement between subject and adjective, conjugation of tú when yo is needed)
* demonstrated difficulty with some of the basic uses of Por and Para, direct and indirect object pronouns and the use of present tense and preterit tenses
* misunderstood the differences between an informative and a narrative text
* demonstrated a lack of control over the basic grammar of noun–adjective and subject–verb agreement
* demonstrated a degree of inconsistency in register and/or tone.