

GCSE Spanish

We study the Edexcel course which has two tiers – Higher and Foundation. The exams are slightly different, but both tiers will have four exams, each of which makes up 25% of your overall grade.

Paper 1 – Listening (out of 50 marks)

You will complete this paper in the same session as Paper 3 (Reading) – you will do your Listening paper straight before your Reading.

When the recording starts, you will hear an introduction to the exam and then there will be a five-minute silence in the recording to give you time to look through the paper. During this time, you should look carefully at the questions, and begin to predict potential answers.

The Foundation Listening exam lasts for around 35 minutes including 5 minutes reading time. The Higher Listening exam lasts for around 45 minutes including 5 minutes reading time.

You are free to make notes before and during listening to help you to answer the questions. You might start to think about potential synonyms to listen out for, or highlight key words in questions.

There is no advance information from the exam board about which topics might feature on the Listening and Reading papers, and no course content has been removed from these parts of the exam. However, usually a certain amount of unfamiliar vocabulary is included in the Listening and Reading papers, and students are expected to use context to work out meaning. This year, if there is any unfamiliar vocabulary from outside of the course vocabulary lists, the words will be explained in a glossary provided with the question.

To revise for your Listening paper, it is important to develop your knowledge of vocabulary around different topics. You can do this by regularly using Quizlet where your class has access to all of the course vocabulary. Join your class if you haven't already by looking for StJohnBoscoSpanish and requesting to join your class. Once you are reasonably confident that you can recognize key vocabulary from a topic, test your listening skills by completing listening exercises on Active Learn and BBC Bitesize. You can further develop your listening comprehension through using websites like <https://www.newsinslowspanish.com/>

Paper 2 Speaking (out of 70 marks)

You will complete your Speaking exam with your class teacher in the early part of May. You will be given a date and time for your Speaking exam nearer to that time. To prepare for the Speaking exam you will need to memorise your presentation – the earlier you make a start on this the better. There are lots of different ways to help you to remember yours and you will have to try different techniques to see what works for you. Some suggestions are:

- Making yourself flashcards with separate sentences on
- Putting your presentation to the tune of a song you like
- Recording your presentation using notes and then trying to repeat your presentation in time with the recording without looking at any prompts
- Making a list of key words from your presentation and saying it out loud, gradually reducing the number of words until you can do it from memory

During your Speaking exam you will also complete a short role-play, describe a photograph which will lead to a conversation around the theme of the photo, and have a general conversation around a separate topic.

Before you begin your Speaking exam you will be provided with prompts for your role-play and photo task, and you will be given twelve minutes to prepare notes to help you with your exam. During your preparation time you must work under exam conditions without books or phones and there will be an invigilator with you while you work.

You will be able to take your notes into the room with you when you do your speaking exam, and your exam will be recorded using a voice recorder and sent away to be marked by an external examiner. You do not have to listen to the recording.

Paper 3 Reading (out of 50 marks)

You will complete this paper in the same session as Paper 1 (Listening) – you will do your Reading paper straight after your Listening.

The Foundation Reading exam lasts for 45 minutes and the Higher Reading exam lasts for 60 minutes.

You are free to make notes around, underline and highlight the text to help you to answer the questions.

It is a good idea to start each section by reading the questions before the texts so that you know what information you are looking for.

There is no advance information from the exam board about which topics might feature on the Listening and Reading papers, and no course content has been removed from these parts of the exam. However, usually a certain amount of unfamiliar vocabulary is included in the Listening and Reading papers, and students are expected to use context to work out meaning. This year, if there is any unfamiliar vocabulary from outside of the course vocabulary lists, the words will be explained in a glossary provided with the question.

To revise for your Reading paper, it is important to develop your knowledge of vocabulary around different topics. You can do this by regularly using Quizlet where your class has access to all of the course vocabulary. Join your class if you haven't already by looking for StJohnBoscoSpanish and requesting to join your class. Once you are reasonably confident that you can recognize key vocabulary from a topic, test your listening skills by completing reading exercises on Active Learn and BBC Bitesize.

Paper 4 Writing (out of 60 marks)

Your Writing exam will be the last Spanish exam you complete and will take place a week

Foundation 1hr 15m and Higher 1hr 20m

Foundation Writing paper:

Question 1 will be a short writing task describing a photo and giving an opinion.

Question 2 and 3 will both have optional questions for you to choose from. You must answer one of the options for Question 2 and one of the options for Question 3. These questions have four bullet points for you to cover in an open response – you should write 40-50 words for Question 2 and 80-90 words for Question 3.

Before you choose your options for Questions 2 and 3, you should read all of the choices carefully and pick the options that you feel most confident you understand well and can write about accurately.

For each bullet point that you answer, start a new line to make it easy for the person marking your paper to know that you have answered all parts of the question.

Try your best to use the tense that is used in the bullet point, for example if a bullet point is in the past tense asking you about something you did previously, this part of your answer should also be in the past tense. To make it clear that you are doing this, also include a time reference like 'last week', 'normally' or 'next year' so it is very clear what timeframe you are using.

Question 4 will be a number of short sentences to translate into Spanish. You can gain marks for getting even some of the words in each sentence correct so attempt all of these, even if you are unsure – 1 mark could make the difference between 2 grades.

The exam board has stated that the following topics will be covered in the Foundation writing paper:

- **Holidays**
- **What school is like + School Activities**
- **Town, region and country**
- **Ambitions**

It is very likely that either **school** or **holidays** will be chosen for the Question 1 topic so be sure to practice describing photos matching these topics.

Two of the following three topics will be featured as options for Question 3: **Town, region and country**, **school activities** and **ambitions** so be sure to build a bank of more extended sentences and descriptions for these topics.

The Question 4 translations are likely to feature either **family/friends** or **free time activities** so when practicing translating from English to Spanish, focus on these topics.

Higher Writing paper:

Question 1 and 2 will both have optional questions for you to choose from. You must answer one of the options for Question 1 and one of the options for Question 2. These questions have four bullet points for you to cover in an open response – you should write 80-90 words for Question 1 and 130-150 words for Question 2.

Before you choose your options for Questions 1 and 2, you should read all of the choices carefully and pick the options that you feel most confident you understand well and can write about accurately.

Question 1 should be written in an informal style usually as if to a friend, but should still feature full sentences and justified opinions with references to the past, present and future. Question 2 requires formal, high-level Spanish with a wide range of complex structures and different tenses.

For each bullet point that you answer, start a new line to make it easy for the person marking your paper to know that you have answered all parts of the question.

Try your best to use the tense that is used in the bullet point, for example if a bullet point is in the past tense asking you about something you did previously, this part of your answer should also be in the past tense. To make it clear that you are doing this, also include a time reference like 'last week', 'normally' or 'next year' so it is very clear what timeframe you are using.

Question 3 will be a short paragraph to translate into Spanish. You can gain marks for getting the content partially correct so attempt all of this, even if you are unsure – 1 mark could make the difference between 2 grades.

The exam board has stated that the following topics will be covered in the Higher writing paper:

- **Town, region and country**
- **School activities**
- **Ambitions**
- **Bringing the world together**

It is impossible to know which of these topics will feature on which question apart from knowing that **Bringing the world together** will definitely be an option on Question 2. As you have two options for Questions 1 and 2, the other three topics could be the options for Question 1, or the alternative option for Question 2.

The Question 3 translation is likely to feature either **family/friends** or **free time activities** so when practicing translating from English to Spanish, focus on these topics.

Your class teachers will provide you with plenty of exam-style practice and guidance to work on both in class leading up to your mocks and actual exams, as well as extra exercises to complete independently, particularly in areas you feel less confident in. It is very important to maintain a positive mental attitude and determined approach to your learning, you have all made incredible progress since starting the school despite all of the challenges you have faced and we as a department are really proud of each and every one of you!

Key websites for extra practice:

www.quizlet.com (make your own account, search for StJohnBoscoSpanish and join your class)

<https://www.newsinslowspanish.com/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/examspecs/z799hbk>

www.pearsonactivelearn.com (Get your username and password from your class teacher if you don't know it)



Trying to learn the entire Spanish language the night before your exam.



Practising little and often, revisiting key vocabulary and verbs.

