



A-level  
**Spanish**

7692/2 Writing

Report on the Examination

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## General

There have again been examples of essays from across the full spectrum of films and texts this year. Most students have been prepared well for the component, however there were a number of scripts where very low marks were achieved. Unfortunately a very few scripts achieved zero in AO4 which means zero is awarded in AO3 too.

The most widely chosen text continues to be *La casa de Bernarda Alba* by a wide margin, but also popular is *Como Agua para Chocolate*. The most studied films, by some margin, are *Volver* and *El Laberinto del Fauno*. In relation to *Ocho Apellidos Vascos* and *Réquiem por un Campesino Español* uptake has dropped slightly, while *El Coronel no tiene quien le escriba* and *Las Bicicletas son para el verano* have seen a slight increase in uptake.

Some texts and films are chosen by very few students and therefore it is hard to identify clear trends.

## Section A Texts

### Question 1 *La casa de Bernarda Alba*

This play was by far the most popular choice and question 1.1 was much more popular than 1.2. It is worth noting that students scored higher in 1.2 in relation to both AO3 and AO4 than compared to 1.1.

In 1.1 the strongest responses included a range of characters from the old and the young, comparing and contrasting similarities and differences; Bernarda Alba, La Poncia and Prudencia in one group and the five sisters, La Hija de La Librada and Paca La Roseta in the younger group. Maria Josefa was seen as being similar to Adela by some, while she was recognised in stronger responses to be a wild card, given her *locura*. Many essays were really character studies of Bernarda Alba with Adela as a point of contrast. Even then in many responses the only rebellion mentioned was the green dress and the flowery fan. It was fine to say the differences were not age related, but many students seemed to feel reluctant to do that. Some students failed to gain marks for only comparing Bernarda and Adela or for ignoring the age aspect completely. A significant number of students mixed up the 5 daughters, appearing not to know who had done what.

Question 1.2 was a much less popular choice. Successful essays recognised that Martirio started out as submissive but after her relationship with Enrique Humanes, she became embittered and hated Bernarda, with evidence of her journey towards telling Adela the lie that Pepe was dead. Some just saw Martirio as ugly and bitter, and narrated the few facts they knew. Most also mentioned her lie to Adela but without really attempting to explain why Martirio did this. Some, for example, failed to mention the photo of Pepe.

### Question 2 *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*

This remains the choice of a significant number of centres. Question 2.1 was much more popular than 2.2, and students scored well in AO3 in Question 2.2, but marks awarded for AO4 were markedly lower in both.

In response to Question 2.1 there were some very good answers, but many less successful responses. Most students could point to the difference in perception of Santiago Nasar and Angela Vicario but this was often turned into an essay on honour only and then students mainly focused on how it impacted men but did not offer any understanding of the impact on women. Some students mixed up the names

of important characters, naming Santiago Nasar as Angela’s husband for example. Many answers lacked detail and analysis.

Very few students chose to answer Question 2.2. Most of the responses dealt unsuccessfully with the idea of a Chronicle and many did not appear to understand the word. Some students were able to offer reasons why the author chose to call it a Chronicle and to point out the ironies of this in terms of it not being a linear narrative. Many responses relied heavily on narrating events with no analysis.

### **Question 3 Como Agua para Chocolate**

This is still a very popular choice, but the marks achieved tended to be lower for this text. Question 3.1 was more popular than Question 3.2, and the marks awarded for AO3 and AO4 were markedly lower for 3.2.

Question 3.1 was a very popular choice. While there were some very good essays, some students did not appear to understand the word *maternidad*. Some understood it but failed to address it, some only talked about the female characters’ ability to feed their babies, or not, and some spent a long time on magic realism and the influence of Indigenous characters. The most successful responses focused on Mama Elena’s treatment of all three daughters, contrasting this with the kindness of Nacha to Tita, and of Tita to Roberto and Esperanza. Many spent too long on tradition and Mama Elena’s youth.

Question 3.2 was less popular but still chosen by a significant number of students. More successful essays addressed Pedro’s decision to marry Rosaura, the impact of his continued presence in Tita’s life, and examined the difficulties created by Mama Elena and Rosaura too. Some responses failed to contrast Pedro’s faults with Mama Elena’s at all and blamed Pedro for many things that had nothing to do with him. The *Manual de Carreño* was blamed too.

### **Question 4 Réquiem por un campesino español**

This text saw a small drop in uptake this series but is still the choice of many centres. Question 4.1 was the popular choice by far and the marks awarded were high in both AO3 and AO4. In comparison, AO4 marks awarded in Question 4.2 were very low but the uptake was low.

Question 4.1 was by far the most popular choice. This question led to some very good responses. Most students addressed the event in the caves analytically and also the impact on Paco afterwards, following it through to Paco’s death with good evidence. Many also examined Paco’s loss of faith in Mosen Millán and the Church. Some students took this further, turning this into a study of only the politics of Spain which became a historical or sociological essay with only passing reference to the novel.

Whilst there were far fewer answers for Question 4.2, the more successful responses focused on the sympathetic portrayal of Águeda and La Jerónima as well as the solidarity of the women at the *Carasol*. Less strong essays only examined one character, often La Jerónima; some did not name any female characters and failed to analyse the role of women sufficiently.

### **Question 5 La sombra del viento**

The uptake for this novel is very low and has fallen again this year. Within this small cohort, uptake was fairly evenly split across both questions, and it is hard to draw conclusions but Question 5.1 appears to have been answered more successfully in relation to both AO3 and AO4 compared to Question 5.2.

Some strong, analytical responses were seen in response to Question 5.1, choosing to examine the lives of women in the novel. Some focussed their response on only one or two and that limited their response. Some chose to narrate events with little analysis.

Some students who chose Question 5.2 this question only narrated the love stories of Julián and Penélope and Daniel and Bea with little analysis, as well as overlooking or misunderstanding the aspect of hatred in the title. However, there were several very good responses which considered different types of love such as the friendships between Julián/Miquel and Julián/Daniel and the contrast between the relationships between Daniel and Clara and Daniel with Bea. They also successfully analysed the positive conclusion to the complex plot.

### **Question 6 La casa de los espíritus**

This remains the choice of a small number of centres. Question 6.2 was more popular than Question 6.2.1 but the marks awarded for Q6.2 were markedly lower in relation to both AO3 and AO4.

The most successful answers to Question 5.1 examined Esteban Trueno's relationships with all of his children and then with his granddaughter Alba, analysing differences and similarities. Some resorted to narrating events.

A few good responses to Question 6.2 compared and contrasted the women in the novel. Unfortunately, there was a lot of narration of events with little analysis.

### **Question 7 Rimas**

This poetry was chosen by a small number of students. Question 7.2 was the most popular choice, and marks awarded in relation to both AO3 or AO4 were low in both questions.

Question 7.1 had less than 5 responses and it is difficult to draw conclusions.

Stronger responses to Question 7.2 gave good examples from the poems where the poet seemed to be unrealistic in his expectations, particularly in lasting bliss. Many essays were vague, citing the number of a Rima without being precise about the evidence.

### **Question 8 Las bicicletas son para el verano**

This text saw an increase in uptake this year and the marks awarded for both AO3 and AO4 were high across both essays, with students scoring particularly higher for AO3 in Question 8.1. Question 8.2 was more popular than Question 8.1.

Stronger responses to Question 8.1 considered the effect of the emotions seen in the play on the audience, giving detailed evidence from the play. The most perceptive responses recognised the irony of the audience watching the optimism at the start, knowing the horrors that would follow. There were a lot of good analytical responses, but some students just narrated what was seen on stage with no reference to the audience at all.

In responses to Question 8.2 many students examined the political divide, with the republicans now being punished and the nationalists being rewarded. Some good, detailed examples of each were

offered, showing an understanding of the injustice but inevitability of what was to come. Some students focused entirely on comparing the prologue with the epilogue.

### **Question 9 El otro árbol de Guernica**

This book remains the choice of a small number of centres. There was a strong preference for Question 9.1 rather than Question 9.2 but responses to both questions were awarded lower marks in AO4 than AO3.

In response to Question 9.1 some students did analyse appropriate events in Santi's time in France and Belgium and showed his transformation. The more successful answers described and analysed Santi's growing maturity as a leader. Many simply narrated events, without showing what change happened or why. Some chose to focus at length on pre-war and post-war, without really examining his life abroad.

Q9.2 This was not as popular and often done by students who relied on listing examples: football, the tree, the beret and the choir with little examination of their importance. A few stronger essays showed the symbols of Basque Identity widening to accepting a Spanish identity in football and then including Catalan identity when Montse introduces the sardana.

### **Question 10 El coronel no tiene quien le escriba**

This text has seen a significant increase in uptake this year. 10.1 was slightly more popular but both were chosen. Both questions achieved high marks in both AO3 and AO4.

Q10.1 The strongest responses examined the impact on both parents, particularly the wife's sadness and the friends' continued support and political activity. However, some turned it into either an essay contrasting the Coronel and his wife (2023 question) or an essay only on the cockerel. Some students narrated rather than evaluated.

Q10.2 Some strong answers contrasted the doctor and Don Sabas, with good evidence and evaluating the contribution of the friends of Agustin too. Some students wrote about the Coronel and his wife, who are clearly not secondary characters.

## **Section B Films**

### **Question 11 El Laberinto del Fauno**

This remains the most popular film and second most popular choice overall after La Casa de Bernarda Alba. 11.1 was four times more popular than 11.2 but was awarded slightly lower marks in AO4. 11.1 was also awarded lower marks in AO3 than 11.2.

Q11.1 A few excellent essays that coped with the duality of the ending and recognised the different possible interpretations but focused on the ending. This included the fall of Vidal, Mercedes' triumph in keeping the baby safe and away from Vidal and Ofelia's sad death but her afterlife as a princess with her parents. Less effective essays struggled with this and turned it into an essay on whether or not the *mundo subterráneo* was real (echoing a previous title). Others examined all the sadness of the film indiscriminately, making for very long essays indeed. Some limited their essays to the scene at the very end, limiting their responses significantly. Sadly, some students saw this as the end of Franco and the civil war.

Q 11.2 Some excellent essays showing how Ofelia, Carmen, Mercedes and the doctor all risked their lives to do what they thought was right. Some students really did just focus on the story of the rose with less favourable outcomes. Others clearly did not know what *arriesgar* meant.

### **Question 12 Ocho Apellidos Vascos**

This remains a popular choice, but there has been a fall in uptake since 2023. Both titles attracted responses but 12.2 was more popular than 12.1. Both were awarded lower grades in AO4 with 12.1 being lowest.

Q12.1 There were few strong answers as there was a tendency to narrate the events leading up to Rafa walking out of the church, with no analysis. Many entirely failed to understand why he walked out-speculating that he fell out of love, was homesick or thought Amaia was too difficult. Conjecture was often seen here rather than returning to the text for evidence. Successful essays referred to the priest, to Rafa's respect for Koldo and therefore wanting no more lies and deceit.

Q12.2 Again, some students were more comfortable narrating events from the film with no analysis. Many focused only on Rafa, but failed to analyse his transformation successfully, choosing to merely describe him. Few looked at Curro and Joaquin. Many wrote essays about stereotypes, being happy to relay the most obvious ones. Some focused more on Basque stereotypes than the Andalusians.

### **Question 13 María, llena eres de gracia**

There was a very slight fall in uptake of this question in 2024. 13.1 was much more popular than 13.2 which was answered by less than 40 students. While 13.1 achieved high marks in AO3 and AO4, 13.2 achieved very low scores in AO4 and in AO3.

Q 13.1 Many students said that the poverty, lack of opportunities in Colombia and the pressure on María to carry her family as the only breadwinner were not factors entirely related to the pregnancy. The stronger essays pointed out that María, in choosing to swallow hard drugs could never have considered the pregnancy. Most students recognised that the picture of the scan, the appointment card and her conversations with Carla led María to think about a better life for her child in the USA. But it seemed that a significant number of students felt they could only talk about the USA perhaps pointing towards a reliance on the previous year's essay on Maria's decision to stay in the USA. This made for a less successful response.

Q13.2 There were so few answers here that it is hard to draw conclusions except to say that students struggled to find content to write an essay on the religious connotations of the film.

**Question 14 Volver**

This film continues to be chosen by a huge number of centres. Nearly 1800 students chose 14.1 and just under 300 chose 14.2.

Q 14.1 There were essays across the full range of grades. Stronger essays offered full and detailed evidence to support the strength of women, the depth of maternal love and the solidarity of women. Less successful essays made valid points but gave brief, limited evidence to justify their statements and some failed to evaluate, they just narrated. There was some evidence of points taken from last year's essay on Paula, but most students chose a good range of women.

Q 14. This option was less popular, and responses varied in success. Some were done well, particularly on music, pointing out the names of the tracks and how they added to the atmosphere as well as being part of the message of the film. But camera angles and colours posed more problems many with unclear points and few examples or vague examples. Colours were said to symbolise many different things with little justification and only the strongest responses gave good evidence from the film to justify their points.

**Question 15 Abel**

This film was answered by less than 10 students in 2024, a fall on the previous year. 15.1 and 15.2 were equally split. There is too little data to draw conclusions, but the essays seen were not overly strong.

**Question 16 Las 13 rosas**

This question saw a drop in uptake in 2024 with just under 50 responses. 16.1 was the more popular choice and responses achieved higher marks than for 16.2.

Q16.1 Essays seen considered the negative effects of the war on romantic relationships, for example those of Virtudes and Adelina. The strongest answers analysed the changing relationships between Teo and his friends, Carmen and Virtudes and positive aspects such as the solidarity between the Rosas.

Q16.2 The essays seen struggled to put together coherent responses with evidence from the text.

### Language A03

While many students displayed excellent language skills, others were not able to express ideas clearly.

1. Students must learn the vocabulary they need to discuss the characters and themes. They are at a huge disadvantage if they do not know the common words needed to write about the film or book.
2. While complex language will be rewarded, pre-learned phrases involving complex structures cannot compensate for an inability to deal with tenses and verbs accurately.
3. Personal responses involving emotion followed by a subjunctive or resorting to conjecture to accommodate 'if/would' structures cannot cover errors of basic grammar.
4. Students should be advised to try to vary both vocabulary and grammatical structures, to avoid repetition.

### Critical response A04

Students need to address the title chosen and ensure that they make valid points, justifying these with detailed evidence from the film or book.

1. Students can agree or disagree with the statements if they provide evidence for the points they make.
2. Some students feel a brief reference to huge events is enough evidence. For example: *Raimunda es fuerte, con el abuso sexual de su padre y la negligencia de su madre (y un embarazo)*. This is like shorthand. Development should involve putting some detail on the bones above and evaluating the impact of it on the characters and possibly on the readers/audience.
3. Native speakers of Spanish must also have a good knowledge of the text or film and must show that they can respond to the question set with a critical eye, avoiding just narrating events without analysis.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.