

A Level Spanish

The written exams

Paper 1 and Paper 2: what is in them, how they are marked, and how to do well

Edexcel 9SP0 · Set works: La casa de Bernarda Alba and El laberinto del fauno

Two written papers

Paper 3 (speaking) is separate and not covered here

Paper 1

Listening, reading and translation into English

2 h

long

80

marks

- Section A Listening 30 marks
- Section B Reading 30 marks
- Section C Translation into English 20 marks

Paper 2

Translation into Spanish and two essays

2 h 40

long

120

marks

- Section A Translation into Spanish 20 marks
- Essay 1 La casa de Bernarda Alba 50 marks
- Essay 2 El laberinto del fauno 50 marks

Paper 1 at a glance

2 hours · 80 marks · no dictionary · you control your own recording

A Listening

50 min · 30 marks

B Reading

50 min · 30 marks

C Translation

20 min · 20 marks

Pearson's recommended timings. Start with Section A and work through in order.

Answer in Spanish...

- ...in Sections A and B. Answers in English score nothing.
- Short phrases are fine; you do not need full sentences. The listening summary (Q4b) needs phrases, not single words.
- Spelling and grammar are not marked, as long as the meaning is clear.

...and in English only in Section C

- The translation is the only English on the paper.
- You may use words from the texts, but must not copy whole sections.
- Only your first answer(s) count: one idea per mark, best idea first.

Paper 1 · Section A: Listening

5 recordings, about 7 minutes of audio in total · listen as often as you like

Question	What you do	Marks
Q1	Multiple choice: pick the right ending (A–D) for 4 sentences	4
Q2	3–4 short questions, answered in Spanish	5
Q3	6–7 short questions on the longest recording	9
Q4(a)	3–5 short questions on the first half of a report	6
Q4(b)	Summary: 3 details for each of 2 speakers, one per bullet point	6

Where marks are lost

- Q4(b): writing three details under one bullet. Give ONE idea per bullet.
- Mishearing word breaks: “medio” or “me dio”? “no” or “nos”?
- Numbers: seis/siete, sesenta/setenta. Keep words like casi, más de, hoy.
- Keeping the speaker’s “nosotros”: change it to the third person.

Paper 1 · Section B: Reading

5 texts · 30 marks · about 50 minutes

Question	What you do	Marks
Q5	Multiple choice: pick the right ending for 4 sentences	4
Q6	Choose the 4 true statements from a list of 9	4
Q7	Short open questions, answered in Spanish	6
Q8	Long text + open questions in Spanish	8
Q9	Long text + open questions in Spanish	8

Q8 and Q9

- Every year: one extract from a novel, play or autobiography, and one article. Either can come first.
- The article was about the Civil War or Franco in 3 of the last 4 years.
- More than half of Section B's marks are here: leave time for them.

Reading Q8–Q9: what examiners want

61%

of Q8–Q9 questions in 2023–2025 asked for two or three ideas (“Da dos ideas”)

29%

in 2018–2022. Two different ideas, not the same one twice.

1

Circle the question word. ¿Quién? needs a person; ¿Qué pasó? needs a verb; ¿Qué les faltaba? needs the thing missing (not “hambre”).

2

Don’t copy chunks. A copied phrase only scores if it answers the question as it stands. Change the words to fit.

3

Say who did what. A verb with no subject is read as the person named in the question.

4

Read between the lines. “¿Cómo sabemos...?” and “¿Qué evidencia hay...?” came up 13 times. Find the proof, then say what it shows.

5

Best idea first. Only the first answers are marked. A correct third idea won’t rescue a wrong second one.

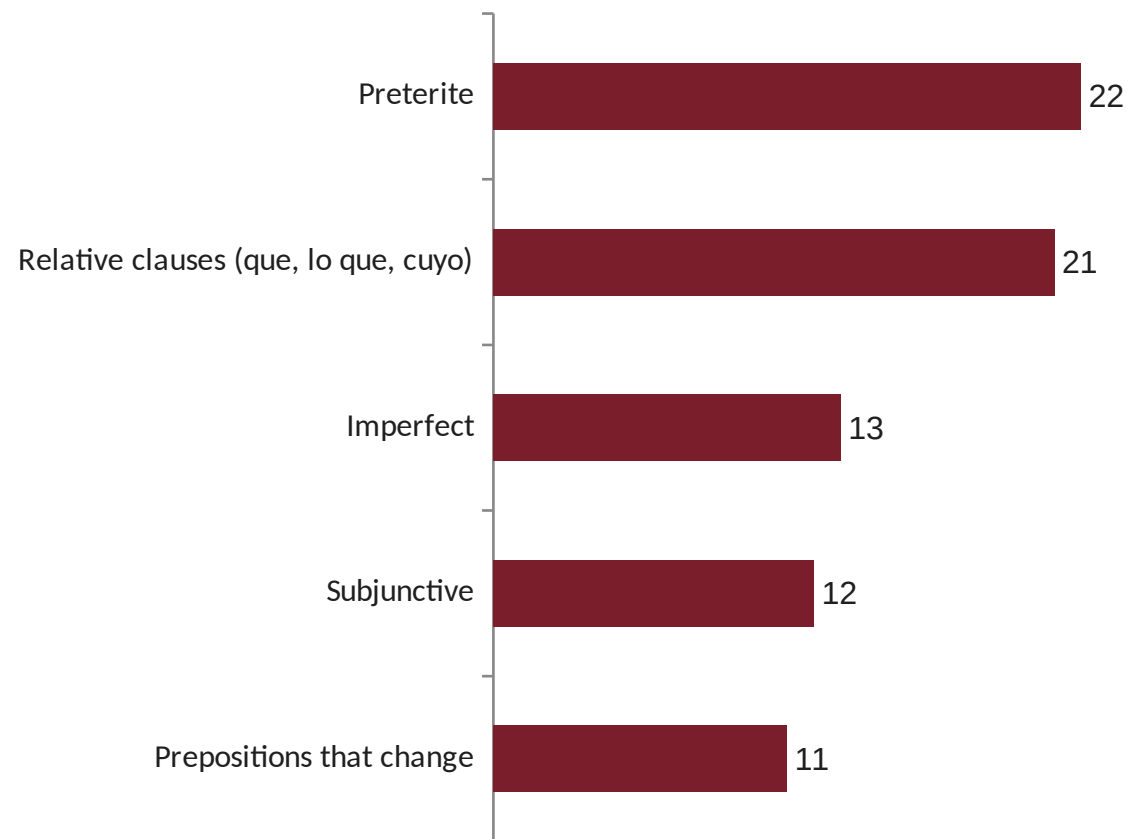
Paper 1 · Section C: Translation into English

About 110 words · 20 minutes · 20 marks

How it is marked

- The passage is cut into 20 sections, 1 mark each.
- The test: would an English speaker understand it without seeing the Spanish?
- Two alternatives where one is wrong = no mark.
- Watch prepositions (“ended UP”, “guilty OF”), false friends (actuales, asistentes) and small words (bastante, sólo).
- Don’t keep Spanish word order, and don’t overuse “the”.

Most-tested grammar: sections out of 160 (2018–2025)



Paper 2 at a glance

2 hours 40 minutes · 120 marks · no dictionary · no copies of the book or film

A Translation

30 min · 20 marks

Essay 1: Bernarda Alba

about 65 min · 50 marks

Essay 2: Laberinto

about 65 min · 50 marks

Pearson recommends 30 minutes for the translation. It gives no time per essay: 65 minutes each is simply the time left, split evenly.

The rules for the essays

- Write 300–350 words for each essay, in Spanish.
- Your first essay must be on the literary text (Section B): La casa de Bernarda Alba is always Question 9.
- Your second essay is on the film (Section C): El laberinto del fauno is always Question 16.
- For each work you choose ONE of two questions: (a) or (b).

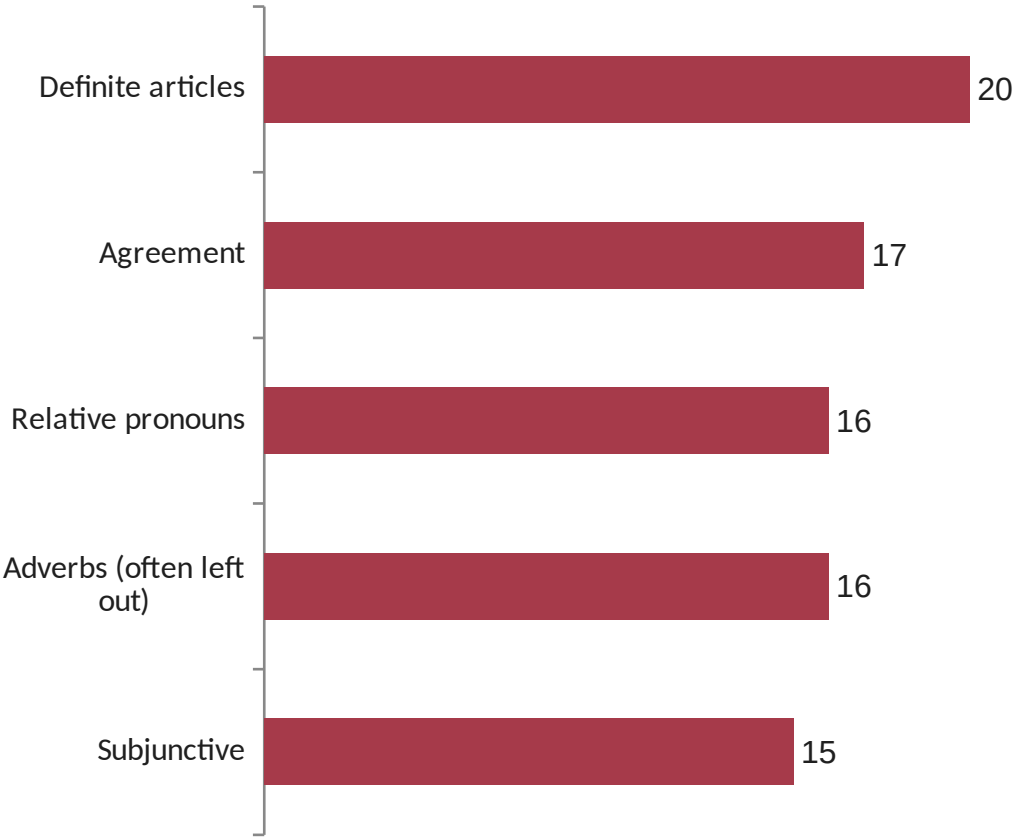
Paper 2 · Section A: Translation into Spanish

About 110 English words · 30 minutes · 20 marks

How it is marked

- The passage is cut into 20 boxes, 1 mark each.
- Each box must be completely correct. Verb and adjective endings count.
- Small accent slips are allowed unless they change the meaning.
- Translate what is there: paraphrase gets no credit.
- Read the whole text first. Check every noun, adjective and article agrees.

Most-tested points: boxes out of 160 (2018–2025)



How each essay is marked

50 marks per essay, on three separate grids

20

Critical and analytical response

Answer the exact question with a clear argument, backed by evidence you explain.

20

Range of grammar and vocabulary

Varied structures and the right terms for analysing literature and film.

10

Accuracy

Correct Spanish. You do not need to be error-free for the top band.

The question words

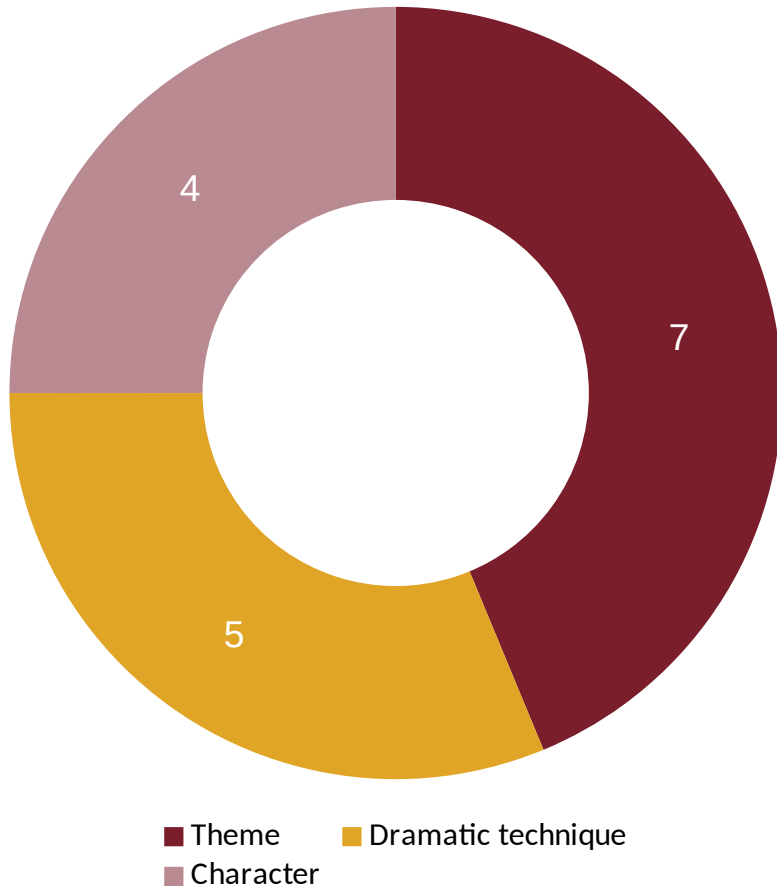
Analiza (analyse: how and why) • **Evalúa** (evaluate: weigh up, reach a judgement) • **Examina** (examine)

Since 2023 every literary question has used Analiza or Evalúa. None has quoted the work.

Essay 1: La casa de Bernarda Alba

Question 9 · 16 questions set from 2018 to 2025

What the 16 questions focused on



- Themes: freedom, fear, desire, money and class, motherhood, violence, men and gender.
- Technique: symbolism, the house, stage directions, colour, structure. Characters: La Poncia, Adela, Bernarda, María Josefa, Pepe.

What top answers did

- Planned in Spanish and named their points in the introduction (2018, 2020, 2022).
- Reached a clear judgement, even disagreeing with the question: the cane, not the house, is the best symbol (top band, 2022).
- Ended each paragraph by linking back to the question (2023).
- Used the conclusion to analyse, not repeat (2018).

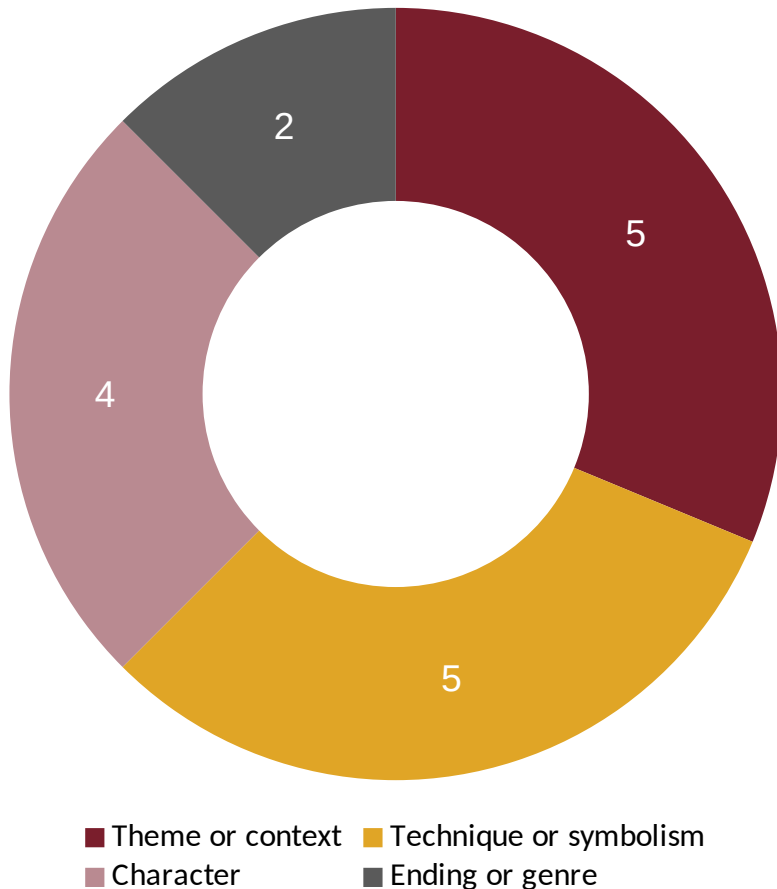
What examiners warn against

- Linking the play to Franco: it is set before the dictatorship (2024, 2025).
- Evidence not linked to the question (4 of 10 printed essays).
- Using drama terms rarely or inconsistently (5 of 10).
- An introduction with background but no argument, or a new idea in the conclusion.

Essay 2: El laberinto del fauno

Question 16 · 16 questions set from 2018 to 2025 · the most popular film in 6 of 8 years

What the 16 questions focused on



- Themes: fatherhood, effects of war, loyalty, rural Spain, sacrifice.
- Technique: symbols, the dinner scene, reality and fantasy, the Faun and the Pale Man. Every year since 2019: one Analiza and one Evalúa.

What top answers did

- Linked each technique to its meaning: the colours of each world, the parallel banquets (2022).
- Analysed colour, shapes and the effect of the Faun and the Pale Man on the audience (2024).
- Weighed both views: is the fantasy only in Ofelia's mind? (2025).
- Used context throughout, e.g. women under Franco (2021).

What examiners warn against

- Losing focus: food with no link to power (2024), fantasy described with no argument (2025).
- Describing colours or techniques without linking them to the question (2020).
- Quotations not explained, and factual slips: Ofelia does not always obey the Faun (2019).
- Retelling the story (criticised in all 8 reports).

Writing the essays: a method

1

Copy the question

Write it at the top. Keep asking: am I answering this?

2

Plan in Spanish

Pick 2–3 points and name them in your introduction.

3

One point per paragraph

PEEL: Point, Evidence, Explanation, Link back to the question.

4

Explain your evidence

Accurate quotations or specific scenes. Say why each one matters.

5

Conclude

Answer the question directly. No new ideas.

Stick to 300–350 words. Much longer essays “very rarely” score higher, and very short ones struggle to reach the top bands.

Before you hand in

- ☐ Does each answer match the question word (who, what, why, what happened)?
- ☐ Would someone who has not read the text understand who did what?
- ☐ For two marks, have I given two different ideas, the surest first?
- ☐ Have I changed copied words so they answer the question?
- ☐ Are my numbers exact, with words like casi, más de, al menos kept?
- ☐ Translations: does my English read naturally? Does my Spanish agree?
- ☐ Essays: have I answered the exact question, in 300–350 words?