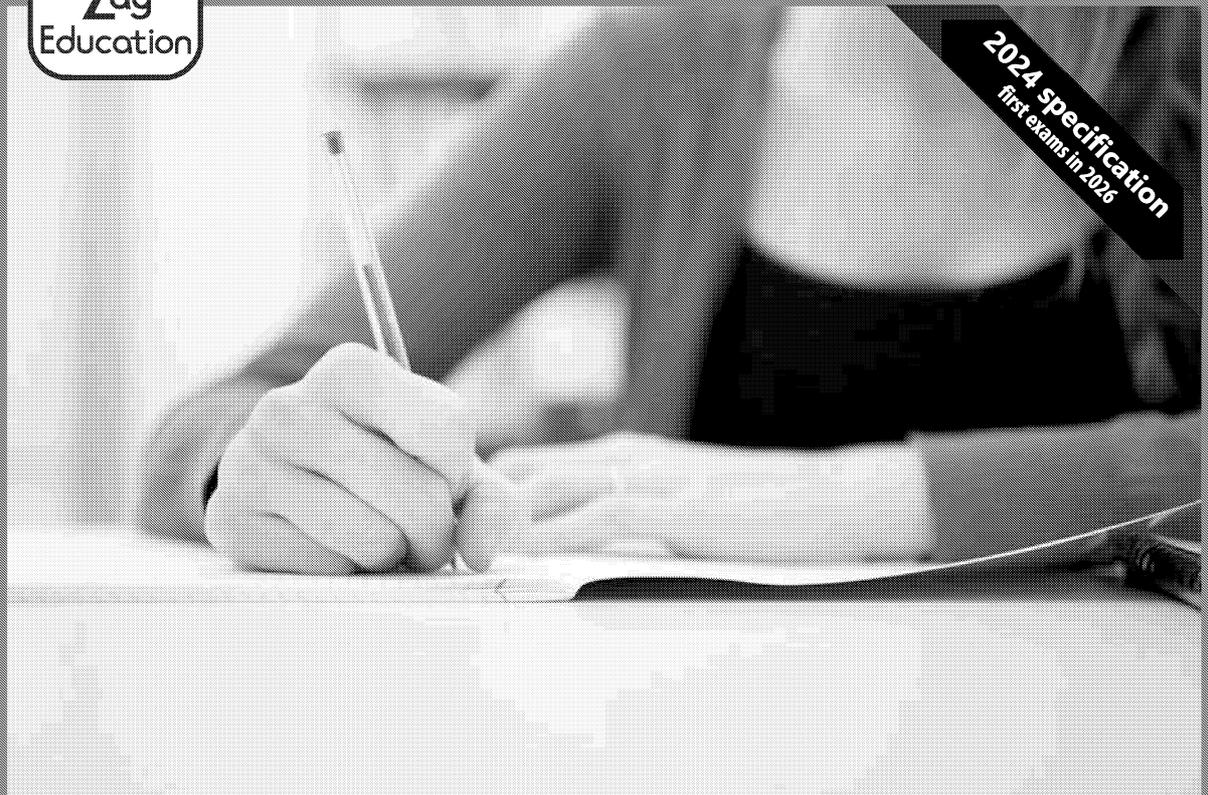
 2024 specification
first exams in 2026

Practice Papers for GCSE AQA Spanish

Writing: Higher

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Teacher's Introduction

Purpose:

This pack contains three full practice papers for the AQA Higher writing exam. When a new specification is launched, initially, teachers may find it difficult to source quality practice papers beyond those provided by the exam board, thereby making it difficult to accurately assess their students. Besides, there is always a risk that students can find the papers provided online by the exam board. The ZigZag practice papers allow teachers to give their students extra practice without taking this risk.

Remember!

Always check the exam board website for new information, including changes to the specification and sample assessment material.

The author has taken every step to ensure the structure of these papers mirrors that of the AQA papers, and has used their extensive experience of resource writing to produce varied and unique content. These papers cover all three themes listed below and most of the topics:

1. People and lifestyle
2. Popular culture
3. Communication and the world around us

How to use this resource:

We recommend setting each paper under exam conditions to give an accurate picture of students' ability at a given point. Papers can be used as teacher-assessed tasks (with the teacher marking the paper and feeding back to the students) or as self-/peer-assessment tasks (with each student or their partner assessing their work). We are not providing a full mark scheme here as it can easily be obtained from the exam board's website, but the author has provided indicative content and an explanation of the mark scheme, and how to achieve the top marks for each task. They have also provided some self-/peer-assessment grids, which can be photocopied and given to students to assess their own or their partner's work.

Although not in exam layout, non-write-on versions of the practice papers have been included in the resource in order to minimise photocopying and reduce costs. Additionally, questions 2.1 and 2.2, and questions 3.1 and 3.2, have been combined onto one page, again to reduce wasteful photocopying. At the end of the resource, there is a lined answer sheet for students to write on. You can photocopy as many as required for mock exams.

December 2025

Structure of the Paper and Mark Scheme

The AQA Higher writing paper comprises three tasks:

1. The translation task (10 marks)

Students translate five sentences into Spanish, of approximately 50 words. The first two sentences are of a moderate difficulty, and later sentences may contain modal verbs and more complex clauses. The task is marked for AO3 only and accurate application of the grammar and vocabulary prescribed in the specification as a whole and there are two criteria: rendering of the original meaning, and accuracy of grammar. For the translation, teachers will apply up to 15 ticks to elements of the translation. To score in the top band in 'rendering of the original meaning', a student must demonstrate a very good knowledge of the vocabulary in the specification, and their grammar must be secure. Only minor errors are tolerated, and there should be few, if any, omissions.

2. The 90-word task (15 marks)

Students choose between two questions, which will be on two different themes (question 5 on the Foundation paper). Students must cover three bullet points at two different time frames. It is marked based on two criteria: AO2 (understanding and using language in speaking and in writing) and AO3 (demonstrating understanding and using grammar and vocabulary prescribed in the specification). To score in the top band for AO2, students must address all three bullet points, communicate clearly, and regularly develop their relevant information. To score in the top band for AO3, students must use a good range of grammar and vocabulary. They must also regularly try to use complex language and structures and successfully use future time frames. There may be minor errors and a few major errors in complex structures only.

3. The 150-word task

Students choose between two questions on two different themes. There are two questions: one is narrative in the present tense, the other in a different time frame. It is marked for AO2 (understanding and using language in speaking and in writing) and AO3 (demonstrating understanding and using grammar and vocabulary prescribed in the specification). To score in the top band for AO2, students need to convey a lot of relevant information, communicate clearly, and regularly develop their relevant information. To score in the top band for AO3, students are assessed according to their use of language, and their accuracy. To score in the top band for range and use of language, students must use a very good variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures. They must use complex language. To score in the top band for accuracy, students must use a very good range of grammar and vocabulary. There may be some minor errors and occasional major errors in complex structures only. The writing must be secure.

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Self- and Peer-assessment Grid

Use the grids below to self- or peer-assess your written responses. Please note that BP stands for bullet point.

1. Translation task:

For the 'rendering of the original meaning' criterion, check the mark scheme and give a tick if the response is correctly translated.

Then convert those ticks as follows:

13–15 ticks = 5 marks

10–12 ticks = 4 marks

7–9 ticks = 3 marks

4–6 ticks = 2 marks

1–3 ticks = 1 mark

0 ticks = 0 marks

For the 'knowledge of vocabulary and grammar' criterion, you can check your work against the following:

Have you...	What the mark scheme says	What it means
	shown very good knowledge of vocabulary?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> translate all or nearly all the words in the message
	translated the message appropriately?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> do not leave any gaps if you translate the message back into English, it is clear
	used highly accurate grammar?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> check your verbs (present and perfect)
	checked if you have made errors, they are only minor?	<p>When you have finished, proofread your work for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> spelling articles (el/la/los/las un/una/unos/unas) adjective agreements (usually you need to check adjectives and an -s at the end of plurals)

2. 90-word task:

Have you...	What the mark scheme says	What it means
	addressed all three bullet points with relevant information?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> write at least one sentence per BP what you write must be relevant to the question use the correct time frame for BP2 and BP3
	communicated clearly?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> write in a way that is easy to understand if you translate it back into English, do not need to change much
	regularly developed your ideas?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> give at least three or four ideas per BP
	used a good variety of vocabulary?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> avoid repetition (use each word once) include different subject pronouns and verbs
	regularly tried to use complex language and structures?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use a range of time phrases ('el fin de semana', etc.) use connectives ('y', 'pero', 'porque', 'e', 'bastante', etc.), and sequencers ('después', etc.) you could use relative clauses, or infinitives ('que', 'hay que', etc.)
	used present, past and future tenses successfully?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are your present, past and future verbs correct? are they in the right paragraph, with the correct time frame ('pasado/pasada' = past, and 'que viene' = future)
	checked if you have made errors, they are mainly minor (though some major ones may have occurred in complex structures)?	<p>When you have finished, proofread your work for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> spelling articles (el/la/los/las un/una/unos/unas) adjective agreements (usually you need to check adjectives and an -s at the end of plurals) add accents where necessary

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3. 150-word task:

Have you...	What the mark scheme says	What it means
	conveyed a lot of relevant information?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> break down the BP (it might be useful) what you write must be relevant to the topic use the correct time frame for BP2
	regularly developed your ideas?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> always give at least six to eight ideas per paragraph this can be achieved by giving other points which are now vs what it used to be, disadvantage, etc.
	communicated clearly?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> plan your paragraphs write in a way that is easy to understand narrate a story as you would in English if you translate it back into English, does it make sense?
	used a very good variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> avoid repetition (use each word or expression only once) use different opinion phrases ('en mi opinión', 'a mi juicio', etc.) include different subject pronouns and object pronouns ('uno', 'ninguno', etc.)
	used complex language regularly and successfully?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use more interesting vocabulary and structures are confident you could use modal verbs ('deber', 'deberías', etc.) use infinitive structures (after 'para', 'antes de', etc.)
	used present, past and future time frames successfully?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are you using present, perfect and near future? have you referred to your childhood / past, using the imperfect? can you replace some near future verbs with ones (will)? did you say what would happen (conditional perfect tense)?
	checked if you had made any errors in complex structures?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you have finished, proofread your work for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> spelling articles (el/la/los/las un/una/unos/unas) adjective agreements (usually you need to add adjectives and an -s at the end of plurals) add accents where necessary

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ZigZag Practice Exam

Supporting GCSE AQA Spanish: 2024

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Write-on paper

Spanish
Writing



Higher Tier Practice Paper 3

Name

Time allowed: 1 hour 15 minutes

The maximum mark for this paper is 50.

Information:

- Answer all questions in the spaces provided.
- In **Section A**, you should answer question 1.
- In **Section B** you should answer either **question 2.1 or question 2.2**. Do not answer both questions.
- In **Section C** you should answer **either question 3.1 or question 3.2**. Do not answer both questions.
- Answer all questions in Spanish.
- You must not use a dictionary.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets.
- To score the highest marks for question 2 and question 3, write something for each bullet point.
- You can write your first draft in the answer book. Clearly cross out everything that should not be marked as part of your answer.

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Section A

Translation into Spanish

1. Translate the following sentences into **Spanish**.

Last year I received many gifts from the Three Kings.

.....

.....

Most of my friends want to be famous.

.....

.....

I've never been to South America, but I'd like to go.

.....

.....

Air pollution in cities is caused by industry and cars.

.....

.....

For many reasons, I've been studying at university to become a doctor.

.....

.....

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Section B

Answer **either** Question 2.1 **or** Question 2.2.
Only answer **one** of these questions.

EITHER

2.1 You are emailing your Spanish friend about your lifestyle.

Write your answer in Spanish in approximately

90 words.

You must write at least one detail for each bullet point.

Describe:

- what you do to stay healthy
- a sport you did last week
- how you will eat in the future

[15 marks]

OR

2.2 You are writing a poster about protecting the environment.

Write your answer in English in approximately

90 words.

You must write at least one detail for each bullet point.

Describe:

- the environment in your area
- what your family can do to protect the environment
- how you will encourage others to do the same

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Section C

Answer **either** Question 3.1 **or** Question 3.2.
Only answer **one** of these questions.

EITHER

3.1 You are writing a post for a blog about celebrities.

Your post is about celebrity life.

You must write your answer in **Spanish** in approximately **150 words**.

Your answer must have information to cover both bullet points.

Describe:

- the positive and negative aspects of being famous
- What your favourite celebrity will do in the future

[25 marks]

OR

3.2 You are writing an article about young people in your country.

Your article is for young people.

You must write your answer in **Spanish** in approximately **150 words**.

Your answer must have information to cover both bullet points.

Describe:

- the importance of young people in your country
- a time in their lives that is important for young people



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ZigZag Practice Exam

Supporting GCSE AQA Spanish: 2024

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Non-write-on paper

Spanish
Writing



Higher Tier Practice Paper 3

Time allowed: 1 hour 15 minutes

The maximum mark for this paper is 50.

Information:

- Answer all questions.
- In **Section A**, you should answer question 1.
- In **Section B** you should answer **either question 2.1 or question 2.2**. Do not answer both questions.
- In **Section C** you should answer **either question 3.1 or question 3.2**. Do not answer both questions.
- Answer all questions in Spanish.
- You must use a dictionary.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets.
- To score the highest marks for question 2 and question 3, write something for each bullet point.
- Clearly cross out everything that should not be marked as part of your answer.



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Section A

Translation into Spanish

1. Translate the following sentences into **Spanish**.

Last year I received many gifts from the Christmas season.
Most of my friends want to be famous.
I've never been to South America and I'd like to go.
Air pollution in cities is caused by industry and cars.
For many years I have been studying at university to become a doctor.



Section B

Answer **either** Question 2.1 **or** Question 2.2. Only answer **one** of them.

EITHER

2.1 You are emailing your Spanish friend about your lifestyle.

Write your answer in **Spanish** in approximately **90 words**.
You must write at least one detail for each bullet point.

Describe:

- what you do to stay healthy
- a sport you did last year
- how you will live in the future

[15 marks]



OR

2.2 You are writing a poster about protecting the environment.

Write your answer in **Spanish** in approximately **90 words**.
You must write at least one detail for each bullet point.

Describe:

- the environment in your country
- what your family do to protect the environment
- how you will protect the environment

Section C

Answer **either** Question 3.1 **or** Question 3.2. Only answer **one** of them.

EITHER

3.1 You are writing a post for a blog about celebrities.
Your post is about celebrity lifestyles.

You must write your answer in **Spanish** in approximately **150 words**.
Your answer must have information to cover both bullet points.

Describe:

- the positive and negative aspects of being famous
- What your favourite celebrity will do in the future

[25 marks]



OR

3.2 You are writing an article about young people in your country.
Your article is for young people.

You must write your answer in **Spanish** in approximately **150 words**.
Your answer must have information to cover both bullet points.

Describe:

- the importance of young people in your country
- a time in the past when young people were important

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Indicative Content

Practice Paper 1

Section A

Indicative content:

	Element of original language	Indicative content	Alternative
1	A month ago	Hace un mes	
2	I went on holiday	fui de vacaciones	
3	with my family.	con mi familia.	
4	I am going to buy	voy a comprar	Compraré
5	a new computer	un ordenador nuevo con	
6	a big screen	una pantalla más grande.	
7	My father sleeps too little,	Mi padre duerme demasiado poco	
8	that's why	por eso	y entonces
9	he is always tired.	está cansado siempre.	tiene sueño
10	Although he always eats	Aunque come siempre	
11	healthy dishes,	platos saludables	
12	he often has heart problems.	suele tener problemas de corazón.	
13	I have been	He sido fan	...soy seguidor
14	a fan of this singer	de esta cantante	de este cantante
15	for many years.	durante muchos años.	Desde hace

Section B

Indicative content for 2.1:

Yo soy una persona muy activa y mi actividad favorita es el deporte. Me gusta mucho jugar al fútbol en el campo del pueblo. Tengo muchas amigas en el equipo y lo pasamos muy bien. También me gusta estar con mi familia. El fin de semana pasado llovió mucho y por eso no fui al cine con mis amigos. En su lugar, fui a jugar a jugar un partido importante de baloncesto. Iré a la ciudad para comprar y luego saldré a comer.

Indicative content for 2.2:

A mí me gusta mucho la tecnología. Siempre uso mi móvil para hablar con mis amigos y para ver películas de acción con mis amigos. También tengo un ordenador para hacer mis deberes. Puedo buscar información fácilmente en Internet. Este año tuvimos clases de informática. Me gusta mucho la tecnología y no apra nada. En el futuro, creo que la tecnología será muy importante para mí. Necesitaré una pantalla muy grande y un ordenador nuevo.

Section C

Indicative content for 3.1:

Mi colegio es bastante grande, pero aun así, conozco a todos los profesores y a muchos de ellos son buenos, pero hay algunos que son demasiados estrictos y ponen muchos deberes. Por otro lado, para mí y, si trabajo mucho y hago un esfuerzo, sacaré buenas notas en los exámenes. Las asignaturas son muy nuevas; tenemos una biblioteca tranquila y mucho espacio para hacer deporte. Hacemos cosas nuevas en todas las clases.

En el futuro, los colegios tendrán más espacios para estudiar, porque cada alumno podrá tener su propio espacio. También, las asignaturas serán más prácticas y nos van a ayudar más a encontrar un trabajo. También tendremos más asignaturas artísticas, y menos libros no digitales porque no son nada moderno. Disfrutaremos de la educación.

Indicative content for 3.2:

Pienso que es muy importante hacer actividades al aire libre, porque mejora mucho la salud. Por ejemplo, lo paso muy bien cuando voy a un paseo con mi familia el fin de semana o jugando al fútbol. Hacer ejercicio me ayuda a poder dormir bien por las noches. Sin embargo, como siempre tengo que ir al gimnasio para el deporte. Por esto, vale la pena levantarse temprano el fin de semana.

La semana pasada fui a la playa con mis padres y mis primos – fue un día estupendo. Fuimos a la playa a disfrutar del sol y luego nadamos en el mar. Comimos en un restaurante y hasta vimos a un actor famoso pero con mucho sueño, porque fue un viaje muy largo en tren para llegar allí.

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