

# Contextual Dialogue Writing

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Contextual dialogue writing asks you to complete a conversation in Spanish using the cues provided. The goal is not to write a speech. You must make your responses fit naturally into the conversation, answer every cue, and show that you understand what the other speaker has already said.

For CSEC Spanish, the dialogue response is usually **80-100 words**. That word count refers to **the words you write**, not the words already printed in the question.

## What Examiners Want

A strong contextual dialogue response should:

- answer **all cues**
- fit the **situation** in the rubric
- respond naturally to the line before and after each blank
- use suitable **tenses and verb forms**
- include useful connectors, exclamations, and conversational phrases
- sound like two people speaking, not like an essay

### Exam Tip

Before writing anything, read the rubric, the cues, and the full dialogue. The printed lines are clues. They tell you the relationship between the speakers, the tense you need, and the kind of response that makes sense.

## Method

Use this five-step method before you start writing.

- **1. Read the rubric carefully.** Identify the situation, the speakers, and the word limit.
- **2. Study the cues.** Underline what each blank must include.
- **3. Read the entire dialogue.** Do not answer blank by blank before understanding the whole conversation.
- **4. Check the line before and after each blank.** Your answer must connect smoothly with both.
- **5. Reread the cues at the end.** Make sure you did not omit anything.

## Common Mistakes

Mistake	Why it loses marks	Better habit
Ignoring a cue	Required information is missing	Tick off each cue after using it
Writing unrelated sentences	The response does not fit the conversation	Read the line before and after the blank
Using only short answers	The dialogue lacks development	Add a reason, detail, or follow-up question
Switching tense randomly	The time frame becomes confusing	Match the tense required by the cue
Sounding too formal	The conversation feels unnatural	Use fillers such as pues, bueno, a ver

## Phone Dialogue Phrases

Phone conversations are common in dialogue completion. Learn these fixed expressions.

### ANSWERING THE PHONE

Spanish	English
Aló.	Hello.
Dígame.	Hello. / Speak to me.
Diga.	Hello. / Go ahead.
¿Quién habla?	Who is speaking?
Soy yo, Ana.	It's me, Ana.
¿Se encuentra Pablo?	Is Pablo there?
No se encuentra en este momento.	He is not here at the moment.
¿Quiere dejarle un mensaje?	Do you want to leave him/her a message?

### MAKING THE CALL

Spanish	English
Llamo para invitarte a mi fiesta.	I am calling to invite you to my party.
Llamo para pedir información.	I am calling to ask for information.

Estoy llamando de la escuela.	I am calling from school.
¿Puedo hablar con Marta?	May I speak with Marta?
¿Me puedo comunicar con el señor López?	May I speak with Mr López?
Dígale a Carlos que me llame.	Tell Carlos to call me.

## Agreeing and Disagreeing

Use these when the dialogue asks for your opinion or reaction.

### PRACTICE — AGREEING AND DISAGREEING

**Vale / Bueno / Bien**

OK

**De acuerdo**

OK / agreed

**Estoy de acuerdo**

I agree

**Claro que sí**

Of course

**Por supuesto**

Of course

**Desde luego**

Of course

**No estoy de acuerdo**

I do not agree

**Claro que no**

Of course not

**De ninguna manera**

No way

**¡Qué va!**

No way

**¡Ni pensarlo!**

Don't even think about it

**Yo también**

me too

**Yo tampoco**

me neither

**Exacto**

exactly

## Giving Opinions

These phrases help you develop your answer instead of writing only one sentence.

### OPINIONS AND BELIEFS

Spanish	English
En mi opinión, es una buena idea.	In my opinion, it is a good idea.
A mi parecer, debemos salir temprano.	In my view, we should leave early.
Pienso que será divertido.	I think it will be fun.
Creo que tienes razón.	I believe you are right.
No creo que sea necesario.	I do not think it is necessary.
Yo sé que el examen es difícil.	I know that the exam is difficult.
No lo sé.	I do not know.
Espero que sí.	I hope so.
Espero que no.	I hope not.

## Exclamations

Exclamations make dialogue sound more natural. In Spanish, use:

**¡Qué + adjective!** for "How...!"

**¡Qué + noun!** for "What a...!"

### QUÉ + ADJECTIVE

Spanish	English
¡Qué maravilloso!	How wonderful!
¡Qué genial!	How great!
¡Qué chévere!	How cool!
¡Qué hermoso!	How beautiful!
¡Qué bonito!	How pretty!
¡Qué afortunado!	How lucky!
¡Qué agradable!	How nice!

### QUÉ + NOUN

Spanish	English
¡Qué sorpresa!	What a surprise!
¡Qué confusión!	What confusion!
¡Qué estrés!	What stress!
¡Qué desastre!	What a disaster!
¡Qué desilusión!	What a disappointment!
¡Qué lástima!	What a pity!
¡Qué tontería!	What nonsense!

Other useful reactions:

**PRACTICE — DIALOGUE REACTIONS****¡Dios mío!**

Oh my God!

**¡Ay, caramba!**

Oh my goodness!

**¿Verdad?**

Really? / right?

**¿En serio?**

Seriously?

**¡Hombre!**

Man!

**¡Oiga!**

Hey! / Listen! (formal)

**¡Oye!**

Hey! / Listen! (informal)

**¡Guau!**

Wow!

**¡Qué guay!**

Cool! / Awesome!

**¡Qué loco!**

Crazy!

**Me da igual**

It is all the same to me

**No me importa**

I do not care

**No me interesa**

I am not interested

## Linking Words

Good dialogue needs links between ideas, especially when you are explaining a reason or consequence.

English	Spanish
so	así que, entonces
therefore	por lo tanto, por eso, por tanto
consequently	por consiguiente, como consecuencia
still / yet	todavía, aún
not yet	todavía no
not even	ni siquiera
but	pero
however	sin embargo
by the way	a propósito

## Dialogue Fillers

Fillers help the dialogue sound spoken and natural. Use them lightly.

### PRACTICE — DIALOGUE FILLERS

#### Pues

well

#### Bueno

well / OK

#### A ver

let's see

#### Digo

I mean

#### Es decir

in other words

**O sea**

I mean / that is

**Entonces**

so / then

**Es que...**

it's just that...

**Sabes**

you know

**En fin**

all in all

**¿Cierto?**

right?

**Obvio**

obviously / duh

**¿Entiendes?**

do you understand?

**A propósito**

by the way

**Y tal**

and so on / and stuff

## How to Build Each Blank

For each blank, ask yourself four questions:

- 1. **Who am I speaking to?** Use formal or informal language correctly.
- 2. **What cue must I answer?** Include every required detail.
- 3. **What tense do I need?** Present, past, future, or conditional?
- 4. **What does the next line expect?** Your answer should lead naturally into it.

For example, if the next line says ¡Qué lástima!, your blank should probably mention a problem, disappointment, or bad news. If the next line says Estoy de acuerdo, your blank should contain an opinion or suggestion.

## Worked Mini-Example

**Situation:** Your friend calls you to discuss plans for Saturday. Complete the blanks using the cues.

### Cues

- greet your friend and ask why they are calling
- suggest going to the cinema
- explain that you cannot go in the morning
- agree on a time and say goodbye

Speaker	Dialogue
Ana	Aló, ¿quién habla?
Luis	Soy yo, Luis.
Ana	<b>¿Qué tal, Luis? ¿Por qué me llamas?</b>
Luis	Quiero salir el sábado. ¿Tienes alguna idea?
Ana	<b>Pues, podemos ir al cine porque hay una película muy interesante.</b>
Luis	¡Qué genial! ¿Vamos por la mañana?
Ana	<b>No puedo por la mañana porque tengo que ayudar a mi madre en casa.</b>
Luis	Entonces, ¿a qué hora nos vemos?
Ana	<b>Nos vemos a las cuatro frente al cine. Hasta luego.</b>

This works because each response:

- answers the cue
- responds to the previous line
- prepares the next line
- uses natural phrases: pues, porque, entonces, hasta luego

## Useful Dialogue Patterns

Use these patterns when you are stuck.

### MAKING SUGGESTIONS

Spanish	English
Podemos ir al cine.	We can go to the cinema.
¿Por qué no vamos a la playa?	Why don't we go to the beach?
Sería buena idea estudiar juntos.	It would be a good idea to study together.
Te recomiendo que descanses.	I recommend that you rest.

### EXPLAINING PROBLEMS

Spanish	English
No puedo ir porque estoy ocupado.	I cannot go because I am busy.
Lo siento, pero tengo que ayudar en casa.	I am sorry, but I have to help at home.
Es que no tengo dinero ahora.	It's just that I do not have money now.
Todavía no he terminado la tarea.	I still have not finished the homework.

### ASKING FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

Spanish	English
¿A qué hora nos vemos?	At what time shall we meet?
¿Dónde quieres ir?	Where do you want to go?
¿Con quién vas?	Who are you going with?
¿Qué piensas hacer?	What do you plan to do?
¿Me puedes llamar más tarde?	Can you call me later?

## Final Checklist

Before you finish, check that:

- your own words add up to **80-100 words**
- every cue has been answered
- each blank makes sense with the line before and after it
- you used appropriate tenses and verb endings
- you included a few natural phrases such as *pues*, *bueno*, *claro*, or a *propósito*
- you checked accents, agreement, and spelling

### Exam Tip

Do not write the first Spanish sentence that comes to mind. Read around the blank first. In contextual dialogue, the context is the mark-maker: it tells you what tone, tense, and response type the examiner expects.