

# CSEC Spanish Exam Breakdown

Matthew Williams • Spanish • March 8, 2026

## CSEC Spanish Exam Breakdown

### Format

The CSEC Spanish examination tests four language skills:

- Listening
- Reading
- Speaking
- Writing

These correspond to the four profile dimensions used in grading.

Skill	Percentage
Listening	21%
Reading	21%
Speaking	25%
Writing	33%

Total marks: **240**

The exam consists of **three papers**.

### Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

**Duration:** 1 hour 20 minutes

**Questions:** 60

Paper 01 assesses **listening comprehension** and **reading comprehension** through multiple-choice questions.

## Listening Comprehension (30 questions)

Students listen to recordings and select the correct answer.

Sections:

- **Section I (8)** — Listen to a sentence and choose the picture that matches it.
- **Section II (8)** — Listen to a sentence followed by a question or incomplete statement and select the best response.
- **Section III (6)** — Listen to two short passages and answer questions about them.
- **Section IV (8)** — Listen to a longer passage and answer comprehension questions.

## Reading Comprehension (30 questions)

Students read written material and answer multiple-choice questions.

Sections:

- **Section I (8)** — Complete a sentence by choosing the most appropriate word or phrase.
- **Section II (8)** — Complete a passage by selecting the grammatically correct option.
- **Section III (7)** — Complete a passage by selecting the most appropriate word or phrase.
- **Section IV (7)** — Read two short passages and answer comprehension questions.

### Paper 01 Tips

- Train your **ear for common verbs and question words**.
- Pay attention to **time expressions and numbers** in listening.
- In reading sections, eliminate clearly wrong answers first.
- If unsure, choose the option that **fits grammar and context best**.

## Paper 02 – Written Paper

**Duration:** 2 hours 15 minutes

All questions are compulsory. Most responses must be written in Spanish.

Sections:

- **Section I – Situational Responses (30 marks)**

Write short responses in Spanish to situations described in English.

Typical situations include requesting information, thanking someone, apologising, inviting someone, giving directions, or making suggestions.

Responses should be **short but complete**, usually one or two sentences.

- **Section II – Informal Letter (30 marks)**

Write **130–150 words**.

Prompts often involve writing to a friend, describing an event, explaining a problem, inviting someone somewhere, or discussing school or family.

A proper letter should include a greeting, introduction, body, and closing.

- **Section III – Dialogue (20 marks)**

Write a **dialogue of 80–100 words** using cues in English.

Common scenarios include shopping conversations, making plans, asking for information, ordering food, or meeting someone.

The dialogue must clearly show **interaction between two people**.

- **Section IV – Reading Comprehension (20 marks)**

Read a Spanish passage and answer questions **in English**.

Questions typically test understanding of the main idea, specific details, vocabulary meaning, and inference.

#### Paper 02 Tips

- Use **simple sentences correctly** rather than complicated ones with errors.
- Use connectors such as *porque*, *entonces*, *después*, *finalmente*.
- Stick to **present, past, and future tenses you know well**.
- Always check **agreement and verb conjugations**.

## Paper 03 – Oral Examination

**Duration:** 10–15 minutes per candidate

This paper evaluates speaking ability.

Sections:

- **Situational Responses (25 marks)**

Respond verbally to situations given in English.

Examples include thanking someone, apologising, asking for directions, inviting someone, or making a request.

Responses should contain **essential information only**. One-word answers such as “sí” or “gracias” are not enough.

### ★ Important

As a result of Melissa making landfall in Jamaica and causing widespread damage, the situational responses section **WILL NOT** be tested for Jamaican candidates in the 2026 examination.

#### • Reading Aloud (10 marks)

Read a Spanish passage aloud.

Assessment focuses on pronunciation, intonation, fluency, and accuracy.

Students should be familiar with vowel sounds, stress patterns, and natural pacing.

#### • Guided Conversation (20 marks)

Answer questions about everyday topics.

Possible topics include:

- Home and family
- School and career
- Sports and recreation
- Daily routines
- Shopping
- Travel

Each topic usually includes **four questions**.

### Oral Exam Tips

- Give **full answers, not yes/no responses**.
- Use **connectors** to expand answers slightly.
- If you do not understand, ask the examiner to repeat the question.
- Speak clearly rather than quickly.

---

## Syllabus Content

The syllabus focuses on **practical communication in everyday situations**, rather than memorising grammar in isolation.

Students are expected to perform language **functions** within common **topics and settings**.

## Core Communication Functions

Students should be able to:

### Establish social relationships

- greeting people
- introducing someone
- thanking someone
- apologising
- congratulating someone
- expressing sympathy

### Give and seek information

- describing people or places
- asking questions
- narrating events
- giving directions
- identifying objects

### Express opinions

- agreeing or disagreeing
- expressing certainty or doubt
- stating opinions
- confirming information

### Express emotions and attitudes

- expressing happiness or dissatisfaction
- showing interest or surprise
- expressing hope or fear
- requesting permission
- giving advice

### Use connectors to organise ideas

- time sequence (después, luego, finalmente)
- addition (también, además)
- contrast (pero, sin embargo)
- conclusion (en conclusión, por fin)

## Core Grammar Knowledge

Students are expected to use common tenses appropriately.

Important tenses include:

- present
- present continuous
- preterite
- imperfect
- present perfect
- future
- conditional

Students should also recognize or use:

- indicative mood
- imperative mood
- infinitive
- present subjunctive

Grammar should be used **functionally in communication**, not memorised in isolation.

---

## Main Topics

Many exam questions are based on everyday life contexts such as:

- Home and family
- School and career
- Sports and recreation
- Daily routines
- Shopping
- Travel

Students should be able to:

- describe experiences
- discuss preferences

- ask and answer questions
  - narrate events
- 

## Study Strategy

If you want to perform well in CSEC Spanish, focus on the following:

### Master everyday vocabulary

Focus on common verbs and daily-life words.

### Practice speaking regularly

Speaking improves both the oral exam and listening comprehension.

### Learn functional phrases

Examples:

- ¿Podría ayudarme?
- Me gustaría...
- Tengo que...

### Practice listening often

Watch Spanish videos or listen to short dialogues.

### Write frequently

Practice writing letters and dialogues within the exam word limits.