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national 5 spanish writing guide



The Course

In the National 5 Spanish course there are two components where your writing skills will be assessed – both in the exam and in your assignment.

Both of these pieces are marked out of 20; however, they will each be scaled down to 15 marks when contributing to your overall grade.

The Exam

The writing section of the exam is found in Paper 1, along with the reading. You are given 1 hour and 30 minutes to complete both elements of this paper, however there will be no warning of time to switch between the components – time keeping is key here.

At National 5 level you will be writing a response to a job application stimulus. Candidates are given six bullet point prompts to cover in their job application – four of these are predictable, the remaining two are more specific to the given context.

The piece of writing produced should be 120-150 words. When writing, it is often easiest for both the SQA markers and candidates themselves if the writing is split into paragraphs, with one covering each individual bullet point.

You will be allowed the use of a bilingual dictionary throughout this exam paper – use it!

The Bullet Points

The first four bullet points in any job application will cover the same areas, and they are presented in the following way:

- Personal details (name, age, where you live)
- School/college/education experience until now
- Skills/interests you have which make you right for the job
- Related work experience

Although it is easier to write truthfully for these bullet points, there is no guideline that stops you from adapting to specific contexts. This may be particularly useful when it comes to covering the 'related work experience' prompts.

The remaining two bullet points are unpredictable; however, they do tend to relate to the given context. The SQA tend to use similar ones between different years, as well as across the other modern language courses such as French or German.

Below we have compiled a list of many of the previous unpredictable bullet points (some of which are taken from other languages' papers):

- Why you would like to work in Spain
- When you can start the job
- The type of films you like
- What you do in your free time
- Your level of Spanish
- Why you want this job
- When you are available to work in the summer
- Your future career plans
- Languages spoken
- Reason for application
- Ask for information about the job
- Your experience of working with people
- Information about your hobbies
- The dates you would be available to work there
- The reasons why you would like to work with children
- An enquiry about what there is to do in the area on your days off
- Your previous links with Spain
- Games and activities that you could organise
- When you will be available for interview and work

The best way to prepare for the writing component of the exam is to do practice writings. The first four bullet points are always the same, so once you have good quality answers that have been proofread by a teacher, memorise them! Then set aside some time and try writing them out, alongside two of the unpredictable ones.

Although the unpredictable points listed above may have come up previously they do have a chance of being used again. With that being said, there is also the possibility of something new.

Useful Vocabulary

This is a list of some of the phrases that I found useful when doing writings at National 5 level.

Spanish	English
Viajé a...	I travelled to...
Mi nivel de español	My level of Spanish
Una experiencia inolvidable	An unforgettable experience
En mi tiempo libre...	In my free time...
Me gustaría...	I would like...
Estoy disponible para ser entrevistada...	I am available to be interviewed...
Quiero trabajar en España porque...	I want to work in Spain because...

Top Tips to Improve Your Writing

- Throughout the year, practice your dictionary skills. Although it may seem easier in class to use online translators, you won't have these in the exam, so you want to be familiar with how the dictionary works and be quick at using it to find exactly what you're looking for.
- Keep on top of learning new vocabulary as often as possible, especially phrases considered to be of National 5 level, but also including the basics.
- Practice your writing as often as possible – this is the best way to improve.
- Try to use a variety of tenses in your work, as this demonstrates to the SQA marker that your work is of a higher standard and may contribute to you receiving a better mark in your writing component.
- Be careful with accents – make sure you're using them appropriately and not missing any out!
- Try not to be too repetitive with phrases such as 'me gusta' – there are other ways to express interest and appreciation.
- If it fits with the stimulus, use the 'nosotros' form of verbs at least once. This helps to demonstrate your skills in verb conjugation, which again is a big factor in SQA marking.

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