

**SPANISH**

**IM 31**

***SYLLABUS***

**Spanish IM 31**

**Syllabus**

Aural-Oral (45 minutes) + Paper 1 (3 hours)

**1. AIMS**

The IM Spanish syllabus aims to expand on the candidates' knowledge and skills obtained at SEC level. It seeks to consolidate this knowledge and to extend it to include more advanced concepts which are dealt with in a broad manner. Most of these new concepts are included to provide a general and coherent view of the subject, but will not be treated with the same rigour and at the same depth as in the Advanced level of the subject.

More specifically it will seek to enable students to:

- develop listening and reading skills to understand authentic texts from common, everyday sources in a variety of registers;
- develop speaking and writing skills to communicate confidently, clearly, fluently and accurately in basic everyday situations on topics of common interest;
- acquire basic linguistic and intellectual abilities for realistic and worthwhile objectives through practical, communicative usage of the language;
- increase their interest in socio-linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge and skills to communicate appropriately and effectively given a particular situation;
- appreciate Spanish literature through the familiarization and appreciation of a literary work;
- stimulate, in an enjoyable way, candidates' interest in basic aspects of Spain and Spanish-speaking countries, particularly concerning contemporary society, cultural background and heritage;
- develop positive attitudes towards language learning, towards the speakers of different countries and towards other cultures and societies.

**2. ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES**

The examination is devised to assess candidates' linguistic competence in the four language skills as well as their socio-cultural knowledge and their literary appreciation skills. In the exam, candidates will be expected to:

- understand and respond to written and oral authentic texts taken from a variety of current, popular sources such as magazines, newspapers, reports, books, television and radio programs, etc.;
- communicate basically but effectively through spoken and written forms, by showing an adequate knowledge of lexical ranges and through good use of grammar and syntax;
- provide sufficient and appropriate information on set topics;
- present well-structured, logical and coherent ideas, facts, arguments, opinions and explanations through both written and oral forms;
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of aspects of Spanish and Spanish-American contemporary societies and cultures;
- analyze and critically appreciate the literary text set.

**3. SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT & EXAMINATION STRUCTURE**

The examination will consist of one written paper and an aural-oral test, carrying a total of 165 marks. The written paper will consist of 3 main sections and is 3 hours long. The listening session takes 30 minutes whilst the oral session takes approximately 15 minutes per candidate. All instructions are given in Spanish and candidates are to answer in Spanish. No type of book, text book or dictionary is allowed during any part of the examination.

PAPER	MAIN LANGUAGE SKILL TESTED	TASKS SET	MARKS ALLOTTED PER SKILL	% ALLOTTED PER SKILL
1	Writing	A) Long essay task	30	18%
	Reading	B) Reading comprehension & Language-use exercises	30	18%
	Language-use		15	9%
	Literary appreciation/ Intercultural awareness	C) Long essay on a set literary text or on a set cultural topic	30	18%
2	Listening	A) Listening comprehension	30	18%
	Speaking	B.1) Topic conversation B.2) Picture interpretation	30	18%
<b>TOTAL:</b>			<b>165</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Written Paper (3 hours, 105 marks)****A) Essay writing exercise (30 marks)**

The objective of this question is to test the candidates' command of basic written Spanish about common, everyday topics. A choice of 4 titles will be given, offering different writing styles: descriptive, narrative, argumentative and epistolary forms. Letter-writing titles may include: formal, informal and e-mail styles. All set topics will be of general interest, relating to experiences and events normally encountered in everyday life. Candidates are expected to write about 250-300 words on ONE topic of their choice, using adequate register and style. Candidates are expected to demonstrate their ability to describe, narrate, explain, present facts, argue, justify and evaluate, according to the topic chosen by them, in a logical and coherent manner, making use of correct grammar and syntax as well as a wide range of vocabulary and some idiomatic expressions. Of the 30 marks allotted, 20 are for the quality of the language and 10 for the content.

**B) Reading comprehension (45 marks)**

The objectives of this section are to test: the candidates' understanding of an authentic basic written text, their ability to express their understanding by answering specific questions in Spanish on the text and their ability to manipulate a wide range of language elements and structures found in the text. A contemporary text of 400-500 words, taken from authentic sources, will be given as a reading task. Two subsections will follow. Subsection B.1 will present open-ended questions to test the candidate's ability to get the gist of the text as well as to focus on particular facts and details of the same text. Subsection B.2 will present a variety of questioning styles to test language use in correlation with the text. The questions may vary and may include: gap-filling, word/phrase substitution and/or transformation, sentence completion, finding synonyms and/or antonyms. Throughout, candidates are expected to answer in full, to paraphrase, to reword their answers and to avoid copying chunks (a group of 4 consecutive words or more) directly from the text so as to demonstrate what they have really understood from the text. This section carries a total of 45 marks, where Subsection B.1 will carry 30 marks and Subsection B.2 will bear 15 marks. Each question's weighting may vary depending on the element/s it is intended to test.

**C) Literary appreciation or Intercultural Awareness (30 marks)**

A total of 8 questions will be set, six for Literary Appreciation and two for Intercultural Awareness. Candidates are expected to choose either Subsection C.1 dedicated to the literary component or Subsection C.2 dedicated to the intercultural component. In either case, candidates are expected to choose ONE question to answer in essay form of 200-250 words according to their theme of preference. A total of 30 marks is allotted to this question and of these 30 marks, 20 are allotted for content and 10 for language use.

**C.1) LITERATURE APPRECIATION**

The following 3 literary texts are set:

1. Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, *Rimas*.
2. Federico García Lorca, *La casa de Bernarda Alba*.
3. Isabel Allende, *La casa de los espíritus*

Note: Only original, non-abridged and non-adapted versions are acceptable at this level.

Two literary essay questions will be given for each set text, totalling 6 questions. If candidates opt for the Literature section, they are expected to choose ONE question for ONE set text and to write a literary essay of 200-250 words in Spanish. Candidates are expected to write a literary interpretation and appreciation, reflecting knowledge of the text, revealing awareness of how the author conveys the message of the work, and showing some background knowledge of the author and of the literary period. Candidates are expected to write in a logical and coherent manner, making good use of vocabulary, grammar and syntax.

**C.2) INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS**

Intercultural awareness and knowledge should be developed in both formal culture and deep culture. Formal culture, also referred to as "culture with a capital C", includes the humanistic manifestations and contributions of a culture: art; music; literature; architecture; technology; politics, whilst deep culture, or "culture with a small c" and "culture with a k", focuses on the behavioural patterns or lifestyles of the people: when and what they eat; how they make a living; the attitudes they express towards friends and members of their families; which expressions they use to show approval or disapproval, etc. It is also recommended to practise language through culture as well as vice versa, thus developing the language skills, particularly those of reading and listening hand in hand with explicit and implicit intercultural awareness.

The following 7 intercultural topics are set:

1. Información general, geográfica, lingüística y estadística sobre España.
2. Las variedades geográficas del idioma español en el mundo.
3. Las tres grandes civilizaciones precolombinas: Mayas, Aztecas e Incas.
4. Los problemas actuales y los papeles en la sociedad española de los jóvenes, los hombres, las mujeres, los ancianos y la familia.
5. Las mentalidades en la sociedad española: la conciencia ecológica, la orientación sexual, las creencias religiosas y el multiculturalismo; ligadas con las costumbres y ritos sociales.
6. El lado artístico de la sociedad española: las bellas artes y las artes escénicas incluyendo el séptimo arte del cine, la moda y el arte culinaria.
7. El lado artístico de las sociedades hispanoamericanas: las bellas artes y las artes escénicas incluyendo el séptimo arte del cine, la moda y el arte culinaria.

The following bibliography is suggested as reference for the afore-mentioned topics:

- *Esp@ña, Manual de civilización* de Sebastián Quesada Marco, Editorial Edelsa Español Lengua Extranjera (ISBN: 978-84-7711-619-6)

(Note: The afore-mentioned text should be referred to as a starting point to trigger further discussions in class and/or further individual research about certain issues arising in the said text. It is also recommended to develop language skills, particularly those of reading and listening.)

In this intercultural section, a choice of two general cultural questions will be given to examine the candidate's knowledge on the afore-listed set of 7 topics. If the candidate opts for the Intercultural section, s/he is expected to choose ONE question and answer it by writing an essay of 200-250 words in Spanish, showing sound intercultural knowledge and good use of vocabulary, grammar and syntax.

### **Aural-Oral (45 min, 60 marks)**

#### **A) Listening Session - Listening comprehension (30 min, 30 marks)**

The objective of this question is to test the candidates' understanding of basic spoken Spanish about common, everyday themes. A contemporary text of about 350 words, taken from authentic sources, will be given as a listening task. A variety of questions will be set to test the candidate's ability to get the gist of the text as well as to focus on particular facts and details of the same text. The questions will be one or more of the following types: true/false selection including correction of false statements, gap-filling, sentence completion and open-ended questions.

The listening task will be carried out in this procedure:

- i. Three minutes will be given to the candidate, prior to the first reading, to read the questions and mentally prepare him/herself for the audition, thus employing the predicting listening technique;
- ii. The text will then be read aloud once at a normal pace and with as close a pronunciation as possible to that of a native speaker, taking approximately not more than six minutes;
- iii. Candidate will be allowed seven minutes to re-read the questions and answer;
- iv. The examiner will read again the text for the second and last time, at the same pace and fluency as the first reading for not more than six minutes;
- v. Candidate will be allowed eight minutes to check and finalize his/her answers.

The whole listening exercise is to be carried out in 30 minutes. This task carries a total of 30 marks and each question's weighting may vary depending on the element/s it is intended to test.

#### **B) Oral session (15 min, 30 marks)**

The main objective of this session is to test the candidates' speaking skills. The candidate is given 15 minutes, prior to entering the examination room, to go through the oral examination paper so that s/he may be mentally and psychologically prepared for the forthcoming examination session.

##### **B.1) Topic conversation (5 min, 10 marks)**

The objective of this section is to test the candidates' ability to discuss and interact freely with the examiner on a common, everyday topic in a narrative, descriptive or argumentative style of speech. The candidate is given 3 topics to choose one as a subject of conversation between him/her and the examiner. All set topics will be of general interest, relating to experiences and events normally encountered in everyday life. Once in the examination room, the candidate should do a short verbal presentation on the subject chosen for about 5 minutes. The candidate should be able to present relevant facts, express opinions and hypotheses and answer any consequent questions which the examiner might ask about the topic. The examiner may encourage the candidate to contribute further to the conversation and may prompt the candidate when s/he has some difficulty in continuing. In such instances, the examiner would ask open-ended questions (such as

'tell me more about...', 'what do you think of...?', 'why...?', 'how...?'), rather than use closed-ended questions which may be answered with a simple 'yes/no'. Spontaneous corrections are accepted. This task is not meant to test the candidate's general knowledge on the topic chosen but his/her ability to carry on a fluent, meaningful conversation in good, correct Spanish. Thus, the total of 10 marks will be distributed as follows: 2 marks for content, 4 marks for fluency, pronunciation and intonation, and 4 marks for language use.

### **B.2) Picture interpretation (10 min, 20 marks)**

The objective of this section is to test the candidates' ability to describe a set scene and use it as a starting point to expand one's ideas, feelings and opinions freely in a creative and imaginative way. The candidate will be given a photo, a drawing, a painting or a computer-generated image to observe and describe as well as to interpret freely. The image will be an A4 copy of the original. The candidate may follow the prompting questions provided in the paper to guide him/her in his/her description and interpretation. The candidate is expected to sustain one's arguments logically by what is being observed and to answer any consequent questions which the examiner might ask about it. The examiner may encourage the candidate to contribute further to the conversation and may prompt the candidate when s/he has some difficulty in continuing. In such instances, the examiner would ask open-ended questions (such as 'tell me more about...', 'what do you think of...?', 'why...?', 'how...?'), rather than use closed-ended questions which may be answered by a simple 'yes/no'. This task is meant to test the candidate's ability to carry on a fluent, meaningful description and interpretation in good, correct Spanish. Spontaneous corrections are accepted. The total of 20 marks will be distributed as follows: 7 marks for content, 6 marks for fluency, pronunciation and intonation, and 7 marks for language use.

## **4. SUBJECT CONTENT**

Candidates are expected to have a basic knowledge of modern idiomatic Castilian Spanish and to express themselves correctly and adequately in speaking and writing. Knowledge of the following language items is essential:

1. nouns (common vs proper, concrete vs abstract, individual vs collective, countable vs non-countable);
2. adjectives, comparatives and superlatives;
3. determiners and pronouns (definite and indefinite articles, personal pronouns, relatives, possessives, demonstratives, numerals, indefinites, relatives, interrogatives, exclamatives);
4. number and gender agreement;
5. verb conjugation and use (indicative, gerund, participle, all forms of indicative and subjunctive, conditional, imperative, compound forms, passive voice);
6. adverbs, conjunctions, connectors and prepositions;
7. common idioms and idiomatic expressions;
8. simple and complex syntactical structures (word order, main clauses and subordinate clauses, direct and indirect speech).

The examination will be devised to test the four language skills, the ability to use language correctly and communicatively according to the given situation and to test the knowledge on the literary or cultural set themes. All textual material used in the examinations will be drawn from the topic areas listed below, with possible references to Malta, Spain and/or any other Spanish-speaking country:

- The individual identity
- The physical and emotional dimensions of the individual
- Human relationships: family, friends, neighbours, generation gaps, adolescence...
- Patterns of daily life and home environment
- Urban and rural life
- Pollution, conservation and the natural environment
- Diet and nutrition
- Education
- Work, employment and unemployment
- Leisure time, recreational activities, celebrations and festivities
- Information and the mass media
- Housing and accommodation, domestic objects and activities
- Social services and establishments
- Health, hygiene and fitness
- Travel, tourism, lodging and means of transport
- Shopping, economy and industry
- Scientific advances and technological innovation
- Government, politics, law and order, war and peace

**IM Syllabus (2026) Spanish**

- Cultural life, heritage and the arts
- Religion, philosophy and beliefs
- Geography, nature, environment and the developing world
- Contemporary aspects of Spain and Spanish-speaking countries

For further details and examples of all the afore-mentioned items regarding the subject content, the following bibliography is suggested as reference:

- *Plan Curricular del Instituto Cervantes, Niveles de referencia para el español de VV.AA.*, Instituto Cervantes, Biblioteca Nueva, 2006 (ISBN: 84-9742-615-0) which can also be found available online on: [http://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca\\_ele/plan\\_curricular/default.htm](http://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca_ele/plan_curricular/default.htm)