

GCSE Spanish Speaking Survival Kit

Speak Confidently. Sound Grade 9. Score Higher.

GCSE Spanish (AQA • Edexcel • IGCSE 2026)

Flavia's Language Academia

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Welcome 🖐️

If speaking Spanish makes you nervous... you're not alone.

Most students struggle with the same challenges during their speaking exams:

- Forgetting essential vocabulary mid-sentence
- Panicking when the examiner asks unexpected questions
- Giving short, basic answers that miss marks
- Repeating "porque" without extending ideas
- Losing easy marks through lack of structure

But here's the truth:

You don't need more vocabulary. You need better STRUCTURE.

This kit gives you the exact phrases, templates and answers I teach my Grade 8–9 students every week. These are proven techniques that work consistently in real exam conditions.

Use it before every practice and you'll sound instantly more confident, organised, and natural.

Let's go 🧡

– Flavia

Flavia's Language Academia

How to Use This Kit (Important)

01

Learn 5 sentence starters

Don't try to memorise everything at once. Focus on five powerful sentence starters that you can use across different topics. Quality over quantity builds confidence.

02

Practise aloud (not silently)

Your mouth needs muscle memory. Silent reading doesn't prepare you for actual speaking. Say the phrases out loud, even if you're alone. Record yourself and listen back.

03

Use the answer templates

Follow the structures provided. They're designed to hit every assessment criterion. Templates give you confidence when your mind goes blank under pressure.

04

Extend your answers

Never give one-sentence responses. Add opinions, reasons, or examples. Examiners are looking for developed ideas, not just basic comprehension.

05

Add past or future tenses

This instantly boosts your grade. Even one sentence in a different time frame shows linguistic range. It's easier than you think once you have the templates.

Speaking is NOT memorising paragraphs.

It's building answers like LEGO – piece by piece, with confidence and flexibility.

GCSE Speaking Exam Structure

Understanding the exam format removes anxiety. Both Foundation and Higher tiers follow the same basic structure, though Higher tier questions require more sophisticated responses.



Photo Card

You'll describe and discuss a photograph, answering questions about what you see and giving opinions. Preparation time is given.



Role Play

A transactional conversation (booking tickets, ordering food, etc.) where you complete tasks using prepared prompts.



General Conversation

Discussion on two topics from the specification. This is your chance to showcase vocabulary, opinions, and different tenses.

You are marked on:

- **Communication:** How well you convey meaning
- **Range of language:** Vocabulary and structures
- **Accuracy:** Grammar and pronunciation
- **Fluency & spontaneity:** Natural flow

Examiners LOVE:

- Longer, developed answers
- Clear opinions with justification
- Detailed reasons and examples
- Variety of tenses (past, present, future)

They DON'T care about perfection.
Communication beats accuracy.

Grade 9 Sentence Starters: Opinions

Strong opinion phrases immediately signal high-level Spanish. These expressions show sophistication and help you avoid repetitive structures like "me gusta" or "pienso que".

Desde mi punto de vista...

From my point of view...

More sophisticated than "pienso que". Shows you can express personal perspectives with maturity.

En mi opinión...

In my opinion...

Classic and reliable. Use at the start of longer answers to establish your viewpoint clearly.

Considero que...

I consider that...

University-level vocabulary. Instantly elevates your response and shows linguistic range.

Me parece que...

It seems to me that...

Subtle and natural. Perfect for giving measured opinions without sounding too forceful.

Personalmente, creo que...

Personally, I believe that...

Combines personal perspective with conviction. Great for conversation questions.

A mi modo de ver...

The way I see it...

Idiomatic and impressive. Shows cultural awareness beyond textbook Spanish.

Top Tip: Practise saying these out loud until they feel natural. The examiner will notice the difference immediately.

Grade 9 Sentence Starters: Reasons & Connectors

Extended answers need sophisticated connectors. These phrases help you build complex sentences that demonstrate grammatical range and natural flow.

Giving Reasons

Ya que... – *Since...*

More formal than "porque". Shows linguistic maturity.

Puesto que... – *Given that...*

Academic tone. Perfect for Higher tier responses.

Dado que... – *Given that...*

Synonymous with puesto que. Adds variety.

Debido a que... – *Due to the fact that...*

Formal and impressive. Use in conversation.

Connectors

Sin embargo... – *However...*

Replaces "pero". Contrasts ideas sophisticatedly.

No obstante... – *Nevertheless...*

Advanced alternative to sin embargo.

Además... – *Furthermore...*

Adds information naturally and fluently.

Por otro lado... – *On the other hand...*

Introduces contrasting viewpoints elegantly.

These connectors transform short answers into flowing, impressive responses that hit multiple assessment criteria.

Grade 9 Time Phrases & High-Grade Verbs

Time expressions and varied verb structures are essential for accessing top grades. They demonstrate your ability to manipulate language across different contexts.



Past Time Phrases

- **Cuando era pequeño/a...** – When I was young...
- **El año pasado...** – Last year...
- **Hace dos semanas...** – Two weeks ago...
- **Recientemente...** – Recently...
- **En el pasado...** – In the past...



Present Structures

- **Suelo + infinitive...** – I usually...
- **Actualmente...** – Currently...
- **Hoy en día...** – Nowadays...
- **Normalmente...** – Normally...
- **En este momento...** – Right now...



Future Time Phrases

- **En el futuro...** – In the future...
- **Me gustaría + infinitive...** – I would like to...
- **Voy a + infinitive...** – I'm going to...
- **Espero + infinitive...** – I hope to...
- **Dentro de cinco años...** – In five years...

High-Grade Verb Structures



Si tuviera más tiempo...

If I had more time...
(Conditional – very impressive)



Me encantaría...

I would love... (Shows enthusiasm)



Lo que más me gusta es...

What I like most is...
(Complex structure)

Upgrade Your Spanish

Simple vocabulary swaps instantly elevate your speaking level. These alternatives show examiners you're aiming for top grades.

Stop Saying This ❌	Say This Instead ✅	Why It Matters
porque	ya que / puesto que	More sophisticated reasoning
me gusta	me encanta / me apasiona	Shows stronger emotion and range
muy	bastante / sumamente	Avoids repetitive intensifiers
pero	sin embargo / no obstante	Academic-level connectors
pienso	considero / creo	Demonstrates vocabulary depth
bueno	excelente / fenomenal	More precise and expressive
malo	pésimo / terrible	Stronger, more natural vocabulary
mucho	un montón / muchísimo	Idiomatic and colloquial

Instant Level Up: Make these swaps automatic in practice, and they'll flow naturally in your exam. Parents and teachers love seeing this clear progression framework.

The 5-Step Photo Card Formula

Photo cards feel unpredictable, but they follow a pattern. Use this five-step structure for every photo card question to ensure comprehensive, high-scoring answers.



1. Describe

Start with what you see. Use present tense and specific vocabulary.

Example: *En la foto veo a una familia que está comiendo en un restaurante.*



2. Opinion

Give your personal viewpoint using sophisticated opinion phrases.

Example: *Desde mi punto de vista, parece una situación muy agradable.*



3. Reason

Justify your opinion with "ya que" or "puesto que" rather than "porque".

Example: *Ya que comer juntos fortalece las relaciones familiares.*



4. Extra Detail

Add a personal example or elaboration to extend the answer.

Example: *En mi familia, solemos comer juntos los domingos.*



5. Past/Future

Include a different tense to demonstrate range and boost your grade.

Example: *El mes pasado fuimos a un restaurante italiano y fue fantástico.*

Complete Template

En la foto veo... [description]

Desde mi punto de vista... [opinion] **ya que...** [reason]

En mi caso... [extra detail]

El año pasado / En el futuro... [different tense]

Photo Card Practice 1

Apply the five-step formula to build a complete answer. Write your response in the spaces provided, ensuring you include all five elements.

Practice Photo Topic: A Family at the Beach

1

Description

What do you see in the photo? Use present tense verbs.

2

Opinion

What do you think? Use: Desde mi punto de vista... / Me parece que...

3

Reason

Why? Use: ya que... / puesto que...

4

Extra Detail

Add a personal example or elaboration.

5

Past or Future

Include a sentence in a different tense.

Top Tip: Read your answer aloud. Does it flow naturally? Time yourself – aim for 45-60 seconds of speaking.

Photo Card Practice 2

Repeat the process with a different topic to build confidence and flexibility. The more you practise this structure, the more automatic it becomes.

Practice Photo Topic: Students in a Classroom

1	Description What's happening in the photo? Be specific with details.
2	Opinion Express your viewpoint clearly and confidently.
3	Reason Justify with sophisticated connectors.
4	Extra Detail Extend with relevant personal information.
5	Past or Future Demonstrate tense variety for higher marks.

Challenge: Now try creating answers for: a sports match, a restaurant scene, or a technology shop. The formula works for ANY photo.

Role Play Survival Scripts

Role plays test transactional language. These essential phrases cover the most common scenarios and give you confidence in unpredictable situations.

Restaurant / Café

- **Quisiera reservar una mesa para cuatro personas** – I'd like to book a table for four
- **¿Qué me recomienda?** – What do you recommend?
- **Para mí, el pollo, por favor** – Chicken for me, please
- **¿Tienen opciones vegetarianas?** – Do you have vegetarian options?
- **La cuenta, por favor** – The bill, please

Shopping

- **¿Cuánto cuesta?** – How much does it cost?
- **¿Tiene esto en azul?** – Do you have this in blue?
- **Me gustaría probármelo** – I'd like to try it on
- **Es demasiado caro** – It's too expensive
- **Me lo llevo** – I'll take it

Doctor / Pharmacy

- **Me duele la cabeza** – My head hurts
- **Necesito una cita** – I need an appointment
- **¿Tiene algo para el dolor de estómago?** – Do you have something for stomach pain?
- **Soy alérgico/a a...** – I'm allergic to...
- **¿Cuántas pastillas debo tomar?** – How many tablets should I take?

Transport / Travel

- **Un billete de ida y vuelta a Madrid** – A return ticket to Madrid
- **¿A qué hora sale el próximo tren?** – What time does the next train leave?
- **¿De qué andén sale?** – Which platform does it leave from?
- **He perdido mi maleta** – I've lost my suitcase
- **¿Cuánto tarda el viaje?** – How long does the journey take?

Role Play Quick Responses

These short, essential phrases help you respond naturally in role plays. Memorise these – they're lifesavers when you need to buy thinking time or respond to unexpected prompts.

Agreement & Confirmation

- **Claro**

Of course / Sure

- **Por supuesto**

Certainly / Of course

- **Vale / De acuerdo**

OK / Agreed

- **Perfecto**

Perfect / Great

- **Estupendo**

Wonderful / Excellent

Uncertainty & Preferences

- **Depende**

It depends

- **No estoy seguro/a**

I'm not sure

- **No tengo dinero**

I don't have money

- **Prefiero...**

I prefer...

- **Me da igual**

I don't mind / It's all the same to me

Why These Matter: Short responses show natural communication skills. They prove you can think on your feet, which examiners value highly. Silence loses marks – these phrases keep the conversation flowing.

Conversation Topics Cheat Sheet

These eight themes form the foundation of every GCSE Spanish conversation. You must prepare answers for all of them. Organised preparation removes anxiety and builds confidence.



Family & Relationships

Describe family members, relationships, what you do together. Include opinions on family importance.



Free Time & Hobbies

Sports, music, social media, reading. Say what you do, when, with whom, and why you enjoy it.



School & Studies

Subjects, teachers, school day, uniform, rules. Compare past and present, discuss future plans.



Holidays & Travel

Past holidays, ideal holiday, accommodation, activities. Include past tense descriptions.



Technology

Social media, phones, internet use. Discuss advantages, disadvantages, and personal habits.



Health & Lifestyle

Diet, exercise, sleep, stress. Give advice using "deberías" or "es importante".



Environment

Pollution, recycling, climate change. Discuss problems and solutions with opinion phrases.



Future Plans

Career ambitions, university, ideal job. Use future and conditional tenses.

Top students prepare a 90-second answer for each topic, including past, present, and future tenses plus sophisticated vocabulary.

Model Grade 9 Answers: Free Time & School

These model answers demonstrate the level of sophistication needed for top grades. Notice the variety of tenses, connectors, and vocabulary range.

¿Qué haces en tu tiempo libre?

What do you do in your free time?

En mi tiempo libre, me encanta tocar la guitarra ya que me ayuda a relajarme después de un día estresante en el colegio. Suelo practicar cada tarde durante una hora, y además, formo parte de una banda con mis amigos. Cuando era más joven, prefería los videojuegos, sin embargo, ahora considero que la música es más creativa. En el futuro, me gustaría aprender a tocar el piano también porque me parece un instrumento fascinante.

¿Cuál es tu asignatura favorita y por qué?

What's your favourite subject and why?

Desde mi punto de vista, la biología es la asignatura más interesante puesto que me apasiona aprender cómo funciona el cuerpo humano. Mi profesora es excelente y sus clases son siempre dinámicas y estimulantes. Aunque las matemáticas me resultan bastante difíciles, reconozco que son importantes para mi futuro. El año pasado, hicimos una excursión al laboratorio de una universidad y fue una experiencia inolvidable. Espero estudiar medicina en la universidad dentro de cinco años.

What Makes These Grade 9: Notice the sophisticated opinion starters, varied connectors (ya que, puesto que, sin embargo), multiple tenses (present, imperfect, future), and extended reasoning. Each answer is 60–80 words – perfect length.

Model Grade 9 Answers: Holidays & Technology

Describe tus vacaciones ideales

Describe your ideal holiday

Mis vacaciones ideales serían un viaje a Costa Rica puesto que me encantaría explorar la selva tropical y ver animales exóticos en su hábitat natural. Me gustaría alojarme en un hotel ecológico cerca de la playa, ya que la sostenibilidad es sumamente importante para mí. Durante el día, haría senderismo y snorkel, y por las tardes, probaría la comida típica costarricense. Además, me encantaría aprender más sobre la cultura local. Si tuviera más dinero, pasaría un mes entero allí explorando diferentes regiones del país.

¿Cuáles son las ventajas y desventajas de la tecnología?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of technology?

En mi opinión, la tecnología tiene tanto ventajas como desventajas. Por un lado, nos permite comunicarnos instantáneamente con personas de todo el mundo, lo cual es fantástico. Además, facilita el acceso a la información para nuestros estudios. Sin embargo, considero que pasamos demasiado tiempo mirando pantallas, lo que puede afectar negativamente nuestra salud mental. Personalmente, intento limitar mi uso del móvil a dos horas diarias. En el futuro, creo que será esencial encontrar un equilibrio saludable entre el mundo digital y el mundo real.

Model Grade 9 Answers: Health, Environment & Future

¿Qué haces para mantenerte sano/a?

Para mantenerme sano, intento comer de forma equilibrada y hacer ejercicio regularmente. Suelo ir al gimnasio tres veces por semana, además de caminar al colegio cada día. También es importante dormir ocho horas cada noche, aunque a veces me resulta difícil debido a la cantidad de deberes. En el pasado, comía mucha comida basura, pero ahora prefiero frutas y verduras frescas. Considero que la salud mental es igualmente importante, por eso dedico tiempo a relajarme con mis amigos y familia.

¿Qué podemos hacer para proteger el medio ambiente?

Desde mi punto de vista, todos debemos contribuir a la protección del medio ambiente ya que es responsabilidad de nuestra generación. En mi casa, reciclamos todo lo posible y utilizamos bolsas reutilizables para hacer las compras. Además, intento caminar o usar el transporte público en vez del coche. El cambio climático es un problema grave que requiere acción inmediata. Si tuviéramos más conciencia ecológica, podríamos reducir significativamente nuestra huella de carbono. En el futuro, espero trabajar en energías renovables para ayudar al planeta.

¿Qué planes tienes para el futuro?

En el futuro, me gustaría estudiar arquitectura en la universidad puesto que me apasiona el diseño de edificios sostenibles y modernos. Espero aprobar todos mis exámenes con notas excelentes para poder acceder a una buena universidad. Después de graduarme, mi sueño sería trabajar en proyectos internacionales, especialmente en países en desarrollo donde se necesita infraestructura. Además, me encantaría viajar por el mundo para inspirarme en diferentes estilos arquitectónicos. Si todo va bien, dentro de diez años habré establecido mi propia firma de arquitectura.

Panic Fillers: What to Say When Your Brain Goes Blank

Even the best speakers need thinking time. These natural fillers keep you speaking whilst you gather your thoughts. Examiners prefer fillers to awkward silence.

Thinking Time Phrases

- **Pues...**
Well... / So...
- **A ver...**
Let's see...
- **Déjame pensar...**
Let me think...
- **Es una buena pregunta...**
That's a good question...
- **Mmm... bueno...**
Mmm... well...
- **En realidad...**
Actually... / In reality...

When to Use Them

- **Unexpected questions:** Buy yourself 2-3 seconds to formulate a good answer
- **Complex topics:** Show you're thinking carefully before responding
- **Transitions:** Bridge between ideas smoothly
- **Natural pauses:** Native speakers use these constantly

Top Tip: Fillers sound natural and thoughtful. Complete silence loses marks and creates awkward tension. These phrases demonstrate spontaneity – a key assessment criterion.

Practice Exercise

Record yourself answering: "¿Prefieres vivir en la ciudad o en el campo?" Start with "Pues... es una buena pregunta..." then build your answer using the five-step structure. Listen back – does it sound natural?

You're Ready

You now have everything you need to walk into your speaking exam with confidence. You've learned sophisticated structures, varied vocabulary, and practical strategies that work.

19

Pages of exam-ready
content

50+

Grade 9 phrases and
templates

8

Essential conversation
topics

Remember: Speaking isn't about memorising paragraphs. It's about building answers confidently using the structures and phrases you've practised. You've got this.

If this kit helped you feel more confident...

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