

## TOP TIPS FOR A LEVEL SPANISH – Mind Blank

### (in Spanish: quedarse en blanco)

Regardless of how well prepared you are, when you're nervous in an oral exam it's very easy to lose your train of thought or have a mind blank! This may seem stressful but it doesn't have to hold you back – here is a list of ways to overcome a mind blank during your oral exam!

#### If you don't understand the question...

Admit it! It's better to admit it and then try to find a way of understanding rather than ramble about something meaningless.

If you do ramble, try to get back on track. The examiner should be able to prompt you...

*I've lost the thread of the conversation - He perdido el hilo de la conversación*

*I've forgotten, what I wanted to say - Se me ha olvidado lo que iba a decir*

Listen to the question a second time...

*I'm sorry, I don't understand/could you repeat the question/speak slower? - Perdona, no he entendido/¿podría repetir la pregunta?/¿podría hablar más despacio?*

If necessary, ask the examiner to reword the question or if there is just one word you do not understand ask for a synonym. If it is the whole question:

*I am sorry, I don't understand, could you reword -rephrase the question? - Lo siento, no he entendido bien, ¿podría reformular la pregunta?*

If it is just one word:

*I am sorry. I don't understand the word. Could you use another word? - Lo siento, no entiendo esta palabra. ¿Me puede decir un sinónimo?*

If you're unsure - double check...

*To confirm, you'd like me to...?/Could I ask a question? - Para comprobarlo, quiere que yo + subj. /¿Puedo hacerle una pregunta?*

If you only understand part of a question, work it to your advantage: sum up the bit you have understood and ask for clarification for the bit you haven't....

*I did not get all of that, but I think you would like me to... No he entendido todo, pero creo que quiere que yo + subj.*

## If you know nothing/can't think of anything...

Be honest, but admit it in a way that allows you to move on!

*Sorry I can't answer/Sorry I don't know the answer... - Lo siento, no sé responder/Lo siento, no sé la respuesta...*

*I haven't read enough about this subject/I don't feel well enough informed... - No he leído mucho sobre este tema/ No me siento lo suficientemente informado.*

*It's slipped my mind, I've forgotten... - Lo he olvidado ...  
I need a bit of time to think... necesito un poco de tiempo para pensar.*

*Could we come back to this question later? - ¿Podríamos volver a esta pregunta más tarde?*

Give it a go -

*I'm not sure, but if I had to guess I'd say/I would imagine that... - No estoy seguro (segura), pero yo diría que/Me imagino que...*

*I don't know off the top of my head but... - No me viene ahora mismo...*

If you forgot dates/facts/names, try to answer without them

*I'm not sure/can't remember the exact date... but... No estoy seguro (segura)/no me acuerdo de la fecha exacta... pero...*

You have limited knowledge/details for a question or you've already said everything you know

*As I said before... - Como dije antes...*

*I could also add that... - Podría añadir que...*

*I must admit this isn't my strong point/has never been clear to me, but... - Tengo que admitir que no es mi punto fuerte/que nunca lo he tenido claro, pero...*

If you feel like you need to give more information than was asked - expand your answer...

*In order to answer this I need to explain... - Para poder contestar a esto antes tengo que explicar...*

*Before I talk about this I'd like to talk about.../I'd also like to mention... - Antes de hablar sobre esto, me gustaría comentar algo sobre.../Me gustaría mencionar también...*

Don't let a mind blank knock your confidence - take a deep breath, try not to panic, and try to overcome it. As long as you are prepared for the exam there's no reason not to be confident!

Always try to say something. Some exam boards mark you down for not using the full time so you really need to be speaking!

It's okay to admit you don't know/don't understand and ask for help, as shown in the examples 😊

NOTE: It is important to remember that the content of the speaking exam varies between exam boards. Make sure you do your research in order to know exactly what the exam entails, and what is expected of you. For example, some exam boards may be strict about moving on from a question, so be sure to discuss mind blank techniques with your teacher to find ones that suit you and your exam style!