

# SPANISH

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**Paper 9719/01**  
**Speaking**

## **Key messages**

For candidates:

- Candidates' own interests should play a part in the choice of the subject for the presentation. Clear reference should be made to Hispanic culture or society.
- It is important to structure the presentation to fit into the allowed time, and to express not only facts, but ideas and opinions.
- Focus on the questions asked and be sure to answer what is asked.
- Remember to ask the Examiner questions in both conversation sections

For centres:

- The test consists of three distinct sections: **(i)** Initial presentation (maximum 3½ minutes); **(ii)** Topic Conversation (7 – 8 minutes) on issues arising from the Presentation; **(iii)** General Conversation (8 – 9 minutes) on themes completely different from those raised in the Topic Conversation.
- Each section should be clearly identified on the recordings. It is important that the prescribed timings are observed.
- Candidates should be reminded if necessary to ask the Examiner questions in both conversation sections and be prompted to do so, if necessary. The Examiner's replies to such questions should be concise – it is the candidate and not the Examiner who is being marked.
- Interaction with the Examiner is an important criterion for both conversation sections.

## **General comments**

There was the usual wide range of performance, with some very good candidates, also those for whom considerable prompting was needed.

The quality of the recordings was generally good, though some were adversely affected by room acoustics or nearby noise. Although the microphone should be placed near the candidate, please ensure that voices of both candidate and Examiner can be heard. Centres are reminded that the recording must not be paused once the test has started.

The range of samples generally followed correct procedure, with a range from top to bottom. Representatives of the whole range should be submitted. Some centres supplied recordings of all the candidates entered. The working mark sheets for all the candidates must be submitted, not just those of the candidates in the sample. A few centres failed to do this initially, causing delay to the moderation process.

While most centres carried out the necessary administration efficiently, a few centres still had a somewhat cavalier approach to the timings, either of the separate sections, or overall, or both. It is in all candidates' interests that those conducting the tests observe the full timings as prescribed to allow access to the full range of marks. It should be noted, however, that candidates cannot be awarded credit for performance in extra time.

Although most Teacher/examiners announced the start of each section clearly, in some cases it was not clear when the topic conversation ended and the general conversation started: it is important that Teachers/examiners clearly announce the start of each section. It is also the responsibility of the Teacher/examiner to announce clearly the name and candidate number at the start of each test.

There was much evidence of sympathetic examining, especially with weaker candidates and those who were clearly nervous. Teacher/examiners were generally supportive and encouraged candidates to remain calm and focused on the task.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Part 1: Topic Presentation**

Guidance on topic areas for the Presentation and discussion may be found in the syllabus. Topics must relate clearly to aspects of Hispanic life or culture and it is important that candidates make this relevance explicit in their Presentation. Centres are reminded that the content mark out of ten must be halved where there was no specific reference to a Spanish-speaking country or context. It was also helpful when candidates stated clearly at the outset what their topic was.

Presentations should be a formal, concise and coherent introduction to the subject that will be discussed in the following Topic Conversation. It is important to show evidence of preparation, organisation and relevant factual knowledge. Candidates who spoke in a casual or disjointed manner, or who made little attempt to engage the Examiner lost credit, as pronunciation, intonation and quality of delivery are assessed.

The best presentations showed evidence of careful preparation and organisation. These not only offered statistics and other information, but also included a candidate's own reactions and analysis; weaker presentations were characterised by being limited to a random list of items, with no discernible central theme or argument. Most candidates made good effort to engage the listener: regardless of ability, the most engaging topics were the ones in which candidates clearly had their own interest.

#### **Part 2: Topic Conversation**

Most candidates responded well in the topic conversation. Many were able to give thoughtful and extended responses and maintain a discussion, though weaker candidates relied heavily on Teachers/examiners to take the lead. A few candidates were permitted to treat this section as a continuation of the Presentation, with little intervention by the Examiner, which limited their mark for comprehension/fluency.

Most candidates had a sufficient range of vocabulary and structures at their disposal, which were used accurately and idiomatically. Most candidates remembered to ask questions of the Examiners either in the natural course of conversation or, in some cases, after prompting, although a few asked only one question. Centres are reminded that candidates must actually ask the Examiner questions to gain credit for 'seeking information and opinions'; it is not sufficient for the Teacher/examiner to volunteer such information.

#### **Part 3: General Conversation**

The start of the section should be clearly announced. There were tests where no clear distinction was made between the two conversation sections. The General Conversation must be treated as a separate section from the Topic Conversation and must not be a continuation of the candidate's chosen topic. Teachers/examiners should not return to the same issues as in the Topic Conversation.

Although there are no prescribed areas for the General Conversation, topics should be at an appropriate level, both in content and in linguistic complexity. Common areas included current events, health, education, crime, the arts, family, sport, the environment, the economy, plans and aspirations. In some centres, the conversation did not develop to the required depth for this examination and Teacher/examiners are again reminded to allow candidates the opportunity to perform at their highest level.

The range and style of questioning should encourage candidates to show competence in structures and vocabulary at a suitably advanced level. As in the Topic Conversation, candidates should ask the Examiner questions to gain credit for 'seeking information and opinions'. Such questions should arise naturally in the discussion and, again, it is not sufficient for the teacher to state an opinion without actually being asked.

#### **Pronunciation and intonation**

Pronunciation was generally good and there were some examples of very good pronunciation and authentic intonation, though both could suffer if candidates recited on auto-pilot during the Presentation.

# SPANISH

Paper 9719/21  
Reading and Writing 21

## Key messages

- **Question 1:** seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question. Candidates should take care not to omit words or to include extra words.
- **Question 2:** rewrite the phrases to include the word(s) in brackets. A grammatical manipulation will be required, and care should be taken to ensure that the answer would fit back into the original text, retaining the same meaning.
- **Questions 3 and 4:** comprehension of texts. Candidates should attempt to answer in their own words. Direct copying of five or more words from the text will usually invalidate an answer.
- **Question 5(a):** summary of relevant details from both texts in answer to the question set. Introduction, conclusions and vague generalisations are not required. Specific, relevant details attract marks.
- **Question 5(b):** personal response. Candidates should give a point of view and, if possible, offer ideas which have not appeared in the texts.
- **Language:** when preparing for the exam, make sure to revise the basic agreements, tenses and verb endings.

## General comments

This was the final June appearance of the examination in this format. It provided an appropriate challenge, and the spread of marks awarded reflected the varying levels of ability of candidates. Most scripts were well presented, and response to the two texts concerning shared living and working facilities was pleasing, with comprehension often clearly demonstrated. There appeared to be little evidence of difficulty with time management.

Most candidates attempted all questions and appeared to be aware that they should not copy more than four consecutive words of text in their answers to the comprehension questions. It was pleasing to note skilled attempts at paraphrase. On occasions, good candidates, who apparently had clearly understood the texts, did not pick up all the marks available when they answered too generally and omitted relevant details. Candidates should note the marks allocated to each question, as this is a good indication of the number of details being sought.

Some candidates still exceeded the 140 word limit in **Question 5**, thus reducing the number of marks they could score in **5(b)**. Summaries in **5(a)** which focused on relevant specific details scored many more marks than vague generalisations.

At the upper end of the ability range there were many excellent papers which were a pleasure to mark. However, equally satisfying were the answers from candidates who attempted to show off more modest linguistic skills to the best advantage.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Sección 1**

#### **Question 1**

Candidates who attempted to identify the phrase in the text which perfectly matched the one in the question and took care not to omit words or to include extra words scored very high marks. Contrastingly, some candidates appeared to be unaware of what was expected of them here and did not do themselves justice on what should be a fairly straightforward exercise.

- (a) A number of candidates struggled to find the appropriate phrase or lost the mark by including either *para* at the front of the phrase, or *hoy en día* at the end.
- (b) Most candidates identified the correct expression, but some answers were invalidated when either *un* or *similar* was omitted.
- (c) This was generally answered well. The commonest error was to omit the initial *se*...
- (d) There were many good answers. Omission of the final *inmobiliario* prevented some from getting the mark.
- (e) The majority of candidates were successful here.

## Question 2

This was a more demanding exercise, although a number of good candidates still scored maximum or near maximum marks.

In addition to performing the language manipulations required in this question, it is important to check that answers will fit back into the original text and retain the same meaning. A line number reference is given for candidates to check quickly that this would be the case.

It is not necessary to change any of the other vocabulary not affected by the manipulation.

- (a) Well answered in general. Some answers incorrectly changed the preposition: *se basa del valor*. Although they are grammatically correct, *que se basa* and *esto se basa* would not fit back into the original text. Other errors included attempting to make *basa* a noun or omission of *se*.
- (b) This question presented some challenge. A number of candidates did not change the verb *recordar* to *olvidar* which made the resulting meaning the opposite of that in the original sentence. Some answers omitted *no hay que olvidar que...*, which although a correct phrase would not fit back in the text. Others chose to use the reflexive form *olvidarse* without the appropriate preposition *de* to follow.
- (c) The subjunctive form necessary for this answer was well recognised. In fact, a whole host of acceptable permutations were offered: *aquello//eso/lo que le sea/parezca/resulte/aparente/que se vea/que se le haga atractivo para/a/en/ante la comunidad*. Moreover, a number of candidates recognised that this manipulation could be performed quite neatly without the use of a verb: *aquello/algo atractivo para/a la comunidad*.
- (d) Most candidates returned correct answers although some used the wrong pronoun with *gusta* e.g. *ya que se gusta usar* or mistakenly kept the *de* as in *ya que nos gusta de usar*. A few omitted *ya que*.
- (e) Moderate success was achieved with this manipulation and a number of candidates were able to identify the adverbial form *basta que* plus subjunctive. Various forms worked: *subas, se suba* or *subamos* or other verbs such as *mandar* to signify the meaning of uploading or sending the photo to the caretakers. It was not uncommon to see answers such as *basta con subir una foto*, which would have been correct if the question had not required *basta que*.

## Question 3

The text about the shared accommodation facilities offered by *Casa Campus* was generally well understood and candidates who gave clear, detailed answers in their own words achieved good marks. A few candidates lost marks when they copied five or more words directly from the text. A minority disregarded the reference given to the paragraph where the information for each specific question was to be found.

Candidates who answered with very brief notes in the form of bullet points were excluded from the full range of marks for quality of language.

- (a) Most candidates were able to state the main characteristics of Coliving by saying that it led to collaboration and that it had shared or common areas which encouraged interaction or a

community. In this question in particular candidates were apt to overlook the requirement that their answers should only be based on the first paragraph of the text and included material which was relevant to later answers.

(b) Many good marks were awarded for this four-mark question. Most candidates were able to say that Coliving offered flexibility with regard to the duration of the stay, and many also scored by stating that you need not have a guarantee from the bank in order to stay. The meaning of the phrase *sin respaldo de un banco* proved a challenge for some who seemed not to understand what this meant and gave answers such as *no tienes que pagar*. Considerable success was achieved in noting that lodgers could rent their accommodation to someone else when they were away. However, a common lift was *pueden subalquilar sus habitaciones a otras personas*. It was not so common for candidates to include the point about Coliving being a meeting place for people from different backgrounds.

(c) Almost all candidates understood that there were activities on offer to residents but a good many thought that Coliving offered jobs, misunderstanding the phrase *espacios comunes donde los jóvenes trabajen*. Most candidates understood that young people were attracted to this type of accommodation because of their income or because of its price.

(d) Candidates usually managed to mention the *últimos avances tecnológicos* or, if not, they mentioned the various services on offer. A majority also managed to explain that it was easy to get repairs made, although many fell into the trap of lifting five or more words from the text, typically *una foto a la app* or ...*algo roto, solo tienes que....* The final point about services being located in social areas was not always accurately expressed, with imprecise answers such as *hay zonas comunes donde puedes lavar ropa* being common.

(e) This proved to be a challenging question. Few candidates added sufficient detail to the first point concerning whether Coliving would add substantially to the housing stock in the capital. More success was achieved in querying whether this new way of living would be extended to other cities in Argentina. A common lift here was *de una nueva forma de...*

## Sección 2

### Question 4

The second text, about shared working facilities, provided a similar level of challenge.

(a) Most candidates mentioned that one of the advantages of Coworking was that the workers shared expenses and that they collaborated on different projects. Frustratingly, a number of answers did not include the idea that the people living in Coworking lodgings were from *diferentes sectores*. This meant they were denied the point about sharing ideas.

(b) Candidates generally did well on this four-mark question, with two to three marks being the commonest scores. Mentioning *teletrabajadores* was enough for the first point and was usually scored. However, the second point, though often attempted, was rarely accurate enough to score the mark. It was important to convey the idea that work colleagues were new and not previously acquainted co-workers. That a common working space would be offered was often included in answers and probably the most commonly correct point was that the Coworking venues were quieter than city offices. Some marks were missed when *con nuevos compañeros de trabajo* or *con un entorno más tranquilo* were copied directly.

(c) A good number of candidates mentioned the fact that a good internet signal was needed, although a few overlooked that *una buena cobertura de internet* constituted a lift of five words from the text. Most were successful in spotting that a specific shared space had to be available for working. However, not all candidates scored the last point by explaining that it was the owner of the property who was to get involved with community projects, and so lost a mark there.

(d) This question was one of the better answered in this section with many candidates scoring maximum marks. Most candidates understood that the owners of rural accommodation wanted to increase the number of clients, although there was occasionally some confusion about how diversification would achieve this.

It was also well understood that tourism should not depend on the holiday months but should be all year round. (Misspellings of *desestacionalizar* were generally recognisable enough to be accepted). The final point about the fact about fighting against depopulation was generally well answered.

(e) Most candidates understood that *Alejandro Parera* was helping the development of rural accommodation by creating a web page about the Association of Coworking. However, *la Asociación Nacional de Coworking* was a common lift for a great number of candidates, which might have been avoiding by just saying *la Asociación* or *la web de Coworking* etc. The second point relating to the set-up of digital strategies in order to interest customers was one that, if copying directly from the text had been successfully avoided, many were able to express well.

### Question 5

Many candidates showed awareness of the techniques required for this part of the examination. Most, but not all, paid careful attention to the overall number of words allowed. More summaries gave specific details rather than generalisations, and the better personal responses contained opinions and original ideas. In their free writing, many were able to write more accurately than in **Questions 3 and 4**.

(a) There were clear differences here in scores between those who had practised this summary question, and those who were not used to the demands of the test. Candidates who had been well-prepared selected their answers from the texts very precisely, usually achieving greater success in extracting relevant details. Although texts about shared accommodation and shared working venues might superficially appear to have a lot in common, the specific details of each differed considerably. Therefore, candidates who considered each text separately were far more successful than those who attempted to combine them.

A good example of the former is:

*El coliving propicia acceso a una comunidad ✓ a través de espacios comunes, ✓ y ofrece hospedaje económico. ✓ Los residentes tienen acceso a varias actividades ✓ y avances tecnológicos. ✓ Se desplazan ciertos servicios a zonas comunes ✓...*

The start of this answer has scored five marks in just over thirty words.

(b) Many were able to express the difficulties that young people face in trying to access the property market in their countries. Some of the main reasons were the difficult economic situations of countries, especially in Latin America, and the housing shortage. Many mentioned that young people find it difficult to find a good job and it is therefore common for them to live with their parents well into their adult lives. On a few rare occasions, candidates misunderstood the question, perhaps thinking *vivienda* meant 'life', and wrote about how difficult or easy it was for young people to get on in life.

### Quality of Language

The quality of candidates' written Spanish, here and throughout the paper, was generally up to the standard required by this examination. Marks were generally in the Sound, Good or Very Good range. Unless they had been penalised for scoring zero in any of the comprehension questions, strong candidates who could correctly manipulate the source texts into good Spanish to display clear comprehension, were awarded maximum marks in all three quality of language assessments. Less able candidates often had major difficulties with verb formation, and use of the singular or plural verb forms in particular. Their mark often improved considerably in the final question when their writing was more free style.

### And finally

A big thank you to centres who have entered candidates for this examination over the years. Assessing their work has consistently been a rewarding experience. It is anticipated that future candidates will find that the changed format of the new specification will offer similar stimulation and challenge.

# SPANISH

**Paper 9719/22**  
**Reading and Writing 22**

## Key messages

- **Question 1:** seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question. Candidates should take care not to omit words or to include extra words.
- **Question 2:** rewrite the phrases to include the word(s) in brackets. A grammatical manipulation will be required, and care should be taken to ensure that the answer would fit back into the original text, retaining the same meaning.
- **Questions 3 and 4:** comprehension of texts. Candidates should attempt to answer in their own words. Direct copying of five or more words from the text will usually invalidate an answer.
- **Question 5(a):** summary of relevant details from both texts in answer to the question set. Introduction, conclusions and vague generalisations are not required. Specific, relevant details attract marks.
- **Question 5(b):** personal response. Candidates should give a point of view and, if possible, offer ideas which have not appeared in the texts.
- **Language:** when preparing for the exam, make sure to revise the basic agreements, tenses and verb endings.

## General comments

This was the final June appearance of the examination in this format. It provided an appropriate challenge, and the spread of marks awarded reflected the varying levels of ability of candidates. All scripts were generally well presented and response to the two texts dealing with possible solutions to environmental issues was pleasing, with comprehension often clearly demonstrated. There appeared to be little evidence of difficulty with time management.

Most candidates attempted all questions and appeared to be aware that they should not copy more than four consecutive words of text in their answers to the comprehension questions. It was pleasing to note skilled attempts at paraphrase. On occasions good candidates, who apparently had clearly understood the texts, did not pick up all the marks available when they answered too generally and omitted relevant details. Candidates should note the marks allocated to each question, as this is a good indication of the number of details being sought.

A few candidates still exceeded the 140 word limit in **Question 5**, thus reducing the number of marks they could score in **5(b)**. Summaries in **5(a)** which focused on relevant specific details scored many more marks than vague generalisations.

At the upper end of the ability range there were many excellent papers which were a pleasure to mark. However, equally satisfying were the answers from candidates who attempted to show off more modest linguistic skills to the best advantage.

## Comments on specific questions

### **SECCIÓN 1**

#### **Question 1**

As stated in the Key Message above, candidates should seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question and take care not to omit words or to include extra words – a feature which often invalidated answers which were otherwise correct.

The majority of candidates scored high marks for this question.

- (a) An additional...*en* sometimes spoiled the answer.
- (b) The correct phrase was almost always identified.
- (c) This was a little more challenging, with candidates sometimes offering the answer to (d) here.
- (d) If the phrase had already been misused above, then there was often a consequential error here.
- (e) Sometimes ...*esto* was omitted.

## Question 2

This was a more demanding exercise, although a number of good candidates still scored maximum or near maximum marks.

In addition to performing the language manipulations required in this question, it is important to check that answers will fit back into the original text and retain the same meaning. A line number reference is given for candidates to check quickly that this would be the case.

- (a) Most candidates recognised that a subjunctive would be triggered by *hacen que* and found very little difficulty in providing one of the many options available: *hacen que el ciudadano se identifique/se tenga que identificar/sea/esté obligado a/se vea/obligado a/deba identificarse*. It was pleasing to note that the orthographical change required by the first option was widely recognised.
- (b) The passive form required in this manipulation was generally well handled.
- (c) Many candidates whose first language was Spanish came unstuck here. A very common error was to attempt a plural – *hayan/puedan haber*. Others misspelt the word: *halla/alla/aya/haiga/aiga*.
- (d) Non-native candidates found some difficulty with this structure, with many seemingly unaware that *se trata de* was the construction which was needed.
- (e) Non-native candidates and some native-speaking ones had problems with this manipulation. Only a minority successfully produced *las consecuencias jurídicas son difíciles de solucionar*.

## Question 3

The text about using 'smart bin' technology provided a good challenge. Candidates who gave clear, detailed answers in their own words achieved high marks.

A number of candidates lost marks when they lifted (copied) five or more words directly from the text. Others did well in using the alternative sentences from **Questions 1 and 2** in this question to avoid certain lifts. or used different vocabulary which they found in the text e.g. *basura/residuos*. A small minority disregarded the reference given to the paragraph where the information for each specific question was be found.

- (a) The third point sought by the Marks Scheme – that the remedy being considered to remedy unsorted, recyclable rubbish was the use of 'smart bins' – was successfully identified by nearly every candidate. Although the other two points – *no hay recogida selectiva de basura* and *no hay tasas que incentiven/penalicen la (falta de) separación* – were widely recognised, these were often invalidated by lifting: *la falta de recogida selectiva, tasas para fomentar o penalizar, la separación y el reciclaje*.
- (b) This was generally answered well and many candidates scored maximum marks. Most candidates stated that the 'smart bins' could check whether the recyclable rubbish had been sorted correctly and that they contained sensors which would notify when they were full or that the temperature of the rubbish was too high.
- (c) This four-mark question provided clear discrimination between stronger and less able candidates. Good candidates, who worked systematically through the paragraph, successfully noted the four stated advantages of the bins: *pueden – mejorar la gestión de residuos, escoger los residuos que deben recoger, diseñar el itinerario de recogida, penalizar o estimular*. Other candidates were

misled by the way in which the text enumerated these benefits, linking them with words like *empiezan por..., siguiendo por..., y acabando...*, frequently taking the meaning too literally.

(d) Although most seemed to understand that this paragraph was focussing on ways in which citizens could be rewarded or penalised according to how they separated their rubbish, a number of candidates did not provide sufficiently accurate details. On other occasions marks were lost because of lifting – *un descuento en la tasa de basuras* or *en la tasa de recogida*.

(e) One mark was a common score for this two-mark question. Some did not realise that the question was targeting *datos confidenciales/personales/privados*, not the data that was entered in the app or the containers – but the data that was thrown in bin. An extremely common lift was *de la empresa de recogida*.

## SECCIÓN 2

### Question 4

The second text, concerning a project to harness rainwater for domestic use, appeared to be slightly more accessible to candidates.

(a) Clear understanding was shown of the fact that Mexico City enjoyed an abundant supply of rainwater during six months of the year. Not all were able to score both of the additional marks by adding either that earlier civilizations had made good use of this asset, or that the environment is very delicately balanced these days.

(b) There were many maximum marks recorded here. Most were able to state that the architect is designing new structures and plans to restore and renovate old channels to capture the rain. It was well understood that the principal constraint was the budget or lack of finance.

(c) This was a very straightforward question based on a very factual paragraph. Most were able to state that 79 per cent of rainwater was lost in evaporation. However, a number of candidates encountered difficulty in noting the destinations of the remaining twenty or so per cent. Problems seemed to arise in expressing that half the remainder went to replenish the aquifers without directly copying *la recarga de acuíferos subterráneos*, or in understanding that the other half drained into *las aguas negras*.

(d) This proved to be another very straightforward question and on this occasion the success rate was high, with a considerable number of maximum scores being recorded. Candidates had little difficulty in stating that problems highlighted in adapting rainwater for domestic use included high costs of the necessary infrastructure, the small volume of water which would be collected, and that it contains a significant number of contaminants.

(e) Full details were required to score well in answer to this question on another fairly factual paragraph.

It was necessary to say that the water obtained through this programme would be filtered, free and available for more than six months of the year. Several candidates omitted one or more of these relevant points. A very common lift was *más de la mitad del año*.

### Question 5

It was pleasing to note how those candidates who were aware of the techniques required for this part of the examination achieved the marks which they merited. Most paid careful attention to the overall number of words allowed for this question. Summaries which gave specific details rather than generalisations, and personal responses offering opinions and original ideas scored well.

(a) Some candidates might have scored higher marks if they had studied more carefully the question which was asked, concerning *los beneficios de los contenedores inteligentes y el proyecto de reciclaje de lluvia*. A number wasted words by including problems or negative features associated with these initiatives

It was better to write about the two texts separately as, apart from a shared environmental theme, there were no shared specific details. A number of candidates wasted words by writing an

introductory sentence, such as *Los proyectos que presentan ambos textos tienen un objetivo en común: la conservación medioambiental*. Although this reads well for quality of language, it scores no marks for content.

The best approach is to plunge straight into the answer as, for example:

*Los contenedores inteligentes tienen sensores que ayudan a saber cuándo se han llenado ✓ y necesitan vaciarse antes de oler mal. ✓ Además controlan si el usuario ha reciclado adecuadamente. ✓ Antes de usar el contenedor el usuario debe identificarse, estos datos ayudan a elegir las rutas de recogida ✓ y el tipo de residuo que recoger. ✓*

The start of this answer has scored five marks in approximately fifty words.

(b) The issue of how rubbish was dealt with in their country was something which produced a variety of viewpoints, according to where each candidate lived. These ranged from *no es un gran problema* to *es un problema en el verano con los turistas, no estamos lo suficiente concientizados con el reciclaje, producimos mucho más que deberíamos, la vía pública está repleta de basura, las personas tiran la basura donde quieran* etc.

### Quality of Language

The quality of the majority of non-native speaking candidates' Spanish, here and throughout the paper, was generally up to the standard required by this examination. Marks were usually in the Sound to Good range. Unless they had been penalised for scoring zero in any of the comprehension questions, native speakers were awarded maximum marks in all three quality of language assessments.

### And finally

A big thank you to centres who have entered candidates for this examination over the years. Assessing their work has consistently been a rewarding experience. It is anticipated that future candidates will find that the changed format of the new specification will offer similar stimulation and challenge.

# SPANISH

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**Paper 9719/23  
Reading and Writing**

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

# SPANISH

**Paper 9719/31  
Essay 31**

## **Key messages**

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- select the title with which they feel most comfortable
- write a response that is clearly relevant, well-illustrated, coherently structured and well-informed
- use Spanish which is accurate and of a suitably advanced nature, as well as demonstrate a good use of idiom and appropriate topic-related vocabulary
- use sentence patterns which show some evidence of complexity in a style which is easy to follow.

## **General comments**

Once again Examiners can report that there was a good level of ability on display in the essays for this session. Candidates have, for some time now, fully understood the importance of composing an essay that makes valid and relevant points that relate clearly to the title set on the paper rather than simply writing in very general terms on the overall topic and hoping that this will attract high marks. There are 16 marks available out of a total of 40 marks for the quality of the content produced by the candidate. Essays that are brimming with irrelevance in terms of the actual title set will not score highly for content.

The quality of thinking on display in many essays was generally impressive and articulately conveyed and if these features were combined with a linguistically accurate piece of writing in Spanish then the end result would almost always be an essay that scored well both for language and for content. Evidence of meaningful preparation for this examination was again clear to see and, as one would reasonably expect, such well-prepared candidates were more inclined to perform well as a result.

Surprisingly, perhaps, there were a few issues relating to the word count (250 – 400 words). When an essay falls short of the minimum of 250 words then marks for content will inevitably suffer because the candidate does not write enough in response to the title. The same can also be said, of course, about the quality of language mark. Very short essays simply do not have enough language in them to warrant access to marks at the higher levels of the language mark scheme. Equally, there were a number of essays that were well in excess of the maximum 400 words and these essays tended to suffer in terms of the language mark because many more errors were made as the candidate continued to write with little awareness of the upper word limit of 400 words. The mark for content in such overly long essays also suffered because there was often a tendency to rely on generalised statements or, indeed, a degree of padding was very much in evidence. Having said all this, most candidates were able to produce a piece of writing that abided by the rubric. The point has been made in many previous reports that candidates need to have a clear understanding of the wording of the mark scheme for this paper, both in terms of word limits and also as far as basic essay writing is concerned in areas such as structure, paragraphing, the use of evidence to support statements and the ability to reach a reasonable conclusion.

The more successful essays were the ones where there was a clear focus on the precise title set on the paper. This comes as no surprise given that candidates who think methodically about the issues raised by a given title are always going to access marks at the higher end of the mark scheme. Generally speaking, most candidates were able to write well-structured essays that made good use of paragraphs and the best essays tended to combine good structure and advanced level language with clearly expressed points backed up by evidence, examples or references. There were, however, a few instances in this session where essays were produced that had very little to do with the title and where candidates simply wrote down a few thoughts about the general topic. A few essays, for example, limited themselves to talking in very general terms about the nature of justice and law order (question number 2 on the paper) but then failed to analyse the importance, or otherwise, in a civilised society of there being some degree of respect for the police.

As for the quality of the language used by candidates, one extremely noticeable feature of the essays during this session was the frustrating lack of punctuation. We are not talking here about the odd missing comma or the lack of an occasional full stop. On the contrary, there were many examples of essays that were extremely difficult to decipher as a direct consequence of there being little if any meaningful punctuation. It is not reasonable to expect the reader to try to work out what is being said in an essay when, by dint of a basic degree of punctuation, the task of understanding what has been written is rendered far more straightforward. It is not unreasonable to expect candidates to write essays that are structured in a way that makes the task of assessing writing skills a stress-free one. Having said this, many candidates were more than prepared to show evidence of the use of complex sentence patterns, with a decent range of advanced grammatical structures and accurate punctuation, an awareness of the desirability of using a range of tenses where appropriate and the judicious handling of topic-based vocabulary that related seamlessly to the topic under discussion.

As is often the case, there was a range of widespread language errors to report, none of which will come as any great surprise to those involved in preparing candidates for this paper. As always, it is worth highlighting the most frequent errors so that candidates can be made aware of common pitfalls that are best avoided. The correct use of the verb '*gustar*' in some fairly basic sentences again proved to be very difficult for candidates to grasp. Examples such as '*...algunos padres no gustan ofrecer demasiado apoyo* '(sic) and '*...en mi opinión yo no gusto viajar al extranjero...*'(sic) were far too common and tended to spoil the overall impression given to Examiners as they assessed the essay. Another really common language error was the use of plural verbs (and, indeed, plural adjectives) with '*la gente*'. Statements such as '*...la gente prefieren ir de vacaciones al extranjero*' (sic) and '*... la gente viejos a meundo evitan el uso de ordenadores...*' (sic) were often seen by Examiners.

As has happened in many previous sessions, the omission of the letter '*h*' when using the perfect tense in sentences such as '*muchos países an dedicado muchos recursos al turismo*' (sic) and '*...mi familia y yo emos decidido comprar un coche eléctrico ...*'(sic) were very much in evidence. The misuse of accents again caused a degree of consternation amongst many candidates with abundant examples of a lack of understanding of how an accent can alter the meaning of individual words (e.g. *sí/si, está/esta, mandé/mande*). The incorrect use of accents inevitably has an impact on the marks awarded for language, especially when it leads to ambiguity of meaning. A number of candidates also struggled with some very basic spelling errors with examples such as '*...muchos abuelos alludan a sus nietos con sus tareas*'(sic) and '*aveces es difficile para los jóvenes...*'(sic). Other very common spelling errors were '*sobretodo*' as one word instead of two and the use of the phrase '*como consecuencia...*'(sic). Compound tense constructions also proved to be a step too far for a number of candidates with examples such as '*... la tecnología va aser más compleja en el futuro*' and '*...han habido muchos problemas recientemente...*'(sic) and the improper use of gerunds was also a feature of many essays with examples such as '*...los beneficios de viajando al extranjero...*'(sic) being very common.

Examples of good use of the language included:

- Spanish accents being used accurately throughout the essay.
- The use of an appropriate range of tenses and moods, all appropriately conjugated.
- The correct use of '*hay*', especially in the past tense.
- A clear understanding of the differences between the verbs *ser* and *estar*.
- Punctuation used to achieve very clear communication.
- The use of impersonal expressions and idiomatic language in order to enhance the overall register of the writing.

Common errors included:

- Extremely inconsistent use of punctuation and, on far too many occasions, no punctuation at all.
- The persistent lack of accents seriously affecting comprehension, particularly when it came to tenses or moods (*tomara/tomará, tomo/tomó, este/esté* and so on).
- The inaccurate use of singular and plural verbs.
- the dropping of the letter '*h*' with an auxiliary verb (e.g. '*los padres siempre an tenido problemas con sus hijos adolescentes en casa*' (sic)).
- The lack of understanding of the use of the verb '*gustar*'.
- The lack of adjectival agreement.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### **Question 1**

##### ***La familia***

***El aspecto más importante de ser joven es el apoyo incondicional de la familia. ¿Comparte usted esta opinión?***

With this very popular title, there was more or less universal agreement that the unconditional support of the family is crucial to the development of young people as they grow up. Many essays also mentioned the desirability of support from members of the extended family as well as the support from parents, brothers and sisters. There were also numerous essays that talked up the importance of the support from friends as well as from family. Some essays suggested that support from the family should be consistent and perhaps not always unconditional, especially when a young person's behaviour, for example, is questionable.

#### **Question 2**

##### ***La justicia y el orden público***

***En una sociedad civilizada el respeto por la policía es esencial. ¿Qué opina usted?***

There were many different approaches to this fairly popular title. Some took the view that respect for the police should be automatic in a civilised society whilst others felt that such respect needed to be earned by the actions of the police. There were references made to the difficult job that police officers carry out on a daily basis as well as references to well publicised incidents of what is perceived to be police aggression in the line of duty. Most felt, however, that the police are at their best when they work with communities and not against them, for whatever reason.

#### **Question 3**

##### ***El turismo***

***‘¿Pasar las vacaciones en el extranjero? No gracias, prefiero quedarme aquí en mi propio país.’*  
¿Qué opina usted de este punto de vista?**

Opinions were somewhat divided as far as this reasonably popular title was concerned. Some felt that travelling abroad is better for reasons of cultural awareness and for enhancing our understanding of other ways of life in different countries. Others felt that staying at home and getting to know the country where one lives is both more rewarding and, quite importantly for many, a lot cheaper and less stressful than traveling abroad. However, there was no argument that travel, whether domestically or internationally, broadens the mind.

#### **Question 4**

##### ***Las nuevas tecnologías***

***Las nuevas tecnologías no siempre han mejorado nuestro mundo y en algunos casos lo han empeorado. ¿Está usted de acuerdo?***

This was also quite a popular title with candidates. Most felt rather strongly that new technologies have undoubtedly improved our daily lives, although there was also a clear acknowledgement that not all aspects of technological progress are positive with many making reference to the technology of armed conflict and weaponry (for understandable reasons) to support this view. Some candidates discussed the pros and cons of social media as a new technology and there were numerous points raised about artificial intelligence and the impact it is having at this present moment in time.

## Question 5

### ***La contaminación***

***Cuando todos los vehículos que conducimos sean eléctricos, podremos dejar de preocuparnos por la contaminación atmosférica. ¿Hasta qué punto está usted de acuerdo?***

This popular title produced many well-constructed essays and it was clear that whilst most felt that electric cars have had and will continue to have a positive impact on the environment there were still questions to be asked about the methods of production of the electricity needed to charge such vehicles. Some essays suggested that the overall impact on clean air will be insignificant unless we embrace the phasing out of fossil fuels altogether in the next decade or so. Many expressed the belief that we need to be concerned on a permanent basis about the levels of air pollution and the inevitable effects on human health.

# SPANISH

**Paper 9719/32**

**Essay 32**

## **Key messages**

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- select the title with which they feel most comfortable
- write a response that is clearly relevant, well-illustrated, coherently structured and well-informed
- use Spanish which is accurate and of a suitably advanced nature, as well as demonstrate a good use of idiom and appropriate topic-related vocabulary
- use sentence patterns which show some evidence of complexity in a style which is easy to follow.

## **General comments**

Once again Examiners can report that there was a good level of ability on display in the essays for this session. Candidates have, for some time now, fully understood the importance of composing an essay that makes valid and relevant points that relate clearly to the title set on the paper rather than simply writing in very general terms on the overall topic and hoping that this will attract high marks. There are 16 marks available out of a total of 40 marks for the quality of the content produced by the candidate. Essays that are brimming with irrelevance in terms of the actual title set will not score highly for content.

The quality of thinking on display in many essays was generally impressive and articulately conveyed and if these features were combined with a linguistically accurate piece of writing in Spanish then the end result would almost always be an essay that scored well both for language and for content. Evidence of meaningful preparation for this examination was again clear to see and, as one would reasonably expect, such well-prepared candidates were more inclined to perform well as a result.

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- The lack of understanding of the use of the verb '*gustar*'.
- The lack of adjectival agreement.

## **Comments on specific questions**

### **Question 1**

#### ***La familia***

***El papel de otros miembros de la familia, por ejemplo los abuelos, es tan importante como el de los padres. ¿Hasta qué punto está usted de acuerdo?***

This popular title produced many enthusiastic statements of support for the way in which grandparents in particular can play a crucial role in the upbringing of young people within a family. Many essays also discussed the desirability of support from other members of the extended family such as aunts, uncles, brothers and sisters and so on. It was, however, the care and guidance shown by grandparents that most candidates chose to discuss. This is unsurprising given that it was specifically mentioned in the essay title. There were also numerous essays that looked to compare and contrast the ways in which families operate in other countries.

### **Question 2**

#### ***La justicia y el orden público***

***Los sistemas judiciales deberían ser más estrictos con los delitos relacionados a las drogas. ¿Qué opina usted?***

This equally popular title gave most candidates the opportunity to state unequivocally that more needs to be done to tackle the problems of drug-related crime. Many felt that stricter penalties for those individuals caught selling drugs on the street would very much help the situation to improve. Even more essays looked at the need to tackle drug trafficking both domestically and internationally. There was some agreement for the idea that more support should be considered to tackle addiction on the grounds that punishment would appear to many to be failing to deal with the problems faced by society.

### **Question 3**

#### ***El turismo***

***La mayoría de los turistas no respetan la cultura del lugar que visitan. ¿Está usted de acuerdo?***

This fairly popular title produced many convincing essays that argued passionately that the lack of respect shown by many international tourists for the country they visit is indeed a widespread problem and one that needs to be tackled head on. There was much discussion about the influence of alcohol, especially on young people, and how more should be done to restrict the sale of alcohol in the more popular coastal resorts. Many candidates argued that schools could be doing more to educate young people about the need to be more respectful of cultures other than their own.

### **Question 4**

#### ***Las nuevas tecnologías***

***Los alumnos no deberían usar sus teléfonos en clase. ¿Qué opina usted?***

This very popular title produced a wide range of views on the subject of mobile phones being used in the classroom. Many felt that they should be allowed given that they can be a very useful and time-saving educational tool, especially when candidates are working independently in class. Others, however, were more inclined to suggest that they should be banned in the classroom because they can be very distracting to other members of the class and also because they can be used for dubious purposes such as photographs being taken without the subject's permission and social media access with the potential for cyberbullying and so on. Other essays suggested that they could be allowed in the classroom providing the teacher has no objections.

## Question 5

### *La contaminación*

***Cuando dejemos de depender de los combustibles fósiles, se acabarán todos los problemas de contaminación. ¿Hasta qué punto está usted de acuerdo?***

There were some impassioned arguments in response to this slightly less popular title. The most commonly expressed view was that we still cannot afford to be less concerned about the environment once fossil fuels are no longer in widespread use. Most essays accepted that there is likely to be some limited use of fossil fuels well into the future but that alternative energy sources, in particular solar power, need to be promoted much more. There was agreement that there are many other sources of pollution unrelated to the use of fossil fuels and that society must never take its eye off the ball as far as caring for the environment is concerned.

# SPANISH

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**Paper 9719/33  
Essay**

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

# SPANISH

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Paper 9719/41

Texts

## Key messages

The key messages are, as have been stated in previous reports, that candidates must have studied the texts in detail, understood them and be able to demonstrate this with reference to the texts to support their argument. Candidates must also respond to the question directly giving a full answer and use the text to illustrate points made, with a clear and logical conclusion to their essay.

## General comments

Candidates demonstrated thorough knowledge and understanding of the texts. Difference in performance was generally based on a precise reading and response to the question, the quality of the argument and judicious use of references. The best essays had usually been carefully planned and examples selected to give as full an answer as possible.

## Comments on specific questions

### *Sección 1*

Comments focus on responses to part (iii) of each question, which requires reference to the whole text. Candidates dealt with question **parts (i)** and **(ii)** well, for the most part.

#### **Question 1 – Ernesto Sábato: *El túnel***

(a) In responding to this question, candidates needed to consider to what extent Castel was aware of his behaviour towards María. Some pointed out that the narrative is presented from Castel's point of view, thus not objective. Castel is self-obsessed and does not have insight into other people's responses to him. Few made reference to his dreams, which give the reader a less biased impression of his psychological make-up. Several responses portrayed Castel as trapped in the titular tunnel and as such, locked out of any form of consciousness at all.

(b) Responses to this question generally focused on the physical blindness of Allende, which represented all the male characters' inability to understand María. Few pointed out that Castel, too, chose to be blind to those aspects of María and her life which he did not understand. The concept of the tunnel is important here in representing Castel's isolation but also echoed in the 'tunnel vision' of Mimí, for example, in her blindness to her own heritage as she extols the superiority of foreign culture. Castel is blind to reality as he creates his own. Some noted that Allende's suicide was as a result of Castel's confession to the murder of María. Would Allende have preferred to be kept in the dark, that is to say, blind to actual events? The concept of blindness was used in many ways.

#### **Question 2 – Gabriel García Márquez: *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba***

(a) Very many candidates chose to answer this question. The most successful responses gave thorough appraisals of the two characters and showed how their behaviours embodied the situation in the town. The colonel, impoverished but dignified and stoic was in contrast to Sabas, a wealthy yet corrupt and dishonest character. Even their illnesses echoed their situation. The colonel suffered dreadfully due to poverty whereas Sabas' diabetes was due to excess. The colonel had a soul but Sabas had no imagination at all.

(b) This question also elicited a large number of responses, and gave candidates scope to analyse the text in a number of ways. All essentially agreed that the novel was more complex than it appeared. This was explored in terms of the depth and range of themes or employment of certain literary techniques and styles. Impact was defined as the creation of dramatic tension and the credibility of the characterisation and the political situation.

### Question 3 – Anónimo: *Lazarillo de Tormes*

(a) There always seems to be a strong temptation to narrate the story of Lazarillo rather than focus on the question set. In this case, we see Lazarillo recovering from the blow inflicted on him by his master after he had been found stealing and who then dismisses him. This contrasts with his previous experience – when Lazarillo himself had chosen to move on. The irony in the statement '*tan diligente servidor*' was not generally identified, but the cunning he learned from the 'ciego' was. So what did Lazarillo learn from this episode and how did he continue to adapt to benefit himself with subsequent masters and employers? The better responses suggested that the episode taught Lazarillo the dangers of lying, the need for caution and an awareness of the true nature of the clergy. It seemed as if Lazarillo began to acquire a better moral understanding but the extreme hunger and cruelty he suffered influenced subsequent decisions and choices, for example ignoring rumours concerning his unfaithful wife so as not to jeopardise the comfortable life he had created for himself at the end of the text.

(b) The most thoughtful responses to this question chose to name the poor – as exemplified in Lazarillo himself, as those most deserving of sympathy and possibly respect. Every other group in society – the clergy, neighbours, nobles (Escudero), were found to be wanting. Some were kind to Lazarillo momentarily but most put themselves first. Many felt that Lazarillo, as representative of his background, was essentially innocent but bound to find a way to survive because of his circumstances. His mother was not feckless, rather desperate to give her son a chance. His stepfather tried to help the family. Society, and those who controlled it, had no sympathy.

### Question 4 – Pedro Calderón de la Barca: *El alcalde de Zalamea*

(a) There were few answers to this question. Candidates knew the text well. **Part (iii)** raises the question of the role of the army. This can be interpreted in several ways. In terms of Calderón's consideration of society and its hierarchies, the army serves the King (who appears late in the play) and it must defend the state, expand its interests and follow the orders of the monarch. Officers of the army are of high status; hence they are billeted in the best homes in the village. The only residents who may complain are those of the nobility. However, in terms of the plot and theme, the army disrupts the harmony of life in the village, initiates a state of crisis and the matter is only resolved by the intervention of the King himself. Harmony is restored, at the expense of the wronged woman and the whole issue of justice is debated.

(b) As with option (a), this was not chosen by many candidates. Answers focused on close appraisal of the main female characters, showing their strengths and weaknesses. In the main, we see women who have an important role to play within their community and display strong moral understanding and loyalty to both family and community. Some are open to coercion. Calderón's female characters tend to be well-rounded, intelligent and expressive.

## Sección 2

### Question 5 – Carmen Laforet: *Nada*

(a) Most answers to this question expressed the view that Andrea was beginning a better life. This was supported with reference to the dreadful time she had in her grandmother's flat. However at the same time, being of an optimistic disposition, Andrea had found a way to survive in a hostile situation and had made friends at the University. She arrived as a naïve, immature girl and learned a lot about life in general during her time there. Her friendship with Gloria was particularly valuable to her. The novel presents a depressing, if realistic view of post-war Spain and although Andrea will benefit from the hospitality of a richer family; she may come across similar challenges in Madrid.

(b) This question gave rise to a number of approaches. Many concentrated on Andrea's dysfunctional family in the flat, analysing what had happened to change the warm, happy memories of her visits there when she was very young. Others compared Andrea's family to Ena's. Superficially, the latter was ideal, but Ena's mother's experience with Ramón, and indeed Ena's too, show that nothing is

perfect. Some very thorough responses also discussed the role of Andrea's artist friends as a substitute family. Does an individual necessarily find love and understanding in a blood relationship, with all the responsibilities entailed with belonging to a family? Is it possible to be happy with like-minded people, subject to fewer expectations?

#### Question 6 – Federico García Lorca: *Bodas de sangre*

Virtually all candidates answered on this text, showing good knowledge.

(a) The most successful responses went beyond comparing the personalities and characters of the two men to analyse what they represent. In the case of the Novio, social order, conservative tradition and security and in Leonardo, rebellion, change and passion. The best answers examined the importance of the given names; one candidate said that 'el Novio cumple el rol universal de novio', whereas Leonardo 'desde la elección de su nombre no encaja dentro de un perfil predeterminado'. Most concluded that the end was fitting as order was restored, some mentioning the help of the supernatural forces of Destiny and Death. Passion is disruptive. It added to the argument to consider the Novia's views and the reasons for her decisions.

(b) Responses to this question needed to go beyond the immediate reactions of grief to consider the society in which the Novia will have to live. She is clearly in despair and feels responsible for the deaths of both men as evidently she initiated the flight with Leonardo, which led to the physical struggle and knife fight. The Novio was duty bound to avenge the slur on his family's honour. The Novia was a bystander at the dénouement – which represents the role of women generally in that society. Her marriage to Leonardo was thwarted because he was unfit from the point of view of wealth and social standing, with no concern for the Novia's feelings. The betrothal to the Novio was arranged; the scene in which the Novio and his mother go to see the Novia and her father to officially agree the wedding is formal and transactional, with the Novia playing a minor role. The social implications for the Novia are likely to be dire, based on what has been expressed. Social isolation and lack of any purpose or role are most likely to mean that the Novia struggles to believe in any future for herself.

#### Question 7 – Gabriela Mistral: *Tala: Lagar*

As has been the practice in earlier sessions, a detailed report has not been given on responses to this text. The number of responses is small.

(a) Candidates must have considerable experience in preparing a detailed commentary on a poem, with awareness of the use of poetic technique and choice of language as well as imagery and the presentation of themes.

(b) Candidates have much scope in choosing three poems from the list on the syllabus to explore and analyse the question, so no two responses will be the same. Examiners look for judicious choice of poems, a clear understanding of how the poet expresses her sense of being an outsider, analysing the poetic techniques as well as the thematic content.

#### Question 8 – Isabel Allende: *La casa de los espíritus*

(a) There were some well-informed responses which examined the way Trueba ruled, both in his political role, within his family and at Tres Marías. He was seen to be autocratic, self-serving and misogynist in all aspects of his life. Candidates varied in their opinions over the degree to which Esteban Trueba was personally responsible or merely representative of egotistical and discriminatory leadership. More nuanced answers pointed to aspects of the regeneration of the community (and the role of Clara). Others emphasised the evidence that women are exploited, there is corruption in buying votes and democracy is undermined. Signs of hope can be seen in the new generation as Alba manages to soften her grandfather's attitudes and he understands how friends (Tránsito Soto) can play a part for good. His kindness to Tránsito many years ago is more powerful than any threats or violence in ensuring Alba's release. So there was some belief that the novel was more positive than the statement suggests.

(b) All responses to this question agreed with the statement, with most basing their answers on Esteban Trueba. Candidates frequently used the example of Trueba's vengeful treatment of Clara and Blanca over the latter's relationship with Pedro Tercero, which was a source of much sadness to him as Clara never spoke to him again. Similarly, his harsh treatment of Esteban García (and his

grandmother) could be seen as the direct cause of Alba's arrest and torture. As a contrast, positive examples are seen in Trueba helping Blanca and Pedro escape to Canada and Tránsito Soto's compassion in helping to rescue Alba after previously receiving assistance herself from Trueba. Many felt that Alba's lack of bitterness or desire for revenge shown at the end of the novel could be interpreted as a more optimistic message.

# SPANISH

Paper 9719/42

Texts

## Key messages

The key messages are, as have been stated in previous reports, that candidates must have studied the texts in detail, understood them and be able to demonstrate this with reference to the texts to support their argument. Candidates must also respond to the question directly giving a full answer and use the text to illustrate points made, with a clear and logical conclusion to their essay.

## General comments

Candidates demonstrated thorough knowledge and understanding of the texts. Difference in performance was generally based on a precise reading and response to the question, the quality of the argument and judicious use of references. The best essays had usually been carefully planned and examples selected to give as full an answer as possible.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Sección A**

Comments focus on responses to part (iii) of each question, which requires reference to the whole text. Candidates dealt with question **parts (i)** and **(ii)** well, for the most part.

#### **Question 1 – Ernesto Sábato: *El túnel***

(a) Answers to this option mainly identified Castel's bullying obsessive behaviour and María's evasiveness from the passage. However many were less successful in applying their ideas to the whole of the text. The question asked candidates to relate what is seen in this extract to the development of the relationship throughout the novel. One of the main issues to analyse is the evident lack of real communication between the two individuals. Castel seems to believe that he can find out what he wants to know by forceful interrogation of María whereas it becomes more apparent that she is not prepared or chooses not to respond directly. Some candidates argued that María was partly responsible for her own downfall due to her deceptive and manipulative nature. Castel initiated the relationship, based on his own interpretation of María's reaction to the painting and it is difficult to ascertain why she responded to him. Another factor to consider is that the whole story is seen from Castel's point of view, which makes objective assessment more challenging.

(b) There were more responses overall to this option. Most essays condemned Castel whilst admitting the mitigation of mental illness. The fact that Castel 'es la voz narrativa', as one candidate mentioned is also important. The more thoughtful responses studied his character in greater detail, pointing out the paradox of his impulsive yet analytical behaviour. A number referred to his loneliness, as exemplified in the title, and his need to be understood, suggesting that the self-justifying confession might be an attempt to gain the understanding of the reader. He murdered the only person who may have been capable of understanding him 'Me has dejado solo'.

#### **Question 2 – Gabriel García Márquez: *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba***

(a) This was an extremely popular question. Unusually, there were a number of variations in interpreting the passage. Some candidates believed that the cockerel's behaviour denoted defeat or even death and others a victory; the bird's stoic passivity could be seen as representative of his owner's attitude. Most agreed that the cockpit offered a microcosm of society, with its violence,

corruption and optimistic sense of opportunity. The concept of 'farce' was less discussed; we see such enthusiasm and importance being given to what is essentially a meaningless display of violence, when the real issues affecting everyone's life are not being addressed. This is all the people can focus on as a distraction from the misery they live through daily.

(b) Most answers to this option agreed that the colonel's wife did not give unconditional support to her husband. Undoubtedly she showed affection and stood by the colonel but also questioned his behaviour frequently, implying that he was not always right. The colonel's wife was patient and fulfilled her role admirably in caring for her husband. Her own feelings were largely kept under control and those outbursts, revealing the extent of her suffering too, were the more effective as a result. Some more thoughtful answers discussed the prevailing patriarchal attitudes and debated to what extent actual opposition to her husband would have been viable.

#### Question 3 – Anónimo: *Lazarillo de Tormes*

(a) Many candidates answered this question. Some disagreed with Lazarillo's assessment of the 'buldero', citing the lack of physical harm and generally less despicable behaviour than the 'ciego'. On the other hand the 'buldero' conducted deception on a huge scale and those most affected were the innocent and impressionable poor. Another factor to support the assertion that this master is the worst so far relates to the way he is exploiting the influence of the Church in a purely selfish way going against all the tenets of Christian behaviour. This is not to ignore the fact that the clergy collude with him for their own gains. More thoughtful responses considered Lazarillo's estimation of the 'buldero' in terms of his own moral awakening, but also analysed to what extent the influence lasted in affecting Lazarillo's own decision-making.

(b) This was another popular question. There was some debate over the difference between respect and empathy and a range of views on the seriousness of Lazarillo's humiliation by the Archpriest and the extent of his own self-deception. Only a few candidates referred to Lazarillo's rejection of the 'buldero' and his compassion for the 'Escudero' as worthy of respect. Some argued that respect for Lazarillo decreased as he rose up the social scale, exemplified in his purchase of better clothes. Most felt that Lazarillo had little choice but to look after himself in order to survive.

#### Question 4 – Pedro Calderón de la Barca: *El alcalde de Zalamea*

(a) This text was not such a popular choice this Session. Some answers to this option were too literal in simply stating that Mendo did not see Isabel as a suitable wife; her status was too low. He was never a real contender for Isabel's hand from her point of view, either, because he was such a ridiculous figure and had no money. The best responses went on to examine the whole theme of honour and social standing, and the true feelings of the Captain towards Isabel.

(b) The debate between educating and entertaining was dealt with in a number of ways. Some felt that characters such as Mendo and Chispa were very central to the play and given a large amount of action, indicating that entertaining was most important. Others felt that the character of Crespo, through his instructions on how to conduct himself to his son and his own attitudes to honour could be seen as a clear message to the audience. Indeed examples such as his rejection of buying false honour or taking the law into his own hands point to this. The fact that his belief in morality trumping social rank is endorsed by the King himself would support this argument. It was also valid to consider that the subject matter of rape, execution and the solidity of justice is serious and challenging. By including entertaining, or lighter elements in the play made the lessons more appealing to the audience. Understanding of Golden Age theatre as a whole was helpful in this regard.

#### Sección B

#### Question 5 – Carmen Laforet: *Nada*

(a) This question raised an important issue in examination technique. The wording of the question requires candidates to debate to what extent Andrea learned from the suffering she endured during her year in Barcelona. Those candidates who described or listed the difficulties she faced were not as successful as others who identified clearly what she actually learned along the way besides resilience. This could include, for example, how to understand and navigate through relationships within the family and amongst people she met of her own age. There are a number of approaches which all depend on effective analysis and reference to achieve success.

(b) Angustias was not present throughout the novel and her role went beyond that of being a figure against whom Andrea could kick on her own journey of self-development. Angustias' life and the choices she made point to a more general representation of conservative values prevalent under post Civil War Francoism. Andrea was subject to Angustias' oppression in terms of her freedom and financial independence in the name of morality and religion. However Angustias herself did not subscribe to these rules; she was tainted by her own hypocrisy and showed the limited options open to unmarried women at the time.

#### Question 6 – Federico García Lorca: *Bodas de Sangre*

Virtually every candidate answered on this text.

(a) There was some debate around the meaning of 'ser feliz' and how it might differ according to the circumstances of the various characters. For some, being happy could equate to passive contentment within conventional social boundaries whereas others seek abandoned joy, ignoring any social norms. Many saw the heart of the play lying in the conflict between these two experiences. Some comments made by candidates include 'se es feliz siguiendo el corazón', 'es cuestión de deseos personales o la presión de la sociedad'. For the Novio, his mother and the Novia's father, the important thing is to follow what is expected and honour the family. The Novia and Leonardo have different feelings. They have tried to do what is correct but it does not work. The power of tradition and reputation is victorious. The best answers analysed the way the individual is depicted in the play and considered Lorca's intentions.

(b) This also aroused debate. Almost all felt that the Madre was a negative, critical person but that some of these attitudes were understandable and possibly justifiable. Opinions were divided as to whether her doom-laden view of life contributed to the final tragedy by sending the Novio to seek vengeance, or simply anticipated it. Her focus on death, suffering and honour could be said to be reflected in the attitude of the supernatural 'characters' who help to ensure that vengeance is carried out. The Madre's treatment of the Novia at the end could also be interpreted as cruel and an extension of avenging her own loss.

#### Question 7 – Gabriela Mistral: *Tala: Lagar*

As has been the practice in earlier sessions, a detailed report has not been given on responses to this text. The number of responses is small.

(a) Candidates must have considerable experience in preparing a detailed commentary on a poem, with awareness of the use of poetic technique and choice of language as well as imagery and the presentation of themes.

(b) Candidates have much scope in choosing three poems from the list on the syllabus to explore and analyse the question, so no two responses will be the same. Examiners look for judicious choice of poems, a clear understanding of how the poet expresses her sense of being an outsider, analysing the poetic techniques as well as the thematic content.

#### Question 8 – Isabel Allende: *La casa de los espíritus*

(a) Some interesting responses to this question challenged the statement given. They focused on Esteban Trueba and the relationship between internal passions and external political forces. He seemed to deal with his personal relationships in the same way as he exerted control in his political activities and those of his party. Trueba was patriarchal, with little concept of joint responsibility. He had influence in the collapse of the economy and the 'golpe de estado'. Here both the external and internal matters coincide as Trueba's family is shocked by Alba's detention and torture. This is as much a blow to Trueba as Clara's refusal to talk to him. However he generally seems distanced from the feelings of his family members. Individuals in the family are affected deeply by personal difficulties of all sorts as well as the trauma of wider political events.

(b) The most successful answers to this option linked individual characters' suffering and the wider political events which had devastating consequences for the country, for example the assassination of Jaime and the 'golpe de estado'. Generally speaking, any challenge to the regime was quashed. There was no debate or democracy and the voice of the individual was not heard. The country suffered from the lack of a moral centre as corruption and the use of violence for control was rife. Those with a conscience were killed or escaped abroad.

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**Paper 9719/43**

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There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.