

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/21
Reading and Writing

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

The texts concerning environmentally friendly business practices and lifestyles were generally well understood by candidates. The linguistic competence of the candidates was generally excellent and, provided that there were no penalties for lack of comprehension, top marks for quality of language were very commonly awarded. Scripts were generally well presented, and there appeared to be little difficulty in meeting the time constraints.

Awareness of the techniques required for this examination was variable and often made a considerable difference to the final mark. Lifting, (the direct copying of five or more words from the text), often invalidated a mark for comprehension. Better candidates produced skillful paraphrasing in their answers; those who were less confident in their understanding often deconstructed and then reordered parts of sentences from the text with very variable degrees of success. A number of candidates exceeded the permitted number of words in **Question 5** which meant that part, or sometimes all, of their personal response could not be assessed.

Comments on specific questions

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

This exercise is usually found to be less of a challenge than the following question. Not so this year. The wrong phrase was often selected for answers, especially for **(b)** and **(e)**. The other common reason for not scoring the mark was to add or omit words from the beginning or end of the target phrase.

- (a)** Many were correct, although some lost a mark by prefacing the phrase with *vivir...* or adding *...a*.
- (b)** A lot of difficulty was found in matching *en su totalidad es* with *de pies a cabeza resulta*. Those who were successful sometimes omitted the final *...resulta*.
- (c)** This match proved to be more accessible.
- (d)** The correct phrase was identified by the majority of candidates.

- (e) Perhaps through unfamiliarity with the meaning of *sinónimo*, many candidates found difficulty in matching *equivale a costoso* with *es sinónimo de caro*.

Question 2

This question was generally answered well by all candidates with the considerable majority scoring higher marks than for the previous exercise. A few attempted mistakenly to paraphrase their answers, when all that is required is a grammatical manipulation which uses the words which are given.

- (a) This was generally done well, although a few lost the mark by answering *es necesario más empresas* (without *que*).
- (b) Most candidates were also successful here. Some overlooked the need to end their answer with *...de* in order to match *...con* in the cue.
- (c) This manipulation proved to be more demanding than the others. Many attempted to use verbs which did not have the same meaning as *suelen* or *tienden a*.
- (d) Given the predominance of native speaker candidates, it was somewhat surprising that a number overlooked the need for a subjunctive after *hacen que...* A few wrongly made the subjunctive verb plural.
- (e) Acceptable answers were either *nos damos cuenta de que* or *tomamos/tenemos en cuenta que*. Variations of these, such as *nos damos cuenta que* or *tomamos/tenemos en cuenta de que* were not accepted.

Question 3

Candidates taking 9719 were usually successful in presenting the required information in their own words, often using more complex linguistic structures. Instances of lifting five or more words directly from the text occurred often by oversight rather than by design. Many 8685 and 8665 candidates gave some but not always all of the required information, and their awareness of the lifting rule was a little more patchy. Attempts at re-ordering the words of key phrases, usually because of difficulties of comprehension, did not always succeed in conveying the correct meaning.

- (a) Most candidates got the first point, although a common lift, perhaps unconscious, was *los ingredientes de origen animal*. It was necessary to qualify that few brands were *100 per cent* or *completamente transparentes* in indicating the origin of their products to score the second mark. The other two marks for *no es fácil verificar* and *más empresas deben aceptar inspecciones* were often elusive to many candidates.
- (b) This was the most successful question for the majority of candidates. Nearly all were able to stress the importance of knowing that a product had not been previously tested on animals. The second point was also widely noted, although some marks were lost by lifting five or more words from *que no cuentan con colorantes o aromas hechos con componentes*.
- (c) Conversely, this sometimes proved more challenging for many candidates. Most wrote that eco-clothes tended to lack style or aesthetics. However, the facts that there was also little variety in style and that the owners wanted to offer what they had been unable to find as customers, were missing from many answers.
- (d) Most scored at least one mark for this question but few got all three. The most common correct element was the fact that the company used recycled cardboard in its packaging. The fact that *Solera* had stopped using plastic in any of its shipments was frequently overlooked. Paraphrasing the meaning of *siempre compensamos la huella medioambiental de nuestros envíos* was a challenge which only the best candidates accomplished successfully.
- (e) This was generally answered well by a majority of candidates. Most successfully stated that *la ropa vegana es más cara*. Many went on to score the other two marks for noting that customers wished to identify with the cause and contribute to the protection of the environment, provided that they managed to avoid lifting from *porque se sienten identificados con lo que* and *quieren contribuir a la protección del medioambiente*.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

Comprehension of this second text, which relates how what we eat can have an impact on the environment, was generally sound, and candidates recorded marks similar to those scored in the previous question.

- (a) Three pieces of information were needed and better candidates were successful in recording all of them. Most scored marks for noting that *Juliana* only buys food products that have been produced locally and for expressing any one of the following ideas: *se preocupa por la salud del planeta/su objetivo es cuidar del medioambiente como consumidora/consume productos menos perjudiciales para el medioambiente*. The most commonly missed mark was the one for noting that she buys *marcas que animen a reutilizar los envases*.
- (b) Many candidates again did well on this question. Most scored marks for stating that food that had been imported or transported a long way and fish should be avoided. (A common lift was *de otra parte del mundo*). A number of candidates missed the third mark with responses such as *conocer las temporadas en que se producen los alimentos*, which does not answer the question *¿Qué se debe evitar para tener una dieta climática?*
- (c) A lot of candidates missed marks for this question often because they failed to make clear that it is the production (not the consumption) of beef that causes high CO₂ levels. For the second point, a comparison was needed namely, that meat production produced more greenhouse gases than the world's transport vehicles. The point that it produces high levels of ammonia was the most successful.
- (d) A good number of candidates made the point that the health of humanity and the planet go together, although there was some lifting from the line *la salud del ser humano y la del planeta van de la mano*. Most clearly understood the idea that *elegir bien lo que uno come es una manera de salvar el medioambiente*. Sometimes the element of choosing our future or a better future was missing from the final point.
- (e) The vast majority wrote that to be a *climariano* you needed a lot of time, and a good number explained that the 'sustainable' products were not always easy to find. However, not so many were able to show that they had understood that knowing about nutrition or choosing the right products *requieren esfuerzo*.

Question 5

For some candidates a lack of familiarity with the techniques required for this question was often responsible for a significant reduction in the final mark which might have been achieved. It is important to adhere to the word count of 140 words for both parts of the question. Anything in excess of 160 words is disregarded, and in extreme cases this can lead to no marks being awarded for **part (b)**, the personal response.

- (a) To score well here, it is necessary to select specific details from the texts which answer the question concisely. Those candidates who attempted to write in general terms about dietary considerations achieved lower marks than those who considered each text in turn and selected facts relevant to the question. Introductory sentences, such as the following, are unnecessary and waste words: *En los textos 1 y 2 se habla de lo que es ser vegano y lo que es ser climariano*.

There were a few instances of personal opinions being incorrectly offered in this part of the question. There is no credit for this in the marks scheme.

Those who paid attention to the question asked, and picked out specific details about the difficulties of being vegan and *climariano* – many of which had already formed part of answers to comprehension questions – scored well. No introductions or conclusions are required and the recommended technique is to plunge straight in:

Para los veganos es difícil identificar ingredientes de origen animal ✓ y pocas marcas son 100 por cent transparentes. ✓ También hace falta más variedad en las prendas ✓ y sus precios son elevados. ✓ Ser climariano también es difícil porque requiere esfuerzo ✓ y tiempo... ✓

Six marks have been scored in roughly one third of the words available, leaving ample room for further details and then 5**(b)**.

An illustration of an answer which uses a similar number of words without recording a single mark is:

En los textos leídos previamente se tocan los temas que en la sociedad que vivimos hoy por hoy son cada vez más importantes: el veganismo, que nos habla mucho del cuidado al animal, y climariano que nos cuenta cómo a través de la consumición uno puede ayudar al ambiente...

- (b)** Candidates who had left 40 or so words for this part of the answer were usually able to pick up another 3 to 5 marks, provided that they answered question. Higher marks were achieved by those who introduced some originality in their answers. A few answers could not be marked as the word limit had already been exceeded.

Although there was a growing eco-friendly awareness in most candidates' countries of residence, interest among the inhabitants in the origins of the food they consumed was considered to be relatively thin on the ground. Far greater importance was attached to availability and pricing. In some countries there appeared to be a small but increasing number of vegans.

Quality of Language

In this cohort, there were few cases of very poor Spanish. Most seemed to come from a native-speaker background. Unless they had been penalised for scoring zero in any of the comprehension questions, many candidates were awarded maximum marks in all three quality of language assessments.

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/22
Reading and Writing

Key messages

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- **Language:** when preparing for the exam, make sure to revise the basic agreements, tenses and verb endings.

General comments

The texts concerning two different types of criminality and the efforts of the authorities to combat this were generally well understood by candidates. Most of those taking 9719 were first language speakers who were able to show clear understanding of the topic in good Spanish. A number of candidates taking 8685 were candidates of Spanish as a foreign language who, despite lacking the same fluency of expression, were often also able to demonstrate good comprehension. Scripts were generally well presented, and there appeared to be little difficulty in meeting the time constraints.

Awareness of the techniques required for this examination was variable and often made a considerable difference to the final mark. Many candidates appeared to have been well coached in the techniques required although lifting, (the direct copying of five or more words from the text), often invalidated a mark for comprehension. Better candidates produced skillful paraphrasing in their answers; less able candidates often deconstructed and then reordered parts of sentences in the text with very variable degrees of success. A small number of candidates exceeded the permitted number of words in **Question 5** which meant that part, or sometimes all, of their personal response could not be assessed.

Comments on specific questions

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

Although good scores were often achieved for this question a few candidates selected the wrong phrase for their answers. The other commonest reason for not scoring the mark was to add or omit words from the beginning or end of the target phrase.

- (a) Many were correct, although some tried to use references in the text to *fusiles*, which did not work. Others lost the mark by adding *...a sus guardaparques* to the correct answer.
- (b) This was generally done well. A few incorrectly offered *no disponer de recursos mínimos*.

- (c) The phrase was almost universally correctly identified. Answers prefaced by *en...* or which omitted *las...* did not score.
- (d) There were very few incorrect answers.
- (e) This again was successfully answered by the vast majority of candidates.

Question 2

This question was generally answered well by 9719 candidates and a number scored higher marks than for the previous exercise. It proved to be much more of a challenge for 8685 candidates.

- (a) The length of the phrase to be manipulated was sometimes a problem, and a few candidates had difficulty in fitting the words into a logical sequence. The majority correctly opted for *los tesoros naturales no pueden ser custodiados por el Estado*, although alternative versions such as *el Estado no puede (man)tener/dejar custodiados los tesoros naturales* were also acceptable.
- (b) The simplest approach was to answer in two words *sigue creciendo*. (The misspelling *creciendo* was not allowed). There were several acceptable variations, such as *sigue sin parar* or *sigue en/su crecimiento*.
- (c) Not unexpectedly, most 9719 candidates were aware of the need for a subjunctive here and usually came up with an acceptable construction. 8685 candidates found this more of a challenge.
- (d) A similar differentiation was very noticeable here. How to use *sober* in this manipulation appeared very obvious to native speakers. Not so to those whose first language was not Spanish.
- (e) The number of different ways in which *falta* can be used caused a few more problems here. Most 9719 candidates correctly answered *si hace falta incendiar un bosque*.

Question 3

Candidates taking 9719 were usually successful in presenting the required information in their own words, often using more complex linguistic structures. Instances of lifting five or more words directly from the text occurred often by oversight rather than by design. Many 8685 candidates appeared to be aware of the lifting rule and began their answers in their own words, with lifting being more prevalent in the latter part of their answers. Attempts at re-ordering the words of key phrases did not always succeed in conveying the correct meaning.

- (a) This was generally done well, with most candidates referring to all, or at least two, of the three points required: the possibility of encountering a drugs trafficker, that these criminals used the forest to store their goods and that there were only a low number of forest rangers.
- (b) Four marks were on offer here provided that answers contained sufficient details. Many candidates noted the lack of protection and resources which the natural parks were experiencing. Not so many were successful in giving full details of the new equipment destined for the rangers: *fusiles/armas por valor de 300 000 dólares* and *chalecos antibalas, donados por EEUU*. A common lift was *una inversión de 300000 dólares en fusiles*.
- (c) This question proved to be a little more demanding, especially for 8685 candidates. That the local inhabitants did not hesitate to report illegal activities causing environmental damage in the parks was often stated successfully. More difficulty was found in stating the belief that a tree was of greater value growing than when felled, with lack of comprehension often illustrated by lifting five or more words from *que es más rentable el árbol en el bosque que un árbol talado*.
- (d) Few candidates scored both marks here. Many noted the lack of investment in the parks but neglected to qualify it by saying that it had been going on for twenty years. Difficulty was also found in noting that the parks were experiencing an increase in *problemas no relacionados con la naturaleza*.
- (e) To score the first two marks on offer here it was necessary to establish the contrast between the minor dangers (*escopeta*) which the park rangers experienced when encountering trespassers in the past and the grave perils (*rifles automáticos*) they faced today. For the other two marks it was

necessary to elaborate further on the brazenness of the *narcotraficantes*: *no tienen en consideración a las personas ni a la naturaleza* and *pueden decidir prender fuego a un bosque para asustar/intimidar*.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

Comprehension of this second text concerning pickpockets in Madrid was good, with candidates scoring slightly higher marks than for the previous exercise.

- (a) Three pieces of information were needed and not many candidates were successful in recording all of them. To their credit, many non-native speakers managed to work out the meaning of *almendra central* and, provided that they did not lift *las líneas que pasan por*, were able to score the mark. The other two marks came from noting that the value of the stolen goods rarely exceeded 400 euros and that both wallets and mobile phones were the items most commonly targeted.
- (b) Most candidates did well on this question. Many were able to state that the police had photographs of the pickpockets and were able to identify them when they were patrolling the stations; although a common lift was *de patrulla en las estaciones*. The point that the pickpockets were most likely to be operating when the Metro was at its most crowded, during rush hour or at times of major events, was often clearly stated. A little more difficulty was encountered in noting that the criminals followed the crowds to other locations, notably the beaches during the summer tourist season.
- (c) This was another question where candidates often mentioned one or two, but not all three, of the details being sought. Many were able to note that there was not a set day or time when the pickpockets were most likely to be operating. More difficulty was found in stating that it was impossible to predict where they would be operating. Not every candidate who had been successful in establishing these two points was able to round them off by saying that *la situación cambia en cualquier momento* or *pueden influir miles de factores*.
- (d) To score two of the three marks on offer here, in addition to noting that there were many cameras in the Metro, it was necessary to clarify that these were used to identify the criminal and follow the journey of the victim. Most candidates clearly understood that the victim needed to act swiftly as the camera recordings would soon be erased.
- (e) This question was done well, with many candidates scoring both marks for noting that mobile phones can be *reprogramados para no ser rastreados* and *se venden fácilmente en el mercado negro*.

Question 5

For some candidates a lack of familiarity with the techniques required for this question was often responsible for a significant reduction in the final mark which might have been achieved. It is important to adhere to the word count of 140 words for **both** parts of the question. Anything in excess of 160 words is disregarded, and in extreme cases this can lead to no marks being awarded for **part (b)**, the personal response.

- (a) To score well here, it is necessary to select specific details from the texts which answer the question concisely. Those candidates who attempted to write in general terms about crime achieved lower marks than those who considered each text in turn and selected facts relevant to the question. Introductory sentences, such as the following, are unnecessary and waste words: *Los crímenes son algo prácticamente imposible de erradicar y tanto en Costa Rica como en Madrid son un problema*.

There was also a tendency among less able candidates to copy verbatim from the texts when extracting key details. Although there is no penalty for this, it should be remembered that any copied material will usually be less concise in nature and therefore will use a lot of words to cover few details, and will not be considered in the Quality of Language mark. There were a few instances of personal opinions being incorrectly offered in this part of the question.

Those who paid attention to the question asked, and picked out specific details about the difficulties of combatting crime – many of which had already formed part of answers to comprehension

questions – scored well. No introductions or conclusions are required and the recommended technique is to plunge straight in:

En Costa Rica hay un guardaparque por cada 4000 hectáreas ✓ y el gobierno lleva 20 años sin invertir en los parques. ✓ Además hay problemas con narcotraficantes ✓ armados de rifles automáticos ✓ que hacen lo necesario para intimidar a los guardaparques... ✓

Five marks have been scored in roughly one third of the words available, leaving ample room for details about the Madrid pickpockets and then 5**(b)**.

An illustration of an answer which uses 58 words before recording a single mark is:

En el Metro de Madrid y en los parques Nacionales de Costa Rica se pueden identificar dos problemas criminales, los cuales se adaptan a las precauciones que hacen los policías en el Metro o los guardaparques. En el caso de los parques nacionales de Costa Rica, los cuales han sido infiltrados por miembros de bandas organizadas de narcotraficantes... ✓

- (b)** Candidates who had left 40 or so words for this part of the answer were usually able to pick up another 3 to 5 marks, provided that they answered question. Higher marks were achieved by those who introduced some originality in their answers. A few answers could not be marked as the word limit had already been exceeded.

The prevalence of security cameras varied according to candidates' nationalities. Those who lived in countries with an abundance of cameras mostly thought they were a good thing, deterring crime and giving a greater feeling of security. A minority did not like the fact that they were being watched all the time. Those who lived in countries with few cameras wished for more.

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 awarded ranged from Below Average to Good, with most marks falling in the Sound 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

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/41
Texts

Key messages

Many of our centres are still being affected by the global pandemic. This has meant that the entry for the component was lower than usual, this Session. The comments which follow give guidance on the content of responses, with fewer reflections on the performance of candidates, in light of the current circumstances.

The key messages for our candidates remain those mentioned in previous Sessions. It is pleasing to note that examiners are seeing an ongoing improvement in the number of candidates who have prepared the texts thoroughly. The second main factor in achieving a good result on this component is to respond precisely and with reference to the text to the question as it is set. Identify the key task in the question, note whether there are specific instructions, such as 'with reference to characters x and y', 'in relation to the theme of x', 'as shown in **Section 1/Act II**', and so on, and focus on the question, with supporting evidence from the text.

General comments

Candidates generally observe the rubrics correctly. Examiners request that all answers are written legibly.

Comments on specific questions

These comments do not constitute model answers, rather suggest possible approaches. Other responses may be equally acceptable.

Section 1

Question 1

Emilia Pardo Bazán: *Los Pazos de Ulloa*

- (a) (i) The child is Nucha's daughter.
- (ii) Julián regrets becoming too attached.
- (iii) Perhaps a key starting point here could be the phrase '*ha triunfado el infierno*'. Responses indicated that Julián was correct. Any attempts to civilise the household had failed. The marriage between the Marqués and Nucha was a mistake, and both Nucha and her daughter suffered as a result. The priest recognises his errors, realising he did not fit in to this society and his role was at best ineffective, at worst damaging. The Marqués, Primitivo and Sabel did exactly as they wished. The best answers related the episode to the wider issues presented in the novel.
- (b) The question asks candidates to analyse the premise that the author depicts a society in which change is impossible. The response should show what kind of change was needed – a society steeped in rural values, based on strength and violence, protecting the status quo. The landowning elite only want to maintain their social position, but feel able to take advantage of those below them in status. Ironically, the Marquis is cheated by Primitivo because he does not carry out his responsibilities adequately. There is some degree of nuance in that there were improvements in Cebré described at the end of the novel, so the rural/urban divide may be changing, although it had not yet reached the Pazos. Julián's role in the situation as a moral judge was also a valid approach.

Question 2

Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda: *Sab*

- (a) (i) This refers to the slave rebellion in St Dominique.
- (ii) The situation refers to Cuba also.
- (iii) As has been suggested in the 'Key messages', candidates should first define their terms in identifying the main issue to be analysed and explain what it is. What is 'barbarie'? It can be defined in more than one way – the most obvious possibly the European exploitation of the New World, exhibiting racism and the use of force in enslaving others in order to profit from them. There are many examples of physical violence and disregard. At the same time, Sab, the supposed 'lesser' being has greater powers of intellect, empathy and selflessness than those presumed to be superior to him, merely by birth. The best responses identified this and looked at both individuals as well as the historical context.
- (b) This option asks candidates to analyse the statement that the main conflict in the novel is between Sab, a slave, who exhibits virtues normally associated with white people, and a white man (Enrique), who is selfish and immoral. The best answers would therefore give a detailed analysis of the motivation and behaviour of both characters, with evidence from the text to support the arguments made. Responses favoured Sab, showing how he was prepared to sacrifice his own happiness for the benefit of others. Enrique was moved only by the prospect of wealth and status.

Question 3

Gabriel García Márquez: *El amor en los tiempos del cólera*

- (a) (i) Florentino was playing the violin.
- (ii) He was completely unaware of current affairs blinded by his feelings for Fermina – arrested as spy.
- (iii) Most responses were positive towards Florentino but the more detailed analyses felt he had shown much selfishness in the way he had treated women in his life. He seemed to be able to rationalise his behaviour by compartmentalising his relationships without considering how he affected others. He could not see himself as others saw him, hence the reference to '*hacer el ridículo*'.

On the other hand, Florentino's whole life seemed to revolve around improving his status to make him good enough for Fermina, and he was determined to win her over, no matter how long it would take. His affection for her appeared real and he wanted to make her happy despite the fact that they had had to wait so long. At least his focus was entirely on Fermina, unlike that of her late husband.

- (b) This option asks candidates to examine the theme of faithfulness in the novel. There are a number of aspects to this, ranging from the commitment of Florentino to Fermina, Fermina's relationship with her husband, Jeremiah's lover's loyalty to him to enable him to carry out his intention to die before he became old, even Leona Cassini's service to Florentino. The ship on which Florentino and Fermina escape was named '*Nueva Fidelidad*'. Answers to this question tended to focus on the contrast between Florentino and Juvenal and their respective attitude to Fermina. Candidates understood the novel and the most successful answers could incorporate a number of the thematic approaches.

Question 4

Anónimo: *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes*

- (a) (i) His behaviour inappropriate (see lines 2/3 of extract).
- (ii) He had so many errands to complete for his master.
- (iii) The statement in the question was accepted by those who chose to answer this option. The fraile demonstrated the hypocrisy seen in many clerics in that the teachings of the Church were ignored in the way they behaved. This tratado differs in that there are hints of even worse actions as

Lazarillo says he can't mention them. This technique could be contrasted with other episodes – the absence of detail may be more effective. So criticism of the Church was seen as the central theme. Christian charity had been replaced by selfishness and greed. To what extent did this influence society at large? Was Lazarillo as guilty as the clerics in the fact that he benefited from his association with the archpriest?

- (b) Candidates felt that society was lacking in compassion overall. There were some instances of kindness, but Lazarillo's experiences seemed to suggest that the main aim in life was to get on, even if that meant learning a certain ruthlessness from his masters. Society had replaced true religion with opportunism. Any charitable behaviour, for example helping Lázaro after he had been assaulted, was limited – individuals were expected to be independent and look after themselves. Lázaro's mother was criticised by some candidates, who felt she was unkind in handing her son over to a blind man but others saw this as symptomatic of a cruel society. She had no other option as poverty was endemic.

Section 2

Question 5

Carmen Martín Gaité: *Las ataduras*

- (a) There was a temptation to tell the whole story in response to this question, which gave no focus to the argument. Candidates needed to identify and analyse those '*momentos críticos*' which can be said to influence the course of Alina's life. Most felt that Eloy's departure to South America and the death of her grandfather were some of the key events. Others mentioned the visit of her parents to Paris. There is no definitively correct response in terms of how many moments, or which ones are chosen. The success of the essay depends on how the candidate uses analysis of each event to show how Alina reacts and possibly changes her way of thinking and how this then affected other decisions she made.
- (b) This was the less popular option on the text. There was little evidence of true happiness, according to responses seen. Most focused on the issue of '*ataaduras*' and whether these contribute to happiness or not. There were some comments on the presentation and criticism of society, where it was more difficult for women to follow their own path than for men. The expectations on women were limiting and even though some were happy (Alina's mother?) there were few possibilities for individual fulfilment beyond the traditional roles. Alina's father was happy when he was in control. Was Alina and Phillippe's marriage happy or just a formality expected by society. Most felt there were more questions than answers, which pointed to the complexity of human relationships and lives.

Question 6

Federico García Lorca: *Yerma*

- (a) Virtually all candidates answered on this text.

Candidates are advised to read the question very carefully before drafting their answer. The wording is important as the focus is on the importance of Juan's words for Yerma. This could be defined as a key element in Yerma's understanding of Juan – showing the gulf between them, and determining her subsequent behaviour. Candidates generally know the text well and understand the essence of the themes. The best answers show the ability to select evidence from the text and to construct an effective argument, with a clear focus on the question as it is set.

- (b) This question gave candidates the opportunity to go beyond the narrative of the play and analyse the intention of the author in presenting the dilemma suffered by Yerma – someone unable to fulfil her individual needs in the society in which she lives, and the tragic consequences of this. Successful essays considered this predicament and showed how Lorca depicted it through the use of expressive images. The dramatic techniques employed also added to this, by evoking the sense of entrapment in the interior scenes and false freedom outside as there is always someone watching and commenting. Yerma is trapped by external forces as well as her own sense of honour. Some characters were happy, as they were able to fit in to the expected moulds, but there was also a sense of unease.

Question 7

Gabriela Mistral: *Tala/Lagar*

The practice for questions on poetry is not to give an outline answer as the responses are inevitably so individual. Examiners look for knowledge and understanding of the work, both in terms of the treatment of themes and the poetic techniques employed by the author.

Question 8

Isabel Allende: *La casa de los espíritus*

- (a) This option asks candidates to consider two aspects of the novel – ‘*humanidad/política*’ and argue whether one is more dominant than the other. Both must therefore be considered. There were fewer responses than usual to this text, but the feeling was that Allende focused on the individual both in terms of relationships and in politics. Esteban and Clara were the main focus of analysis. Certainly Esteban’s character and the way he reacts with his family and employees could be said to be mirrored in his political career.
- (b) The role of the Church in the novel reflects society as a whole. It is a patriarchal society, where the role of women is subservient to that of men; the husband is the head of the household; there are ‘*mujeres decentes*’ and ‘*otras*’; society is unequal but that is the status quo and the Church does not challenge it. Clara is daring in challenging Padre Restrepo over the existence of hell and Tránsito Soto, though not a ‘decent’ woman in the eyes of the Church, displays Christian charity and compassion in securing the release of Alba. The Church is right-wing, not on the side of the people.

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/42
Texts

Key messages

Many of our centres are still being affected by the global pandemic. This has meant that the entry for the component was lower than usual, this Session. The comments which follow give guidance on the content of responses, with fewer reflections on the performance of candidates, in light of the current circumstances.

The key messages for our candidates remain those mentioned in previous Sessions. It is pleasing to note that examiners are seeing an ongoing improvement in the number of candidates who have prepared the texts thoroughly. The second main factor in achieving a good result on this component is to respond precisely and with reference to the text to the question as it is set. Identify the key task in the question, note whether there are specific instructions, such as 'with reference to characters x and y', 'in relation to the theme of x', 'as shown in **Section 1/Act II**', and so on, and focus on the question, with supporting evidence from the text.

General comments

Candidates generally observe the rubrics correctly. Examiners request that all answers are written legibly.

Comments on specific questions

These comments do not constitute model answers, rather suggest possible approaches. Other responses may be equally acceptable.

Section 1

Question 1

Emilia Pardo Bazán: *Los Pazos de Ulloa*

- (a) (i) Don Pedro criticises the quality of the statues of the saints and the Cathedral itself.
- (ii) He has no imagination and cannot see beyond the obvious – no sentiment.
- (iii) Don Pedro considers that he knows best and has a strong sense of self-importance. The general brutishness and ignorance displayed in the extract can be seen in the way he conducts his affairs at Ulloa, in that he leaves things to Primitivo, allowing himself to be manipulated by both him and his daughter. The reason for his visit to Santiago was to find a wife. Why did he choose Nucha when he was initially so attracted to Rita? Consider his selfishness and the fact that Nucha appeared to be easier to dominate than the 'forward' Rita. Don Pedro's judgement is questioned.
- (b) This question was the less popular of the two options. The essence of the discussion was the extent to which '*la naturaleza*', which could be interpreted as instinct, defeats civilisation, reflecting a lack of control or order. There had been hope in that the marriage of Pedro and Nucha may create a positive and calm atmosphere '*bella y serena*', but the baser instincts prevailed. This can be traced through the course of the novel as particular characters develop and exert control over others.

Question 2

Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda: *Sab*

- (a) (i) Teresa.
- (ii) It is the day of Carlota's wedding to Enrique and Teresa loves him.
- (iii) The question as to who (if anyone) is happy in this novel allows candidates to examine the main themes and to consider the motivation of the main characters. Ironically, the happiest individuals are also the most sad. Teresa finds contentment in the convent, having rejected the opportunity to use the money offered by Sab to entice Enrique from Carlota. Sab dies knowing he did what Carlota wanted in helping the marriage to take place and in protecting Enrique. Neither Carlota nor Enrique are happy as the marriage was based on idealism on Carlota's part and on financial gain for Enrique.
- (b) Candidates agreed that the novel does present social criticism. There were few responses, but most focused on the issues of slavery and the exploitation of the colonies by the Spaniards. Some felt that the author's interests lay more in her development of the characters than in criticism of society at the time. There was some confusion as to Sab's status – he was offered freedom more than once but chose not to accept it. His own parentage may well have been a factor in the way he was treated, but his education gave him the means to express the plight of the slaves in an articulate way.

Question 3

Gabriel García Márquez: *El amor en los tiempos del cólera*

- (a) (i) Jeremiah's lover.
- (ii) That he would die before he reached old age.
- (iii) The most successful answers to this question found a way of identifying attitudes to old age and analysing each one. Most found the novel presented a positive picture of being or getting older, despite some drawbacks. Jeremiah reflected one extreme – the fear, loathing and despair of being old and out of control, and taking the decision to end one's life before suffering from old age. Juvenal can be seen as careless in bringing about his own needless death in that he ignored his physical limitations. At the same time he had lost a sense of himself as a respected physician and was feeling ignored and rejected professionally. Florentino continually reinvented himself and despite some failings was determined to keep going. He sadly noted Fermina's signs of ageing but still saw opportunities to fulfil his ambitions. Fermina also realised that in old age she was more able to ignore any comments from others and to decide for herself. Perhaps old age meant a new, even if limited life for the couple and it is never too late to be happy.
- (b) Almost all the responses to this question agreed with the author's assertions as to the strength and importance of Fermina. Many pointed out that while many passages of the novel were concerned with Florentino, his sexual conquests and ambition were all being driven by his obsession with Fermina, who formed the link between the main characters. Some responses fell down by dwelling exclusively on the first part of the question, the strength of Fermina, a frequent example being the way in which she deals with her husband's infidelity, and neglecting to comment on her importance to the novel as a whole.

Question 4

Anónimo: *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes*

- (a) (i) They deceived the local people with false 'bulas'.
- (ii) Lazarillo was shocked, taken in by the drama enacted and also impressed by their performance.

- (iii) This question was one of the most popular choices. Unfortunately, a large number of responses were limited to lists of the ways that various rogues and swindlers operated, implying that for this to take place was proof enough for Lazarillo of innocent victims at large in society. More complete answers examined Lazarillo's gradual loss of innocence, culminating in his possible self-deception at the end of the novel, while also focusing on the idea of a complicitly gullible general population in the grip of a less than innocent church as a portrait of the wider society of the time.
- (b) This option presented a challenge in the comparative scarcity of examples to use from the novel. The better responses, seized on this very fact as illustrative of the position of women in a patriarchal society, and went on to discuss the portrayal of women as largely benevolent (the neighbours of the Escudero who come to Lazarillo's aid), or victims of oppression, forced into desperate actions in order to survive – Lazarillo's mother forced into prostitution and giving up her son, and his wife obliged to be the mistress of a more powerful man.

Section 2

Question 5

Carmen Martín Gaité: *Las ataduras*

- (a) The most successful responses to this option discussed not only the importance of Eloy to the development of the character Alina with references to their shared dreams while watching the river being the stimulus to broaden her horizons, their shared relationship with Alina's grandfather and the hint of romance, but also his role in the novel as a social document to the plight of uneducated young people in Galicia in that era linked to emigration. Some went on to link his role to a feminist reading of the text where the opportunities open to an impoverished poorly educated male were seen to be much greater than those of a young woman with a high level of education from a family of much higher social status. Some noted how Alina had empowered Eloy to develop opportunities by teaching him to read – and indicated how her reaction to the waiter in a scene towards the end of the story showed how close they had been.
- (b) More complete responses to this question examined the various different aspects of the question such as the importance of remembered sections to the structure of the novel and also the effects of memories on individual characters and on the reader him or herself. Most pointed out the effectiveness of the parallel reminiscences of Alina and her father in giving the novel a cinematic feel and also allowing the natural development of the characters, allowing the reader a greater understanding of their motivations. They also mentioned the significance of the grandfather's own memories to the plot and his fear of their extinction after his death, alongside the usefulness of reminiscence to Alina as a means of ordering her thoughts. It was not sufficient to simply mention important memories.

Question 6

Federico García Lorca: *Yerma*

This text attracted the most answers of the Paper. Virtually all candidates submitted a response.

- (a) Most answers were clear in agreeing that Yerma's sense of honour, which prevented her looking for ways to conceive a child outside her marriage, effectively found her trapped in an unbearable position. More complete responses also looked at Juan's own code of honour which literally attempted to keep Yerma imprisoned in the house and guarded by his sisters. Interesting comparisons were made between these two codes of honour, Yerma's private and personal and Juan's public for the benefit of the rest of society.
- (b) The more successful responses to this option went beyond simply listing which women showed kindness to Yerma and which did not, to discuss what the play revealed about a patriarchal society where motherhood had become almost competitive. Some essays went on to analyse the motivation of women who needed children to feel accepted, and those few who did not. This could lead to the wider issue of how an individual could fulfil themselves in such a society where anyone who did not fit the mould was seen as a threat.

Question 7

Gabriela Mistral: *Tala/Lagar*

It has not been practice to give commentary on the responses to these questions as the approach to poetry is so individual. Provided the text has been thoroughly prepared and understood, and the candidate is able to present a coherent analysis with supported evidence, examiners are ready to accept a range of interpretations of the work.

Question 8

Isabel Allende: *La casa de los espíritus*

- (a) This option has a clear focus on the political aspect of the novel. The tendency is to show how the right wing approach of Trueba is cruel and repressive. Women are seen as second class citizens and power depends on force. The reader feels compassion for Trueba's victims, and his family. Most of them take a different political stance to Trueba or seek personal revenge from him. The reader is led to admire Jaime and Pedro Tercero, criticise political corruption and violence and is made aware of some nuance at the end of the novel when Trueba uses personal contacts to free Alba and arranges for Blanca and Pedro to flee to Canada.
- (b) The alternative question asks candidates to analyse the role of '*violencia y soledad*' in the general sense and also as the means of enforcing power in personal relationships within the novel. The most effective strategy may be to identify a small number of characters and show how they either use violence deliberately cutting individuals out, or are victims of this behaviour. The obvious choice would be Esteban and Clara, but there are many other possibilities. The key to a good answer is to find a way of developing an analytic approach without resorting to narrative.