

SPANISH

<p>Paper 8685/01 Speaking</p>

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 $3\frac{1}{2}$ minutes); **(ii)** Topic Conversation (7–8 minutes) on issues arising from the Presentation; **(iii)** General Conversation (8–9 minutes) on themes complete different from those raised in the Topic Conversation.
- Each section should be clearly identified on the recordings, and the prescribed timings observed.
- Candidates should be reminded if necessary to ask the Examiner questions in both conversation sections and be reminded 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

The performance of candidates covered a large range.

On a few occasions the presentation was not related to any Spanish-speaking country. This, however, was increasingly rare. Centres seemed to be aware of the requirement to address the topic lists given in the Syllabus.

Prescribed timings were generally observed, though some centres, particularly those with few candidates, tended to prolong some of the sections of the tests. In a few centres, timings were short enough to put candidates at a disadvantage by not being given the opportunity to cover sufficient range of content or language.

Centres are reminded that teachers/examiners need to strive to develop a proper conversation with the candidates and prompt them to ask the required questions.

Candidates generally had sufficient information to respond to questions in the Topic Conversation and offered ideas and opinions. Most candidates remembered to ask the Examiner questions, but occasionally needed prompting to do so. Teachers conducting the test are reminded that they should if necessary prompt the candidate to ask at least two questions relevant to the issues actually being discussed.

The General Conversation section was variable in standard, both in terms of conduct of the test and in the level of candidate response. Teachers conducting the tests are reminded that they, and not the candidate, determine the issues to be discussed. Although many candidates rose to the occasion fairly readily, some were less forthcoming and were more hesitant in this section, especially when dealing with ideas and opinions. There was a marked difference in candidates' ability to deal with expected and well-rehearsed and

unexpected questions. As has been reported previously, candidates were not always called upon to operate at a sufficiently advanced level.

Centres are reminded that teachers/examiners should make a clear distinction between the Topic and General Conversations, and avoid conducting the General Conversation merely as an extension of the former. In such cases, candidates had insufficient opportunity to discuss a variety of issues or to offer a suitable range of higher-level language. Marks cannot be awarded for a General Conversation if this has clearly not been conducted.

It is highly recommended that Centres inform teachers/examiners of the guidelines for conducting exams and of previous advice provided in this report.

The quality of pronunciation was generally acceptable. Problems with some more difficult sounds occasionally impeded ready communication. Over-reliance on prepared material sometimes led to flat or inaccurate intonation and stressing. Nevertheless, many candidates again made real efforts to sound authentic.

The range of samples followed correct procedure with a range from highest to lowest; some centres submitted recordings of all candidates entered. The quality of the recordings was generally good with just a few suffering from low volume or intrusive background noise.

While most centres carried out the necessary administration efficiently and correctly, some centres had to have their marks amended because of arithmetical errors, or through errors in transcribing marks to the final mark sheet. Some candidates were even given marks lower than the correct total. We should remind centres of their responsibility in ensuring the accuracy of the marks submitted for moderation.

Most centres, however, conducted the tests in accordance with the syllabus and instructions; candidates had the opportunity to gain access to the full range of marks and to perform to the best of their ability.

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 clear in their Presentation. The content mark out of ten was halved where there was no specific reference to a Spanish-speaking country or context.

Presentations should be a formal and coherent introduction to the subject: pronunciation and clarity of delivery are assessed. It is important to show evidence of preparation, organisation and relevant factual knowledge. Presentations ideally provided a personal overview of the issue to lead to the basis of a debate in the topic conversation.

Part 2: Topic Conversation

Topic Conversation provides the opportunity to develop points arising from the presentation, rather than continuing with the previous presentation section. Interaction is a key criterion. Candidates whose responses were confined to pre-learned answers, with little evidence of spontaneity, could not be awarded high marks for responsiveness. Candidates should actually take part in a discussion, including justifying or refuting a point of view, as well as giving relevant examples or information.

Candidates should ask the Examiner at least two substantial questions. Marks could not be awarded for "seeking information and opinions" where no questions were asked by the candidate.

Part 3: General Conversation

This must be a separate section from the Topic Conversation and the start of this section should be clearly announced on the recording. It is important that different issues from those addressed in the Topic Conversation should be discussed. Although there are no prescribed areas for the General Conversation, topics covered should be at an appropriate level. Common areas included current affairs, something in the news, the arts, sport, the environment, the economy, politics and social concerns



All conversations should go beyond the descriptive. The range and style of questioning should further allow candidates to use more sophisticated language and to show competence in structures at a suitably advanced level. Without this, candidates could not gain access to the higher mark ranges. As in the Topic Conversation, candidates should ask the Examiner questions – and be prompted to do so as necessary – to gain credit for “seeking information and opinions”. Such questions should arise naturally in the course of the conversation and it is not sufficient for credit for the teacher to state an opinion without actually being asked.

Language

A reminder that Quality of Language is assessed in all sections. Centres should encourage candidates to use as wide a range of language as possible. Those conducting the tests should take care to provide candidates with the opportunity to do so.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/21
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 majority candidates taking the examination were first language speakers who were able to show clear understanding of the topics in good Spanish. Comprehension of the two texts dealing with the need for appropriate waste management was generally good. Awareness of the techniques required for this examination was variable and often made a considerable difference to the final mark. In **Questions 3 and 4**, lifting, (the direct copying of five or more words from the text), often invalidated a mark for comprehension. In **Question 5**, there was still a number of candidates who exceeded the permitted number of words, which meant that part, or sometimes all, of their personal response could not be assessed.

The papers were usually well presented, although there were still a few candidates whose handwriting made their answers difficult to read. Very few candidates seemed to have had difficulty with time management. On the whole, candidates displayed a good communicative level of Spanish but spelling and use of accents were often found wanting.

Comments on specific questions

Sección 1

Question 1

Most candidates scored at least three marks, and marks higher than this were not uncommon. Only a few tried to paraphrase the expressions in their own words, rather than try to find the expressions in the text.

- (a) Nearly every candidate was successful in identifying this phrase.
- (b) This phrase was also readily identified, although marks were commonly lost for the omission of either *con el fin de...* or *...en ellos*.
- (c) Again there was very successful identification of this phrase. A small number of candidates did not score when they omitted an adjective to qualify *actividades*.

- (d) Widely well-answered, although some candidates incorrectly chose *inundan las costas* or *se acumulan en el sedimento*.
- (e) This was well-answered too. Some answers were invalidated by the omission *los...* or the unnecessary inclusion of *algunos de...*

Question 2

The first language candidates all performed well on this challenging exercise. Scores higher than three were not uncommon.

- (a) Most came up with a correct version of *la importancia de/que tiene no contaminar*. When candidates went astray it was often because they tried to include the *es* from the text and produced answers such as *la importancia es no contaminar* which just did not work.
- (b) Nearly every candidate appeared to be familiar with the construction *hay que + infinitive*. However, finding the infinitive from which *prevengamos* derives caused occasional unexpected difficulty. Incorrect answers included *prevengar, preventar, previnir* and *prever*.
- (c) Very few correct answers were recorded. A need for the subjunctive after *para que...* was almost universally recognised, but not the fact that when following *llevaron...* the tense required was the imperfect subjunctive. Accurate answers of *(la) llevaron para que fuera/fuese pesada* were very few and far between and, frustratingly, sometimes invalidated by the omission of *llevaron*. Incorrect answers of *llevaron para que sea pesada* proved to be the norm.
- (d) Mixed results were recorded here. When candidates realised that they should begin their answer with *no solo...* they knew where *sino que* would fall into place and invariably completed the transformation correctly. Some candidates used synonyms of the verb *provoca*. This was acceptable in most cases, but should not be encouraged.
- (e) This was done well by the vast majority of candidates. Occasionally the mark was lost when the present perfect *han sido* was used instead of *fueron*.

Question 3

The text, reporting on initiatives to clear rubbish from beaches in Ecuador and why these were necessary, was generally well understood. Candidates who gave clear, detailed answers to the questions in their own words achieved high marks. Some candidates lost marks when, possibly involuntarily, they copied five or more words directly from the text.

- (a) Most candidates got off to a good start with many scoring at least two marks out of three. The objectives of ridding the beaches of rubbish and reminding people of the importance of not contaminating the natural environment were readily identified. Many candidates, quite legitimately, used the cue from 2a as a means to avoid lifting. Showing comprehension of the third point, about changing the attitudes of those who cause contamination, often proved to be a little more challenging, with attempts such as *concienciar a la poblacion sobre sus comportamientos* ruled as not being close enough to the idea.
- (b) Again, two from three, was quite a common score. Some candidates clearly noted all three of the Minister's calls to action – that everybody should play their part in caring for the beaches, act before the damage is done and prevent the ruining of the natural environment. A number of others were distracted by the example of how a cigarette end contaminates fifty litres of water and attempted to use this as their third action point. Perhaps this is an indication that some candidates think they need to summarise everything in each paragraph rather than focus on the question asked.
- (c) Answers here were to be found in the first and final sentences of the paragraph. A number of candidates focused solely on one of these sentences, thereby missing out on maximum marks.
- (d) Two from three was again often the mark achieved. The unpleasant sight of rubbish in the sea and on its shores was readily identified. Nearly every candidate recognised the toxic effect it had on marine life. To score the third mark full details were required about how plastic disintegrated into particles which get into the sediment and are then ingested by fish and invertebrates.

- (e) A number of candidates did not give sufficient detail in their answers to score the marks available here. Firstly, it was necessary to say that environmental awareness should be developed in those who use the coastal areas – not people in general. Many suggested that rubbish needed to be collected, when idea was that it had to be done in an appropriate way. The final part was often answered *hay que mejorar la depuración de las aguas*, without the essential *residuales* or *negras*.

Sección 2

Question 4

Candidates showed good understanding of perceived deficiencies in waste management in Spain, although some of the finer points were only appreciated by the more able.

- (a) The full range of marks was awarded for this question. Although there were a number of ways of scoring the first mark – *no recicla la mitad/una gran parte etc. de los residuos, no cumple con la normativa europea* or *hay bajos niveles de recuperación de la basura* – not so many candidates successfully stated one of them. Most scored the second mark, provided that they made clear that most of Spain's rubbish ended up in landfill sites. The third point, although usually clearly understood, was often negated by the direct copying of *...de reciclaje de restos orgánicos*.
- (b) Most candidates seemed to be very familiar with the recycling concept involved here, and it was only those who omitted some of the details or copied five or more words who did not score all three marks. It was necessary to say that the bottle should be returned to the point of purchase, where the customer would receive a small sum of money (*recibe 10 o 20 céntimos por...* was often a common lift) which had been included in the purchase price.
- (c) Four marks were on offer for this question and most candidates scored well. An avoidable stumbling block was direct copying of phrases from *...recicla el 70% de sus envases de plástico y cartón, y más del 60% de sus botellas y envases de vidrio*. The points about the director's opinion that Spain already had an efficient recycling system and the reliability of the audited figures were usually clearly stated.
- (d) This proved to be a fairly accessible question and scores of two or three were often the norm. The idea of false figures and statistics was highlighted twice in the paragraph and very few candidates neglected to mention it. The allegation that some of the production of packaging was concealed was readily identified, although *parte de la producción de* proved to be a common lift. The inclusion of other waste, such as metals, was usually successfully noted.
- (e) To score both the final comprehension marks it was necessary to make a distinction in the answer between consequences for the Spanish public and the local authorities: the former having to pay more for their rubbish collection and the latter having to investigate new ways of disposing of it. Candidates who did not make this distinction or those who directly copied *...para la gestión de residuos* (easily avoided by using an infinitive *para gestionar los residuos*) ended up with one mark.

Question 5

A small, but not insignificant, number of candidates disregarded the need to keep to the limit 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 the second part.

- (a) This question generally produced disappointing answers with scores higher than half marks being the exception rather than the norm. Gifted candidates who had achieved good or even excellent marks elsewhere often struggled here. Although there appeared to be a certain amount of increased familiarity with the techniques required for this type of summary, too many candidates simply did not answer the question and listed the initiatives rather than stating why they were needed.

There was still a tendency to give general summaries of the texts, to point out how the two were linked, to waste words with superfluous starters such as *en el primer texto/en el segundo texto* and to make generalisations which were usually too vague to score. Answers such as *En el texto 1, se habla acerca de la contaminación de las playas y los planes para promover la limpieza de estas. Por otro lado, en el texto2, se hace mención a la situación actual en España, que se encuentra en*

una crisis debido a los programas de reciclaje que no están funcionando... use up 51 words and score 0 for content.

What is required in order to achieve a good mark is to note, in the very limited number of words available, details from the texts which answer the question which has been asked. For example, the answer which begins *Son necesarias para prevenir la destrucción del medioambiente ✓ y educar a la gente de la importancia de no contaminar. ✓ Hay basura en la costa ✓ que no es solo una vista desagradable ✓ sino que también afecta la vida marina ✓ ...* scores 5 marks in only 37 words. It is the relevant specific details, here with no restraints on copying directly from the text, (other than that this will not be considered when awarding the quality of language mark), which score the marks.

It should also be remembered that the mark scheme does not reward personal opinions in this part of the question.

- (b) Most candidates were aware that what is required here is one or two details which answer the question, whenever possible different from anything contained in the texts, and a clear personal opinion. Additionally, this is an opportunity to display familiarity with more complex linguistic structures.

Waste management in their own countries was an issue which every candidate had something to say about and, as was to be expected, answers varied according to the locations. A common theme seemed to be that there was a lot more that needed to be done.

Quality of Language

As was to be expected from predominantly first language candidates, the quality of written Spanish was generally excellent. Customary blemishes included the lack of accents, misspelling of words, (particularly *v* for *b*, or vice versa, *y* for *ll*, and *c* for *s*), and widespread use of anglicisms.

Unless they had been penalised for scoring zero in any of the comprehension questions, candidates were almost always awarded maximum marks in all three quality of language assessments.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/22
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 examination provided an appropriate level of challenge and discriminated well, with a wide range of marks awarded to candidates from across the ability range. Most candidates taking 9719 were first language speakers who were able to show clear understanding of the topic in good Spanish. Candidates taking 8685 were invariably candidates of Spanish as a foreign language who, despite lacking the same fluency of expression, were also able to demonstrate comprehension commensurate with their ability.

Scripts were well presented, and few candidates appeared to have had difficulty in meeting the time constraints of the examination. Awareness of the techniques required for this examination was good on the whole and often made a considerable difference to the final mark. In **Questions 3 and 4**, lifting, (the direct copying of five or more words from the text), sometimes invalidated a mark for comprehension. In **Question 5**, a small number of candidates exceeded the permitted number of words, which meant that part, or sometimes all, of their personal response could not be assessed.

Comprehension of the two texts, dealing with demands made upon health services in different parts of the world, was generally good and gave candidates ample opportunity to demonstrate their skills in paraphrasing original text.

Comments on specific questions

Sección 1

Question 1

Most candidates scored at least three marks, and marks higher than this were not uncommon.

- (a) The target phrase was usually identified. Some 8685 candidates incorrectly answered *la gravedad de su condición es subjetiva*.
- (b) Nearly every candidate was successful in identifying this phrase. A few omitted ...*suced*.

- (c) There were two expressions – (*mejor*) *valorados por los ciudadanos* and (*lo*) *que gusta al público*– which matched the cue. The majority of candidates successfully identified one of them.
- (d) Widely well-answered, although some answers were invalidated when prefaced by *que...* A few thought that *no subestime el riesgo de error humano* could be the answer.
- (e) This was well-answered too. Some answers were invalidated by the addition of *...de la incidencia* at the end of the phrase.

Question 2

This proved to be a challenging exercise.

- (a) Quite a few candidates used the verb *llevar* or *son*. This invalidated the answer. Equally some answers which correctly used *están* could not be accepted as they were arranged in such a way that would not fit back into the original text e.g. *desde hace varias semanas que están saturados*.
- (b) This was a great challenge, especially for 8685 candidates. They often found difficulty in using a passive infinitive or subjunctive after *está pendiente de...* and incorrect answers such as *está pendiente de le ha llamado* or *está pendiente que llamado* were not uncommon. Others wrongly used a tense that indicated that the patient had already been called e.g. *está pendiente de que le hayan llamado*.
- (c) This was answered well by 9719 candidates. Quite a few 8685 candidates showed unfamiliarity with the construction *soler* + infinitive and submitted incorrect answers such as *el servicio suele bastante rápido*, or *el servicio suele es bastante rápido*.
- (d) This proved to be challenging for candidates of all abilities. A common incorrect answer was *a quien podría ser atendido*.
- (e) This was well done by 9719 candidates. Quite a few 8685 candidates did not supply the subjunctive after *es importante que...* In other instances, they did not use the pronoun *lo*, even if they had used the subjunctive *vea*.

Question 3

The text, reporting on the difficulties experienced by A&E units in Spain during winter months, was generally well understood. A number of less able candidates often successfully identified parts of the text that would answer questions, and then endeavoured to ‘tweak’ the word order in order to avoid copying directly. Only when this technique produced coherent answers was it rewarded. Candidates who showed comprehension by answering in their own words fared better, especially in the mark awarded for quality of language.

- (a) Most candidates got off to a good start with many scoring at least two marks out of three. A few were not specific enough when they answered that *hospitales estaban saturados*, rather than A&E units. Provided that direct copying was avoided, most were able to give examples of the result of overcrowding *pacientes – duermen en pasillos/en camillas* etc. Similarly, the fact that medical personnel were exhausted or worried about making mistakes was often correctly identified.
- (b) The mark awarded for saying that people go to A&E as they know that there will always be a doctor available was scored by many. The idea of not wanting to wait for an appointment with the family doctor, or the need to go somewhere where they would be seen more quickly, was also readily identified, although there were a few lifts of *la cita con su médico de cabecera*. The concept of a medical condition perceived to be worsening in advance of a surgical intervention proved to be a little more difficult to unpick, and even more so to paraphrase. Less precise answers such as *si el problema es urgente acude a urgencias* were not rewarded.
- (c) The question discriminated well and a full range of marks was awarded, with candidates endeavouring to supply a range of details to meet the demands of a four mark question. To score two of the marks it was necessary to clarify the reasons why people go to A&E, namely that they receive rapid attention and that they like the number of tests which are carried out. A number of answers missed the point that A&E services were highly valued, and some copied directly from the text *mejor valorados por la población*. The final point about the percentage of patients truly

requiring urgent medical attention was usually successfully made, unless it contained the lift *10% de los que llegan*.

- (d) Only the more able candidates scored maximum marks here, with the majority finding difficulty in understanding that medical personnel should not view less acute patients as a problem. The need for the personnel to be alert to spotting serious cases amidst a crowd of non-urgent ones appeared to be widely understood and, slightly less so, that they should not underestimate the risk of making mistakes. There were quite a few lifts of *reconocer un paciente grave entre la multitud* and *en su centro de atención primaria*.
- (e) Less able candidates found this to be a challenging question. Answers often mixed the verbs *prever*, *prevenir* and *anticipar*, or did not mention that the flu occurred every year and no prior plans had been made. There were quite a few lifts of *la incidencia de la gripe*.

Sección 2

Question 4

Candidates showed good understanding of how new technology was being used to cover gaps in healthcare in Bolivia, although some of the finer points were only appreciated by the more able.

- (a) This question was well answered in general, with many candidates scoring maximum or near maximum marks. The points about using advanced technology or telecommunications to exchange medical information and to provide medical attention at distance were clearly understood. Marks were lost when it was stated that medical information was changed (*cambiar información médica*), or when there was direct copying of *el intercambio de información médica* or *servicios de salud a distancia*.
- (b) Many candidates scored one out of three. This was for answers related to *la propagación de enfermedades contagiosas*. Some candidates neatly avoided the common lift *dos de cada diez personas* by expressing the numbers in an equivalent form *1 de 5*. Some became muddled and expressed the opposite idea by not using a negative form of the verb: *dos de cada diez tenían acceso a servicios sanitarios*. Only a few candidates understood that *la salud era un lujo*.
- (c) A lot of candidates understood that rural health care centres had been equipped with advanced technology. Not so many were able to show understanding that these centres can be connected with A&E departments from the regional capitals where specialists might assist with diagnosis. Quite a few answers copied from the text *unidad de emergencias de la capital de la región*.
- (d) The idea that rural doctors would be able to work with consultants from hospitals was understood by most. More difficulty was encountered in expressing that that they would be able to control their stock of medicines and do in-service training without leaving their place of work. Sometimes both these ideas were incorrectly combined: *puede pedir más fármacos sin abandonar su trabajo*. The verb *capacitarse* seemed to be a barrier for quite a few candidates. Frequent lifts were *especialistas de los principales hospitales del país* and *en su centro de salud*.
- (e) Quite a few candidates scored two out of three marks. They understood that Bolivia's international reputation had increased, but some did not mention that this was related to health services. Equally they were not awarded the mark if the answers did not include that the government had been able to reduce their expenditure in health services. Provided that lifts were avoided, there were many correct answers to the third point: that rural communities would experience less social exclusion. There was extensive lifting of *prestigio internacional del país en terminos sanitarios*, *gastos estatales en la salud* and *exclusión social de comunidades aisladas*.

Question 5

The majority of candidates had been well prepared in the techniques needed to answer this question. A small, but not insignificant, number of candidates appeared to be unaware of the need to keep to the limit 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 the second part.

- (a) To achieve a good mark it is essential to note, in the limited number of words available, details from the texts which answer the question which has been asked. In this exercise, candidates are not

penalised for copying directly from the text(s). It should be remembered, however, that any copied material will not be considered in the Quality of Language mark. Candidates should also refrain from offering personal opinions in this part of the question.

Better scores were often achieved by candidates who wrote in their own words, allowing themselves to be considerably more concise than those who relied heavily on sentences from the texts. Quite a few candidates scored $\frac{5}{6}$. Some candidates still persisted in wasting words on unnecessary introductions: *Entre los textos 1 y 2 se puede identificar varios problemas relacionados con la sanidad...* Some answers scored lower marks because, when referring to the second text, they described what Telesalud consisted of, rather than answering the question and summarising the difficulties which it helped to overcome. Some wasted valuable words with comparisons between the two texts, instead of selecting relevant details from both.

- (b) Most candidates were aware that what is required here is one or two details which answer the question, which are, whenever possible, different from anything contained in the texts, and a clear personal opinion. Additionally, this is an opportunity to display familiarity with more complex linguistic structures. Access to healthcare in their own countries was something which every candidate had something to say about and, as was to be expected, answers varied according to the locations. A common theme seemed to be that healthcare was excellent – if you paid for it!

Quality of Language

The quality of candidates' written Spanish, here and throughout the paper, was generally well up to the standard required by this examination, with most marks in the Sound, Good, or Very Good bands.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/23
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.
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- **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 paper provided an appropriate challenge to candidates across the ability range and the wide spread of marks awarded reflected the varying levels of ability of candidates. Comprehension of the two texts, dealing with the effects of changing weather conditions was generally good. Scripts were legible and clearly presented. A few candidates seemed to struggle with the time constraints of the examination, possibly because of painstaking attempts to rearrange key sections of the texts in answers to **Questions 3 and 4** in such a way that would avoid directly copying five words. The vast majority submitted work which was well up to the required standard.

Comments on specific questions

Sección 1

Question 1

Most candidates scored at least three marks, but only a few achieved the maximum on this opening exercise.

- (a) The target phrase was usually identified, although occasionally invalidated by the omission of se...
- (b) Nearly every candidate was successful in identifying this phrase.
- (c) This proved to be a good test of candidates' understanding and vocabulary recognition. Only the better candidates were able to equate *estaban a punto de ahogarse* with *el agua ya les llegaba al cuello*.
- (d) Despite the apparent similarity of meaning of the cognates for *calma* and *tranquilizaron* a surprising number of candidates found some difficulty here.
- (e) This was almost universally answered correctly.

Question 2

This proved to be a challenging exercise, with only a minority of candidates able to return scores of three or higher.

- (a) This caused a surprising amount of difficulty, especially as the construction *al* + infinitive is one that has been regularly tested. Some candidates tried to change the gender of *ciudad* or attempted unsuccessfully to construct an answer with *al paso*. A few unlucky ones came up with the correct construction but invalidated their answer by omitting *por*.
- (b) It was heartening to see the number of candidates who recognised that *fue necesario que...* needed to be followed by a subjunctive construction. Only a very few were able to form the imperfect subjunctive correctly.
- (c) Candidates showed a fair amount of awareness of how this temporal construction should be formed. Mixed results were obtained.
- (d) There were a good number of ways to produce a correct answer, with *ayuda* being used either as a noun or a verb. Again a mixed bag of answers was submitted.
- (e) This caused considerably more difficulty than had been anticipated. The expression *tener lugar* is widely used in Spanish, but only very few candidates appeared to be aware of it.

Question 3

As mentioned above, there were a number of candidates who often successfully identified parts of the text that would answer questions, and then endeavoured to 'tweak' the word order in order to avoid copying directly. Only when this technique produced coherent answers, was it rewarded. Candidates who showed comprehension by answering in their own words generally fared better, especially in the mark awarded for quality of language.

The text, reporting on a river bursting its banks as a result of torrential rain, despite a number of fairly challenging vocabulary items, was generally well understood.

- (a) Most candidates got off to a good start with many scoring all three marks. A few were unable to state clearly that the primary reason for all the demands made on the emergency services was that the river burst its banks, but many were able to note that cars were swept away – often, quite legitimately, using the cue from 1(a) to do so. The final point about people being trapped in their cars was identified by most, although the mark was occasionally not awarded when *dejar* was incorrectly used in attempts to say that 'people could not get out of their cars'.
- (b) Three marks scored was often the norm here. Candidates were able to note that Elsa's house was flooded, her parents needed to be rescued and that she needed to clean a lot of mud from her house. A mark was sometimes missed when it was not made apparent that these incidents related to two separate houses.
- (c) The question discriminated well and a full range of marks was awarded. Most candidates noted that the residents were without electricity for two days. (The noun *electricidad* did not appear to be widely known). The second point, that their freezers were full – implying that the contents would be ruined – often appeared to be scored more by luck than judgement, with candidates often including a lot of unnecessary material about people having just been paid and having done the shopping for the next few weeks. The fact about receiving scant return from the insurance companies was recognised, although only better candidates were able to express this clearly. That the residents themselves had to do all the cleaning was generally well recorded.
- (d) This was a very straightforward question and, even if some vocabulary was unfamiliar, most candidates were able to note the examples of damage done in the city centre: broken shop windows, municipal gym flooded and damage to the roof of a health centre.
- (e) Many candidates found this to be a challenging question, perhaps through a lack of appreciation of the meaning of *resume*. Those who realised that they were required to focus on the words spoken by the mayor were usually successful. Many attempted to base their answers on other elements in

the paragraph and scored no marks, which had a consequential effect on their quality of language mark.

Sección 2

Question 4

Once candidates had cottoned on to the fact that this concerned an opposite extreme of water supply, the contents of this second text appeared to fall into place.

- (a) This opening question proved to be a little bit tricky in that it referred to errors in geography text books which would only become apparent from full comprehension of the first paragraph. To score both marks it was necessary to give some detail of the considerable change in dimensions of the lake. One mark was awarded for merely stating that the lake had reduced in size. A common lift was *menos de un kilómetro cuadrado*.
- (b) The first point, concerning the disappearance of flora and fauna, was generally well appreciated. Candidates were not always able to give full details of the fact that migratory birds were no longer able to use the lake as a resting point on their journey. The fate of the fish caused some difficulty, with a number of candidates showing unfamiliarity with forms of the verb *morir*.
- (c) Two or three marks were the scores most commonly awarded. Despite some difficulty caused by lack of understanding of *secamiento*, most candidates were able to identify that local people had to leave the area. The expression *pueblo fantasma* also appeared to be accessible to most candidates. The final point about disappearing culture and traditions was often invalidated by the direct copying of *la cultura y las tradiciones*.
- (d) This was a four mark question and many candidates were successful in scoring maximum marks. Nearly all identified the increase in temperatures as a factor in climate change and most, but not all, were able to state that this led to increased evaporation of water in the lake. The decline in rainfall was also commonly noted, as was the reduction in size of the glaciers – although this latter point sometimes proved difficult to express.
- (e) Most candidates were able to score some of the marks allocated to human actions which had contributed to the lake's decline. Most difficulty was encountered in describing the plan which gave preference in water supply to *Titicaca* at the expense of *Poopó*. The effects of mining and agriculture on water supply were usually clearly stated.

Question 5

The majority of candidates had been well prepared in the techniques needed to answer this question. A small, but not insignificant, number of candidates appeared to be unaware of the need to keep to the limit 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 the second part.

- (a) To achieve a good mark it is essential to note, in the limited number of words available, details from the texts which answer the question which has been asked. In this exercise, candidates are not penalised for copying directly from the text(s). It should be remembered, however, that any copied material will not be considered in the Quality of Language mark. Candidates should also refrain from offering personal opinions in this part of the question.

Better scores were often achieved by candidates who wrote in their own words, allowing themselves to be considerably more concise than those who relied heavily on sentences from the text which gave examples of consequences of the changes in water supply.

- (b) Most candidates were aware that what is required here is one or two details which answer the question and which are, whenever possible, different from anything contained in the texts, and a clear personal opinion. Additionally, this is an opportunity to display familiarity with more complex linguistic structures.

Surprisingly, climate change, appeared to be a topic which not so many candidates appeared to have given a deal of thought to. There were a number of good answers which referred to the effects of rising sea levels, increasing extremes of temperature and intense tropical storms. Many

candidates opted to write about conserving the environment, which was not always relevant to the question.

Quality of Language

The quality of candidates' written Spanish, here and throughout the paper, was generally well up to the standard required by this examination, with most marks in the Sound, Good, or Very Good bands.

SPANISH

Paper 8685/31
Essay

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

In general terms, the essays produced for this session demonstrated a wide variety of ability, ranging all the way to the very well written and convincingly argued pieces of writing. Many candidates demonstrated an admirable ability to deliver an articulate, well-conceived essay, convincingly argued and coherent from start to finish. Many essays were a joy to read and showed considerable insight into the issues raised by the title as well as an impressive command of the language.

The most successful essays tended to be the ones that dealt very clearly with the title set and resisted the temptation to go off on various tangents in order to reach the stipulated word count. Examiners will award good content marks to candidates whose essays are relevant and to the point whereas those essays that show little understanding of the title or which deal superficially with the issues are unlikely to attract such good marks for content.

Comments in previous reports regarding the importance of the word count have been taken on board by centres and candidates. It has been stated very clearly before on numerous occasions but there is no doubt that essays that are short or indeed those that are well in excess of the word count are unlikely to access the higher categories on the mark scheme. This important message is fully acknowledged by most centres and this is very much to their credit.

The quality of Spanish used by candidates in their essays was, once again, generally very good indeed. Nevertheless, the more common language errors (which, as always, are unlikely to come as any great surprise to centres) are worth highlighting. For example, examiners were surprised to note again this year that some candidates continue to insist on using singular verbs with plural subjects and vice-versa.

There was also a misunderstanding amongst many candidates of the use of the verb *ser* in passive sentences. Examples such as "...la vida en el campo está criticada por la gente que vive en la ciudad..." (sic.) and "...el turismo estuvo introducido por el gobierno español..." serve to illustrate the point. For some candidates, the use of the gerund instead of a verbal noun in examples such as "...visitando la playa es más divertido que estudiando la arquitectura de un pueblo..." (sic.) or "...la idea de creyendo en algo espiritual debería tener más importancia en nuestra sociedad..." (sic.) was fairly widespread. There also seemed to be some confusion amongst candidates regarding the difference between "si no" and "sino" which tended to lead to confusion in more complex sentences.

Nevertheless, generally speaking, many candidates were able to make good use of paragraphs. The very best essays achieved structural balance and were linguistically sophisticated. They were also able to express relevant points backed up by evidence, examples or appropriately focused references in order to produce an essay of quality and style, all of which grants them access to marks at the top end of the mark scheme.

Examples of good use of the language included:

- The consistently accurate use of appropriate tenses.
- Full understanding of the importance of adjectival agreement throughout the essay.
- The judicious use of adverbs and adverbial phrases in order to raise the register of the essay.
- An ability to employ advanced grammatical constructions (e.g. the subjunctive mood) in order to enhance the linguistic complexity of the essay.

Common errors included:

- A lack of accentuation (even in very good candidates' work).
- Adjectives of nationality with capital letters.
- Poor punctuation such as not using capital letters at the beginning of sentences.
- Insecure use of the personal 'a' and prepositions in general.
- Confusion over the use of the verbs *ser* and *estar*.
- Continued misunderstanding of the differences between *hay* and *es/tiene*.
- The dropping of the letter 'h' with an auxiliary verb (e.g. "los jóvenes an tenido muchos problemas con sus padres" (sic.)).
- The use of incorrectly spelt words, especially when they already appear on the examination paper itself (e.g. *independentes*, *nececidad*, *filosófico* (sic.))

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *La familia*

"Los jóvenes se vuelven más independientes si los padres tienen confianza en ellos". ¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo?

This was a very popular title and, as expected, candidates adopted a wide range of responses. Good answers were often characterised by a variety of articulately crafted points stating not just the reasons why young people needed to become independent but also highlighting the damage caused if children were trusted without any established limits on their freedom. The best answers pointed out the difficulties of trying to achieve a balance between parents trusting their children and also making them aware of rules to govern their freedom. Personal examples tended to enhance many of the points made in response to this title.

Question 2 *La vida urbana y la vida rural*

"Sentirse aislado o alejado de otra gente es la principal desventaja de la vida rural". ¿Estás de acuerdo?

This was a contentious title and was generally well answered. The more successful responses were inclined to provide a balanced approach with examples of the advantages of rural isolation as well as the disadvantages. The weakest answers tended to be extremely one-sided and mainly consisted of personal anecdotes or examples of people spending their days lost in admiration of the rural idyll with little or no mention of the problems relating to solitude and lack of personal interaction.

Question 3 *La filosofía y la creencia*

"Crear en algo filosófico y espiritual es una necesidad humana". ¿Estás de acuerdo?

This was a less popular title on the paper, although those who elected to write an essay on this topic generally produced work of a high standard. Tightly structured and well-illustrated arguments were a feature of such responses.

Question 4 *El turismo*

"Cuando un/a turista viaja al extranjero, es mejor que todo sea diferente". ¿Compartes esta opinión?

This title proved to be reasonably popular with many candidates. There was much evidence of the ability to draw on personal experience to illustrate points in more depth. The best essays gave a balanced analysis of tourism and detailed the many reasons why people travelled to other countries and the diverse ways in which a different environment could be beneficial to the tourist.

Question 5 *La vida cultural y el patrimonio*

“Es difícil tomar en serio el arte moderno”. ¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo?

This was not a popular title amongst candidates. The small number of essays that were written in response were articulate and showed a sympathetic understanding of the nature of modern artistic endeavour in general.

SPANISH

Paper 8685/32
Essay

Key messages

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- 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

In general terms, the essays produced for this session demonstrated a wide variety of ability, ranging all the way to the very well written and convincingly argued pieces of writing. Many candidates demonstrated an admirable ability to deliver an articulate, well-conceived essay, convincingly argued and coherent from start to finish. Many essays were a joy to read and showed considerable insight into the issues raised by the title as well as an impressive command of the language.

The most successful essays tended to be the ones that dealt very clearly with the title set and resisted the temptation to go off on various tangents in order to reach the stipulated word count. Examiners will award good content marks to candidates whose essays are relevant and to the point whereas those essays that show little understanding of the title or which deal superficially with the issues are unlikely to attract such good marks for content.

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The quality of Spanish used by candidates in their essays was, once again, generally very good indeed. Nevertheless, the more common language errors (which, as always, are unlikely to come as any great surprise to centres) are worth highlighting. For example, examiners were surprised to note again this year that some candidates continue to insist on using singular verbs with plural subjects and vice-versa.

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- The use of incorrectly spelt words, especially when they already appear on the examination paper itself (e.g. *crencias*, *impotante*, *conosimiento* (sic.))

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *La familia*

"La familia no es tan importante hoy como en el pasado". ¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo?

This was a very popular title with candidates adopting, as one would expect, a wide range of responses. Good essays were characterised by a variety of points stating not just how the modern family was a break with the past but also the relative advantages and disadvantages of past and present arrangements. Again, personal experiences served to back up many of the points raised.

Question 2 *La vida urbana y la vida rural*

"Ser joven en un entorno rural es mejor que ser joven en un entorno urbano". ¿Estás de acuerdo?

Another popular title with many candidates listing the pros and cons of rural and city life but not really taking the opportunity to develop the argument regarding the impact on young people. The best answers, accordingly, were the ones that showed how the different environments were specifically good or bad for young people.

Question 3 *La filosofía y la creencia*

"Un mejor conocimiento de las diversas creencias religiosas solo puede mejorar nuestra sociedad". ¿Qué opinas tú?

The least popular of the titles, although the few candidates who attempted the question produced good, tightly argued and intellectually rigorous essays that showed plenty of insight into the issues surrounding the importance of faith in many societies.

Question 4 *El turismo*

“Un destino turístico siempre sufre una crisis de identidad como consecuencia del turismo internacional”. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

This title was dealt with intelligently and convincingly by most candidates and it was clear that many had personal experiences of how tourism can affect the cultural identity of a tourist destination. The best answers stressed the importance of finding some degree of compromise yet remained realistic in pointing out the economic advantages of tourism to the local community.

Question 5 *La vida cultural y el patrimonio*

“La televisión ya no ofrece nada de valor cultural a la vida nacional”. ¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo?

A title tackled by only a small number of candidates. Those candidates who wrote on this topic were able to produce essays of a good standard and provided detailed examples of the cultural value of a number of television programmes, past and present. However, only the best answers attempted to show a difference between the positive and negative effects of television on a nation.



SPANISH

Paper 8685/33
Essay

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- The use of incorrectly spelt words, especially when they already appear on the examination paper itself (e.g. *crencias*, *facinación*, *relavancia* (sic.)).

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *La familia*

***"Hoy en día el éxito de la familia como estructura social reside en su capacidad de evolucionar".
¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo?***

This was a less popular title on the paper and, as expected, candidates adopted a wide range of responses. Most agreed that the changing nature of the family in modern society does not have to be seen as a potential threat to the institution as such. Most agreed that harmonious relationships between family members are the most important element in the success of a family.

Question 2 *La vida urbana y la vida rural*

"Los que viven en la ciudad no entienden cómo es vivir en el campo, pero los que viven en el campo tampoco comprenden cómo es vivir en la ciudad". ¿Estás de acuerdo?

This was quite a popular title and there was a wide variety of opinions expressed on the issue. Most agreed that both urban and rural life can offer advantages and disadvantages and that the choice of where to live is very much a personal issue. Some went on to mention the increasing costs of properties in the city nowadays and how these can put a lot of people off. A very fair point to make in such an essay.

Question 3 *La filosofía y la creencia*

"Todos necesitamos principios o creencias que nos guíen en la vida". ¿Compartes esta opinión?

This was a less popular title on the paper. Many of the essays, however, went into considerable detail in order to support the points being made regarding the importance of belief systems for many people around the world. Most essays agreed that there is indeed a human need to have faith and believe in something spiritually although some were happy to accept that life can still be fulfilling without such belief systems.

Question 4 *El turismo*

“Ya no hay una sensación de misterio ni fascinación al viajar al extranjero”. ¿Qué opinas tú?

This title proved to be very popular with candidates. Many of the essays produced pointed out the shrinking nature of the world as a consequence of cheap air travel and suggested that the sense of mystery has indeed been diminished by websites offering virtual tours and the like. Nevertheless, most agreed that foreign travel is still a very worthwhile and enriching experience.

Question 5 *La vida cultural y el patrimonio*

***“Para mucha gente, la cultura y el patrimonio no tienen importancia ni relevancia en su vida diaria”.
¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo?***

This was not a popular title amongst candidates. Those who selected it managed to produce convincing arguments to back up their opinions and to emphasize the importance of cultural endeavour to every country's sense of national identity.