

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 topic of population movement within rural areas or between rural and urban environments was one that candidates seemed to be familiar with. Comprehension of the two texts was generally good. Scripts were usually well presented and legible, and very few candidates seemed to have had difficulty with time-management. A number of candidates would have benefited from more preparation for the techniques required in the summary question in **5(a)**. 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 – to be read in conjunction with the Mark Scheme and Question Paper.

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

For the vast majority of candidates, this exercise proved to be a sound start to the examination and a considerable number scored full marks. Other than misidentification of the target phrase, the most common error was to include additional words from before or after the targeted phrase in the text, or to omit part of this phrase. Additions were most seen in **Question 1(d)**, and *desde que* was sometimes omitted from **1(c)**.

Question 2

Most candidates scored high or maximum marks in this question. A small number of candidates were under the misapprehension they needed to change all of the vocabulary in the phrases given, rather than change the sentence to include the given word or words in the question. This sometimes resulted in phrases which would not fit properly into the original text, thus failing to gain the mark.

- (a) This caused few problems, although some candidates lost the mark by changing *diaria* to *diariamente* which changed the meaning of the phrase. There were a few answers with the verb in the singular (*cuando cocina*). These responses could not be accepted by the Mark Scheme, as they did not fit back in the original text.

- (b) Most were successful. A few candidates added *las* before *plantas* which meant the phrase could not fit back into the text and still make sense.
- (c) This was the question which was answered least well, due to a widespread misspelling of *recojan* with *g* instead of *j*. Some responses lost the mark by inserting *la* (presumably for *la leña*) thus invalidating the phrase.
- (d) A lot of success was achieved with this manipulation, although some candidates lost the mark for missing off the initial *a* before *los productores* or missing the *s* off *les* before *interesa*.
- (e) Most candidates answered correctly.

Question 3

Comprehension of the text about the hardships endured by nomadic sugar cane workers in Mexico was generally good, and candidates who gave clear, detailed answers to the questions in their own words achieved high marks. Some candidates lost marks due to copying five or more consecutive words directly from the text.

- (a) Most scored three marks on this question, with the most commonly overlooked point being that the *jornaleros* travel to look for work. However, a good number who did mention this had copied *México en busca de trabajo* directly from the text, which invalidated the point. A lot of candidates mentioned that the workers were paid very little without saying how hard the work was, or vice versa; both these elements were required by the mark scheme.
- (b) Many candidates scored full marks in this question, although two out of three was more common. Candidates often only mentioned one of either *no pasan frío* or *tienen una vivienda más cómoda*, and a few showed misunderstanding of the text by answering *prefieren pasar hambre en esta época que aguantar el frío*. A phrase commonly copied from the text was *es más cómoda y caliente*.
- (c) A lot of candidates scored full marks for this question. However, a number merged the first two points with not quite enough information to score separate two marks, e.g.: *cultivan plantas que crecen allí*. Many candidates copied *leña para calentar la comida* directly from the text, which disqualified them from gaining the last mark.
- (d) If candidates did fail to score all three points in this question, it was usually because they were not specific enough to mention *dos colchones*.
- (e) Some candidates misunderstood that the men block the *lavaderos* after work with all their dirt. A number of candidates appeared a little confused about the open aspect of the *lavaderos*. Some thought that they were only open in the afternoon or that there would not be enough water for the women and men to wash at the same time. A few thought that the women washed before the men came back so that there would not be queues. A phrase commonly copied from the text was *antes de que lleguen los hombres*.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

The second text, dealing with the *éxodo rural* and its reversal, provided a similar level of challenge to the first text, with candidates commonly showing a clear understanding and achieving good marks.

- (a) The overwhelming majority of candidates mentioned that *los jóvenes se ven atraídos por las ciudades* but a far smaller number also mentioned that there were no new births in rural areas. A number of candidates were not awarded a mark because their answers focused only on the beginning of the paragraph (*la mitad de la población vive en las ciudades*).
- (b) Many answers failed to include all the information required by the Mark Scheme. The first point was usually mentioned but the second, which required mention of construction workers being unemployed, was most frequently incomplete in candidate responses.

The third point, regarding large companies wanting all their workers in the same urban area, was almost always attempted but often failed to gain a mark, either because *grandes* was not included before *empresas*, or because candidates had copied five or more consecutive words from the text. The most common such copied phrase was *a todos sus trabajadores en el mismo*. The mention of more comforts and services in the city, however, was often successfully made, provided that the phrase *cantidades de servicios y facilidades* was not directly copied.

- (c) Many candidates failed to score full marks in this question because they did not give the correct information regarding what was being offered in some rural areas. It was common to see answers such as *dar casas gratis y con parcelas muy baratas* which was not what the text was saying.

The first point (that rural areas could make these offers which the big cities could not) was nearly always mentioned. However, a good deal of candidates had copied five consecutive words from the text, for example: *que las grandes ciudades no pueden*.

- (d) It was unusual for candidates not to achieve the two marks available for this question. However, a number lost a mark for directly copying the phrase *más ecológicos, sostenibles y saludables*. Although, many realised they only had to swap two of these adjectives around to give the required answer.
- (e) Full marks were often missed because of the omission of certain key details. Candidates who managed to talk about people who want to *escaparse de la ciudad un par de días* were successful in gaining the first point. However, all too often candidates copied the phrase *escape de fin de semana*. Nonetheless, the point about retired people searching for tranquillity in the country was nearly always mentioned, as was the point about improvements to transport, (although reference solely to *infraestructura* was not sufficient). A lot of candidates did not quite get the last mark, often because they only mentioned the improvement in communications without adding that this allowed people to work from home. Another commonly copied phrase was *y la red de telecomunicaciones*.

Question 5

Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks allocated. Most, but not all, candidates were aware of the need to keep to the limit of 140 words for both parts of the question. Anything in excess is disregarded, and in extreme cases this can lead to no marks being awarded for part (b).

- (a) Candidates who had achieved good or even excellent marks elsewhere frequently struggled to reach even half marks here. One reason for this arose from candidates not answering the question that had been asked, which was about population movement within and to rural areas, and not to cities.

The other reason for low marks was a lack of the required technique. Here, candidates need to understand the importance of extracting specific details from the texts succinctly in order to gain the marks available. There are no marks just for giving a general summary of the theme of the two texts, and looking for similarities and differences between them. Incorporating titles of the texts into the body of the summary will waste precious words.

An example of poor technique, scoring just 1 mark (for *buscar trabajo*) in 51 words (over a third of the permitted word length of the whole of **Question 5**) begins: *Ambos, el texto 1 y el texto 2, hablan sobre las migraciones y la zona rural. El primer texto se concentra en un país pobre como México y como la pobreza (sic) de la gente que vive en la sierra los hace moverse a otros lugares para buscar trabajo y sobrevivir.*

By contrast, an excellent example of the required technique for this question begins: *Los jornaleros migran en busca de trabajo por escaso pago a las plantaciones. Las condiciones de vida mejoran, ya que la vivienda es más cálida y caliente, aún cuando viven en condiciones deplorables de higiene. Tienen una dieta basada en frijoles, huevos y pollo, viven en casas pequeñas sin privacidad.* In 50 words this candidate scored 7 marks, and also left ample opportunity to increase this score by going on to answer the question with regard to how the *éxodo rural* is being reversed in Spain.

- (b) In the two or three sentences available for this last part of the examination the vast majority of candidates wrote good answers. They usually had something interesting to say and most scored 4

or 5 marks. However, there were also a number who seemed to confuse *la vida rural* with *la vida urbana* and proceeded to give their opinions on what life in urban areas was like in their countries rather than the other way round. Such candidates scored little or no marks for this part.

Quality of Language

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

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/41

Texts

Key Messages

1. Candidates are advised to read the questions carefully and be sure that they understand their chosen questions before they begin to write. It is advisable to underline or circle key words in the question and plan the essay around these.
2. Candidates are advised to introduce essay answers by defining the terms (key words) briefly, in the context of the text studied, in their opening paragraph.
3. Candidates are advised to check that they have answered the question, rather than simply re-told the story. Incidents, characters, and/or quotations from the story should be used to support their arguments.

General Comments

The majority of candidates demonstrated that they had studied the texts closely. There was also evidence that candidates were experienced in answering practice examination questions. Key Message 1 is particularly important as a significant number of candidates did not read the question accurately and instead seemed to be responding to a question set on a previous examination paper (e.g. see comments below on **Q5(a)**).

A number of candidates had acquired awareness of the plot of the texts studied but did not have a full understanding of the motivation of the characters within the context of the work or the literary themes. They also tended to project contemporary attitudes onto the texts or characters, which were not always appropriate.

In *Sección Primera*, the answers to the three components of option **(a)** are not intended to be of equal length. Candidates will note that **(i)** and **(ii)** require brief responses, linked directly to the published extract. This means that candidates may be able to give a full answer in one or two sentences. **Part (iii)** is more wide-ranging and asks candidates to analyse aspects of the extract in the context of the whole text. Therefore this will be a much longer answer, in which the candidate can show understanding and appreciation of the text in depth.

Most candidates followed the rubrics correctly. There were some instances of answering the wrong combination of questions, including responding to both **(a)** and **(b)** on the same text.

It is important to check carefully when mentioning names of characters, authors and the historical context of texts. If these are muddled it can be difficult for Examiners to follow the candidate's train of thought.

Examiners had considerable difficulty reading a significant number of scripts due to extremely poor handwriting. Candidates are advised to find a way of writing legibly as Examiners only mark what they can read.

Comments on Specific Questions

Sección Primera

Question 1

Juan Rulfo: *Pedro Páramo*

- (a) Examiners saw some good answers, but many essays dealt with the questions rather superficially. Not all candidates identified the extract correctly. The best responses included analysis of the character of padre Rentería with reference to a number of incidents, significantly his meeting with the priest from Contla, and discussed the Church in a wider sense – links with landowners and its role in the revolution, for example.
- (b) There were more answers to this option. Successful essays were well structured, contrasting the idyllic past of Comala as described by Dolores, with the situation found by Juan Preciado. The best responses demonstrated candidates' ability to refer to the text to support their argument, than simply narrate without analysis.

Question 2

Lope de Vega: *Peribáñez y el Comendador de Ocaña*

- (a) A number of candidates gave vague answers in (i) and (ii). These options are designed to elicit brief, accurate responses. In (iii), the best responses focused on the Comendador's arrogance and the way he abused his position of power. This was a more successful approach than those who concentrated on Casilda, suggesting that she actively considered a relationship with a noble.
- (b) There was much potential for responses to show the hierarchy of the society depicted in the text. Most contrasted the nobility and *campesinos*, but did not understand Peribáñez's standing at the opening of the text. The best answers showed the conflict between different strata of society rather than only describing the differences in wealth and power. Candidates also mentioned the powerful female characters – the Queen and Casilda.

Question 3

Jorge Luis Borges: *Ficciones*

- (a) There were a few very good answers which identified the information to (i) and (ii) correctly and then structured part (iii), clearly comparing and contrasting the theme of treachery, rather than describing the stories. Most mentioned some of the key aspects of ambiguity, identity and the theme of circularity often found in Borges' work.
- (b) This was a popular choice for the text. Candidates tended to discuss the structure of the detective story and the sense of mystery often found in his work. The most popular choice of stories was *El fin* and *El sur*, although some referred to *El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan*, which was possibly more productive. There was also scope to consider why Borges chose this format and how the author used it to explore deeper themes.

Question 4

Antonio Buero Vallejo: *El concierto de San Ovidio*

- (a) Some candidates did not see the deeper meaning in parts (i) and (ii); the patronising and hypocritical attitude. These points led directly to part (iii) and the *moraleja* of the play. The best answers recognised the immoral exploitation of the *ciegos* for personal gain, and the contrast in attitude toward them by Valentín. Some also related the moral of the play to the political situation in Spain at the time the play was written and saw this as the central message.
- (b) This question was one example of the need for careful reading of the question. Candidates sometimes missed the word *positiva* in the question, and simply focussed on *tragedia*. This

severely limited the marks available. There were some interpretations which indicated knowledge of the plot but fairly superficial understanding of the themes. The positive aspects would be the reaction of Valentín Haüy and possibly the death of Valindin as the aggressive bully. However this led to the tragic death of David. The positive outcome would be in the future and as much as a result of a change in attitude rather than an immediate effect. This would also fit in with the interpretation of the work as a metaphor for the political situation in Spain at the time the play was written.

Sección Segunda

Question 5 Gabriel García Márquez: *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba*

- (a) This question was the primary prompt for Key Message 1, above. A large number of candidates read *idealismo optimista* as a synonym for hope and produced an essay based on 'is there any hope in the novel?'. The main focus of the essay was then usually a contrast between the attitudes of the colonel and his wife, with mention of the *gallo*. This clearly reduced the number of marks available as candidates were not answering the question on the examination paper.

Candidates could have begun by quoting: '*La vida es la cosa mejor que se ha inventado*', which encapsulates the colonel's idealism and optimism. The political life of the town is an essential part of the theme – the colonel maintains his position as a liberal idealist despite the murder of his son. The incident when the colonel comes face-to-face with his son's assassin and stands his ground shows how he maintains his dignity and sees the effects of a brutal society which has debased individuals. The colonel is hopeful, but candidates needed to explain why – the colonel has ideals and lives by them. Reference to other characters in the text, as well as the wider society, in the light of his idealism gave a clearer perspective. For example, Sabas has no ideals as he put personal gain as the motivation for his life and betrayed his political views and his friends, allying himself with those who were his enemies, in stark contrast to the colonel. The *gallo* also represents the colonel's ideals as he is honouring the memory of his son who sacrificed his life for the right of free speech and political beliefs.

- (b) This option was a little less popular than (a). The majority of candidates understood the role of an omniscient narrator and some recognised the power of descriptive passages. Many tended to deal with the fact that the omniscient narrator knew everything by including too much narrative. An interesting comparison with the use of dialogue could have enabled candidates to analyse the relative effect of literary techniques.

Isabel Allende: *La casa de los espíritus*

- (a) The best responses to this option showed how the author had written a multi-layered novel dealing with complex themes and introducing a wide range of characters. The focus on one family in the main gave a stable central group of individuals who then developed in different ways. The socio-political context was presented through the experiences of the main characters and drew the reader into the setting. A number of candidates chose one or two themes, such as the position of women or the effects of an oppressive right-wing government and showed how the author explored them. Knowledge of *el realismo mágico* as a literary device was rarely demonstrated. Candidates generally knew the novel well, but did not always select references to best effect and tended to narrate too much.
- (b) This question also raised issues referred to in the Key Messages, in that many candidates did not read the instructions carefully and wrote responses in which they contrasted one or two specific male and female characters. The question asked candidates to analyse the contrast between the presentation of women as creative and original individuals, versus the aggressive and conservative nature of men. The more general approach may well touch on the question but would also include much irrelevant information. The best answers selected a small number of characters and used depth of knowledge to show how attitudes developed, and in some cases changed, according to circumstances.

Question 7

Federico García Lorca: *Bodas de sangre*

- (a) The best responses analysed the Madre's influence in the development of themes and the plot. Some candidates demonstrated how her personality had been affected by experiences and how she was influenced by the society in which she lived. Most candidates were able to use the text well by supporting their arguments with quotations, although some of these were too long.
- (b) There were some very good responses to this question. Candidates understood that there was a conflict of irreconcilable destinies in that Leonardo and the Novia were destined to be together, yet the Novio was destined to die. These ideas were supported by an appreciation of the social context and the many dramatic features, which seem to lead inexorably to the tragic outcome. A fair number of answers were overwhelmed by narrative and simply told the story and then concluded the ending was destiny. As in other questions, candidates must focus on the key words and ensure their answer responds directly to the question asked.

Question 8

Rosalía de Castro: *En las orillas del Sar*

- (a) Candidates who choose this text are usually well prepared and are familiar with the terminology and techniques in analysing poetry. The best essays are those which are able to structure their response in a thematic way, comparing and contrasting ideas referring to Nature from both poems as they work through their answer. Examiners look for a personal response which is fully supported by detailed references to the text and understanding of the writer's focus.
- (b) In this option, candidates are able to choose whichever poems they feel express the theme of religion and analyse it. Examiners are open to any choice of verses, provided they are relevant to the theme, and also accept the candidate's own interpretation, subject to understanding of the many aspects which make up a poem. These include lexis, imagery, metre, setting, voice and other linguistic devices.