

SPANISH

<p>Paper 9719/01 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:

- **Section 1** Initial presentation (maximum 3½ minutes);
 - **Section 2** Topic Conversation (7–8 minutes) on issues arising from the Presentation;
 - **Section 3** 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. It is important that the prescribed timings are observed.
 - Candidates should be reminded if necessary to ask the examiner questions in both conversation sections and be 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 wide range of performance. Occasionally the teacher/examiner allowed the candidate to ignore the required timings. On a few occasions the general conversation became an extension of the topic conversation and there were still a few presentations that were not clearly related to a Spanish-speaking country

The quality of the recordings was generally of a high standard, though some suffered from low volume or intrusive background noise. The range of samples mostly followed correct procedure with a range from top to bottom; some centres supplied recordings of all the candidates entered. Some centres did not include recordings of the lowest mark awarded.

We remind centres to remind teachers / examiners that they should strive to develop a proper conversation with the candidates and prompt them to ask the required questions. This is particularly problematic when an otherwise good candidate loses marks because the teacher fails to prompt the candidate to ask at least two questions in each section. Overall though, teacher/examiners entered into the spirit of the test and helped candidates to produce the best possible recordings.

There was much evidence of sympathetic examining, especially with weaker candidates, and candidates' nerves were dealt with calmly by many teachers in order to maintain the momentum of the conversation. We remind teachers/examiners not to give unnecessarily long responses to questions from candidates, thereby reducing the time available to candidates to develop their own thoughts.

While most centres carried out the necessary administration efficiently and correctly, some centres needed marks amended because of incorrect addition and transcription between documents. We remind centres that it's their responsibility to ensure the accuracy of marks submitted to Cambridge.

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. Candidates who spoke in a casual or disjointed manner and who made little attempt to engage the examiner lost credit.

Most candidates were able to inject references to a Hispanic context into their presentations. Evidence of preparation was widespread with candidates often quoting statistics but then, crucially, backing them up with their own reactions to such statistics rather than just slavishly quoting them and hoping that was enough to impress.

Part 2: Topic Conversation

This part of the test should not just be an invitation to the candidate to give a further series of mini presentations, though a few centres were content to allow this. The Topic Conversation provides the opportunity to develop points arising from the presentation. 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.

A good number of candidates spoke articulately, intelligently and spontaneously in response to such questions and were fully able to express themselves in ways that were convincing, tightly structured and grammatically accurate for this level. Weaker candidates had difficulty in going beyond prepared answers and linguistic control was lost when this was attempted.

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 in the Topic Conversation should be discussed. Although there are no prescribed areas for the General Conversation, topics 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. We remind centres that in order to access the full range of marks, the conversation should be developed to the level required for this examination, with issues covering more than elementary topics such as favourite food and pets.

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

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

<p>Paper 9719/22 Reading and Writing</p>
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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 paper provided an appropriate challenge to candidates across the ability range. All scripts were generally well presented, and response to the two texts, dealing with the tax on sugary drinks and measures taken to reduce food wastage, was pleasing.

Most candidates attempted all questions and appeared to be aware that they should not copy more than four consecutive words of text in their answers to the comprehension questions. It was pleasing to note skilled attempts at paraphrase. Despite good, overall understanding, marks were lost when additional relevant details were not included in answers. (Candidates should keep a careful eye on the number of marks allocated to each question, and gauge the amount of detail to be included accordingly).

Only a very few candidates exceeded the 140 word limit in **Question 5**, thereby restricting the number of marks they could score in **5(b)**. Summaries in **5(a)** are continuing to improve as the message seems to be getting through that relevant specific details score many more marks than vague generalisations.

Most candidates attempted all questions and there was little evidence of any difficulty with time management. As always, at the upper end of the spectrum there were many excellent papers which were a pleasure to mark. However, no less satisfying were the answers from candidates who attempted to show off more modest linguistic skills to the best advantage.

Comments on specific questions

Sección 1

Question 1

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

- (a) This was usually answered correctly. A few, perhaps influenced by the present perfect tense used in the cue, incorrectly offered *ha entrado en vigor*.

- (b) The commonest error here was the omission of *que*, which was needed to start the phrase.
- (c) Very few errors were made.
- (d) Again, this was almost universally answered correctly.
- (e) Apart from a few instances when answers were erroneously prefaced by *que* the phrase was usually correctly identified.

Question 2

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

- (a) This was done well, especially by native speakers. Some of the less able candidates attempted to use *es* instead of *está*, which does not work here. Others just offered *basado* without attempting to form a passive construction.
- (b) How the verb *soler* is used is something which candidates were either well aware of or not. The majority were able to form *suele conducir* correctly.
- (c) The main mistake was an incorrect preposition being used after *preocupados*. Only *por* was acceptable. One or two correct alternatives were noted: *si se ven preocupados por la salud* and *si la salud les tiene preocupados*.
- (d) The correct answer here caused a little more trouble to ascertain. Many carelessly overlooked that the subject of *ponga* needed to remain impersonal and so *se* was required. Others changed the cue word to *pongan*, which is not permissible. A few also incorrectly tried to omit *es suficiente* from their answers, which would give a change of meaning and emphasis when reinserted in the text.
- (e) A common error was for those candidates not in the habit of writing accents on their Spanish to mistake the noun *aumento* for the verb *umentó*. To score the mark it was necessary to use the noun with a verb in the present perfect e.g. *no ha habido / no se ha experimentado (un) aumento del / en el precio del azúcar* or *el precio del azúcar no ha tenido / experimentado / sufrido aumento*.

Question 3

The text about a tax on the sugar content of soft drinks imposed by Cataluña was generally well understood and candidates who gave clear, detailed answers in their own words achieved good marks.

- (a) What should have been a very straightforward first mark for noting that the tax was aimed at combating obesity and diabetes, was frequently spurned by the direct copying of *la obesidad y la diabetes*. (This lift could so easily have been avoided by changing the order of the two conditions). The two other points, that a similar tax had shown positive results in other countries and had been recommended by the WHO, were often overlooked. This led to some candidates who offered little more to their answer than the above mentioned lift scoring no marks for the question and thereby reducing their mark for quality of language.
- (b) Better marks were scored here. Nearly every candidate was able to state that the tax was part of a strategy to encourage healthier lifestyles. Some precision in wording was needed to score the other two marks for describing the anticipated effect that the tax would have on manufacturers – that they would produce drinks with a lower sugar content, and focus their publicity on such products.
- (c) This was also done well. Some candidates omitted one of the elements in the way the tax had been applied in other countries, where there was no differentiation between the sugar content of the drink and the size of its container. Most were able to state that the consumption of sugary drinks had increased in these countries as consumers realised that bigger bottles were cheaper. A common lift was *que los envases más grandes*.

- (d) Most candidates scored at least three of the four marks available, successfully converting direct speech into indirect. Many acceptable interpretations of *la información... está ahí* included 'the information is / there / available/ public / easy to see / find', etc. and were all credited. Amaya's views that she decides what she drinks, and that the authorities are using the tax as a money-raising scheme in addition to showing concern for public health, were often clearly noted.
- (e) A very accessible two marks were on offer here and more often than not it was direct copying from the text which prevented candidates from scoring them. Common lifts included *menos azúcar en las bebidas* and any five consecutive words from *una campaña de concienciación contra el consumo de azúcar*.

Sección 2

Question 4

The second text, dealing with proposals to cut food wastage and tackle hunger in Colombia proved to be equally accessible to candidates.

- (a) All three marks were commonly scored. The first point was sometimes invalidated by direct copying of *de hambre en el país*, and the second by neglecting to mention that the food was still fit for human consumption. The distribution of waste food to needy sections of the population was usually clearly stated.
- (b) Although the question was understood, sometimes a lack of precision meant that candidates did not manage to get the full two marks. The mark scheme was seeking a reference to the need for agricultural practices to be *más adecuadas* and to improvements to the *highways* infrastructure. There were some lifts of the language relating to the second point (*mejorar la infraestructura de carreteras (para)*).
- (c) This proved to be one of the more challenging questions to be answered, as the mark scheme was looking for full information to be given. Probably because of number of figures and percentages involved candidates often found problems in manipulating the language. Provided that a lift was avoided, most were able to state that Colombia wastes an enormous quantity (ten million tons) of food. Provided that *vive en condiciones de inseguridad alimentaria* was understood and that candidates could paraphrase this, a second mark was also added. Not many were successful in including all the details that food could be given to nine per cent of the malnourished under-fives, but more were able to pick up a mark for noting that children who were dying from hunger would be saved.
- (d) Two marks out of three was a common score here. The idea that the proposed law would offer *incentives* to reduce food wastage was often overlooked. The two points that businesses and their owners would be encouraged to donate excess food and that there would be penalties for those who wasted food still fit for consumption were usually clearly stated.
- (e) Candidates who took care managed to score all three marks here. The first point, that this is the first example of food waste legislation, needed to be qualified by *in the world*. The fact that this would save a considerable amount of money was usually successfully recorded. The final point was frequently invalidated by the direct copying of *la cultura de la solidaridad*.

Question 5

Many candidates now appear to be aware of the techniques required for this part of the examination. The vast majority paid careful attention to the overall number of words allowed for this question. Most summaries gave specific details rather than generalisations, and the better personal responses contained opinions and original ideas.

- (a) Although considerable improvement has been made in answering this part of the question, it is perhaps worth a reminder of the sort of answer which, despite scoring well for quality of language, will score next to nothing for content:

Básicamente en el texto uno se habla más de una manera la cual van a usar los catalanes para aumentar el precio de las bebidas azucaradas y rebajar el consumo. En el texto dos se comenta la nueva ley que quieren poner en Colombia, la cual...

These opening lines use up nearly one third of the words allowed for both (a) and (b) and the answer has yet to score any content marks.

By contrast, the first half of the following answer scores five for content using a similar number of words:

Cataluña introdujo un impuesto sobre bebidas azucaradas ✓ que varía dependiendo de la concentración de azúcar. ✓ Se intenta estimular que los productores fabriquen refrescos con menos azúcar ✓ y que promocionen productos menos azucarados. ✓ En Colombia la ley prohíbe la destrucción de alimentos aptos para consumir... ✓

Specific details not generalisations are what is required.

- (b) Apart from a small minority who had already exhausted their word allocation by the time they reached this point (and thereby scored zero), most candidates had something to say in response to the question. The word *nutrición* was interpreted either as meaning 'having sufficient food' or 'eating healthily'. With the former most answers did not perceive any real issues, but mentioned the existence of food banks and organisations to help those in need. Candidates taking the latter interpretation often linked obesity with the increase of fast food restaurants and prepared meals as a negative or, if positive, the Mediterranean diet and the ready availability of fresh produce.

Quality of Language

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

SPANISH

<p>Paper 9719/32 Essay</p>
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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

The essays produced for this session once again offered a wide variety of ability levels ranging, as is often the case year on year, from responses that were barely adequate all the way to extremely well written and convincingly structured pieces of writing. The regularity with which many candidates were able to demonstrate a convincing ability to deliver well-conceived, tautly argued and intelligently written essays was impressive. The flair, linguistic accuracy and thoughtful approach to the issues raised by the titles of the essays on the paper were very much on show in numerous essays. These observations undoubtedly reflect the high levels of preparation and linguistic commitment that many candidates embrace as an integral part of their preparation for this particular examination.

In general term, those essays that set out immediately to deal with the title set on the paper and to stick determinedly to the issues involved without lapsing into generalised comments on the overall theme were the essays that attracted more marks at the upper end of the mark scheme. The stipulated word count (250 – 400 words) was adhered to by the vast majority of candidates and only a handful of candidates wrote a brief paragraph on each of the five titles set on the examination paper, thereby severely limiting the marks that could be awarded in both language and content. Once again, for this session, there were only a few examples of essays that had been pre-learnt and which had little, if indeed anything, to do with the title set and were mainly a collection of superficial thoughts on the general topic (e.g. *Las relaciones personales*) rather than on the actual title set. As has been stated before, examiners award good or very good content marks to candidates whose essays are relevant and to the point whereas those essays that are inclined to show little understanding of the title or which deal vaguely and arbitrarily with the issues are highly unlikely to attract such good marks for content. The mark scheme states that for an essay to be awarded a ‘very good’ mark for content, it needs to be ‘detailed, clearly relevant and well-illustrated’ as well as being ‘coherently argued and structured’. The very best essays ticked every one of these important boxes. If candidates have a clear understanding of the mark scheme, it follows that they are more likely to produce better essays.

In terms of the quality of Spanish used by candidates, there were plenty of insightful responses that were confident in their use of complex sentence patterns. Such essays were generally accurate and often showed a good sense of idiom as well as an ability to draw upon extensive vocabulary that was relevant to the issues under discussion. Many essays also read reasonably well and showed a generally sound grasp of Spanish grammar with some attempts at varied vocabulary. Again, it is worth pointing out that the mark scheme clearly states what is expected in the essays written by candidates in order to attract marks in the various language categories ranging from ‘very poor’ to ‘very good’. The more common language errors are, as always, worth highlighting for the benefit of future candidates.

At the very top of this list of common misunderstandings is the erroneous tendency of some candidates to use singular verbs with plural subjects and vice-versa. Examples such as ‘la gente son pobre’ (sic), ‘la relación entre dos personas son importantes’ (sic) and ‘muchos ríos está contaminados’ (sic) were not unusual. The tone that this type of error sets in an essay is such that it really is worth informing candidates

just how widespread the misunderstanding is in order that it can be avoided in future. Equally basic and yet just as commonplace was the lack of adjectival agreement in many essays. Utterances such as ‘...los individuos inteligente...’ (sic), ‘la polución atmosférico’ (sic) and ‘el gobierno mejicana’ (sic) regularly occurred in a good number of essays. Perhaps candidates run out of time to check what they have written or maybe they simply do not see the grammatical error. Either way, such fundamental inaccuracies are best avoided.

Many candidates were inclined to confuse the uses of *ser* and *estar* and quite often the accurate use of the passive voice was a challenge for a good number of candidates. Examples such as ‘...tales vehículos caros están conducidos por la gente rica...’ (sic) and ‘...muchas decisiones malas han estado tomadas por los jóvenes...’ (sic) serve to illustrate this particular point. For some candidates, once again there seemed to be some confusion with regard to the difference between ‘si no’ and ‘sino’ and also ‘por qué’ and ‘porque’ which resulted in a lack of clarity of the entire sentence and/or point being made.

In spite of the points raised above, there were indeed many good or better essays that made reasonable use of paragraphs in order to reach coherent conclusions. The very best essays, as one would expect at this level, achieved structural balance throughout and were linguistically sophisticated. Those candidates who made relevant points often backed up by evidence, examples or appropriately focused references in order to produce very readable essays, were rewarded by gaining access to the higher categories of the mark scheme.

Examples of good use of the language included:

- Accurately conjugated verbs.
- Accents being used accurately throughout the essay.
- Consistently executed adjectival agreement.
- The judicious use of adverbs and adverbial phrases in order to raise the register of the essay.
- The correct use, depending on context, of *por* and *para*.
- The consistently accurate use of appropriate tenses with verbs in both singular and plural forms.

Common errors included:

- A lack of accentuation (even in very good candidates’ work) and often no accents being used at all. In some cases, the lack of accents seriously affected comprehension, particularly when it came to tenses (tomara/tomará, tomo/tomó, esta/está and so on).
- Ending sentences with a preposition.
- Poor punctuation leading to a breakdown of understanding of the point being made by the candidate.
- 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 padres an tenido problemas con el comportamiento de sus hijos’ (sic)).
- Confusion with the use of the letters ‘g’ and ‘j’ in words such as ‘generalmente’ and ‘agencia’.
- The omission of opening exclamation marks (¡) and question marks (¿).

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *Las relaciones personales*

Es muy fácil exagerar la importancia de tener buenos amigos y poder depender de ellos. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

This was a popular title with candidates and one which produced many interesting and thoughtful responses. Good answers were often characterised by a variety of forcefully made points stating not just the importance of having good friends but also of knowing who one’s real friends are, especially at moments of personal crisis. Social media websites were often cited as causing the exaggeration of the importance of friends but most essays concluded that self-deception in terms of the number of real friends an individual may have really is somewhat pointless. Personal examples, as is often the case in such essays, tended to enhance many of the points made in response to the title.

Question 2 *La justicia y el orden público*

Si los jóvenes tuvieran más cosas que hacer en su tiempo libre, habría menos delincuencia juvenil en las calles. ¿Qué opinas tú?

This was a generally well answered title but also quite a contentious one. Some candidates decided that young people are often let down by those in authority and are regarded with suspicion by their elders. Others were keen to point out the element of personal choice involved for many young people when faced with the opportunity to indulge in criminal activity. Most did conclude, however, that in general terms it is likely to be the case that figures relating to juvenile delinquency would decrease if young people were offered better local facilities in terms of youth clubs, sports centres and so on.

Question 3 *El trabajo y el ocio*

El trabajo contribuye más a la sociedad que el ocio. ¿Qué opinas tú?

This was a less popular title on the paper, although those who responded tended to produce work of a decent standard. Whilst the importance of leisure time activities was not underestimated in any way, most agreed that work does indeed contribute more to society, especially in economic terms. The basic point appeared to be that a society cannot function successfully with very high levels of unemployment. The compelling nature of this argument was apparent for many candidates.

Question 4 *La guerra y la paz*

En casos extremos, la guerra sí que se puede justificar. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

This title proved to be reasonably popular with candidates. The best essays gave a balanced analysis of the possible justifications for armed conflict and many also made highly appropriate references to recent history in order to support their argument. The weaker essays tended to confine themselves simply to the assertion that war is a bad thing but then did not go on to develop further any of the surrounding issues.

Question 5 *La contaminación*

Nuestro planeta es mucho más resistente a la contaminación de lo que pensamos. ¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo?

This was a very popular title amongst candidates. There was much agreement that the planet is struggling to cope at present with the levels of pollution we are currently subjecting it to as a consequence of our dependence on oil and plastics, for example, and that a tipping point would appear to have been reached. There was also a degree of sympathy for the view that nature has coped, and always will cope, with whatever humans throw at it. Either way, the amount of conviction with regard to the importance of the issues raised by the title was rather impressive.

SPANISH

<p>Paper 9719/42 Texts</p>
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Key messages

- 1 Read the question carefully. Plan your answer and keep referring back to the question to ensure that the essay remains focused.
- 2 Justify the argument presented with references to the text which illustrate the points being made.
- 3 The essay should be entirely focused on the question, avoiding references to the author's background, life or other works.
- 4 Examiners are seeking evidence of analytical skills and understanding. A detailed narrative account of the text is not required.
- 5 Check the instructions regarding choice of questions from Sections 1 and 2. Candidates must choose one question from each Section and a third from either Section. If all answers are from one Section only, the lowest mark will be removed from the total.
- 6 Write legibly. Examiners can only mark essays if they can read them. There are many more scripts which are extremely difficult to decipher. It is in the candidate's own interests to ensure that the work submitted can be read easily by an Examiner who is not familiar with the handwriting of any individual.

General comments

Candidates generally showed detailed study and knowledge of the texts. As in previous sessions, the majority of answers were based on texts from the most popular authors (García Lorca, Esquivel, Sender).

It was encouraging to note that many candidates had adopted the pattern of 'point, example, explanation, link', using their knowledge of the text to justify the argument, analysing the point and giving coherence to the answer by linking one paragraph to another in the construction of the response. A number of answers began well but candidates were distracted by recounting the narrative and lost the thread of the argument. A good conclusion contributes significantly to the impact of a well-argued essay.

Some candidates have been tempted to interpret texts as purely reflections of reality rather than works of fiction. This made it difficult for them to present an appropriate response as there was a tendency to speculate and extrapolate beyond the text itself.

It is important that candidates have a clear understanding of specific historical events when these are an intrinsic part of the narrative and theme. For example, in the Sender text, references are made to events leading up to the Spanish Civil War of 1936–39. The nature of the conflict is reflected in the text, and candidates need to understand this without having to study the course of the war in detail.

The majority of candidates followed the instructions correctly and answered 3 questions covering both Sections of the question paper. Those who chose 3 questions from the same Section were credited with the two highest scores only. The same principle was applied to candidates who answered both options on the same text; the higher mark was carried forward.

Comments on specific questions

Sección 1

Question 1 Emilia Pardo Bazán: *Los Pazos de Ulloa*

- (a) (i) Reference to dawn not always mentioned.
- (ii) Julián was in a state of extreme anxiety, verging on hysteria over concern for Nucha in labour.
- (iii) Most referred to Julián's involvement in introducing Nucha to her husband, and his influence on the Marquis' decision. Julián and Nucha brought sensitivity and moral standards to Los Pazos. They supported one another emotionally, but were in conflict with the prevailing attitudes and way of life. Both suffered.
- (b) Most essays argued that the prevailing atmosphere was one of pessimism. Candidates were able to refer to a range of examples, often contrasting town and country. The violent and heartless treatment of Perucho, the manipulation of Primitivo, the chaotic state of the whole estate reflected the corrupt and dissolute way of life. Julián tried to improve matters by tackling the finances, intervening in the treatment of Perucho and influencing the Marquis' marriage but all attempts failed. His return to Los Pazos at the end of the novel to find Nucha dead and her daughter neglected underlined this.

Question 2 Lope de Vega: *El caballero de Olmedo*

- (a) (i) Inés' tears showed the sincerity of her feelings.
- (ii) Alonso was cowardly in using Fabia.
- (iii) Candidates were able to refer to a number of instances and quotations which pointed to a tragic end for Alonso. Many analysed Lope's poetic presentation of the relationship between love and death. Alonso made some poor decisions, such as his employment of Fabia, collusion in lying to Inés' father and ignoring clear warnings – some of which would presuppose punishment. At the same time he had many admirable qualities and was always led by feelings of love towards Inés and his parents and respect for another nobleman.
- (b) The best answers to this question recognised the King's role as the arbiter of justice, a moral example and in addition, the only individual who can stabilise society and restore order to chaos.

The King's favour was bestowed on Alonso, increasing his standing in society. Rodrigo's accident took place in the presence of the King, making his embarrassment and humiliation greater. The King is seen to be fair and acts decisively. The monarch's role in the play influenced the plot and the themes.

Question 3 Laura Esquivel: *Como agua para chocolate*

- (a) (i) Pedro was burned when a flame (caused by the ghost of Mamá Elena) caused an oil lamp to shatter.
- (ii) Pedro questioned Tita's affection for him, behaves like a spoiled child.
- (iii) Some very good answers showed Pedro's lack of sensitivity, selfishness and cowardice. He condemned both Tita and Rosaura to unhappiness by agreeing to marry Rosaura. He did not stand up to Mamá Elena, preferring to watch Gertrudis escape and being complicit in the death of his son by agreeing to go to Texas when Roberto depended on Tita. Candidates compared Pedro's behaviour with that of John Brown. The doctor displayed selfless love, only wanting Tita to be happy and caring for her with no sense of personal gratification. However Tita chose Pedro, which gave rise to analysis of the meaning of love and how anyone could be seen to deserve affection.
- (b) This question tended to attract a fairly limited treatment. The concept of change was presented in many aspects of the novel, both personal and national; few candidates dealt with both in detail. All mentioned Gertrudis as a woman choosing her own path, but not all understood what the Mexican Revolution was about. Some analysed Mamá Elena's attitude as a political statement showing how

her control affected members of her family causing unhappiness and even death in the case of Roberto. Her reaction to Gertrudis and Tita was hypocritical in that she had been denied love when young. Tita also changed in that she became more confident and finally challenged her mother's spirit and banished her malign influence for ever. Change and hope for the future was seen in the fire which destroyed the past, cleansing the area and allowing new growth. Esperanza's name and the legacy of Tita's recipes symbolise a new age, with the best from the previous generation. Other elements mentioned included the influence of the USA.

Question 4 Rodolfo Usigli: *El gesticulador*

- (a) (i) Navarro may expose Rubio as a fraud.
- (ii) Ridiculous comments.
- (iii) The audience is kept at a distance from the characters, laughing at and with them. There were relatively few answers to this question and candidates tended to list some examples without being able to analyse how the author portrayed characters' gullibility or the tragi-comic elements.
- (b) Most answers identified that the Mexican Revolution had lost its objectives, with no effective leader. Politics were mired in corruption, as exemplified by Navarro. The murder of Rubio ended any new hope of change. However this was flawed in essence as the whole premise of Rubio leading the people into a new future was based on a lie and hope of personal advancement. So he mirrored the intentions of the political class presented in the play. Essays included analysis of the theme of deception and abuse of power with the normal citizens helpless to achieve any change.

Sección 2

Question 5 Ramón J Sender: *Requíem por un campesino español*

- (a) The essence of this question was to show how although the novel is set in an unspecified village in Spain during the lead up to the Civil War of 1936–39, many of the issues and themes are universal. These cover questions such as the role of religion or the Church, family, community, society, class, violence and equality. Most answers concentrated on the theme of war and violence and showed good knowledge of the text, analysing loyalty and allegiance in particular but focused only on the Spanish experience. The best essays went beyond this to show how exploitation of the working classes, 'peasants', and the suffering of the most vulnerable in society, is both timeless and universally experienced in any unjust system.
- (b) This question attracted a large number of responses, as did (a). Most essays dealt with the key relationships where communication broke down – Paco and Mosén Millán, Paco and Don Valeriano. The best essays took the Mass as the centre of the argument and showed how the divisions in society, caused by lack of communication and the inability to see another point of view led to the personal tragedy of Paco and the national tragedy of Spain.

Question 6 Federico García Lorca: *Yerma*

- (a) Virtually every candidate answered on this text, with both options attracting many responses.

This question went to the heart of Yerma's dilemma – honra – and required an analysis of how the protagonist was torn because she was determined to live according to her ideals and be true to herself, but circumstances worked against her. In particular, the concept of 'honor', maintaining a reputation in the eyes of society. Yerma's response to the old woman who offers her son as a substitute for Juan '*¿Te figuras que puedo conocer otro hombre? ¿Dónde pones mi honra?*' and Juan's exclamation '*No quiero que la gente me señale. Por eso quiero ver cerrada esa puerta y cada persona en su casa*' show the gulf between the couple. Yerma is unable to be herself. Juan's focus is his work and his reputation. Yerma maintains her 'honra'. Both are unhappy because the marriage was not based on love but convenience. Neither can fulfil the other's needs. Yerma's murder of Juan was not to enable her to have a better life with another partner – this misinterpretation of the play is becoming more frequent – but to rid herself of the torture of uncertainty. Analysis of the forces driving characters, the poetic language and the commentary on society gave greater depth to essays. All work must be based on the text itself and not adaptations or extrapolations.

- (b) This question asked for analysis of the play which, according to García Lorca himself, has no plot. If this is the case, what gives momentum to the work? The most successful essays argued that the title was the key – the plight of a childless woman. Her despair increases as the play progresses and the other characters in the play contribute information about Juan, his family and the attitude of society at large to explain why Yerma's situation has no solution. The use of symbols, verse and prose to highlight aspects of the themes was also effective.

Question 7 Brotherston, (ed): *Spanish American Modernista Poets: A Critical Anthology*

- (a) This question required candidates to present a critical analysis of the poem 'En país extraño' by Manuel González Prada. The main themes of the natural world, the senses and universality were explored in terms of the ideas and poetic interpretation. Candidates who have been prepared for this specific type of question tend to attain a good result as they are aware of the need to pay close attention to detail and to present a focused analysis.
- (b) This question presented the view that some of the poets in the anthology seemed to be particularly influenced by ideas from other countries and took pride in reflecting these in their own work. It is difficult to give a general comment on possible responses to this question as candidates are free to choose the poets and poems which illustrate this, or challenge the premise. All valid arguments were accepted. Perhaps the best answers included examples for and against the argument posed.

Question 8 Horacio Quiroga: *Cuentos escogidos*

- (a) This question was focused on one story 'El Simún'. Quiroga puts psychological verisimilitude before sentiment in his stories, possibly creating a harsh note, but this is reflected in his economical and intense style. Essentially, Man cannot triumph over Nature. In this story, he shows how even lifelong friendships can be destroyed by experiencing extreme conditions. There are many references in the text to illustrate how Quiroga achieves such tension and drama in a crisis.
- (b) There were some interesting responses to this question, where candidates had detailed knowledge of several stories and justified the argument effectively. The dramatic nature of the stories was studied and the role of animals in showing that Man cannot dominate Nature and force human ways on to an existing system without suffering himself or causing suffering. Essays were generally well planned and showed understanding of the themes.