

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/21
Reading and Writing

General comments

This examination contained tasks of varying degrees of challenge and was a good test for candidates of all levels of ability. There was a wide range of marks awarded, with some candidates putting in excellent performances and, at the other extreme, some candidates who clearly were not ready for an examination at this level.

The majority of Centres had encouraged their candidates to present their work well; an extra space left between questions made reading easier. Good presentation also tended to coincide with good examination technique. Regrettably, there were still a small number of Centres whose candidates offered brief answers for high-scoring questions, disregarded the word count for **Question 5** or introduced irrelevant, generalised material in their summaries.

Comments on specific questions

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

This exercise in matching a paraphrase with a phrase used in the text generally gave candidates a confidence-boosting start. Scores of five out of five were not infrequently recorded, although the majority were closer to the middle of the range.

Candidates should be reminded that they are looking for a precise match, and a superfluous word or words will invalidate a correct answer.

Question 2

The language manipulations in this question always prove to be challenging, and only the better candidates recorded marks above three out of five.

A considerable number of variations were possible in the answers, all of which were acceptable as long as they were grammatically correct and would fit back seamlessly into the original text.

Some candidates failed to use the targeted expressions in their answers, for example in **(a)** some candidates used *solemos* instead of the required *suele*, and in **(b)** some answers omitted *que* in the phrase *es preciso que*. In both these instances answers were invalidated.

- (a)** Many candidates were successful in forming the variety of infinitive constructions which could follow *suele*. Answers were sometimes invalidated by the omission of *que*, as they would no longer fit back into the text and retain the same meaning.
- (b)** A subjunctive was required here, as was realised by most native speakers and the better candidates amongst the non-native speakers. Those who opted for *utilizar* sometimes encountered orthographical problems.
- (c)** The majority of candidates were able to form one of the many constructions which could be followed by the infinitive *justificar* and express the same idea as the original phrase.
- (d)** Out of all the five manipulations, this one, requiring the use of *tantas*, generated the highest number of acceptable permutations.

- (e) There was mixed success in the use of *les hace falta* or *les falta* as an alternative to *necesitan*.

Question 3

This text contained some challenging sections, although candidates were quickly able to appreciate the underlying theme that physical appearance can often be a discriminatory factor where job opportunities are concerned.

- (a) This question stretched candidates. Many were able to note that the barrier to reaching the *sitio deseado* arises from shortcomings in personal appearance. Not so many correctly identified the *sitio deseado* as the sought after job.
- (b)(i) This question was more accessible than the first but unfortunately some candidates lifted “*el aspecto físico y la personalidad*”, and were therefore unable to score.
- (ii) By contrast this part of the question was far more testing, with candidates required to demonstrate a good command of Spanish in order to express their views as to why a 'selection process' might equate to 'discrimination'.
- (c)(i) Many candidates used the *encajar en un cierto grupo de trabajadores* from **Question 1(c)**, showing that they were observant and had understood the information needed to answer the question correctly. Some answers were too general and could not be awarded any marks, for example, *explica el término excelente presentación mediante una asociación, una ejemplificación y una comparación*.
- (ii) This was a fairly accessible question which most candidates answered correctly. Some, however, gave very vague information for which they could not get any marks, for example, *por su aspecto físico y los contrastes en su apariencia* or *por la forma en que viste*. These answers did not give specific details about the differences between *banqueros* and *programadores*. A few even missed the force of *es poco común ver* and suggested the banking profession was characterised by long hair.
- (d) This was a more challenging question. Some candidates understood that the trend was *invertir más dinero en su apariencia* but quite a few failed to get the second point *es más fácil negociar...* Incorrect answers ranged from *la nueva tendencia es preocuparse más por un aspecto físico to cambiar de imagen por la moda*.
- (e) Candidates scored well on this question, successfully identifying the ideas that there were not so many job opportunities for the over-thirties, so in order to improve their chances or to be promoted they needed to look younger. The mistake that was sometimes made was to give a more general answer, such as *para mejorar su imagen*.
- (f) The two elements of the answer were fairly easily identified in the text. Marks were occasionally invalidated by the lifting of phrases such as *una cultura laboral menos discriminatoria*.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

Answers to questions on the second text were commonly not so accurate as the answers to the first text. One possible reason for this was that candidates often resorted to their own ideas about ways in which disabled people experienced discrimination instead of offering the specific details stated in the text.

- (a)
(i) & (ii) Although four marks were offered for the two parts of this question answers often lacked the necessary detail. For example, some candidates mentioned that *las autoridades no han hecho nada*, which is not the same as saying that they have not succeeded in changing this attitude.

- (b) This should have been quite a straightforward two marks. However, candidates frequently failed to take full advantage, either because they did not mention how many pupils were affected, or because they directly lifted *rampas, aulas y baños adecuados*.
- (c) (i) There were some very good explanations of the term *violencia arquitectónica*, although a number of candidates used information which answered the second part of the question and could not be rewarded here. One or two misinterpretations of the term to mean 'physical violence against the disabled' were also noted.
- (ii) Noting the three obstacles to mobility for disabled people which were mentioned in the text did not turn out to be such a straightforward three marks as had been anticipated. There was quite a lot of lifting of *ausencia de semáforos para ciegos* and *el mal estado de las veredas*. Some answers failed to get a mark for the last point as they did not include information about the lack of facilities in buses for wheelchairs.
- (d) This question was answered successfully by most candidates.
- (e) Sometimes candidates offered answers containing information not extracted from the text, for example, *los discapacitados necesitan apoyo público para su integración como facilidades para poder depender de ellos mismos y no de otra persona*. But all in all most answers were correct.

Question 5

Quite a lot of candidates were aware of the word limit and stuck to it, and the number who exceeded the stated limit decreased in comparison with previous sessions. Anything more than 20 words over the maximum of 140 words is disregarded, and in extreme cases this can lead to very low or even no marks for the personal response.

- (a) As has been often stated in previous reports, what is required here is not a generalised summary of the two texts but a succinct statement of the main points which they contain. There is no need to paraphrase as no penalty is exacted for copying phrases from the texts. Also, personal opinions are not required in this part of the question.
- (b) In the two or three sentences which candidates have at their disposal here it is important to give a personal point of view and to attempt to incorporate original ideas rather than those merely taken from the texts.



FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/22
Reading and Writing

General comments

This examination contained tasks of varying degrees of challenge and was a good test for candidates of all levels of ability. There was a wide range of marks awarded, with some candidates putting in excellent performances and, at the other extreme, some candidates who clearly were not ready for an examination at this level. A few candidates suffered from poor time management and were unable to complete their work. Candidates seemed well aware of the environmental issues underpinning the two texts, although the first text frequently proved more of a challenge to some candidates than the second one.

Comments on specific questions

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

This exercise in identifying the correct definition of vocabulary used in the text generally gave candidates a confidence-boosting start. Scores of five out of five were not infrequently recorded, although the majority were closer to the middle of the range.

The key to success in this test type is, of course, to look at the vocabulary item in the context in which it appears in the text. It should in fact encourage understanding of the text in advance of the specific comprehension demands made by **Question 3**.

Question 1 (a) was often incorrectly answered as (ii).

Question 2

Few candidates recorded marks above three out of five in this exercise.

- (a) Most candidates were successful in constructing the third person singular of the perfect tense.
- (b) Only a minority of candidates knew that a subjunctive was required here and many of those that did failed to spell *modifique* correctly.
- (c) A number of answers were incorrect because of a failure to make the correct agreement with *colocadas*.
- (d) Finding a connection between *visibles* and *verse* and forming a construction which correctly included the latter frequently proved to be too much of a challenge for some candidates.
- (e) Greater success was noted here, possibly because there were several permutations in which *tanto* could be correctly used.

Question 3

As mentioned above, weaker candidates often struggled with this first text which dealt with controversy surrounding the siting of a new wind farm. However, those candidates who successfully applied their knowledge of Spanish to the text were rewarded with good marks.

- (a) The journalistic vocabulary and register of the first paragraph proved to be difficult for many candidates. Those who recognised more common phrases, such as *se niega a* and *apoyan diferentes motivos* were able to successfully answer the question.
- (b)(i) Those who recognised the significance of *la licencia de obras* and who were able use this, or paraphrase it with a suitable verb, scored the mark.
- (ii) This part of the question called for inference to be drawn from candidates' understanding of the proposed design of the wind farm. Most candidates came up with at least one suggestion, usually that the turbines should not be so high or so near, or that there should not be so many of them. Some candidates clearly did not understand and merely re-stated the actual details and dimensions of the planned project.
- (c) The impact of the wind farm on the natural environment was correctly identified by many, and better candidates also noted the noise pollution which would occur. Only a minority of candidates recorded the fact that the project would contravene European guidelines.
- (d) Although many candidates considered the wind farm to be potentially life threatening for the migratory birds, a surprising number struggled to use *morir* or the passive of *matar* correctly. Others commented on ecological implications of changed routes and habitats, and some thought the wind farm would have no effect whatsoever – which was fine as long as candidates justified this opinion.
- (e)(i) Candidates scored well on this question. The importance of renewable energy was readily identified, and many backed this up by noting that the impact of the wind farm would be less than that of coal-fired power stations. Many candidates also understood that the birds were not in such grave peril as had been feared.
- (ii) The idea of a pilot plan, to examine the impact of just one or two wind turbines, was also well understood.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

The text on the tax on plastic bags proved to be more accessible than the first text. Candidates appeared to be a lot more confident with the vocabulary and also the concept involved.

- (a) Many candidates achieved maximum marks on this question, correctly identifying all three of the elements required by the mark scheme.
- (b) A total of two out of three was a common outcome for this question, with there being no clearly identifiable pattern in the element missing from the answer.
- (c) Candidates were generally not so confident in their answers here. The point about the consumers taking time to change their habits was often overlooked.
- (d) At this point many of the weaker candidates decided that the text was not about *bolsas plásticas* at all, but about *botellas plásticas* instead. The majority, however, picked up the mark on offer for the concept of using two or three bags to carry one bottle, although not so many noted the need to plan shopping in advance.
- (e) This question proved to be the most challenging on the second text. Only better candidates were able to demonstrate understanding of the point that if the manufacturers increase their prices to the supermarkets then the latter will pass on this increase to the consumers.
- (f) Even if the previous answer had been answered incorrectly most candidates were able to identify correctly the two elements required by the mark scheme.

Question 5

Both parts of this question were generally handled well. Candidates had clearly been well trained in the techniques required and only a very few exceeded the maximum of 140 words. Anything more than 20 words over this maximum is disregarded and, in extreme cases, this can lead to very low or even no marks for the personal response.

- (a) As has been often stated in previous reports, what is required here is not a generalised summary of the two texts but a succinct statement of the main points which they contain. There is no need to paraphrase as no penalty is exacted for copying phrases from the texts.

Most candidates were well aware of this approach and the only barriers which restricted access to higher marks were either an imperfect understanding of the first text or, when dealing with the second text, a tendency to write about the evils of plastic bags rather than the initiative which had been taken to curtail their use.

- (b) In the two or three sentences which candidates have at their disposal here it is important to give a personal point of view and to attempt to incorporate original ideas rather than those merely taken from the texts. This last question was generally done well, with most candidates being proud of their country's green credentials.



FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/04

Texts

General comments

The quality of work seen this session was fairly typical for this component. Examiners noted minor differences in that there were fewer 'excellent' scripts and that more candidates were able to answer all three questions equally well.

In terms of preparation for future sessions, it would be very helpful if Centres could encourage candidates to follow the rubric when answering questions in **part (a)** in *Sección Primera* (where candidates are given an extract from the text with three questions). The three questions are designed to elicit short answers for **Parts (i) and (ii)**, by asking for specific information, which can usually be found in the extract. **Part (iii)** seeks a much longer response and requires candidates to refer to the **whole** of the text, as indicated in such phrases as '*con referencias detalladas a la obra entera*'. This means that the allocation of time and words should be heavily weighted to **part (iii)**. A large number of candidates either spent too much time on the first two parts and had to rush or limit the answer to **part (iii)**, or they did not make reference to the text beyond the printed extract. It is not possible to access the higher bands of the mark scheme if the answer is limited to material in the printed extract.

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

1 Mariano Azuela: *Los de abajo*

- (a) This was a popular question and most candidates dealt with it well. The best answers referred to examples of amoral behaviour on the part of the revolutionaries and the army, and showed how the attitude of Demetrio's men changes for the worse as the novel progresses. Some characters manage to maintain a kind of morality and this was discussed also.
- (b) The majority of candidates who chose this question were of the opinion that Azuela gave a true account of the Mexican people, and that it was rather depressing. A few essays went beyond this to show how the author had taken a snapshot of his countrymen at a moment of crisis and that this inevitably affected how objective his depiction could be.

2 Isabel Allende: *Eva Luna*

- (a) This novel is always a popular choice. The responses to **parts (i) and (ii)** were good. A considerable number of candidates did not maintain this standard in answering **part (iii)** – they tended to state that the quotation was apt but did not give examples of how Eva had shown herself to be proactive and prepared to fight for what she wanted.
- (b) This was also chosen by a large number of candidates. The best answers dealt with both Eva and Rolf fairly equally and although some background was given, went on to show how both characters had always looked to the future, the next opportunity, and learned from past experiences. Eva, in particular, did not forget what she had been through. Rather this became the raw material for her writing and helped significantly to form her character.

3 Gabriel García Márquez: *Los funerales de la Mamá Grande*

- (a) This was probably the question which produced the greatest range of marks. The best answers acknowledged that Baltazar had lied to his companions and that he would wake from the dream to a hard reality. These candidates empathised with his wish to be accepted and feted and that he had achieved a kind of victory over Montiel – but that the whole episode was a transitory period of happiness. Mention was often made of other stories which showed that what we think will make us happy often does not – or that what we thought was happiness turns out to be something different

altogether. The weakest answers gave the impression that Baltazar had sold the cage and then went on to give a personal interpretation of the nature of happiness.

- (b) This was the less popular option on the text but there were some good answers. The nature of the political analysis was understood in Márquez's criticism of the dictator-type figure. Many examples of irony could be found in the reaction of the people and the guest list for the funeral, where hyperbole was effectively used.

4 Antonio Buero Vallejo: *Hoy es fiesta*

- (a) There were relatively few answers on this text, and a number of candidates relied too much on the printed extract. The importance of the extract in relation to the whole text was often not explored in sufficient depth. Candidates were expected to discuss the whole nature of truth and lies, the importance of appearances and human relationships.
- (b) Most answers to this question focused mainly on Silverio. There was much material to be discussed in the whole premise of the play – what is said about chance/fortune and recognising real opportunities, for example.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

5 Carlos Ruiz Zafon: *La sombra del viento*

- (a) This resulted in a few very good answers where candidates discussed the whole atmosphere of the novel – foggy, damp, cheerless – and made political references to the strength of the police force and its unorthodox and cruel methods and the lack of freedom of speech and action which reflects the dictatorship and the aftermath of the Civil War.
- (b) This question was answered well by virtually all who chose it. Candidates seemed to be able to empathise with Fermín Romero de Torres and recognised how he used his skills learned in his previous experience of espionage, as well as his strong sense of humanity and the importance of finding out the truth in helping in Daniel's quest.

6 Lope de Vega: *Fuenteovejuna*

- (a) Many candidates answered this question fully. They examined the treachery of the Comendador, both in relation to the women of the village and to the King of Spain. In addition, the role of the men in the village was seen to have let the women down. There were some detailed discussions of the various aspects of the question, well-supported by quotations.
- (b) This question also attracted a large number of good answers. Candidates examined the different types of love apparent in the play and showed how love inspired characters to achieve challenging goals and withstand personal threats.

7 Federico García Lorca: *La casa de Bernarda Alba*

- (a) This text always attracts a very large number of answers. The best essays in response to this question examined the way the play developed, seeking clues in the imagery, the plot and the setting as to the nature of the outcome. Adela's relationship with Martirio was a key element as was the fate of the woman who had killed her baby. María Josefa's 'madness' gave us insight into the minds of the daughters and the increasing desperation and tension within the house. Most came to the conclusion that Adela's suicide was not expected and that Lorca had managed to shock the audience.
- (b) This was an extremely popular choice and resulted in many good answers. Candidates examined the importance of the word '*Silencio*' from the point of view of Bernarda's obsession with '*el que dirán*' as well as her inherent need for absolute control. The idea of silence being what was not said or repressed also resulted in many thoughtful discussions.

8 Rubén Darío: *Una selección de poemas*

- (a) The majority of candidates who opted for this text chose this question. Candidates were well prepared for the examination and were able to give much detailed analysis of the required number of poems. Most were in agreement with the statement made but examined the presentation of women from a number of perspectives and showed understanding and sensitive reading of the poems.
- (b) This was answered by a very small number of candidates and presented a number of challenges in asking for an appraisal of Darío's approach to poetry in general, with specific reference to *Era un aire suave*. Candidates were able to examine the versification and the themes and relate these to other poems. It is pleasing that although a relatively small number of candidates choose to study the poetry text, those who do are usually very well prepared.

Final comments

It has been encouraging to note the increased level of knowledge and understanding of the texts shown by candidates overall. Centres are to be congratulated on careful preparation. Candidates in future sessions are advised to take note of comments made with regard to *Sección Primera* questions and to try to keep a close focus on the title of all questions tackled to enable them to achieve the highest possible grades.