

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/01
Speaking

Key messages

The Speaking test is made up of three sections: Presentation, Topic Conversation and General Conversation. Each is assessed separately and should be clearly distinguished. Centres are reminded that:

- the interests of the candidate should play a part in the choice of the subject for the Presentation, and clear reference should be made to Hispanic culture or society;
- it is important to structure the presentation to fit into the allowed 3½ minutes, and to express not only facts, but ideas and opinions;
- candidates should focus on the questions asked of them and make sure they answer what is asked;
- candidates should remember that they are expected to ask questions of the Examiner in both conversation sections.

Spanish should be generally accurate and of a suitably advanced nature as well as showing a good use of idiom and appropriate vocabulary. Interaction with the Examiner is an important criterion in both conversation sections.

General comments

The majority of Centres carried out the tests according to the syllabus requirements and instructions. As a result, candidates had the opportunity to perform to the best of their ability.

Moderators have to report, however, an increase this session in the proportion of Centres where problems arose because they had not adhered to the requirements. These fell into the following main categories:

- (i) Timing – candidates must be allowed the prescribed timings for each of the three sections of the test. There were some instances of greatly extended timings for the Presentation, the purpose of which is to assess the candidate's ability to outline a topic succinctly and in an organised manner. Candidates cannot receive extra credit for their performance in tests that go beyond the time limit.
- (ii) No clear distinction between the Topic Conversation and the General Conversation. Moderators (and candidates) need to know when each conversation section begins and ends. In some cases, there was no obvious General Conversation and Centres should be aware that marks cannot be awarded for this section of the test if it has clearly not been conducted.
- (iii) Giving apparent notional credit for 'Seeking Information and Opinions'. Candidates must specifically ask the Examiner questions in both conversation sections to gain credit; it is not sufficient for the Examiner him/herself to state an opinion and then credit the candidate.

Recordings are of increasingly high quality and this has greatly helped the moderation process. Most tests are now being recorded onto CD, and there were a very few instances of incompatible format. Please remember to announce the candidate number and name at the start of each test and save each test as a separate track or file.

Nearly all Centres remembered to enclose the correct documentation: the Working Mark Sheet, fully completed for **all** candidates, not just those submitted in the sample, must accompany the recording. Moderators cannot confirm Centres' marking without this information.

For the most part, candidates were familiar with the requirements of the examination and were generally well prepared. Topics were suitably focused on the Hispanic context. Most candidates were able to offer some opinions on the issues discussed and, within their ability range, managed to discuss matters at a factual

level. Most asked the Examiner questions, though many needed a prompt from the Examiner to do so. Examiners should remember to remind candidates to ask questions if necessary.

There was considerable variation in the quality of language. Most candidates had sufficient syntax and vocabulary to cope with factual descriptions and basic opinions; at the higher level there was an attempt to use a wide range of structures. A few Centres arguably restricted candidates by keeping questioning to a comparatively low level, especially in the General Conversation. It is important that all candidates have the opportunity to respond to the unexpected and to use an appropriately advanced level of language.

Pronunciation was generally acceptable, though occasionally first-language interference impeded comprehension. Quality of intonation was variable: authentic intonation continues to be a challenge for many candidates.

Comments on specific sections

Section 1: Presentation

General topic areas are outlined in the syllabus and topics must relate clearly to aspects of Hispanic life or culture. It is important to make this relevance explicit in the Presentation. The 'Content and Presentation' mark out of ten is halved if no Hispanic focus is included.

Presentations should be a formal and coherent introduction to the subject and ideally provide a lead in to the Topic Conversation. Organisation and evidence of preparation are important.

Candidates should remember that they are outlining a situation or topic to an uninformed but interested listener. It is important to phrase their points clearly and in an appropriate manner in order to allow the listener to take in the messages being conveyed.

Candidates chose a variety of topics including the environment, tourism, cultural/historical items. There were also some more individually-focused presentations, such as politics, recent events, music. Many candidates managed to communicate their own interests and enthusiasm for the topic and had researched it well, giving both relevant information and ideas.

Section 2: Topic Conversation

This part of the test should discuss and develop points arising from the Presentation and should not just be an invitation to the candidate to give a further series of mini presentations. Interaction is important and Examiners should encourage the candidate to justify an opinion, or refute a differing point of view.

Candidates should ask the Examiner questions in order to seek information and opinions. Examiners should take care should be taken not to respond at length. Wherever possible, candidates' questions should arise naturally from the discussion. In some cases questions were very simplistic or with little real relevance to the topic.

Section 3: General Conversation

This should be a totally separate section from the Topic conversation and should cover different areas to those addressed in the Topic Presentation/Conversation. Although there are no prescribed areas for the General Conversation, the level of discussion should be at an appropriately advanced level. Commonly discussed were issues relating to current affairs, a news item, the arts, sport, the environment, the economy, politics and education.

There were still some cases of questioning at a level more appropriate to IGCSE or Ordinary Level. Although some basic, personal or factual questions may be useful to start the discussion, candidates must be given the opportunity to show they can give and justify opinions on more advanced issues, as well as having sufficient general knowledge to substantiate a point. All conversations should go beyond the descriptive.

As in the Topic Conversation, candidates should ask the Examiner questions in order to seek information and opinions and be reminded to do so if necessary.

Language

Range and accuracy of language are assessed in both conversation sections. Examiners are reminded to encourage candidates to use as wide a range of language as possible, both in terms of vocabulary and structure. To access the higher ranges of the mark scheme, candidates should show competence in dealing with hypothetical and abstract situations as well as factual or descriptive areas. Accuracy tended to be more shaky in some basic structures, including verb endings and tenses, or noun/adjective/verb agreements.

Resources

A selection of Example Candidate Responses together with revised and updated Schemes of Work are now available to download from the Teacher Support website <http://teachers.cie.org.uk>.

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 include extra words.
- **Question 2:** rewrite the phrases to include the word(s) in brackets. A grammatical manipulation will be required, and candidates should take care to ensure that the answer fits 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, candidates should revise the basic agreements, tenses and verb endings.

General comments

The two texts dealing with the prospects for people reaching retirement age were accessible to most, with the subject matter being familiar to all. The comprehension questions afforded candidates not only the opportunity to show understanding, but also the chance to display skills in paraphrasing original text. This often proved to be a discriminating factor between the varying ability levels.

All scripts were generally well presented, and there was only very occasional evidence of difficulty with time management.

Comments on specific questions

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

The majority of candidates were aware of the required technique, with many taking the trouble to copy the paraphrase in the question before writing their answer on the line beneath. As it is important to answer with a phrase from the text which is a precise match to that of the question, this is a good way to check at a glance that an answer contains no extra words or omissions.

Additional or omitted words invalidate otherwise correct answers. Instances of this were most likely to be found in:

- (a) omission of *los...* or addition of *de la mina o de la construcción*.
- (b) omission of *originaban...*
- (c) omission of *es considerado...*
- (d) addition of *para aumentar su nivel de ingresos*.

For the vast majority of candidates this exercise proved to be a sound start to the exam, with the target phrases being readily identified. Occasionally *pide el derecho a hacer justamente lo contrario* was offered as an incorrect answer to (d).

Question 2

In addition to performing the language manipulations required in this question, it is important to check that the answers fit back into the original text and retain the same meaning. The technique mentioned above of copying out the phrase as it appears on the question paper before writing the answer underneath can help to ensure that this is the case.

- (a) Most candidates were successful with this manipulation. Occasionally answers were invalidated by the use of the wrong tense and, although not a frequent answer, *se es considerada una conquista* was not accepted either.
- (b) Only a very small number of candidates rendered this correctly. The huge majority wrote *que les gustaría dejar de trabajar* which was grammatically incorrect. A few disregarded the rubric and answered *me gustaría que quisieran dejar de trabajar*.
- (c) The linguistic manipulation required here using *tienen* to express age proved to be very accessible.
- (d) The majority of candidates were able to supply a suitable subjunctive construction after *para que*.
- (e) There were a considerable number of ways in which this phrase could be re-constructed using *agotados* and most candidates were successful in their attempts. Unacceptable answers either omitted *los*, e.g. *agotados por su vida laboral*, did not convey the whole meaning of the target phrase and simply offered *los que se encuentran agotados*, or changed the target word, e.g. *las personas agotadas por sufrir una vida laboral*.

Question 3

This text, about the prospects for Spanish workers when they reach retirement age, was generally well understood and candidates who gave clear, detailed answers in their own words achieved high marks. Some candidates lost marks when they copied more than four words directly from the text.

- (a) This was a fairly accessible opening question and it was well answered in general. Occasionally, candidates needed to convey the idea of hard work instead of simply suggesting that 65-year-olds were tired due to a life in the country. Most conveyed the idea of illness but perhaps the most missed point was that it had been unusual to live much more beyond 70. Some candidates gave answers that were too vague e.g. *la población sufría* or *las enfermedades abundaban*.
- (b) Most candidates appeared to understand the three scenarios that created the different attitudes towards retirement, but often they were unable to convey the attitude. For example, many wrote *una de las actitudes es dejar de trabajar luego de los 65 años* which actually made no mention of the gratitude felt at being able to retire. The third point was sometimes not clearly stated when candidates wrote *desean jubilarse, la pensión no les alcanza* without mentioning *anticipadamente*.
- (c) Candidates provided satisfactory answers, but in many cases did not specify that some people over 65 worked legally. Fewer still conveyed this first point successfully without copying *contribuyen a la Seguridad Social* directly from the text. Most candidates scored two marks for conveying the idea of retired people helping in the home or in the family business. Occasionally candidates attempted to answer by picking up a word which did not convey the whole meaning, e.g. *algunos trabajan como suplentes*, without mentioning where, i.e. *en un negocio familiar*.
- (d)(i) On the whole, candidates managed to convey the idea of illegality, but there was a substantial number who seemed not to understand what *economía sumergida* meant and either copied or got into a muddle about retired people having their own economy or such like.
- (ii) Two marks were scored by most. There were quite a few instances of copying *precios de los productos básicos* from the text. Also, a few candidates gave information that did not answer the question, e.g. *ha subido el porcentaje porque los jubilados cada vez buscan tener más ingresos* or *el trabajo de un 20% de los mayores de 65 se enfocaba en una economía destinada a ganar más dinero*.

- (e) The point that it was people who had worked hard who felt most affected by the proposal was understood by the majority, but some disregarded the fact that three details were necessary for full marks and did not mention the physical deterioration or the increased possibility of accidents in the workplace. Some answers did not give specific details, e.g. *las personas cuya vida laboral fue sufrida son las más tocadas por esta propuesta ya que tendrán que continuar sufriendo por unos años más.*

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

The second text, concerning far better prospects for those pensioners who could afford to live out their retirement in Costa Rica, provided a similar degree of challenge.

- (a) This was a fairly accessible opening question, and most candidates were able to provide answers relating to increased revenue for Costa Rica and more jobs. However, a number of candidates lost the first mark either through copying more than four consecutive words, or by missing out one of the elements from *jubilados, ricos, extranjeros*.
- (b) Three marks were commonly recorded here. Almost all mentioned the good weather all year round, but a few confused the *lazos de transporte aéreos internacionales* with links between airlines and the government. Not all candidates mentioned the environmentally-friendly approach of the Costa Rican government.
- (c) (i) Most candidates referred to the situation of the villages close to beaches and national parks but many stumbled on the second point by not conveying the idea of *servicios personalizados en medicina*.
- (ii) Almost without exception, candidates answered this part of the question correctly.
- (d) Apart from those who copied *es la principal actividad económica* from the text, it did not appear too difficult for most candidates to express the idea of medical tourism being the most important sector. However, very few managed to mention the large number of tourists who came last year. Some candidates did not answer the question by saying: *la importancia de Costa Rica son los variados tratamientos que uno puede hacerse, generalmente cuando llega a la tercera edad, or la importancia es porque los visitantes superan los 65 años y van a hacerse tratamientos.*
- (e) A good number of candidates managed to score on the first point referring to the real-estate sector being boosted but a lot fewer explained how its figures were now three times those of the tourist real-estate sector. Many mentioned that *los ingresos serán mayores* without giving the idea of considerably larger or making the relevant comparison.
- (f) This question was answered well, although a recurrent 'lift' from the text was *la estabilidad política y social*. Some candidates did not mention the second point relating to the benefits for Costa Rica, but specified the financial benefits already stated in the question, i.e. that retired people would have no obstacles to buying property in Costa Rica, or that Costa Rica would find the situation profitable: *será beneficiosa para el país ya que había una amplia expansión en distintas actividades económicas.*

Question 5

Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks awarded. Most candidates were aware 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 part (b).

- (a) Candidates who had achieved good or even excellent marks elsewhere on the paper frequently struggled to score half marks here. The problem was invariably a lack of familiarity with the required technique, which is probably very different from the technique which candidates have been encouraged to use in other forms of summary writing.

For this task the technique required for achieving 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. Generalisations, often required by other forms of summary writing, are usually too vague to score. It is the relevant specific details which score the marks. Introductions, such as *Luego de la lectura de*

ambos textos, podemos llegar a la conclusión de que la gente mayor tiene muchas opciones para ver qué hacer con su vida waste twenty-eight words and score nothing, apart from contributing to the Quality of Language mark.

Candidates should also refrain from offering personal opinions in this part of the question.

- (b) In the two or three sentences available for this second part of the question the vast majority of candidates wrote good answers, giving insight into how they felt older people were treated in their respective countries. Most included opinions and backed these up with examples.

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 Very Good or Good bands.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/22
Reading and Writing

Key messages

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- **Language:** when preparing for the exam, candidates should revise the basic agreements, tenses and verb endings.

General comments

The two texts dealing with recycling were accessible to most, with the subject matter being familiar to all. The comprehension questions afforded candidates not only the opportunity to show understanding, but also the chance to display skills in paraphrasing original text. This often proved to be a discriminating factor between the varying ability levels.

All scripts were generally well presented, and there was only very occasional evidence of difficulty with time management.

Comments on specific questions

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Question 1

The majority of candidates were aware of the required technique, with many taking the trouble to copy the paraphrase in the question before writing their answer on the line beneath. As it is important to answer with a phrase from the text which is a precise match to that of the question, this is a good way to check at a glance that an answer contains no extra words or omissions.

Additional or omitted words invalidate otherwise correct answers. Instances of this were most likely to be found in:

- (b) prefaced with *recordarles que...*
- (d) continued with *...y tuerta.*
- (e) omission of *se...* at the start.

This exercise provided most candidates with a sound start to the exam, with the target phrases being readily identified. Occasionally *hacia los lados* was offered as an incorrect answer to (c).

Question 2

In addition to performing the language manipulations required in this question, it is important to check that the answers fit back into the original text and retain the same meaning. The technique mentioned above of copying out the phrase as it appears on the question paper before writing the answer underneath can help to ensure that this is the case.

This is a very demanding exercise but examiners noted that several correct answers had been arrived at by the application of grammatical rules rather than by instinct.

- (a) The majority of candidates were able to make a correct passive construction: *2.400 toneladas son recogidas*.
- (b) Candidates who recognised the need for a subjunctive were often unfamiliar with the form that *crecer* should take. Candidates who got this right occasionally invalidated their answers by misspelling *crezca* as *crezca*.
- (c) The use of *llevar* + present participle in temporal expressions proved to be difficult for some, and a few achieved near misses when writing *extiendéndolo* for *extendiéndolo*.
- (d) There was good awareness that a subjunctive would be needed after *es necesario que*, and that of the verb *ir* appeared to be widely known. Sometimes the singular form *vaya* was offered, and the mark could not be awarded.
- (e) The construction *al* + infinitive as a replacement for a clause introduced by *cuando* has featured in previous examinations and many candidates recognised the manipulation that was required.

Question 3

This text, about an enormous rubbish tip in Mexico, was generally well understood and candidates who gave clear, detailed answers in their own words achieved high marks. Candidates who correctly identified the points which were being tested but who answered in brief phrases, or had difficulties in producing a successful paraphrase, were credited for content – provided that fewer than five words of text had been copied – but could not access to the full range of marks available for Quality of Language.

- (a) This was a fairly accessible opening question and many candidates got off to an excellent start. Most were able to state that the tip was infamous on account of its size, and that it was continuing to grow because it was receiving more rubbish. To qualify for the second mark it was necessary to state that more rubbish was arriving every day.
- (b)(i) Marks were awarded here to answers which gave full details of the government's action. It was not enough to state that the government had launched a campaign and that citizens would be fined. Both these points needed to be extended to include the nature of the campaign and the reason for the fine.

(ii) Three points were required to answer this question and the majority of candidates were successful in noting one or two. The maximum was commonly not achieved, either by not mentioning the speaker's reference to the citizens' irresponsible behaviour, or by interpreting his remark about flooding figuratively to mean 'flooded with rubbish' and not literally as a consequence of the rubbish blocking the drains.
- (c) There was good comprehension of the facts that the tip could no longer be extended laterally as it was surrounded by houses and could only grow upwards. Marks were sometimes lost when candidates wrote that the tip had been extended laterally *hace 40 años*.
- (d) Candidates who successfully paraphrased the two examples of the work of the *recolectores* given in the text scored both marks. More generalised answers such as: *usan los desperdicios para arreglar sus casas* and *recogen objetos rotos para repararlos* were also credited.
- (e) This was a more demanding question for which full marks proved harder to achieve. Marks were commonly awarded for stating that the *recolectores* had no medical insurance, (although the five-word 'lift' *no tienen seguro de salud* could not be allowed), and also that they had to pay a high price to acquire a work permit. The fact that their products were sold on at a much higher price than they had received for them was often not stated.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

There was no discernible difference in the level of challenge provided by the second text, which dealt with the recycling of cooking oil.

- (a) The meaning of the opening paragraph appeared to be well understood, with nearly every candidate able to note that cooking oil was a principal contributor to marine pollution. All candidates recognised that it was used cooking oil that was being recycled, although a number were unable to express this without directly copying *aceite usado de las cocinas*. The third mark, for stating that *las plantas depuradoras* were unable to treat it, often proved more difficult to achieve.
- (b)(i) Most candidates noted that the used oil should be collected in a plastic bottle, although not so many stated that it needed to be allowed to cool down first.
- (ii) Most candidates appeared to have understood the idea that the oil could subsequently be recycled as fuel for vehicles. Not so many supplied all the details which were needed for the three marks. Often a *las plantas de tratamiento* was copied directly from the text, and the subsequent mixing of the biodiesel with conventional diesel was often not noted.
- (c) There were four possible ways to score the three marks here. Some difficulty was encountered in describing the protective coating of the recycling containers which, through quite a widespread misunderstanding of the meaning of the word, was often said to be 'inflammable'. When stating that all types of oils could be recycled it was necessary to qualify these as *aceites vegetales*.
- (d) The second answer to this question, that the recycling containers would be located in areas where large amounts of oil were produced, was often stated more successfully than the first.
- (e) Marks were relatively accessible here, with there being three possible ways to score the two marks which were on offer. A common pitfall was the direct copying of *unas 5000 toneladas de aceite*.

Question 5

Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks awarded. Most candidates were aware 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 part (b).

- (a) The technique required for achieving a good mark in this task is to note, in the limited number of words available, details from the texts which answer the question which has been asked. Generalisations, often required by other forms of summary writing, are usually too vague to score. It is the relevant specific details which score the marks. Introductions, such as *Se puede observar cómo cada vez más se continúa dando ejemplo de un mundo sostenible usando la técnica del reciclaje* waste words and score nothing, apart from contributing to the Quality of Language mark. Nor are marks awarded for personal opinion here. As candidates appeared to be very knowledgeable on the subject of recycling, some succumbed to writing a more general essay, giving their opinions on environmental issues and information which had not appeared in the texts.

Candidates who found most of their positives in the second text and who were able to identify the many negatives in the first achieved good scores.

- (b) In the two or three sentences available for this last part of the examination many candidates were able to give clear opinions on recycling policies in the countries where they live. Regardless of where the candidate lives, a common conclusion was that people knew all about recycling but often could not be bothered to do 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 falling in the Sound to Very Good range.

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General comments

The two texts dealing with tourism were accessible to most, with the subject matter being familiar to all. The comprehension questions afforded candidates not only the opportunity to show understanding, but also the chance to display skills in paraphrasing original text. This often proved to be a discriminating factor between the varying ability levels.

All scripts were generally well presented, and there was only very occasional evidence of difficulty with time management.

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Question 1

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Additional or omitted words invalidate otherwise correct answers. Instances of this were most likely to be found in:

- (b) omission of *...la toalla*.
- (d) often prefaced by *ha venido a...*
- (e) omission of *no...* at the start.

This exercise provided most candidates with a sound start to the exam, with the target phrases being readily identified.

Question 2

In addition to performing the language manipulations required in this question, it is important to check that the answers fit back into the original text and retain the same meaning. The technique mentioned above of copying out the phrase as it appears on the question paper before writing the answer underneath can help to ensure that this is the case.

This proved to be a challenging exercise, and only a minority of candidates scored more than three marks.

- (a) The *gusta* construction often presents difficulties to Spanish learners. This example was no exception, frequently giving rise to wrong answers and several almost correct answers which were invalidated by the omission of *a* before *los europeos*.
- (b) This was generally done well, with many candidates able to convert the adjective into a noun with expressions such as *lo que es de más importancia*.
- (c) The use of *acabar de* with the infinitive to express 'have / has just' was not widely recognised.
- (d) Candidates achieved more success with this manipulation, although a number of otherwise correct answers were invalidated by the omission of *a* between *comenzado* and the infinitive.
- (e) Although still only a minority were able to produce *hayan* as the required form of *haber*, there was a considerable awareness that the subjunctive was required after *es una pena que*.

Question 3

The text about the consequences of too much cheap tourism on the Mediterranean coasts of Spain was generally well understood. Candidates identified many of the points which were targeted and the more able among them answered successfully in their own words.

A number of candidates did not attempt to answer in their own words but instead manipulated words from the text that they felt would answer the question. Although such attempts avoided the pitfall of directly copying five or more words they were not always successful in communicating the meaning, and this often had a negative impact on the Quality of Language mark.

'Tourists' were often mistakenly rendered as *turísticos* or *las turistas* and 'a holiday' as *una vacación*.

- (a) Most candidates were successful in noting the concern of the Spanish authorities that they needed to increase the quality of the tourism on offer as they were beginning to lose tourists to resorts elsewhere. Greater difficulty was often encountered with the other two points, with many (misled by *llamado* in the text) being convinced that it was the name '*turismo basura*' which needed to be replaced rather than the phenomenon itself. Candidates also found difficulty in expressing the idea that cheap tourism was killing off tourism of a higher quality.
- (b) Nearly every candidate was able to score a mark for noting that many tourists were seeking more peaceful resorts. Fewer either knew or were able to work out the meanings of the less familiar words *masificadas*, *atestadas* and *desapacibles*. Very often the opposite answer of tourists seeking out crowded beaches and noisy streets was offered.
- (c) The majority of candidates were able to identify at least two of the reasons why tourists were upset, and several successfully noted all three.
- (d) This question was answered very successfully. The fad of '*balconing*', why it happens and its often tragic consequences were clearly understood.
- (e) A very small minority of candidates did not attempt this question. Many candidates successfully stated that tourists were seeking more peaceful resorts. Several also picked up further marks by giving an appropriate definition of '*turismo basura*' and the effect it has had on the former image of certain Spanish resorts.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

The slightly more discursive text on the potential for eco-tourism in Colombia was also well understood by most, and many candidates scored slightly higher marks than for the previous question. A common feature of first-language influence was the incorrect use of *los locales* to mean 'the local people'.

- (a) The facts that tourism provides a considerable amount of employment around the world but can also have damaging side effects were clearly recognised.
- (b) The definition of eco-tourism and its possible benefits for local communities proved to be very accessible.
- (c) The emphasis on 'excessive' construction in areas of natural beauty was sometimes overlooked, and the point that unscrupulous travel companies were in the habit of falsely describing adventure holidays as eco-tourism proved elusive to many. The fact that some local communities had never been consulted about plans for eco-tourism was more frequently recognised.
- (d) This was a four-mark question which most candidates attempted to answer fully, with greater or lesser degrees of success. The force of *¿Qué hay que hacer...* in the question was often not fully grasped, which resulted in answers not clearly stating what 'should' or 'ought to' be done.
- (e) Very few candidates successfully noted all three points: to emphasise that there are areas in Colombia which are completely safe for the eco-tourist and that promotion should be done both nationally and internationally and in collaboration with tour operators.

Question 5

Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks awarded. Nearly every candidate seemed to be aware 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 part (b)).

- (a) The technique required for achieving a good mark in this task is to note, in the limited number of words available, details from the texts which answer the question which has been asked. Generalisations, often required by other forms of summary writing, are usually too vague to score. The relevant specific details accumulate the marks. Introductions and conclusions waste words and score nothing. Most candidates had been extremely well prepared for this exercise, with many achieving at least half marks and several recording very high scores. The negative aspects of cheap tourism and eco-tourism appeared to be well understood.
- (b) The personal response was generally done well, with the vast majority of candidates agreeing that tourism was beneficial for their respective countries. Most candidates seemed to be aware that, in the two or three sentences which are usually available for this task, any ideas that are different from those expressed in the texts, combined with a personal opinion, will usually access the higher mark bands.

Quality of Language

The quality of candidates' written Spanish throughout the paper was generally well up to the standard required by this examination, with most of the marks falling between the Sound to Good range. Subject verb accord and adjectival agreements were generally sound and candidates clearly had a good range of vocabulary and structures at their disposal.

Resources

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SPANISH LANGUAGE

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

The titles appeared to provide most candidates with the opportunity to tackle the issues from a variety of different approaches, most with individual merit, and to varying degrees of depth and analysis. There was some evidence in the weaker essays of a more limited capacity to argue a particular case but on the whole ideas were debated with maturity, common sense and intelligence. The best essays showed more depth and levels of analysis.

It was clear that there is a widespread understanding of the mark scheme and, more generally, the demands of the examination itself.

The requirement to write an essay which is wholly relevant to the title set was understood by the vast majority of candidates. There were still a few essays that were too general in their interpretation of the specific issues raised by the title and which, accordingly, could not score well for Content.

The quality of written Spanish used by candidates was wide-ranging. The majority of essays showed a reasonably confident use of complex sentence structures coupled with a wide range of vocabulary appropriate to the topic being analysed. Being able to handle Spanish grammar was much in evidence and often resulted in essays that were articulate, relevant and coherently argued. Scoring good marks for Content is often hampered by a narrative which loses its thread as a direct consequence of grammatical inaccuracies and inappropriate use of idiom.

This session, there were fewer essays which exceeded the stipulated word count of 250-400 words. As mentioned in previous reports, Centres are advised to ensure that their candidates are aware of the lower and upper word limits.

The differences between *ser* and *estar* continue to cause difficulties for a number of candidates and some offered phrases such as *la situación es mejorando* and *la televisión es educando a la gente*. Equally common was the tendency to drop the letter 'h' in the perfect tense with utterances such as *...el asunto a sido discutido mucho...* and *...muchos individuos an aprendido a respetar la privacidad de otros...* appearing in many otherwise well-written essays. Many candidates experienced considerable difficulty with the use of stem-changing verbs in the present tense, especially some of the most common irregular verbs such as *tener* in phrases such as *...el estado tene que introducir más leyes para luchar contra la pobreza...*

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *El ocio es mucho más importante que el trabajo. ¿Estás de acuerdo?*

This was a very popular title and it attracted many good responses which were characterised by a variety of relevant points. Many felt that leisure is important to relieve the stress of work and thereby enable workers to be even more productive at work. It was also argued that work not only offers the opportunity to earn money

but also the chance to relate to other people and to improve social skills. The weaker responses tended to concentrate on the notion that leisure is more important than work and then went on to repeat this in several different guises throughout the essay.

Question 2 *El papel principal de la televisión no es educar, sino entretener al público. ¿Estás de acuerdo?*

This title was generally well answered. Most argued that entertainment and education should go very much hand in hand as far as television programmes are concerned. Some candidates expressed their contempt for 'reality shows' and the seemingly endless quiz shows shown on television these days. The very best essays gave much detail about the aims of state television in their own countries and some even provided statistical evidence to back up their view that most people want television to be both entertaining and informative at the same time.

Question 3 *La conservación de los bosques debería ser una prioridad para todos los países. ¿Qué opinas tú?*

This was an extremely popular title. Almost all candidates attempting this title argued the urgent need for a global solution to the problem of deforestation.

Question 4 *Hoy en día, a pesar de todo, vale la pena estudiar en la universidad. ¿Estás de acuerdo?*

This was a popular and generally well-answered essay title. Many candidates used personal experience to illustrate their arguments. The plight of graduates experiencing difficulties in getting a job was described in considerable detail. Despite this, many candidates also expressed their strong support for helping students to attend university with the view that it still offers advantages to the individual, both intellectually and socially.

Question 5 *Una nación con una buena vida cultural es, inevitablemente, una nación muy civilizada. ¿Qué opinas tú?*

This was the least popular title on the paper. Those candidates who responded agreed with the statement that a vibrant culture with artistic endeavour and a sense of historical context almost always leads to a country being more 'civilised' in its outlook.

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Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *No debería haber una edad obligatoria para jubilarse. ¿Estás de acuerdo?*

This was a reasonably popular choice of title amongst candidates and responses were often very good. Many candidates opted to point out that older people deserved a rest from work and that this, in turn, would give younger people more employment opportunities. However, the experience offered by older employees

was also mentioned in many essays. A good number of essays concluded that the retirement age should be dictated by the nature of the work being done by the employee.

Question 2 *La censura de la prensa nunca puede ser justificada. ¿Qué opinas tú?*

This title was also generally well answered. Most argued that all censorship is bad and should be resisted at all costs. Freedom of speech is what matters most as far as the majority of candidates were concerned. The best essays examined the issues in depth and mentioned, for example, the potential abuse of innocent people in the press and the possible dissemination of false or deliberately libellous information.

Question 3 *El agua es oro. ¿Qué opinas tú?*

This was a popular title. Most candidates attempting this title provided a well-evidenced set of approaches. Some saw water as not only essential for the survival of life but also necessary for all human activities including food production, cleaning and even swimming. Many statistical references were made to support particular points of view and the most common conclusion was that without water, nobody would be interested in gold.

Question 4 *La enseñanza ofrece la oportunidad de realizar todas tus ambiciones. ¿Estás de acuerdo?*

This was the most popular title on this paper. It was generally well-answered and much personal experience was brought into play in order to illustrate the points being made. The nature of education and its close links to ambition were thoroughly discussed and most essays concluded that, whilst money is important, other values such as family life, human friendship and compassion were much more important in terms of aspirations and ambitions.

Question 5 *La música pop no está relacionada con la cultura. ¿Qué opinas tú?*

This was the least popular title on the paper. Those candidates who responded produced enthusiastic appraisals of the cultural dimensions involved in much pop music. The ability of pop music to influence people's opinions was also mentioned and all concluded that it should indeed be considered an integral part of our culture.

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Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *El ocio ha cobrado demasiada importancia hoy en día. ¿Estás de acuerdo?*

This was quite a popular choice of title. There was a common approach amongst many to highlight the need for a balance between work and leisure. The need to earn money in order to achieve a reasonable standard of living was also mentioned in most essays.

Question 2 *Parece que muchas revistas populares no entienden la idea de respetar la privacidad del individuo. ¿Qué opinas tú?*

Many responses were well informed with regard to the world of celebrity and most candidates stated openly that magazines exist to make money and that this overrides most other concerns. Some argued that too many celebrities nowadays simply long for publicity, whether good or bad. Some even suggested that celebrities actually want their privacy to be invaded in order to become yet more famous.

Question 3 *Los expertos dicen que la conservación es de suma importancia mundial. En tu opinión, ¿tienen razón?*

This was a very popular title. There were many well-structured and convincingly-argued essays. Much valuable preparation had obviously taken place with regard to this topic. The threats to our environment were well documented and the fairly unanimous conclusion was that we need a global solution to this global problem.

Question 4 *El único objetivo importante de la enseñanza es saber leer, escribir y contar. ¿Estás de acuerdo?*

This was the most popular title on this paper. It also produced the biggest range of responses. Most argued that there is much more to education than just learning to read, write and count. Many obviously felt that these skills are essential but not exclusively so. Learning to communicate, to get on with people and to resolve conflict (at whatever level) were also referred to as essential characteristics of a good education.

Question 5 *Con tanta pobreza en el mundo, ¿es justo ofrecer dinero para apoyar la vida cultural de un país?*

Only a small number of candidates responded to this question. It was generally well answered. Candidates stated categorically that the relief of poverty was of much more importance to us all and that it should indeed come before any sort of cultural support is offered.

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