



## Oral Component

### GENERAL COMMENTS

The oral component of the Spanish examination consists of two sections. The Conversation (approximately seven minutes) is about the student's personal world; for example, school and home life, family and friends, and interests and aspirations.

The second section, the Discussion (approximately eight minutes), focuses on aspects of the language and culture of the Spanish-speaking world. During the course of the year, students must spend 15 hours of their class time analysing and discussing a range of texts. The topics and sub-topics are selected in conjunction with their teachers according to the *Spanish VCE Study Design*. This Detailed Study could refer to a number of issues, such as 'children's rights in the Spanish-speaking world', 'music and other art forms' (such as films as texts) or 'marriage and family life'.

The majority of students demonstrated an understanding of the requirements of the examination. All students observed the appropriate greeting conventions when interacting with the assessors. However, some students introduced themselves by name, including their surname. This is not required and students should be reminded to avoid disclosing any such personal information and not to mention their school name.

### SPECIFIC INFORMATION

#### Section 1 – Conversation

The overall performance in this section was outstanding, and it was a pleasure to see how well prepared the students were. Students conversed fluently, discussing and commenting on issues that came up in the course of the conversation. They presented ideas, information and opinions while maintaining the flow of the communication. Students talked about their family members and occupations, and gave information about their free time activities. They also mentioned the subjects they studied at school and elaborated on why those subjects were chosen, what aspects are more relevant to further studies or aspirations and so on.

Many students used accurate vocabulary and grammatical structures and very little English interference was noted. Most students conjugated verbs properly, particularly when the subjunctive mood was required. It is advisable to study verbs, moods and tenses during the academic year.

Students are required to advance the conversation and link with the assessors. In order to demonstrate their ability to meet the criteria, students should expand the conversation with comments and descriptions rather than, for example, just giving the number of people in their family. Assessors will often prompt the student with phrases such as 'Could you elaborate on...', 'Tell us...', or 'Comment on...' so that students realise that the ability to **communicate** with appropriate **content** and the correct use of **language** should be demonstrated in this section.

Future students should keep in mind that preparation is the key to this task. Students are advised to prepare a variety of topics related to their personal world. It is recommended that they practise conversing on such topics in class with teachers and with other students.

#### Section 2 – Discussion

The main focus of this section is to discuss and explore aspects studied during the 15 hours spent on the Detailed Study. At the beginning of this section, students have one minute in which to indicate to assessors the sub-topic chosen. Students should briefly introduce the main focus of their sub-topic and the various texts they have studied in detail (for example, articles, poems, songs, plays, films and so on).

Teachers should ensure that students use at least three different text types, and careful attention should be paid to the requirements given in the *Spanish VCE Study Design*. This part of the examination consists of a discussion, therefore it is important to remind students that they must be prepared to express ideas and opinions about the texts analysed, not simply retell the content of the short story or the film. They need to demonstrate an understanding of the deeper level of the studied text or texts.



This year most students displayed readiness and confidence performing this task. The topic 'Celebrations', particularly festivals in Latin America, was one of the most popular topics and was very well presented by students.

**Capacity to maintain and advance the exchange appropriately and effectively**

Students must ensure that they comment on their sub-topic rather than simply recite, for example, the film or the poem studied. This may involve, for example, explaining how the issues in the film portrayed the topic they are discussing. The assessors are interested in the student's opinions and ideas about the texts studied.

Many students discussed their texts in detail, presented various points of view and demonstrated that they had analysed the texts in depth. The students' ideas and opinions often made the discussions interesting and fruitful.

**Relevance, breadth and depth of information, opinions and ideas**

Overall, the majority of students demonstrated that they had spent time and effort preparing for this task and they achieved good results. Many students had chosen interesting texts. They expressed their points of view in depth and were able to support their opinions with evidence from the texts studied. Some students had prepared their topic very well and discussed and presented relevant information and ideas. However, a few students were poorly prepared and simply retold the story of a film or a novel. They were not able to discuss the texts in depth, present opinions or present analytical arguments.

A number of students discussed the film 'Motorcycle Diaries'. This text is very rich and appropriate to study; however, the students did not appear to have thought about the topic in depth. One appropriate area of discussion could be the lives of ordinary Latin-American people and how realistically they are portrayed in the film.

Students should watch the film more than once and analyse the various aspects presented in the story, such as the workers' conditions, their languages, their lives, hopes and sorrow. Perhaps students should consider whether it is possible to carry on such a journey under the present conditions in Latin America.

Some students studied the Celebration of the *Día de los Muertos* in Mexico. They explained what the celebration consisted of and who celebrated it, and they elaborated on the significance of this day in people's lives. In general, students' comments and comparisons were rich and varied, and they demonstrated an understanding of the cultural, religious and traditional aspects of this festival.

**Clarity of expression**

Most students used a good range of vocabulary and grammatical structures. However, some students occasionally used an inappropriate style and register. Students are expected to comply with the cultural formalities of the language, such as the use of *usted* when addressing the assessors.

**Written component**

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

Most students understood the requirements of the written examination and were well prepared. Some sections of the paper required a response in English and others a response in Spanish. It is very important for students to answer in the correct language, as responses in the wrong language are considered incorrect and are not awarded marks. Students should read the tasks, follow instructions carefully and make use of the space provided for taking notes.

Teachers should make the students aware of the following.

- Students should attempt all questions.
- Responses in the wrong language will receive no credit.
- No credit will be given for notes or drafts. Marks will be awarded only for answers given in the space provided.
- If a student makes a minor English language mistake, yet produces a correct answer, full marks will be given.
- The meaning of the response should be conveyed accurately for marks to be awarded.
- In Section 3 – Writing in Spanish, students should comply with the word limit specified.
- Not all questions based on a text are factual; some are high-order questions and require analysis, so that students can demonstrate that the text was understood.



## **SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

### **Section 1 – Listening and responding**

#### **Part A – Answer in English**

In this section most students answered the questions correctly. The texts were very clear and the questions were based on the information heard on the recordings. Students are advised to listen carefully and to take notes during both readings of the text, as this will assist them in completing their answers.

##### **Text 1**

The first text was a telephone message regarding a forthcoming celebration of a grandmother's 80th birthday. The person leaving the message was asking her daughter to complete some chores for a surprise party. This text was fairly simple and the appropriate answers could be obtained by carefully listening to the text.

##### **Question 1**

Mother and daughter

The answer 'family' was also accepted. Most students answered this question correctly.

##### **Question 2**

- Celebration: the Grandmother's birthday
- Location: the Botanical Gardens

##### **Question 3**

The three chores requested by the mother were:

- pick up the cake from the cake shop
- take the cake to the mother's home
- persuade the grandmother to accompany the granddaughter to the Botanical Gardens.

##### **Text 2**

The second text consisted of a broadcasted interview of a popular singer, Alejandro Rey. The journalist asks questions about the artist's latest success and future plans. The four questions were successfully answered by most students.

##### **Question 4**

'The train of the moments' or '*el tren de los momentos*'

##### **Question 5**

The 10 songs summarise 10 milestones/life moments/experiences that affected the artist's life.

##### **Question 6**

Besides music the artist is concerned about (any three of):

- children
- global warming
- inequality
- lack of justice in the world.

##### **Question 7**

All of:

- opening new markets is complicated
- he has enough work at the moment
- these types of projects are very hard for him/they cost a lot of effort and a lot of money.

#### **Part B – Answer in Spanish**

##### **Text 3**

Most students were able to respond to the questions on this text appropriately. The dialogue was simple and the questions were mostly factual.

# 2007 Assessment Report



## Question 8

- *Hacer un viaje de estudios o un intercambio estudiantil* (to complete a student exchange program)
- *Estudiar* (to study)

## Question 9

- *Los amigos que conocio* (the friends she has met)
- *La vida social y las oportunidades de divertirse con amigos y gente joven* (the active social life and fun times)
- *Las noches de diversión* (the late nights)
- *La falta de presión of de estrés debido al estilo de vida* (the lack of pressure due to the relaxed life style)

## Question 10

*Carlos esta contemplando hacer estudios de posgrado en Honduras.* (Carlos is thinking about studying in Honduras.)

## Section 2 – Reading and responding

### Part A – Answer in English

#### Text 4

#### Question 11

- Date of birth: 14 May
- Place of birth: Rosario

#### Question 12

His personality was audacious/daring/adventurous/obstinate. It did not coincide with the official zodiac sign but it did coincide with the secret (or real) one.

#### Question 13

The astrologer revised her calculations to check for any mistakes she might had made previously, because Che's personality did not coincide with his official zodiac sign.

#### Question 14

Any two of:

- because the mother was pregnant
- to escape from the scrutinising eyes of the Buenos Aires society
- to avoid the scandal.

#### Question 15

Managing a Yerba Mate plantation

#### Question 16

Any three of:

- they were prejudiced/judgemental
- they had strong moral beliefs
- they did not believe in having children out of wedlock
- they scrutinised other people's issues.

#### Question 17

- Who: a friend who was a doctor
- How: by forging the birth certificate

#### Question 18

- No one dared to doubt the date of birth.
- No one would have put them on the spot, or on trial.

#### Question 19

All of:

- the secrecy of his real birth date
- his clandestine way of life
- the conspiracy of his death.



## **Part B – Answer in Spanish**

### **Text 5**

#### **Question 20**

- *Para que los niños aprendan a leer y escribir en ambas lenguas* (for children to learn to read and write in both languages)
- *Para rescatar su cultura* (to rescue their culture)
- *Para asegurarse de que no se olviden de su lengua y cultura* (to make sure they don't forget it)

#### **Question 21**

All of:

- the contradiction that both languages represent
- which language to teach their children
- whether to be economically richer at the cost of their native tongue or vice versa.

#### **Question 22**

- Goal: that all books be written in both languages
- Results: future generations can have access to both languages  
recognition of the value of both cultures and languages

## **Section 3 – Writing in Spanish**

In preparing for this section, students are encouraged to practise different styles of writing (informative, persuasive, evaluative, personal and imaginative) and the conventions that correspond to each text type. Students would benefit from practising the different writing styles and revising verbs and tenses.

### **Question 23**

Students were asked to write a persuasive letter to the director of a transport company demanding compensation for problems caused by a strike. Most students produced a number of arguments. They demonstrated the capacity to present information and ideas with reasons, examples and evidence.

Students were expected to use a logical structure including an introduction, well-developed body and good sequencing of ideas, and a logical conclusion. Most students did very well on the criterion that assesses appropriateness of structures and sequence.

Students needed to use appropriate verb tenses and conjugate them correctly. The most common error occurred when using the imperfect tense: the endings of structures such as *estaba* and *cantaba* should be written with a 'b', but the *aba* ending was often written with a 'v' instead. Students should spend some time practising the imperfect past tense, which is commonly used when talking about past experiences.

Another common mistake was a lack of gender and number agreement. Students should bear in mind that, in Spanish, gender and number agreements apply to the article, the noun and the adjective. For example, *la silla nueva*, *los libros antiguos*, *el muchacho estudioso* and *la chica estudiosa*.

### **Question 24**

Students were asked to write an article evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of the use of computers in the classroom. The task required:

- a good balance between advantages and disadvantages
- correct use of language given the target audience
- a conclusion at the end
- a logical sequence of ideas for the text type, using connectors and relevant vocabulary.

### **Question 25**

Students were asked to write an informative piece of writing that consisted of a welcoming speech to new Year 7 students at their school. The speech should have included at least three extracurricular activities offered by the school. The task required:

- correct register (friendly and welcoming)
- no fewer than three activities mentioned and described
- informative and factual language

# 2007 Assessment Report



- a logical sequence of ideas for the text type, using present tense, informal imperative, subjunctive, connectors and relevant vocabulary.

## Question 26

The task involved the narration of an imaginative story about an adventure involving a map. Responses needed to:

- develop a story with a beginning, a middle and an ending
- contain a logical sequence of registers of time and place
- correctly use tenses, including the preterit and imperfect tenses for describing and recounting past events, and use connectors
- contain a variety of vocabulary
- involve an engaging and entertaining narrative.

## Question 27

The task required students to write a personal account of an unforgettable experience. Responses needed to:

- develop a narrative with a beginning, a middle and an ending
- contain a logical sequence of registers of time and place
- correctly use tenses, including the preterit and imperfect tenses for describing and recounting past events, and use connectors
- contain a variety of vocabulary
- involve an engaging narrative.