

SPANISH LITERATURE

Paper 8673/04

Texts

General comments

Examiners found the standard to be similar to that of previous sessions, although a greater number of candidates were able to answer three questions satisfactorily. In terms of preparation, Centres are advised that many candidates did not answer part (iii) of **Question 1(a)** fully because they needed to refer to the text as a whole – practice of this type of question would be very helpful. Also, candidates do not need to quote at length from the given extract.

Handwriting continues to present a significant problem as Examiners struggle to decipher answers. Candidates are clearly putting themselves at a disadvantage if their work cannot be read.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1: Pérez Galdós – *Doña Perfecta*

- (a) Candidates found enough material in the extract to answer parts (i) and (ii), but found it more difficult to discuss the extract in the context of the whole work in answer to part (iii).
- (b) The better answers developed into a discussion of the theme of hypocrisy generally in the book. A few candidates digressed into spending too long discussing what is meant by 'Christianity'.

Question 2: Isabel Allende – *Eva Luna*

- (a) Although many candidates chose this question, surprisingly few were able to relate the extract to a more wide-ranging discussion of the novel as required in part (iii).
- (b) There were many excellent answers to this question. In fact candidates found almost too much material and there were a few who had difficulty organising it. The material was used to support a wide variety of angles and arguments. The best were able to see how revolutionary Allende's subject matter and treatment was against its cultural background.

Question 3: Vargas Llosa – *Los jefes/Los cachorros*

- (a) Parts (i) and (ii) presented no real problems. Answers to part (iii) sometimes failed to go beyond the surface, and lacked depth and detail.
- (b) Candidates showed a good knowledge of all the stories. Some had difficulty selecting material and forming a coherent argument. Weaker answers tended to consist of a list of the presence/absence of parental influence in the various stories, without enquiring into the significance of this, which would have taken the discussion to the next level. The best answers recognised that a feature of adolescence is identification with the peer group values which often contrasted with those of the parents.

Question 4: Fernán-Gómez – *Las bicicletas son para el verano*

- (a) There were disappointing responses to both questions on this play, but especially to Question 4. Many candidates chose this text but few of them were able to recall enough detail or to apply it. The result was thin answers, especially to part (i), while answers to part (iii) failed to make any reference to the whole work. In the case of some candidates, it was difficult to discern how well they really knew the play or to what extent they were improvising on the basis of the extract. Some answers were a general discussion of the experience of living through a war with no specific references to the text at all.
- (b) Although there were some very good answers to this question, some weaker candidates interpreted the question too abstractly and did not relate it closely enough to the play's characters.

Question 5: García Márquez – *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*

- (a) This question was popular and there was a variety of different but good treatments. Candidates showed detailed knowledge of the text.
- (b) This question was also very popular and was generally well answered, although a number of candidates interpreted the question in too abstract and general a way rather than confining their answers to the characters in the book.

Question 6: Lope de Vega - *Fuenteovejuna*

- (a) There were many good and well-argued answers to this question. Perhaps the most successful were those that took a chronological approach, rather than a simple 'yes' or 'no' treatment.
- (b) Although not many candidates chose to answer this question, there were some good analyses of Esteban's role. It is, of course, acceptable to challenge the statement in the question, but candidates cannot then write a whole essay on a different character.

Question 7: García Lorca – *La casa de Bernarda Alba*

- (a) This question proved the most straightforward and popular, with everyone putting forward approximately the same argument.
- (b) Fewer chose this question, which was a pity because it prompted some interesting and original discussion.

NB – Examiners do not expect candidates to have detailed knowledge of the historical period in which the text was set, but if a particular point is made, it must be accurate. Many candidates were unaware of the chronology of the Spanish Civil War and believed that Franco was in power before Lorca died.

Question 8: Machado – *Campos de Castilla*

- (a) There were few answers to this question.
- (b) Although few candidates chose this question, those that did found it straightforward, and produced good and well supported essays.