

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/22
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 to include extra words.
- **Question 2:** rewrite the phrases to include the word(s) in brackets. A grammatical manipulation will be required, and care should be taken to ensure that the answer would fit back into the original text, retaining the same meaning.
- **Questions 3 and 4:** comprehension of texts. Candidates should attempt to answer in their own words. Direct copying of five or more words from the text will usually invalidate an answer.
- **Question 5(a):** summary of relevant details from both texts in answer to the question set. Introduction, conclusions and vague generalisations are not required. Specific, relevant details attract marks.
- **Question 5(b):** personal response. Candidates should give a point of view and, if possible, offer ideas which haven't appeared in the texts.
- **Language:** when preparing for the exam, revise the basic agreements, tenses and verb endings.

General comments

On the whole, candidates seemed well prepared for the examination and, while there was a variety of abilities, all seemed to know the requirements of the paper, with relatively few copying five or more words in **Questions 3 and 4** and most keeping within the word limit in **Question 5**.

More able candidates showed clear understanding of the two texts on population movement, and most appeared to be well aware of the techniques required in answering specific questions. A few candidates used bullet points to answer **Questions 3 and 4**, thereby restricting their access to the full range of marks for Quality of Language. Presentation of the scripts was generally good, and only one or two candidates seemed pressed for time.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This opening question encourages a careful reading of the first text, and doing just this provided many candidates with a good start.

One of the biggest traps to be avoided is, after having successfully identified the section of text which matches the paraphrase in the question, to include non-essential words or omit essential ones. The answer should exactly match the paraphrase in the question. A recommended way for candidates to check that they have exactly the right phrase is to copy out the question before writing their answer 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.

Two answers which were frequently invalidated by the inclusion of extra words were:

(d) – prefaced with *están*.

(e) – prefaced with *no quieren que*.

In (b) a small number of candidates opted incorrectly for *ha visto una clara tendencia*.

Question 2

The successful grammatical manipulations required by this question are always one of the more demanding tests in the examination. Again, it is recommended that candidates copy out the phrase from the question in the line above their answer as a means of checking that all elements of the manipulation have been tackled.

- (a) Equivalence between *ya no* and *dejar de* appeared to be well known, and many correct answers were recorded. A number of candidates added *tan* to their answers, giving *ya no es tan fácil*, which worked well.
- (b) The use of *llevar* in temporal constructions is often difficult to master. Several candidates began the phrase correctly, but were unsuccessful in the second part through offering *no viendo* or *sin viendo* when *sin ver* was required.
- (c) Many candidates correctly made the association between *de nuevo* and *volver a*. Other candidates did not see beyond the basic meaning of *volver*, and were unable to supply a phrase to fit back into the text with the same meaning.
- (d) This should have been a fairly straightforward manipulation but many candidates invalidated an otherwise correct answer by omitting *que* at the beginning of their answer. (The answer must be able to fit into the text with exactly the same meaning as the original phrase). A number of candidates realised that the manipulation could be made without either *que* or *está* and correctly began the answer with *relacionada*.
- (e) This was a clear case of how copying the phrase from the question before attempting the manipulation might have helped. Although a number of correct variations were possible, all required *los* and *por el paro* – either of which were frequently omitted.

Question 3

The text and questions seemed to be generally well understood. Most candidates attempted to include in their answers the number of points sought by the question, with a greater or lesser degree of success. Instances of copying five or more words of text were relatively infrequent.

- (a) This was a fairly straightforward opening question, with many candidates scoring full marks. The vast majority of candidates mentioned that Fernando's age made him eligible, although the other points were sometimes missed by confusing his previous work with what he was doing now.
- (b) There were four possible routes to scoring three marks and many candidates found at least two of them. The final point about working the land to help domestic finances needed to mention that this was done in people's spare time to get the mark.
- (c) Candidates often found difficulty in successfully communicating the first point – that the mayor was now seeing people back in the village who used to live there. The other two points were accessible to most.
- (d) Many candidates were able to note both points about the illegal tractors, (lack of paperwork and lack of insurance), and the majority scored at least one mark. Some candidates focused on other points in the paragraph which were not relevant to the question. A few candidates missed out on a mark by copying *no quieren pagar el seguro obligatorio* directly from the text.
- (e) This question was answered well. Many candidates noted the points that the over 50s were flocking back to the country, and that they were the ones who were suffering most from unemployment. Although the point that young people were also returning because of the collapse in the property market was often noted, the fact that these were the ones who had abandoned agriculture to work in the construction boom was sometimes overlooked.

Question 4

There was a similar pattern of outcomes to that of the previous question and the two comprehension questions appeared to offer a comparable level of challenge.

- (a) Many candidates readily identified all three points required by the mark scheme although there were a few instances of copying *en lugares cada vez más deshumanizados* from the text which meant that the mark could not be awarded.
- (b) Most candidates were able to pick out *la igualdad social* from the text to score the first mark. A good number of candidates were also able to develop this successfully by adding that in the cities people from different classes mingled with one another.
- (c) Teasing out the meaning of the third paragraph proved a little more difficult, although marks were perhaps lost through inattention to detail rather than lack of comprehension. The point about people moving from the centre to the outskirts or outside the city was sometimes missed, and also the fact that they were seeking accommodation which was not only bigger but also cheaper.
- (d) Again marks were sometimes missed by not including relevant details. It was necessary to say that pollution was caused by daily or constant travel, and that this made demands upon energy resources which were unsustainable.
- (e) Most candidates scored marks, but not so many managed to convey all four answers. The point about the rediscovery of parts of the city that were previously covered by advertisements and the one referring to the dilapidated state of the buildings that were painted in Tirana, were the most commonly omitted.

Question 5

- (a) Although the advice about the technique required to answer this question successfully has been given in previous reports, there were still a number of candidates whose marks here did not reflect their marks for comprehension in the preceding two questions. Therefore, it is worth emphasising this technique again.

Candidates should, in the limited number of words available, give 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 *En el primer texto nos habla de qué pasó con las personas que no pudieron adaptar a ser acomodadas en ciudades urbanas. En el segundo texto podemos ver que las personas que sí son acomodadas exigieron más y está afectando a todos en la ciudad* waste forty-five 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.

As there was a wealth of specific detail to choose from to answer the question, those candidates with the correct technique often scored high marks.

- (b) Candidates who answered this part of the question and gave opinions on the quality of life in cities where they live were able to access the higher mark bands. A number of candidates wrote about the quality of life in their country in general, and scored zero or just one mark for not really answering the question. A small minority of candidates also scored zero after having used up their allocation of words in **Question 5(a)**.

Quality of Language

The quality of written Spanish was frequently of a high level and answers were often a pleasure to read.

Teacher Support

Teachers may be interested to know that there is a new Discussion Forum for AS/A Level Spanish on the Teacher Support website. Go to <http://teachers.cie.org.uk> and follow the link to 'Community'.

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/42

Texts

Key messages

- Candidates must abide by the rubric and only answer the required number of questions. A number of candidates answered both options (a) and (b) on a text. In **Sección Primera** option (a), all subsections (i), (ii), and (iii) must be answered.
- Each answer must be directly relevant to the question asked and should include specific, accurate references to the text.
- Essay planning is essential, especially where two sides of an argument are being presented. The introduction could be used to define the key words in the question and outline the structure of the answer. A generic introduction covering biographical details of the author and general comments on his or her work is not helpful.
- Candidates should be familiar with literary terms often used in questions, such as *símbolo*, *protagonista*, *recurso estilístico*.

General comments

The overall standard was at least satisfactory with many good and some very good essays. Most candidates had prepared well for the paper; they knew the texts and were aware of what was expected of them. The weakest area of the paper was in **Sección Primera**, option (a), the extract-based question. Candidates often spent too long on parts (i) and (ii), with much storytelling, and did not include enough material in part (iii) relating to the whole text (not just the extract printed on the Question Paper). There was a tendency for some candidates to prepare generic responses, triggered by names or reference to themes in the question. By their very nature these essays were too generalised with insufficient focus on the question being answered.

Comments on specific questions

Sección Primera

Question 1 Ernesto Sábato: *El túnel*

- (a) This was the more popular of the questions on this text. Most candidates identified the location correctly. In (iii) the better essays distinguished between Castel's circumstances and what he has made of them rather than simply discussing his personality or writing about his solitude.
- (b) This often led to rather general essays on the meaning of the novel. The best answers analysed the meaning of 'ciegos' in the context of the novel, frequently focussing on Allende, who, though blind, can 'see' or understand more clearly than Castel. The issue of darkness and the tunnel was dealt with more effectively.

Question 2 Calderón de la Barca: *La vida es sueño*

- (a) This question elicited a wide range of answers. The best gave superb responses, encompassing the whole breadth of meaning of the play. Others concentrated on the actions of Basilio and referred very briefly or not at all to Clotaldo, or were caught up in narrating the plot in detail with little reference to the rest of the play in part (iii).
- (b) Candidates were able to respond to this question on a number of levels. Some good answers showed that candidates appreciated the play as a piece of theatre. Weaker essays focused on narrative with little analysis of Clarín's actions.

Question 3 Luis de Sepúlveda: *Un viejo que leía novelas de amor*

- (a) The best answers here appreciated the irony of the situation. In general there were several interpretations of '*protagonista*' in (iii) and some confusion as to the subject of (i) and (ii). This is a good example of one of the key points mentioned above – candidates need to understand common literary terms.
- (b) Most answers concentrated on the white man's respect, or lack of it, for the jungle. This was often presented in a clear argument structured around the idea of contrast between the personalities and actions of the protagonist and the mayor. Some candidates chose to dismiss this topic and write about other central themes. This can only be acceptable if the main focus of the answer remains the topic referred to in the question, which is then compared to another.

Question 4 Antonio Buero Vallejo: *El concierto de San Ovidio*

- (a) As in other cases, many candidates spent too long in answering (i) and (ii), often leading to much storytelling. In (iii), many answers were clear on the contrast in meaning between realising yourself as a human being and as a blind person; others found this more difficult to discuss, or indeed argued that they are the same thing. The weakest essays simply recounted the theme and plot of the play.
- (b) This question was well answered overall. Some very good essays discussed Adriana's role in political or historical terms. Others were able to analyse how she played a figurative role with regard to the situation in Spain at the time the play was written.

Sección Segunda

Question 5 Carmen Laforet: *Nada*

- (a) Unfortunately, there was a typographical error in this question for which we sincerely apologise. Answers were generally well-informed and focused. The better essays charted developments in the relationships of the characters. Weaker answers placed too much emphasis on narrative or a character study of Román.
- (b) This question was interpreted in a number of ways and produced a wide range of answers. Most compared and contrasted the beautiful and ugly in the novel, with better answers going beyond the more obvious to refer to beauty in the goodness of Gloria and *la abuela*, for example. Those pre-prepared essays on the misery and ugliness of the flat and its inhabitants were less impressive.

Question 6 Isabel Allende: *La casa de los espíritus*

- (a) There are a number of specific points to bear in mind when approaching a question on this novel. Candidates need to be able to focus on the question as it is printed and to sustain the argument on those precise issues. It is tempting for candidates to pick up an aspect of the question and pursue a tangential argument, perhaps trying to include all the references they can recall on a theme or character. Following on from that observation, it is essential that candidates can select effectively from the text, (not the film version), to substantiate the argument.

Answers to this question interpreted '*historia*' as either the plot of the novel or as history (social and political). Either reading is acceptable. Most essays dealt with the notion of repetition, but some were challenged by the concept of change. Examples were seen of candidates who focused only on Esteban Trueba and the extent to which his personality changes throughout the novel. Another very good answer dealt with the cycle of oppression of women through the course of the novel. The weakest answers dismissed the question and listed what they thought were the themes.

With a long text, candidates are advised to use the introduction to their essay to define the scope of the analysis and to have a clear focus and closely argued answer which is fully relevant to the question set.

- (b) Fewer candidates chose this question on the text. There were some excellent appreciations of the narrative technique of the novel but many gave straightforward character studies of Clara, ignoring the question.

Question 7 Federico García Lorca: *Yerma*

- (a) This was a very popular choice. The best candidates were able to discuss the various pressures on Yerma, appraise her character, her relationships and her predicament in a sensitive and nuanced way. It was also possible to take a chronological approach, showing how Yerma changes over the course of the play and analysing why. Those candidates who presented Juan as a victim and discussed simply whether Yerma was justified in killing him, or interpreted the events in the play in their own context, almost as if it were a modern soap opera, were less successful.
- (b) Many candidates also chose this question. For some candidates the term '*símbolos*' was not fully understood, and those essays tended to focus on themes only. There was a broad interpretation of the term, with the *lavanderas*, María and Víctor being included in the discussion. Candidates justified this by pointing out that the washerwomen represent public opinion and Víctor represents '*lo deseado/prohibido*', thus making it valid. Some excellent essays linked symbols sensitively to themes.

Question 8 Pablo Neruda: *Veinte poemas de amor y una canción desesperada*

- (a) Responses were relatively few in number. Candidates tackled the critical analysis fairly well but needed to keep a closer focus on the question and concentrate more on '*la naturaleza*'.
- (b) The small number of essays indicated that candidates found it more difficult to select poems to support a thematic argument and to construct an effective response.

Teacher Support

Teachers may be interested to know that there is a new Discussion Forum for AS/A Level Spanish on the Teacher Support website. Go to <http://teachers.cie.org.uk> and follow the links to 'Community'.