

SPANISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9844/11
Reading

Question Number	Key
1	A
2	C
3	A
4	C
5	D
6	B
7	H
8	G
9	B
10	E

Question Number	Key
11	F
12	A
13	C
14	B
15	D
16	B
17	A
18	C
19	D
20	A

Question Number	Key
21	D
22	C
23	D
24	C
25	B
26	B
27	A
28	B
29	A
30	D

Question Number	Key
31	D
32	C
33	B
34	B
35	C
36	D
37	C
38	D
39	A
40	D

Key messages

In order to perform well candidates should:

- demonstrate understanding of a passage, identifying emotions, attitudes and stated or implied opinions
- read the questions carefully and answer according to the ideas in the texts rather than their knowledge own the subject matter
- identify expressions, vocabulary and synonyms in the questions and texts
- recognise rhetorical organisation and discourse features, including cohesion, coherence and text structure.

General comments

Candidates responded well to this examination assessing reading comprehension by multiple choice question.

Candidates need to recognise key ideas in each question and look for details in the text that correspond with those ideas. They should be encouraged to look for synonyms or rephrasing of the ideas in the questions and options.

The following comments attempt to give guidance on those questions which candidates appear to have found more challenging.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1–6

Candidates are asked to read a text and answer 4-option multiple choice questions.

Performance in this exercise was good, but **Question 3** and **5** presented more of a challenge. In **Question 3** many candidates selected distractor **D** (*residir en la vivienda durante los días laborables*) over the correct answer **A** (*buscar reposo al mediodía*). Here it seemed that candidates missed the significance of *hacer una pausa laboral*, as Díaz lived on the outskirts of Buenos Aires and had not time to go and come back to take a break, and chose option **D** following what their knowledge of the world is, rather than what the text says.

The other question which proved somewhat challenging was **Question 5**, which drew on candidates' powers of inference. The answers spread fairly evenly between all the options. The Díaz family changed their plans because renting had become unprofitable as fewer renters were attracted to the building (**D**) after the pandemic and the increase in demonstrations in the area, but not in the city. There is no mention to their investments so **A** is ruled out and, although demonstrations are mentioned, that is not the sole reason for The Diaz to open the *chalecito* to the public. There is no mention to them not wanting to live there, so **B** is also ruled out. Here reading carefully was of paramount importance.

In **Question 1** just under 40 per cent of candidates chose the correct answer **A**, *edificación poco usual* which was linked to the text in *insólita construcción*. **D** proved to be very tempting when in fact there was no reference in the text to finding out about the construction of the building making a visit to Chalecito Díaz worth it.

Question 7–12

Candidates are asked to identify the phrase/sentence that fits each gap in the text. Two extra options serve as distractors.

Candidates responded to the task extremely well. **Question 9, 10, 11** and **12** proved to be very accessible with over and around three quarter of correct answers. In **Question 8** over a third of the candidates chose incorrectly option **D** over the correct answer (**G**), which explained the reason why the condor is in danger of extinction: *el veneno destinado a grandes predadores está diezmando su población*. In **Question 7** over half the candidates chose the correct answer (**H**), the area being sacred which refers to Cerro López, mentioned in the first and second sentences, which was linked to *los ancestros* in the following sentence.

Question 13–20

This is a matching exercise, where candidates identify statements with one of four shorter texts. Two extra options serve as distractors.

Out of the eight questions, **Question 16** proved to be the most challenging with 36 per cent of the candidates selecting the correct option **B**. This answer was drawn from the first two sentences in which developing as a writer is compared to becoming a father. The rest of the answers spread fairly evenly between all the options. In **Question 13** around forty per cent selected the right answer (**C**) prompted by *me escribió un editor* *había visto leído unas notas más en un suplemento* and a third chose the distractor **D** in which the speaker mentioned he/she was the editor of the school magazine. Similar outcomes were observed in **Question 15**. The correct answer could be inferred from the first sentence in **D**, as the speaker wanted to prove his/her family wrong, who assumed he/she deserved the Nobel prize. Under a quarter of candidates chose the distractor **A** from the phrase *pero sí a mi entorno*.

Question 21–32

Candidates choose from four options to fill the gaps in the text.

The performance in this task was varied. Some high scores were secured in **Question 21, 22, 23, 27, 28**, but others posed more difficulty such as **Question 25, 26** and **32**. In **25** more than half chose **A** (*movida*) over the correct answer **B** (*cruzada*) and over a third selected **C** (*marcha*) or **D** (*encrucijada*). The Quintanar family were known for their commitment to sustainability, as mentioned in the first paragraph, so theirs was a novel campaign. It is worth noting that this task focuses not only on vocabulary, structures and grammar but also on information. Surprisingly in **Question 26** only a minority chose the correct option **B** (*germen*). The majority of the answers were spread elsewhere. Understanding that the Quintanar family were the ones to

start this new venture in the region proved to be a bit of a challenge. As for **Question 32** a third of candidates favoured equally **D** (comprometen) or **A** (requieren) over the correct answer **C** (comportar) that collocates with *pérdidas* in the sense of entailing losses.

In **Question 24** only a third of candidates secured the correct answer **C** (abasteciésemos) as in supplying energy. *Proporcionasemos* (**B**) is a transitive verb and did not work in this context. In **Question 29** over a third of candidates selected the correct answer **A** (idónea), as not many people have their own roofs to install solar panels. In **Question 30** *tendencia* (**D**) was only secured by under a third of candidates. The rest of the marks were spread elsewhere. As for **Question 31** there appeared to be some confusion between the correct answer **D** (en interés) and **A** (en favor).

Question 33–40

Candidates are required to read a longer text from which 4-option multiple choice questions. They are tested on their comprehension and ability to identify opinions and draw conclusions from explicit and implicit information.

This exercise proved to be challenging for a number of candidates. Performance was strong in **Question 35** and **39**. **Question 35** required the conclusion that Campo Abierto was opened because of the full dedication of the founders, found in '*Por el día construíamos y por las noches trabajábamos en el programa educativo*' in the second paragraph of the text. In **Question 39** over half the candidates chose correctly **A**. The evidence for this was found in *Hoy (...) convertido en profesor*.

In **Questions 33 and 34** the performance was weak. For **Question 33** careful reading of the first paragraph of the text should reveal that Campo Abierto was born out of *una confluencia de ilusiones como lo define Luz Díaz, una miembro del equipo fundador* and *intención de poner en marcha un proyecto innovador*, which corresponds with option **B**, *las inquietudes de varias personas* (**B**). There is no reference to the educational shortcomings of the system, distractor **A**, to children asking to be out of the classrooms (**C**) or thanks to an idea that was considered inadequate then (**D**). In **Question 34** the majority of candidates chose options **A** or **D**, a recoverable deposit, which was not mentioned. The text stated that they required a mortgage.

In **Question 37** around forty per cent of candidates chose distractor **A**, when Munol indicates that he realised Campo Abierto was going to be *un complemento extraordinario a la educación* (end of the third paragraph). Therefore, he considered that giving them a chance was worth it, the correct answer being **C**. For **Question 40** candidates were expected to draw the conclusion that this type of institution must follow regulations from various government departments (**D**) based on *Por los animales, somo centro zoológico, en lo que respecta a la residencia, dependemos de Turismo, y en la economía, ni siquiera tenemos un epígrafe fiscal propio* (last paragraph).

SPANISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9844/12
Reading

Question Number	Key
1	C
2	B
3	A
4	D
5	C
6	D
7	G
8	E
9	C
10	F

Question Number	Key
11	A
12	H
13	B
14	C
15	B
16	A
17	D
18	C
19	A
20	D

Question Number	Key
21	D
22	B
23	B
24	D
25	C
26	D
27	C
28	B
29	A
30	C

Question Number	Key
31	C
32	A
33	C
34	D
35	D
36	B
37	B
38	D
39	C
40	A

Key messages

In order to perform well candidates should:

- demonstrate understanding of a passage, identifying emotions, attitudes and stated or implied opinions
- read the questions carefully and answer according to the ideas in the texts rather than their knowledge own the subject matter
- identify expressions, vocabulary and synonyms in the questions and texts
- recognise rhetorical organisation and discourse features, including cohesion, coherence and text structure.

General comments

Candidates responded well to this examination assessing reading comprehension by multiple choice, with the majority of candidates scoring more than half the allocated marks. Performance was comparable over the five tasks. Candidates attempted all questions.

Candidates need to recognise key ideas in each question and look for details in the text that correspond with those ideas. They should look for synonyms or rephrasing of the ideas in the questions

The following comments attempt to give guidance on those questions which candidates appear to have found more challenging.

Comments on specific questions

Questions 1–6

Candidates are asked to look for key information, detail or implicit meaning in a text.

Performance in this exercise was extremely good, with most candidates answering the majority of questions correctly and showing good comprehension of the information contained in the text. In **Question 3** some candidates chose option **D** (*le mostró la popularidad constante de la lectura*) rather than the correct option **A** (*resultó central en su investigación*) that was linked to *Lamparero conoció los nuevos modos de circulación de la lectura y escritura. Así abordó su tema de investigación doctoral o los jóvenes quieren presumir de una forma de vestir determinada*.

Questions 7–12

Candidates are asked to identify the phrase or sentence that fits each gap in the text. Two extra options serve as distractors.

Most candidates did well in this task. They were particularly successful with **Question 12**, in which candidates correctly chose option **H** that continued with the different steps in an assembly of the Modelo de Naciones Unidas (MUN). In **Question 7** only a third of candidates understood that option **G** qualified the debates and negotiations of a MUN as the backbone of the assemblies and incorrectly chose option **B**, which did not fit in textually. In **Question 8** almost half the candidates selected the incorrect option (**G, que constituyen las piedras angulares de la actividad del organismo internacional**), when what was required was the reason why MUN fits into a skills-based education (*por favorecer el desarrollo del razonamiento crítico y de la capacidad por aprender*, option **E**). This was understood by just over 40 per cent of candidates. The relative pronoun *que* that follows gap **10** refers to *preparación* so the verb that followed must be in the singular. The correct answer **F** was correctly selected by almost half of the candidates, which was that the *preparación* is based on knowing the regulations. In distractor **E** the verb is in the plural (*constituyen*) so that would not fit in grammatically.

Question 13–20

This is a matching exercise, where candidates identify statements with one of four shorter texts. Two extra options serve as distractors.

This task was attempted with very good success. With the exception of **Question 17**, well over 70 per cent of candidates answered satisfactorily, matching the statements with the expected texts. That is not to say that candidates found **Question 17** a challenge. It was only a quarter of candidates that chose distractor **B** rather than the correct answer. The evidence for this was to be found in text **D** where it can be concluded that the speaker shows initiative by organising different kinds of activities.

Question 21–32

Candidates choose from four options to fill the gaps in the text.

This exercise was done very well with some high scores recorded. **Question 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28** produced very few cases of inaccuracy. In **Question 21** nearly 40 per cent of candidates chose the correct option **D** (*rueda*), as Simon is a film director, but a third chose either option **A** (*actúa*) or **C** (*maneja*). The rest of the questions achieve a high score of over 50 per cent. In **Question 23** for instance, some candidates chose option **C** incorrectly as *presenta* does not fit in front of *capas y personalidad a cada una de las personas*. In **Question 30** the correct answer (**C, insostenibles**) was overlooked by a third of candidates, who chose the adjective *inalcázables* (**B**) to collocate with *precios* in this context.

Question 33–40

Candidates are required to read a longer text from which 4-option multiple choice questions. They are tested on their comprehension and ability to identify opinions and draw conclusions from explicit and implicit information.

Performance was strong. There was only one question where only a third of the candidates answered correctly. The correct answer for **Question 36 (B)** can be found in the third paragraph. Ernesto Prieto admits that some employees can find a four-day working week stressful, but he did not. So that rules out option **A** (*implicaba demasiada ansiedad*). He says that at first he thought the four-day working week made no sense (*me parecía un disparate*), which links to the correct answer (*era un proyecto que no iba a prosperar*). The next lower mark was in **Question 37**, where over 60 per cent of candidates chose the correct answer (B, *el rendimiento laboral ya goza de alta productividad*); the evidence for this can be found in *ello repercute en la productividad* in the fourth paragraph. Joan Checa mentions that the employee must not feel burdened or overwhelmed for the initiative to be successful; this rules out **A** (*el trabajador se siente recompesado*). There is no mention of the need for a company to be successful already for the initiative to work (option **C**) chosen by some candidates. Candidates are encouraged to read the text closely in these types of questions.

SPANISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9844/13

Reading

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

SPANISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9844/21

Writing

Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- Respond to the title in **Section A** and then select the title with which they feel most comfortable with in **Section B**.
- Write responses that are 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 vocabulary.
- Use sentence patterns which show some evidence of complexity in a style which is easy to follow.

General comments

This relatively new style of essay paper now seems to have embedded itself well and candidates are responding to it with enthusiasm and a determination to showcase their writing abilities. Producing essays that deal unequivocally with the titles set, as opposed to titles that candidates wish had been set, remains as important now as it ever was. The challenge of producing two essays that are completely different in style between the two sections is a considerable one and yet it would appear that candidates are being well prepared to deal with this style of examination thereby giving themselves a fine chance of scoring decent marks across the paper. In general terms, despite the fact that there are a few issues that centres would do well to address, the standard of performance of candidates on this paper was good and, in a fair number of cases, very good indeed.

In terms of issues arising from this session, in **Section A** some candidates again opted to disregard the details of the title and simply wrote a few random paragraphs about the difficulties facing elderly people in our society whilst failing to mention the main theme of the title, namely the perceived lack of importance or relevance that elderly people have nowadays. Even if an essay were to be produced in this way in a style that was grammatically accurate, complex and very readable it would still not score many marks for content as it would be deemed to have failed to address the title. This point really is worth emphasising when preparing candidates for this paper. Similarly, essays that were indeed focused on the title but had limited linguistic range and were poorly organised and full of linguistic inaccuracies would also not score highly for language. The more successful essays were the ones that kept a close eye on both the relevance and appropriateness of content as well as the need to write with accuracy, coherence and a sense of style.

Having said this, most essays remained clearly focused on the title set and dealt well with the issues arising with regard to the importance or otherwise of elderly people in today's society. It was clear a lot of the time that there was a constant awareness of structure, the judicious use of paragraphs to give a sense of order to the ideas being presented to the reader, the need to look at both sides of the debate as and when necessary and the desirability of arguing a convincing case in accurate Spanish. When an essay hits these targets then it is bound to access the higher sections of the mark scheme both for language and content.

In terms of the language used by candidates, there was much evidence of an ability to organise a piece of convincing writing, to use a good range of grammar (both basic and advanced) and to include a level of vocabulary that was both appropriate and effective. Most candidates understood the need to use a range of cohesive devices to add a sense of style and control to their writing. Some very good essays, however, were slightly tarnished by an almost complete lack of punctuation and often in such essays the use of Spanish accents was considered optional. It is reasonable for Examiners to expect candidates to use punctuation and accentuation with some degree of accuracy. Candidates who do not manage this are unlikely to score high marks for language accuracy. It is almost as if some candidates believe that the use of commas, capital letters, full stops and accents is an unnecessary element in the process of essay writing. They would do well

to accept that this is not the case. As has been mentioned before in previous reports, accents in Spanish can often alter the meaning of words if they are used incorrectly or left out altogether so this point remains an important one to make and an even more important one for candidates to embrace.

As always, some language errors appeared so often and at all levels that they need to be repeated in reports such as this one in order to assist future candidates in their preparation. The omission of the *a* in the simple future tense produced errors such as ...*los ingenieros iban investigar la posibilidad de desarrollar aviones eléctricos* and *vamos seguir viajando en avión cuando vamos al extranjero*. There was similar confusion caused when candidates opted to use the verb *hacer* instead of *ser* in utterances such as *los novios van hacer casados en la playa* and *los chicos jóvenes empiezan hacer difíciles si están cansados en un banquete de boda*.

It was quite common to see candidates switching between present and past tenses, especially when writing a narrative response to **Question 3** resulting in some confusion (e.g. *Cuando salí de la casa, veo un gato negro en la calle*). Also, some candidates correctly identified that subjunctive forms were required in certain constructions but then incorrectly used the present subjunctive forms when narrating events in the past (e.g. *la chica quería que su padre la ayude*). There was again some degree of confusion with the use of the verbs *ser* and *estar* and a number of candidates decided to use the auxiliary verb *haber* without the initial letter *h* in examples such as *emos llegado tarde*. The use of *hay* in the past tense also caused much confusion with statements such as *han habido muchos problemas* and *habían varias dificultades*. Minor errors such as confusion between *si* and *sí*, missing the accent on the word *más* and forgetting to invert question marks at the beginning of questions in passages of dialogue were also quite common. One final, but vitally important, point is worth making here. There were a lot more essays this session that were extremely difficult and at times almost impossible to read as a result of illegible handwriting. If centres are aware that any candidate's handwriting is so very difficult to decipher then it may well be worth taking advice from Cambridge in order to make the necessary arrangements in the examination to deal with this situation.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Las personas mayores tienen cada vez menos importancia en nuestra sociedad. Argumenta tu opinión a favor o en contra.

The majority of essays produced in response to this title argued the case against the statement. There were many references to the way in which young people can benefit enormously from the advice and life experiences of the older generation. Many candidates used their own grandparents as examples of this and paid tribute to the affection and support shown to them by the much older members of their families, especially in their more formative years. It would be fair to say that there was also some frustration shown in essays regarding the perceived reluctance of many elderly people to embrace new technologies and new ways of thinking and to relate to the changing attitudes and values of modern society. There was also a degree of acceptance that these generational differences are not uncommon and that it is partly up to the younger generation to deal sympathetically but assertively with the situation. The most common conclusion reached by candidates was that elderly people continue to be important members of society whose wisdom, most of the time, cannot be underestimated. There were very few essays that failed to address the title and most of the ideas put forward were clearly expressed with a range of supporting evidence and relevant justifications regardless of whether they agreed with the statement in the title or not.

Section B

Question 2

Describe el ambiente de un banquete de boda.

There was, as one would expect, a very wide range of different approaches to this fairly popular title. Some candidates described what they imagined a wedding banquet would be like whilst others used their own experiences to put a more personal slant on the title. There were many detailed descriptions of the food served on the day as well as some very evocative descriptions of the speeches given by various family members as toasts were proposed and expressions of goodwill were made to the happy couple. Essays that focused on giving clear descriptions of the various aspects of wedding celebrations with references to the

emotions being experienced and the joy of families and friends uniting to enjoy the whole day tended to be the most successful responses both in terms of content and language. Those essays that opted for very simple descriptions with little development or imaginative detail tended to score fewer marks overall but, in fairness, these were in the minority.

Question 3

Escribe un texto narrativo titulado Mi sueño se hizo realidad.

Of the two possible titles in **Section B** this one was the more popular choice with candidates. Career aspirations being achieved, candidates meeting their sporting or musical heroes, learning to drive a car and passing a driving test, becoming a parent, learning to speak a new language, meeting the perfect romantic partner and, somewhat surprisingly, landing an aircraft for the very first time, were all examples of the types of dreams that candidates wrote about in their essays. Whether these experiences were genuine or simply made up for the purposes of the examination did not seem to matter. It was impressive to see the levels of imaginative prowess, original thinking and narrative maturity shown by many candidates as they told their stories. Most appear to enjoy the challenge of retaining the reader's interest with unexpected plot twists, effective conclusions, the occasional dream sequence and some hilarious characterisations. Long may this continue to be the case.

SPANISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9844/22

Writing

Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- Respond to the title in **Section A** and then select the title with which they feel most comfortable with in **Section B**.
- Write responses that are 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 vocabulary.
- Use sentence patterns which show some evidence of complexity in a style which is easy to follow.

General comments

This relatively new style of essay paper now seems to have embedded itself well and candidates are responding to it with enthusiasm and a determination to showcase their writing abilities. Producing essays that deal unequivocally with the titles set, as opposed to titles that candidates wish had been set, remains as important now as it ever was. The challenge of producing two essays that are completely different in style between the two sections is a considerable one and yet it would appear that candidates are being well prepared to deal with this style of examination thereby giving themselves a fine chance of scoring decent marks across the paper. In general terms, despite the fact that there are a few issues that centres would do well to address, the standard of performance of candidates on this paper was good and, in a fair number of cases, very good indeed.

In terms of issues arising from this session, in **Section A** some candidates again opted to disregard the details of the title and simply wrote a few random paragraphs about the need to tackle climate change with little or no mention at all of the main theme of the title, namely the impact of flying on the environment. Even if an essay were to be produced in this way in a style that was grammatically accurate, complex and very readable it would still not score many marks for content as it would be deemed to have failed to address the title. This point really is worth emphasising when preparing candidates for this paper. Similarly, essays that were indeed focused on the title but had limited linguistic range and were poorly organised and full of linguistic inaccuracies would also not score highly for language. The more successful essays were the ones that kept a close eye on both the relevance and appropriateness of content as well as the need to write with accuracy, coherence and a sense of style.

Having said this, most essays remained clearly focused on the title set and dealt well with the issues arising with regard to the importance of reducing our dependence on flying in order to reduce global carbon emissions. It was clear a lot of the time that there was a constant awareness of structure, the judicious use of paragraphs to give a sense of order to the ideas being presented to the reader, the need to look at both sides of the debate as and when necessary and the desirability of arguing a convincing case in accurate Spanish. When an essay hits these targets then it is bound to access the higher sections of the mark scheme both for language and content.

In terms of the language used by candidates, there was much evidence of an ability to organise a piece of convincing writing, to use a good range of grammar (both basic and advanced) and to include a level of vocabulary that was both appropriate and effective. Most candidates understood the need to use a range of cohesive devices to add a sense of style and control to their writing. Some very good essays, however, were slightly tarnished by an almost complete lack of punctuation and often in such essays the use of Spanish accents was considered optional. It is reasonable for Examiners to expect candidates to use punctuation and accentuation with some degree of accuracy. Candidates who do not manage this are unlikely score high

marks for language accuracy. It is almost as if some candidates believe that the use of commas, capital letters, full stops and accents is an unnecessary element in the process of essay writing. They would do well to accept that this is not the case. As has been mentioned before in previous reports, accents in Spanish can often alter the meaning of words if they are used incorrectly or left out altogether so this point remains an important one to make and an even more important one for candidates to embrace.

As always, some language errors appeared so often and at all levels that they need to be repeated in reports such as this one in order to assist future candidates in their preparation. The omission of the *a* in the simple future tense produced errors such as *...los ingenieros iban investigar la posibilidad de desarrollar aviones eléctricos* and *vamos seguir viajando en avión cuando vamos al extranjero*. There was similar confusion caused when candidates opted to use the verb *hacer* instead of *ser* in utterances such as *mis amigos iban hacer atacados por los perros* and *los chicos jóvenes empiezan hacer estresados si tienen tanto miedo*.

It was quite common to see candidates switching between present and past tenses, especially when writing a narrative response to **Question 3** resulting in some confusion (e.g. *Cuando salí de la casa, veo a mucha gente con banderas y bufandas en la calle*). Also, some candidates correctly identified that subjunctive forms were required in certain constructions but then incorrectly used the present subjunctive forms when narrating events in the past (e.g. *la chica quería que su novio la ayude*). There was again some degree of confusion with the use of the verbs *ser* and *estar* and a number of candidates decided to use the auxiliary verb *haber* without the initial letter *h* in examples such as *emos llegado tarde*. The use of *hay* in the past tense also caused much confusion with statements such as *han habido muchos problemas* and *habían varias dificultades*. Minor errors such as confusion between *si* and *sí*, missing the accent on the word *más* and forgetting to invert question marks at the beginning of questions in passages of dialogue were quite common. One final, but vitally important, point is worth making here. There were a lot more essays this session that were extremely difficult and at times almost impossible to read as a result of illegible handwriting. If centres are aware that any candidate's handwriting is so very difficult to decipher then it may well be worth taking advice from Cambridge in order to make the necessary arrangements in the examination to deal with this situation.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

'Una de las maneras más efectivas de combatir el cambio climático es viajar menos en avión.' Argumenta tu opinión a favor o en contra.

The majority of essays in this section were inclined to agree with the statement in the title. The effects of burning huge quantities of aviation fuel were well documented by candidates and many felt that alternative modes of travel (in particular electric vehicles) should be promoted even more than they are at present. There was an acceptance, however, that long distance travel would be severely restricted by the need to travel less by plane but that this is a price worth paying in order to deal with climate change. A number of essays took the view that air travel could actually be considered to be less damaging to the atmosphere than the same number of individuals all travelling by car instead of by plane. Looking at both sides of the argument and reaching their own conclusions also seemed to be quite a common approach to the title. Either approach is valid providing candidates deal with the issues raised by the title as well as writing in an assured and natural style.

Section B

Question 2

Describe cómo fue participar en un evento deportivo.

Most essays were written on the basis of personal experience of taking part in a sporting event. Football, athletics and swimming were the most common sports mentioned. There were many passages that dealt very effectively with the nerves experienced by those participating in the event and candidates were keen to convey the sense of achievement of winning a race or a game or whatever the contest was and how that then produced great feelings of pride together with satisfaction with the success achieved. When essays were not so forthcoming with descriptive detail it is true to say they did not score highly on the mark scheme both for content and for language. A small number of essays also fell significantly short of the minimum word

count set out in the rubric, namely 300 words. The mark scheme is set up to award candidates marks based on a minimum of 300 words being written so this last point is worth bearing in mind for future sessions.

Question 3

Escribe una narración titulada Una noche interminable.

A great many candidates made a genuine attempt to tell their story in a convincing and appealing way. Perhaps understandably, some candidates chose to write essays full of suspense and fear of the unknown with individuals being somehow held prisoner emerging as a popular narrative choice. As with previous sessions, the horror-fantasy genre seems to be popular with many candidates. Enigmatic characters and unresolved mysteries also tended to be common features of many of the essays written in response to this title. When candidates wrote essays that engaged the reader with well-developed plot lines and good attention to detail then the marks awarded for content were often good as were the marks for quality of written communication.

SPANISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9844/23

Writing

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

SPANISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9844/31

Literature

Key messages

There are several important points relating to the candidates' approach to the Paper, now in its second year.

Answering the question precisely

Section A questions, which include an extract from the text, require candidates to respond to the question posed in two ways, one directly related to the extract and the second looking at the issue with reference to the text as a whole. Examiners saw many examples of candidates either only referring to the printed extract in their answers or not including it at all. This will be explained in detail when commenting on specific questions below.

Candidates must read each question carefully and find a method of noting the tasks – underlining parts of the question or summarising each part, e.g., **Question 1** – define the nature of the conflicts between Bernarda and the other women in the extract **and** show how these conflicts relate to the outcome of the play. It is important to refer back to the question throughout the course of writing the essay to ensure that a clear focus is maintained.

Section B questions deal with one issue relating to the whole text. Candidates should ensure they keep focus on this in writing their answer.

Awareness of the Mark Scheme

Centres should make sure that candidates know the requirements of the Mark Scheme in detail. They must be aware of the four elements tested in the assessment objectives and seek to include reference to all of these in their answers.

Length of answers.

Candidates should not spend time counting words. The length of essay given (400–500 words) is recommended but not required. Candidates may write more than 500 words without penalty. An essay of less than 400–500 words is unlikely to have addressed the task fully as set. Examiners do not count words.

General comments

In many cases it is apparent that candidates benefit from studying two rather than three texts and are able to complete two answers in the time allowed. They are aware of the rubric of the Question Paper and choose the questions correctly. Some candidates could have benefited from closer study of the Mark Scheme, to ensure that they include material on all four assessment objectives.

Candidates are never asked to give a full summary of the text. They should use their knowledge and understanding to choose appropriate quotations or incidents to support their analysis of the text in the light of the question being answered.

It is imperative that candidates read the questions fully and carefully before they begin to write their answer. They are assessed on their response to the questions as they appear on the Question Paper.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Federico García Lorca: *La casa de Bernarda Alba*

¿Cómo definirías los conflictos entre Bernarda y las mujeres del pueblo en este extracto? Analiza la importancia de estos conflictos para el desenlace de la obra. Justifica tu respuesta.

Candidates have two tasks here:

- 1 – define the nature of the conflicts between Bernarda and the other women in the village
- 2 – analyse the importance of these conflicts for the outcome of the play.

A significant number of candidates dedicated most or all of their answer to a line-by-line commentary of the extract, pointing out how the conflicts are based on Bernarda's authoritarian, superior attitude without referring to the tragic outcome of the play. Another group of candidates chose to give a detailed character analysis of Bernarda. Neither of these approaches gave candidates access to the full range of marks available as they did not fulfil the requirements of the question. There were some good answers which addressed both parts of the question.

It may be helpful to show how candidates could combine analysis of conflicts in the extract and show how these were related to the end of the play as shown below. These are some examples:

- Bernarda's contempt for those in a lower class to herself *Los pobres son como los animales*
- The best answers linked this comment with Bernarda's rejection of Enrique Humanas as a suitable suitor for Martirio (although Martirio was not aware of this) – and how the experience had embittered Martirio, made her jealous of Adela and led directly to Adela's suicide.
- Bernarda's cruelty – seen here with Magdalena. Bernarda is insensitive to other people's feelings, whether the poor or her own family. We see this in her attitude to Enrique Humanas, with no consideration for Martirio's reaction which contributed to Martirio's unhappiness and resentment.
- Bernarda will not accept any advice – *No he dejado que nadie me dé lecciones*. Bernarda's response in the extract is mirrored in her refusal to listen to la Poncia who warns her of the negative effects caused by Pepe who upsets the family dynamics.
- Bernarda will not accept reality*A Pepe no lo ha visto ni ella ni yo*. Bernarda chooses to mould reality to what she wishes it to be. This results in damage to all who come under her influence, especially her daughters.
- Bernarda operates with double moral standards ... *Bernarda Quien sí estaba era el viudo de Darajalí. Muy cerca de tu tía*. *Mujer 2a ; Mala más que mala!* Bernarda criticises the behaviour of others harshly but does not allow this to be reciprocated, causing much tension with others and isolating herself and her daughters from the rest of society. The result of this is that her daughters feel stifled and will do anything to escape – hence the ending of the play.

By combining the tasks, the argument builds to its conclusion as the disruption caused by Pepe, Adela's infatuation and rejection of her mother's flawed values and judgement and Martirio's seething resentment and jealousy combine to result in Adela's suicide. Examiners do not recommend any specific approach in answering the question; the assessment depends on the quality of the response.

Question 2

Patricia García and Teresa López-Pellisa (eds) *Fantastic short stories by women authors from Spain and South America*

Analiza cómo la autora introduce el elemento de horror en el cuento, refiriéndote a los recursos literarios empleados. Compara y contrasta este cuento con las técnicas utilizadas en otro cuento de la colección, indicando cuál resulta más aterrador y por qué. Justifica tu respuesta.

Candidates have two tasks here:

- 1 Read the extract and show how the author creates horror in the story – description, choice of language, and any other linguistic technique.
- 2 Choose another story from the collection then compare and contrast with *La resucitada*, analysing which is the most effective horror story and why.

There were a number of good responses to this question. The most successful candidates were able to show how the author drew the reader into the story, using references to the sights, sounds and details to create an effective atmosphere and establish a rapport with the main character. The context in the extract becomes both real and existential as the themes of alienation and the role of women emerge. The unusual aspect of creating horror from two viewpoints – the *resucitada* herself and her family – was mentioned but more attention could have been paid to the specific techniques employed by the author to impress the reader.

The stories most frequently chosen as comparison with *La resucitada* were *El huésped* and *El ángulo del horror*.

With *La resucitada*, candidates mentioned tropes often seen in cinema such as the corpse opening its eyes shocking the reader and the reaction of the family to the person seemingly returning from the dead, but clearly not alive; references to the five senses again impact the reader.

In *El huésped* the psychological aspect of the horror was analysed together with the theme of violence against women, threatening behaviour and then the empowering of the female protagonists to counter this and protect themselves and the children. Lack of physical description is effective in letting the reader imagine their own image of the creature.

In the story *El ángulo del horror*, there is more emphasis placed on the existential nature of the story as it seems to question reality and normality becomes strange and inexplicable. So horror can be found anywhere.

Question 3

Carmen Laforet: *Nada*

Explica por qué Gloria estaba molesta en este extracto y analiza la importancia de su papel a lo largo de la novela.

The candidate has two tasks here:

- 1 Explain why Gloria is upset in the extract analysing the situation.
- 2 Analyse Gloria's role in the whole text (themes, character, how her experience may affect Andrea, for example) and how the author influences the reader's reaction to her.

There were few very good essays which dealt with both parts of this question. A number of responses were hampered by misunderstanding of the extract, with Gloria's husband frequently identified as Román, not Juan.

The best responses analysed the toxic atmosphere of Andrea's family's flat. The physical description as a dark, gloomy place with furniture piled up and no sense of comfort mirrors the lack of personal nurturing. Gloria is subject to both physical and psychological violence at the hands of her husband, Juan. He has been affected by his role in the Civil War and is not able to support his family. The nature of the role and character of Román has not yet been understood by Andrea, but he also plays a part in Gloria's life. Andrea has been drawn in to a nightmarish existence, which was completely unexpected when she moved to live in the flat and start her university studies. Both Andrea and Gloria are trapped. Consider the violence and coldness of the attack by Juan and the reaction of other individuals in the flat.

Gloria's role in the novel reveals the violent nature of life in post-Civil War Spain. We see in the extract how Gloria tries to support her family financially but is punished for this as Juan interprets this as an insult to him and not appropriate for a woman. Gloria represents the suffering of women in this society who have little power. Her life is a contrast to that of Andrea, who has arrived with hope for a positive future. Andrea gradually learns from her experience and observation; Gloria's life so far shows a sense of enterprise and independence, inspired by desperation, but at a considerable cost. Andrea does not want to live like this.

There are many other references in the text which candidates could have used to fill in the picture of Gloria and Juan's lives, as well as Gloria's involvement with Román.

Question 4

Gabriel García Márquez: *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba*

Los personajes de esta novela no tienen control de su vida. Analiza los efectos de esta situación en tres individuos. Justifica tu respuesta.

As with **Question 5**, many candidates chose to narrate the plot of the novel rather than focusing directly on the question. This would impact the level of analysis shown in the response.

The majority of answers chose to study the colonel, his wife and either the son or the cockerel and fewer mentioned Don Sabas, the 'pueblo' as a whole, the doctor and the lawyer. The most perceptive analyses of the colonel and his wife went beyond listing the forces such as poverty, a corrupt government and illness which deprived them of agency but also explored the extent to which to which their reactions to these forces impacted on their lives. The *gallo* clearly has no agency but is used by many – for Sabas as a way to make money, for the wife it is a burden, for the colonel a source of tension in his marriage as well as a way of honouring his son and giving him hope. Sabas is the richest man in the village but he knows he cannot buy good health nor the respect of others or the love of his wife. The doctor sees through him, he treats his wife badly and he betrayed his oldest friend, the colonel. Sabas had choices. The whole town is impacted by the authoritarian and corrupt government as seen in the curfew, censorship of the press, the cinema, the constant intimidating presence of the army and control of movement imposed by the mayor for the funeral. The cockfights are both a release and a threat to the people. Both the doctor and the lawyer were offered as convincing candidates. In spite of their education and position in society they were powerless to challenge the status quo.

Question 5

Gabriel García Márquez: *El coronel no tiene quien le escribe*

Ni el coronel ni su mujer llevan nombre propio. ¿Por qué? Justifica tu respuesta.

Márquez chose not to give the individuals names. This is a literary strategy which reinforces the central themes of the novel. Many answers showed understanding of this intention in that story could apply to any people unfortunate enough to find themselves in a similar situation. In the same way, neither the country nor the village are named. The colonel represents all those who are forgotten by the system; the army veterans, the poor, those who wait for justice which never arrives. With no name, the colonel becomes a universal figure and not a specific individual. In the same way, someone without a name has no identity, no power or resources. The colonel's wife, who is ill and silent is also a figure of resistance with no voice in a society which does not listen to her. The constant reference to the colonel's rank is also seen as ironic in emphasising his lack of status.

Questions 6 and 7

Carmen Conde: *Mientras los hombres mueren*

There were insufficient answers to comment on the overall quality of answers. This follows the pattern of previous PERTs.

Question 8

Laura Esquivel: *Como agua para chocolate*

Esta novela presenta una sociedad que está dejando atrás las influencias del pasado pero que al mismo tiempo cuestiona cómo será el futuro. ¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo? Justifica tu respuesta.

This was the less popular of the questions on this text. Candidates tended to focus on reference to the past and described the circumstances around Tita being forbidden to marry Pedro and the subsequent events, all under the control of Mamá Elena. There was discussion around Gertrudis' actions which were seen to herald a change in society with reference to women's independence. Tita was able to control Esperanza's future after the death of Rosaura – another significant change in women's lives. The Mexican Revolution was

mentioned as heralding change but there is ambiguity as the chaos also brought about the death of Mamá Elena. Esperanza's marriage to John Brown's son is a positive indicator and may hint of the increasing closeness of the USA and Mexico. The USA represents both good and bad – better treatment but the death of Roberto. The burning of the ranch and existence of the cookery book hint of both erasing the past but remembering positive elements of it. Some essays also mentioned the influence of the native people such as Nacha.

Question 9

Laura Esquivel: *Como agua para chocolate*

Hay lectores que empatizan con Pedro. En tu opinión, ¿tienen razón? Justifica tu respuesta.

This question attracted a large number of responses including some thorough essays. The vast majority were not favourable to Pedro. Some of the points explored included:

- the decision to marry Rosaura betrayed Tita and condemned his wife to a loveless marriage, indicating that Pedro did not respect the feelings of either woman
- he behaves in a possessive and selfish way throughout. Pedro interferes with Tita's life even when she is trying to reignite her relationship with John Brown. He does not let Tita move on emotionally or offer her a free and dignified relationship. This could allow us to conclude that his view of love is more of a possessive obsession than affection based on mutual respect
- in contrast with Gertrudis who is compelled to free herself from the traditions imposed by Mamá Elena after eating food prepared by Tita, but then establishes herself in a new life despite her mother's reactions, Pedro accepts the family rules when he could have escaped with Tita and changed their lives completely
- Pedro never confronts Mamá Elena directly nor does he try to improve Tita's position. He appears to be cowardly and reluctant to jeopardise his own comfort. He even accepted Mamá Elena's decision that he and Rosaura should go to Texas with Roberto, even though that brought about the baby's death as only Tita could breastfeed him
- Pedro's relationship with Tita caused distress to both Rosaura and Tita (despite the 'agreement' made between the women), drove the sisters apart and was instrumental in Rosaura's death
- Pedro's death could be interpreted as supremely romantic. However it impels Tita to take her life too. So his love for her has not changed. The ending may be seen as the destruction of the past, the avoidance of reality or the triumph of Pedro's selfishness – Tita has been made to be dependent on him. Pedro never accepted responsibility for his own actions.

Some students argued that the reason some may sympathise with Pedro was due to the fact that he was also a victim of Mamá Elena's rules and he accepts the marriage to be closer to Tita. They also suggested that Pedro and Tita were together after the deaths of Rosaura and Mamá Elena, giving some form of happy ending.

In order to access the higher mark bands, candidates need to use evidence from the text to build the argument and also consider how the author influences the reader's reaction to the character – how is this done? Consider the literary techniques used to influence your judgement and draw you in to the narrative.

SPANISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9844/32

Literature

Key messages

There are several important points relating to the candidates' approach to the Paper, now in its second year.

Answering the question precisely.

Section A questions, which include an extract from the text, require candidates to respond to the question posed in two ways, one directly related to the extract and the second looking at the issue with reference to the text as a whole. Examiners saw many examples of candidates either only referring to the printed extract in their answers or not including it at all. This will be explained in detail when commenting on specific questions below.

Candidates must read each question carefully and find a method of noting the tasks – underlining parts of the question or summarising each part, e.g., **Question 1** – analyse the grandmother's poetic language in this conversation; to what extent do we see an aspect of Martirio's personality in this scene which is different from her other appearances in the play? It is important to refer back to the question throughout the course of writing the essay to ensure that a clear focus is maintained.

Section B questions deal with one issue relating to the whole text. Candidates should ensure they keep focus on this in writing their answer.

Awareness of the Mark Scheme.

Centres should make sure that candidates know the requirements of the Mark Scheme in detail. They must be aware of the four elements tested in the assessment objectives and seek to include reference to all of these in their answers.

Length of answers.

Candidates should not spend time counting words. The length of essay given (400–500 words) is recommended but not required. Candidates may write more than 500 words without penalty. An essay of less than 400–500 words is unlikely to have addressed the task fully as set. Examiners do not count words.

General comments

In many cases it is apparent that candidates benefit from studying two rather than three texts and are able to complete two answers in the time allowed. They are aware of the rubric of the Question Paper and choose the questions correctly. Some candidates could have benefited from closer study of the Mark Scheme, to ensure that they include material on all four assessment objectives.

Candidates are never asked to give a full summary of the text. They should use their knowledge and understanding to choose appropriate quotations or incidents to support their analysis of the text in the light of the question being answered.

It is imperative that candidates read the questions fully and carefully before they begin to write their answer. They are assessed on their response to the questions as they appear on the Question Paper.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Federico García Lorca: *La casa de Bernarda Alba*

Analiza la importancia del lenguaje poético de la abuela en esta conversación. ¿Hasta qué punto revela esta escena un aspecto de la personalidad de Martirio que no se ha visto antes en la obra?

Candidates have two tasks here:

- 1 – analyse the importance of the poetic language used by the *abuela* in this conversation
- 2 – analyse whether a new aspect of Martirio's personality is apparent in this scene and discuss.

Most candidates mentioned that María Josefa's role in the play is unique as is her voice. She is the only character who is unafraid of Bernarda and speaks truth to power, reflecting the desire for freedom and personal fulfilment in the daughters. María Josefa expresses herself in poetic language but few candidates were able to go beyond the statement to detailed analysis. The biblical and maternal symbolism of the lamb, together with the imagery of the sea and waves, representing freedom and vitality and the continuation of life were included. Some mentioned colours, particularly the black/white contrast seen in the brightness of the sea foam against the dark of mourning clothes. The animalisation of names gives a lighter but no less apt touch. María Josefa suffers the same fate as the daughters in being locked away – but she escaped. María Josefa knows what all the women want and is aware of what happens when they are denied the chance to live their lives freely. The idea of madness or senility is played with – María Josefa is one of the few characters to understand what is going on and to express this. Bernarda, the capable one, is deluded. The use of poetic language takes the situation to another level, looking at the life force itself, those instincts which cannot be ignored or controlled, the spiritual and nurturing love needed by all. The right of the individual against the artificial rules of society which do not enhance the lives of those affected by them or recognise their needs. Candidates needed to consider the choice of language, images and symbols and other techniques such as repetition and rhyme. María Josefa's role was examined in greater detail by some candidates, noting her determination to be free, her prophecy *Aquí no hay más que mantos de luto* and the symbolic meaning of when and where she appeared in the action of the play.

The added facet of Martirio's personality was usually defined as measured and assured, with compassion for her grandmother whilst others saw a reflection of her own mother in her authority. Another interpretation was that Martirio was set on a course of action – to catch Adela with Pepe – and her brief commands to her grandmother were necessary to enable her to continue with her plans.

Question 2

Patricia García and Teresa López-Pellisa (eds) *Fantastic short stories by women authors from Spain and South America*

Explica por qué la tía no podía vivir una vida normal, según el extracto. Analiza cómo la autora critica la sociedad a través de la figura de la tía a lo largo del cuento. Justifica tu respuesta.

Candidates have two tasks here:

- 1 explain why the aunt could not live a normal life – details and examples
- 2 analyse how the author uses the aunt's experience to present a wider criticism of the society depicted in the story.

Candidates were successful in identifying the physical impairment caused to the aunt by the *chágara* and resulting disfigurement. This meant that she was unable to live a fulfilling life as she was perceived to be not worthy of it. This was a clear criticism of the machista Puerto Rican society which required women to be physically perfect. The best answers stated briefly what that meant to the aunt.

In analysing how the author then presented a deeper social criticism, these were some of the points covered:

- the patriarchal system and set of beliefs including the way women are seen as objects or mere decoration without agency
- denunciation of male opportunism and exploitation of women, symbolised by the doctor and his son who profit from the suffering of women as well as from their beauty. The doctor did not offer a cure to the aunt as it was in his pecuniary interest to keep on treating her to pay for his son's education. The doctor's son married the youngest niece because of her beauty to increase his social status
- exposing violence committed against women via the image of the *chágara* living in the aunt's leg. This could be interpreted as the exploitation and invasion of the female body
- reclaiming female power through symbolism – the last doll, which comes alive and opens its eyes at the end of the story suggests resistance or vengeance. It could be interpreted as a woman reappropriating her body and destiny. She is not simply something to be displayed on the balcony and admired.

Most essays covered some points but few examined the role of the dolls in detail or recognised their importance. Some noted that the sale of the precious doll's eyes was another example of financial oppression by men.

Question 3

Carmen Laforet: *Nada*

Analiza por qué Jaime se preocupa por Ena en este extracto. En tu opinión ¿es Jaime el novio ideal para Ena? Justifica tu respuesta refiriéndote a la novela entera.

The candidate has two tasks here:

- 1 explain the reason for Jaime's concern
- 2 analyse the relationship between Ena and Jaime and show whether they are suited to one another or not and why.

The first impression on reading essays on this question was that a number of candidates needed to have studied Jaime's part in the text more fully. It was clear that some responses were based on a reading of the extract supplemented by supposition and extrapolation with little real knowledge of the text.

More successful answers showed understanding of the characters of Ena, Jaime and Andrea and their friendship. Some essays referred to Ena's mother's links with Román to explain Ena's interest in him.

When analysing whether Jaime was the ideal partner for Ena, these issues were pertinent:

- Jaime's self-deprecating understanding and attentiveness towards Ena, shown in the extract point to a positive estimation of him
- Jaime and Ena both belong to the same high social class which puts them in the same social circles with similar interests and experiences
- Jaime seems to be sincere in his feelings for Ena. He is prepared to accept the highs and lows of any relationship and tries to understand Ena's needs. Jaime asks Andrea to help
- He is a stable figure – slightly older than Ena. They could be said to represent a more secure future and family (similar to Ena's family) than the chaos experienced by Andrea in her family circumstances. There is a sense of rationality and moral equilibrium
- Andrea likes and respects him and is grateful for the way he has included her as a friend of Ena.

Those who were less positive towards Jaime felt that Ena could have been happier with a more assertive man or, conversely, one who gave her more space – but these ideas were not supported with evidence from the text.

Question 4

Gabriel García Márquez: *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba*

En esta novela, a veces suceden cosas muy extrañas. Analiza cómo el autor emplea esta realidad inesperada para ayudarnos a comprender los temas de la novela.

This was the less popular choice on this text and many candidates chose to narrate the plot of the novel rather than focussing directly on the question. This impacted the level of analysis shown in the response.

The more successful answers first defined the nature of the technique and why the author chose to use it and what it represented. It is possible to state that Márquez used descriptions of strange events to emphasise the abnormality of the way of life depicted in the novel, which seemed to be full of violence, corruption and abandonment.

Some of the most effective responses referred to the following:

- The colonel attended the funeral of a person whose death was the first from natural causes for some time. This underlines the institutionalised violence prevalent at the time. The whole episode was recounted in an almost surreal way with the colonel pushed up close to the deceased and the mayor forbidding the normal route of the funeral procession
- Márquez's narrative technique in describing the colonel's physical sensations is not based on medical facts, rather uses exaggeration and unexpected images of *hongos y lirios venenosos* to portray his discomfort, illness and poverty, with death lurking close. The use of hyperbole is notable in these examples
- Another episode which is worthy of analysis in the context of this question is the visit of the colonel to the lawyer's office. Again, the description is barely credible and unexpected. The chaos in the office is both strange and powerful as the lack of respect for clients, the unprofessional approach and the disregard for any attempt to take control point to a breakdown in processes and in the whole system of justice.

There are other such examples to refer to and analyse to show how the author presented the themes in a critical way by means of the colonel's behaviour in the text and the readers' reaction. Even a brief comment such as the colonel's reference to the rain when he was in Sabas' office showed the gulf of understanding and perception between the colonel and his supposed friend. This question gave candidates the opportunity to show the depth of their knowledge in selecting and analysing examples from the text which characterise the effect of Márquez's writing.

Question 5

Gabriel García Márquez: *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba*

Hubo un momento en que el coronel declaró que iba a vender el gallo a Sabas por novecientos pesos. Analiza por qué decidió hacerlo, por qué al final no lo hizo y por qué es importante este episodio para la novela entera.

The first part of the question gave rise to some thoughtful comments, going beyond the obvious examples of grinding poverty and attempted to convey the idea of growing pressure on the colonel from his wife, with the incident of the wedding rings causing him to question the state of his marriage. Other points included the sale being a quick solution to their financial problems; the intervention of the doctor, who revealed Sabas as a cheat; memories of Agustín and the colonel's sense of responsibility for the care of the cockerel.

The importance for the meaning of the novel could be exemplified in the colonel's realisation of the importance of the cockerel to the whole community. The trial fight showed its bravery and promise and gave all townspeople something to hope for and a way of being together in a joint enterprise for a better future. The colonel has a key dilemma – to choose between surviving physically and maintaining dignity. This could be said to represent the clash between idealism and reality. Should the colonel accept the pragmatic solution favoured by his wife or continue hoping for the dream, which keeps him alive? This episode prepares us for the end of the text. His decision not to sell the cockerel is parallel to the conclusion when the colonel utters the final word *Mierda* in response to his wife's question about what they will eat. He will carry on fighting.

The main challenge in terms of producing an effective essay was in managing the material effectively. Candidates knew what happened but needed to select examples in such a way as to support each part of the argument.

Questions 6 and 7

Carmen Conde: *Mientras los hombres mueren*

There were insufficient answers to comment on the overall quality of answers. This follows the pattern of previous PERTs.

Question 8

Laura Esquivel: *Como agua para chocolate*

Analiza el papel de Gertrudis en la novela, indicando lo que contribuye a los temas centrales. Justifica tu respuesta.

This was generally well answered. Gertrudis was seen by all as a key figure in the novel. She represents female liberation; Gertrudis defies the rules of the household put in place by Mamá Elena. Gertrudis literally ran away from the ranch, nude, after eating *codornices en pétalos de rosa* prepared by Tita, which sparked an overpowering emotional and sexual drive after a lifetime of repression. Ironically, Gertrudis was the child of Mamá Elena and her lover José Treviño – underlining Mamá Elena's hypocrisy. Gertrudis not only escaped but reinvented herself, driven by her own desires. Once she was sated sexually, she built a new career as a general in the revolutionary army, found a partner who loved her and had a child herself. All on her own terms.

Her new life showed leadership, strength and a break from the previous gender stereotypes. At the same time Gertrudis was a real friend to Tita, supporting her all the way through the relationship with Pedro. Gertrudis gave Tita a sense of worth and self-possession which was not given to her by anyone else in her family.

Question 9

Laura Esquivel: *Como agua para chocolate*

El realismo mágico es un truco estilístico para entretenir a los lectores de la novela. ¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo? Justifica tu respuesta.

Fewer candidates answered this question on the text and the majority of essays tended to list the examples of magic realism rather than analyse how they were used by the author. The technique was described as entertaining and impactful. Some responses addressed why the author chose to use it and what it conveyed in terms of communicating characters' emotions, which could not have been expressed with mere descriptions of feelings. Another interesting aspect of its use was the introduction of ghosts, particularly those of indigenous characters such as Nacha and John Brown's grandmother. This reflected magical thinking surrounding death and the dead, particularly prevalent in Mexico.

SPANISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 9844/33
Literature

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.