

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/21
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- **Question 1:** seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question. Candidates should take care not to omit words or 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 have not appeared in the texts.
- **Language:** when preparing for the exam, make sure to revise the basic agreements, tenses and verb endings.

General comments

All those candidates who, despite challenges and inconveniences resulting from the pandemic, were still able to sit this examination should be complimented on their achievements. Although preparations must have presented considerable difficulties, there was little evidence of this in the scripts received.

The two texts, contrasting school attendance in Spain and a Latin American country, proved to be a topic which candidates could engage with and discuss. With a few exceptions, responses were generally well presented, with the paper posing suitable levels of challenge which led to the full range of differentiation expected among candidates at this level.

Most candidates attempted all questions and there was little evidence of any difficulty with time management. A few were not entirely certain how they should answer **Question 1** and, as always, the language manipulations in **Question 2** were a challenging test.

In **Questions 3 and 4** a good many candidates showed that they had thought out their answers and so were able to manipulate the text and skillfully paraphrase to convey the comprehension points, without copying more than five words. The practice of introducing 'conscious' grammatical errors into original text as a means of avoiding five word lifts is not rewarded, as it does not demonstrate candidates' linguistic ability or knowledge in any way. Candidates should be reminded to look at the number of marks available for each question: if a question is worth three marks, then they should try to include three comprehension points in the answer.

Candidates were generally familiar with the word limit in **Question 5** and usually stuck to it. Performance in this question is continuing to improve. A number still seemed unfamiliar with the type of *resumen* being sought here: specific detail and not generalisation. A very small minority wrote a very lengthy **5b** first, followed by a much shorter answer to **5a**, seemingly unaware that the latter is worth double the marks of the former.

A considerable number of candidates taking the paper at AS level were of Hispanic descent and the quality of their written Spanish was structurally very sound, if not always accurate in spelling. Candidates of other nationalities, including those with more modest linguistic skills, produced work which thoroughly justified their entry for this level of examination.

Comments on specific questions

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

As stated in the Key Message above, candidates should seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question, and take care not to omit words or to include extra words – a feature which sometimes invalidated answers which were otherwise correct.

Candidates generally performed well in this part of the exam, although there were still a few who disregarded the rubric and explained the phrase in their own words or offered no response at all.

- (a) Most candidates identified the correct expression.
- (b) This was also handled well. Occasionally the initial *es necesario...* was omitted.
- (c) An unnecessary *que...* at the beginning or misunderstanding of *esporádicamente* were reasons why this mark was sometimes missed.
- (d) This target expression was successfully identified by nearly every candidate.
- (e) Marks were missed here either by the omission of *...con* or the addition of *...los padres*.

Question 2

As mentioned above, this was the more challenging of the two opening exercises.

In addition to performing the language manipulations required in this question, it is important to check that answers will fit back into the original text and retain the same meaning. A line number reference is given for candidates to check quickly that this would be the case.

- (a) Many alternative word orders were possible, all requiring *a* before *los adolescentes*. This was sometimes omitted, which meant that the mark was not awarded.
- (b) This grammatical manipulation was formed successfully by numerous candidates who remembered to include the idea of *en mayor riesgo* by including a quantifier such as *más* or *mayormente*.
- (c) This was the least well done of all the manipulations with only the strongest candidates being able to use the reflexive *se diferencian*, add a quantifier such as *mucho* or *bien* and then use the correct preposition *de*.
- (d) This was done well by the majority of candidates who recognised the need for a subjunctive verb form after *es necesario que*, although a number did not identify *intervenir* as part of the *venir* family and offered incorrect versions such as *intervena/intervina*.
- (e) To native speakers *no faltan* should have been a natural response but far too many candidates did not appear to realise that by putting *faltan suficientes medios* they were offering the exact opposite in meaning to what was required. Some marks were lost when another cue such as *falta* or *hace falta* was used.

Question 3

Most candidates made a good attempt at answering all five questions. Better answers were written in full sentences and often skillfully manipulated language from the text by use of synonyms, rephrasing and correct constructed verbs.

- (a) Most candidates scored two marks for noting that school was not interesting for candidates and that attending lacked purpose. There was often good paraphrasing for the former, e.g. *ven al colegio y sus intereses como dos cosas diferentes*, although *ajeno* was often a vocabulary issue which sometimes hampered scoring the second point. The amount of statistical detail required to establish the other point – that thirty per cent of Spanish candidates miss school at least one day a

week (whilst still avoiding copying five or more words of text) often proved an insurmountable barrier. Two common lifts were *tres de cada diez alumnos* or *un día o más a la semana*. The use of the verb *'atender'* for *'asistir'* was a common error.

- (b) It was pleasing to see the facility with which candidates were able to convert first person direct speech into third person reported speech. Most candidates noted that *las clases no son entretenidas/interesantes* and many noted that candidates were laughed at in school. With the latter point, although *se burlan de mí* was widely understood, attempts to find a synonym floundered when an unacceptable, more extreme term such as *el bullying* or *acoso* was used. The idea of teachers not paying attention to candidates who are struggling was somehow more elusive for candidates. Some indicated that teachers did not pay attention to those that were doing well. Those who wrote more generally about teachers not being good could not be credited.
- (c) This was a good differentiator. How does *Rebeca Cisternas* distinguish between the types of absentees? Many candidates thought it was too obvious (with 2 marks available) and tended to describe the reasons why candidates occasionally missed school: to play basketball or hang around for a candidate they fancy at another school. Only the more astute realised correctly that the question was seeking a distinction between occasional absence and habitual absence.
- (d) In many ways, this was a challenging question in terms of comprehension: *supone carecer de formación* followed by *lo que le va a marginar social y laboralmente* clearly foxed many. The boldest, while not fully understanding it, ploughed on with tortuous manipulations of the same words whilst with varying degrees of success. Few candidates scored full marks, with some missing out altogether that the candidate will see their training suffer when missing school. Most success was achieved in pointing out that retaking the year costs the State double. The final point was also well answered by saying that the cost of candidates repeating the year ran into millions, although a common lift here was *miles de millones de euros*.
- (e) Some good answers were given by candidates who correctly identified that parents should pay close attention to whether their children get to school, and many candidates also expressed the idea about schools needing to pay close attention to school attendance. Fewer candidates expressed the key idea of schools needing to immediately contact parents, and candidates in future should be reminded to give all the precise details required by the question.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

The second text contrasted strongly with the first passage, showing the value that less privileged candidates place upon school attendance. Comprehension was good and candidates who gave clear, detailed answers in their own words achieved their just rewards.

- (a) Most candidates scored well on this question, with two marks out of three being the most common outcome. The majority mentioned that school started at 6.30, (although not all succeeded in avoiding the lift *a las 6.30 de la mañana*), or that they started early their long journey to be on time. The next point was generally well answered by stating that they had to walk through water and mud, (a common lift was *chapupear por agua y lodo*). For the final point, most candidates mentioned that the the candidates also needed to negotiate tree branches on their journey and scored the mark if they made it clear that these were *caídas*. Other answers implying this, such as *derrumbadas* or *en el piso* were accepted. Stronger candidates often neatly combined these last two points: *tienen que pasar por agua y barro, intentando no pisar ramas caídas*.
- (b) The idea of the impassable road was expressed well by nearly all candidates, many of whom simply removed or replaced the word *prácticamente* in order to avoid lifting five words from the text. Similarly, a majority of candidates mentioned the fact that drivers were reluctant to drive their vehicles down that road. (A common lift was *no se atreven a ingresar con sus vehículos*). Fewer candidates identified that this reluctance was because of previous drivers on the road getting stuck in the mud, although those who were successful often showed a pleasing knowledge of acceptable synonyms for *atrapado*.
- (c) Most candidates answered this question well, identifying that *Tania's* walk to school was difficult because her footwear got stuck in the mud, often using good synonyms for the words *se quedan pegadas*. The majority also identified the deep holes on the road and the risk of snakes, though

some candidates were too vague, as references to dangerous animals rather than snakes in particular could not be credited. A few candidates thought incorrectly that *Tania* herself got stuck in the mud, or had snakes in her *chanclas*.

- (d) This question was challenging, although most candidates successfully noted *Efraín's* sense of abandonment. Not so clearly stated were the excuses of the council regarding the lack of money to repair the road, with many adding unnecessary information about the lack of electricity or running water in *El Toco*, possibly because the roles of *alcadesa*, *gobiernos municipal and departmental* and *gobernador* were not fully understood. The rank injustice of officials finding funds to refurbish the road near the governor's residence was successfully identified by better candidates.
- (e) Most candidates understood the contradiction that the government insisted on school attendance but did not help candidates get to school. More challenge was to be found in identifying that better off town-dwelling candidates sometimes have to repeat the year. Some misunderstood this and indicated merely that these candidates skipped classes, or simply contrasted their affluence with those from *El Toco*. There was also a quite common misuse of *faltar* for *suspender/fallar*. If the lift *aprenden y se van superando* was successfully avoided, the mark for pointing out that the candidates from *El Toco* learnt and overcame their difficulties was awarded.

Question 5

As stated earlier, more candidates now appear to be aware of the techniques required for this part of the examination and there were clear differences in marks between those who had practised the summary question, and those who were not used to the demands of the test. The majority paid careful attention to the overall number of words allowed for this question. More summaries gave specific details rather than generalisations, and the better personal responses contained opinions and original ideas.

- (a) Although improvement has generally been made in answering this part of the question, it is still necessary to remind candidates that an answer giving the essence of both passages in beautiful, accurate Spanish will be at risk of scoring only one or two of the ten marks available for content. Similarly, introductions, conclusions and superfluous starters such as *en el primer texto/en el segundo texto* are an unnecessary waste of words.

Here is an example of the sort of answer which, despite scoring well for quality of language (maximum 5 marks), scored next to nothing for content (maximum 10 marks):

Es importante subrayar que ambos textos tratan el mismo tema: la educación. Por una parte el primer texto describe un problema muy grave en España, que es el absentismo. El autor explica las razones según las que los estudiantes faltan las clases y además añade la opinión de la investigadora de educación Rebeca Cisternas.

Por otro lado, el segundo texto examina una realidad totalmente diferente...

These opening lines use up nearly half the words allowed for both (a) and (b) and have scored zero for content.

This style of summary giving the essence of what is in the texts will score very few marks for content. On the contrary, what will score content marks are details of the *razones por las cuales es difícil que algunos alumnos vayan a sus clases*. The following example is a good illustration, scoring six marks in a similar number of words:

Es difícil para algunos porque los profesores no ponen atención a los que lo necesitan ✓ y se burlan de ellos. ✓ Muchos ven la escuela como un sitio fuera de sus intereses ✓ y para ellos no vale la pena ir. ✓ Hay algunos que no van porque tienen que jugar un partido. ✓

Los niños de El Toco tienen que caminar doce kilómetros ✓...

Specific details – many of which have already cropped up in answers to comprehension questions – are required, and not generalisations.

- (b) Apart from a tiny minority who had already exhausted their word allocation by the time they reached this part of the question (and thereby scored zero), most candidates had something to say in response to the question. Many scored high marks, particularly those who brought a new idea to

the table, rather than relying on ideas rehashed from the source texts. There were many detailed and interesting opinions on absenteeism or support available in education, embracing those examples mentioned in the text but also going far beyond, depending on the situation in their own countries.

Quality of Language

The quality of candidates' written Spanish, here and throughout the paper, was generally up to the standard required by this examination. Marks were generally in the Sound to Good range. Unless they had been penalised for scoring zero in any of the comprehension questions, strong candidates who could correctly manipulate the source texts into good Spanish to display clear comprehension, were awarded maximum marks in all three quality of language assessments. Less able candidates often had major difficulties with verb formation, and use of the singular or plural verb forms in particular. Their mark often improved considerably in the final question when their writing was more free-style.

Amongst candidates from Hispanic families, although communication was generally very sound, spelling often left a little to be desired: *halla/haiga* for *haya*, *haser*, *va a ver* for *va a haber*, *lollo* for *los hoyos*, *evede* for *en vez de*, confusion between b/v, and lack of 's' in plurals e.g. *lo estudiantes*.

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/22
Reading and Writing

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

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/41
Texts

Key messages

The essential preparation to succeed in this Paper is thorough study of the texts and close reading of the examination paper to ensure that the material presented is focused directly on the questions chosen.

General comments

It is pleasing to note that candidates are increasingly well-prepared for the examination. The vast majority of scripts conform to the rubrics.

Candidates may benefit from defining the terms they are discussing in the introduction to their essay and be sure to refer back to this as they develop the argument to ensure that they maintain the focus of the discussion.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Emilia Pardo Bazán: *Los Pazos de Ulloa*

- (a) This question focused on Julián's discomfort on seeing how Pedro was physically abusing his wife, Nucha and the sense that he was being watched. This led on to **part (iii)** – deception. Julián was possibly guilty of self-deception in hoping that Nucha would be a civilising influence on Pedro. Primitivo wanted to preserve his position by protecting Pedro whilst deceiving him in the running of the estate and in his machinations to influence the elections and undermine Pedro's legacy, as seen in the way Pedro's daughter's position was usurped by Perucho, Primitivo's grandson at the end of the novel. This approach resulted in a more effective argument, looking at the whole political situation whilst still mentioning Pedro's relationship with Sabel as an example of his lack of self-control and deception of his wife, as well as the fact that his title was dubious.
- (b) This task focused on the tense relationship between city and country society. The best answers gave details of Pedro's visit to the city and his sense of discomfort as well as a comparison between the values shown in the behaviour of Julián and Nucha (as examples of city, educated, refined characters) and that of Pedro, Sabel and Primitivo (violent, selfish, uneducated country people). Also important was the disappointment experienced by Julián at the end of the novel – he found a lack of progress or modernisation at Ulloa and that the tension between the two ways of life was sadly expressed in the plight of Nucha's daughter in comparison with the well-dressed Perucho.

Question 2

Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda: *Sab*

- (a) Candidates dealt with (i) and (ii) well. In (iii), the tendency was to describe the main characteristics of Sab and Enrique, without analysing in depth their individual motivations. Sab was extremely unusual as a slave in being highly educated and his strong sense of morality determined the choices he made. This led even to saving the life of the man he despised most. Enrique was

motivated solely by selfish interests. The best answers examined how the actions of the two men reflected their values as the novel progressed.

- (b) It is always helpful to define terms in such a question – what is meant by ‘romantic’? It is not just a love story, but rather has elements of idealisation of the characters, sensibility, melodrama, and is somewhat removed from real life. What motivated the love expressed by Carlota for Enrique/Enrique for Carlota/Sab for Carlota/Teresa for Enrique? The romanticism present could be said to be a way of introducing underlying themes such as morality, justice and oppression of slaves and women.

Question 3

Gabriel García Márquez: *El amor en los tiempos del cólera*

- (a) This option was answered by fewer candidates than (b). Most responses dealt reasonably with (i) and (ii), but few answered **part (iii)** fully. The issue of ‘deterioro’ in the novel is a wider issue than the physical ageing of Florentino and Fermina. The extract offers a contrast between Florentino’s early voyages and the later one, which gave candidates an introduction to the destruction of the environment and the presence of bodies, which pointed to deterioration in the political situation. The most successful answers considered this.
- (b) This was a popular choice. All stated the importance of Florentino’s love letters to Fermina when they first began their relationship and then after the death of Juvenal, so they clearly acted as a plot-driver. There were other points to add, however, in showing how Florentino’s life revolved around written communication in his role in the post and telegraph office to writing love letters for other people. His personality evolved and shone through his writing, so it was an essential part of his being. Letters also served important functions in the note which had Fermina expelled from school and the letter left to be found after his death by Jeremiah De Saint-Amour.

Question 4

Anónimo: *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes*

- (a) Answers to questions (i) and (ii) were generally well rounded. Responses to (iii) tended to lack in detail in analysing the effect of first-person narrative. Most emphasised the immediacy and authenticity of the text. Essays scoring on higher bands pointed out that the autobiographical approach meant that there was no objective overview of events. In addition, Lazarillo’s account engendered empathy in readers as they were drawn into his life story and saw him develop from a vulnerable child to a comparatively prosperous adult.
- (b) Some candidates found challenges in defining ‘tragedia’. Many listed all the bad experiences suffered by Lazarillo over the course of his young life, particularly in connection with the circumstances which led him to work for a series of masters. These episodes were certainly sad. The best responses considered Lazarillo’s position at the end of the novel, showing how he had used those harsh lessons to create a comfortable life for himself, and analysed whether the degree of self-deception apparent could be seen as optimistic or tragic, in assessing whether Lazarillo had been morally corrupted by those around him. Did Lazarillo eventually behave in the same way as those he had satirised?

Section 2

Question 5

Carmen Martín Gaité: *Las ataduras*

- (a) This was the more popular choice on this text. Most were able to give a detailed examination of the relationships Alina enjoyed with both her father and grandfather. The lessons learned from her grandfather seemed to be the most memorable, in encouraging her to be courageous and to be herself. Her father’s attitude was seen as negative, with candidates suggesting that this was the essence of what was being criticised in the story. There was a hint of optimism at the end of the novel as the father said that he was becoming more like Santiago. Some candidates also analysed Alina’s attachment to Philippe, and considered to what extent he mirrored the attitude of her father or grandfather.

- (b) This question asked candidates to analyse the impact of references to Galicia. The author created a strong sense of place and belonging as Alina's childhood experiences seemed to be embedded in her memory. The importance of the landscape and the river are obvious examples. Alina continued to find solace in places which reminded her of her childhood home. There was a less positive side to the setting of the story as the closed, rural society was limiting for young people, as Eloy, as well as Alina, wished to escape.

Question 6

Federico García Lorca: *Yerma*

Virtually every candidate answered on this text.

- (a) This was the more popular question. All responses dealt with the central issue of Yerma's desire for a child and the reality of her not being able to have one. The more perceptive essays examined the factors leading to the strength of desire in Yerma and the changing reality of why she could not conceive becoming apparent to the protagonist and leading to the tragic ending. Some candidates showed insight in exploring the underlying theme of the need for individual fulfilment.
- (b) All candidates agreed that Juan's sisters played a minor role physically in the play, but represent an aspect of a main theme which runs throughout – that of control. In their case, Juan had resorted to using them as agents to exert control over Yerma and monitor her behaviour when he was absent from the house. They were important in increasing the sense of tension and feeling of oppression both inside and outside the house, emphasising how unreasonable this was for Yerma. The effect of their presence served to heighten Yerma's vulnerability and built to the climax of the play. A few candidates also looked at the situation from the sisters' perspective, suggesting that they were also victims of the patriarchal society with little choice in agreeing to Juan's demands.

Question 7

Gabriela Mistral: *Tala/Lagar*

- (a) (b) It is not the practice to make generalised comments on this text. Candidates are given considerable freedom to show their understanding of the poems and to demonstrate their skill in interpreting and commenting on the themes and poetic language and techniques.

Question 8

Isabel Allende: *La casa de los espíritus*

- (a) Candidates agreed that there were elements of peace and reconciliation in the novel. Some essays tended to mention this only in the introduction and conclusion, with few detailed supporting arguments in the body of the essay, or simply narrative. Those who challenged the statement supported this premise with reference to the high levels of violence and antagonism throughout. Clara's continuing reluctance to forgive Esteban was seen as an essential element in establishing this case. Responses which supported the themes of peace and reconciliation found examples throughout the novel, such as Pedro García's rescue of Esteban from Tres Marías, Esteban's rescue of Alba and aid in the escape of Blanca and Pedro to Canada. Either position led to good essays – provided Examiners found a judicious choice of references to the text to support a well-structured argument.
- (b) This question resulted in some interesting responses. The standard argument was that the multiple narrators added variety to the writing. A more analytic approach was to appraise the various personalities and styles of expression of the narrators; Clara mystical, Esteban egocentric, Alba compassionate. In addition, the change from third to first person narrator gave additional range of texture and gave a greater sense of authenticity. The use of multiple narrators also allowed the reader to know how the information was acquired, with particular reference to Clara's diaries.

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/42
Texts

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