

SPANISH LANGUAGE

<p>Paper 8685/01 Speaking</p>

Key messages

For candidates:

- Candidates' own interests should play a part in the choice of the subject for the presentation. Clear reference should be made to Hispanic culture or society.
- It is important to structure the presentation to fit into the allowed time, and to express not only facts, but ideas and opinions.
- Focus on the questions asked and be sure to answer what is asked.
- Remember to ask the Examiner questions in both conversation sections

For centres:

- The test consists of three distinct sections: **(i)** Initial presentation (maximum 3½ minutes); **(ii)** Topic Conversation (7 – 8 minutes) on issues arising from the Presentation; **(iii)** General Conversation (8 – 9 minutes) on themes completely different from those raised in the Topic Conversation.
- Each section should be clearly identified on the recordings. It is important that the prescribed timings are observed.
- Candidates should be reminded if necessary to ask the Examiner questions in both conversation sections and be prompted to do so, if necessary. The Examiner's replies to such questions should be concise – it is the candidate and not the Examiner who is being marked.
- Interaction with the Examiner is an important criterion for both conversation sections.

General comments

The performance of candidates covered a wide range, from the outstanding to the very basic. Some very good candidates were clearly native speakers, but occasionally the Teacher/examiner allowed the candidate to ride rough-shod over the required timings. On a few occasions the general conversation became an extension of the topic conversation.

The quality of the recordings was generally good, though some were adversely affected by room acoustics or nearby noise. Although the microphone should be placed near the candidate, please ensure that both voices can be heard.

The range of samples followed correct procedure, with a range from top to bottom. Some centres supplied recordings of all the candidates entered.

While most centres carried out the necessary administration efficiently, a few centres failed to observe the correct timings for the separate sections as required by the specification. It was not always clear when the topic conversation ended and the general conversation started; it is important that Teachers/examiners clearly announce the start of each section.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Part 1: Topic Presentation

Guidance on topic areas for the Presentation and discussion may be found in the syllabus. Topics must relate clearly to aspects of Hispanic life or culture and it is important that candidates make this relevance explicit in their Presentation. Centres are reminded that the content mark out of ten must be halved where there was no specific reference to a Spanish-speaking country or context.

Presentations should be a formal and coherent introduction to the subject: pronunciation and clarity of delivery are assessed. It is important to show evidence of preparation, organisation and relevant factual knowledge. Candidates who spoke in a casual or disjointed manner, or who made little attempt to engage the Examiner lost credit. Sometimes it was not clear what the actual topic for the presentation was and candidates should be encouraged to state this clearly at the outset.

The best presentations showed evidence of careful preparation and organisation. These not only offered statistics and other factual information, but also included a candidate's own reactions and analysis; weaker presentations were characterised by being limited to a random list of items, with no discernible central theme or argument.

Part 2: Topic Conversation

Most candidates understood questions and responded well in the topic conversation. Many were able to give thoughtful and extended responses and maintain a discussion, though weaker candidates relied Teachers/examiners to take the lead. A few candidates were permitted to treat this section as a continuation of the Presentation, with little intervention by the Examiner, which limited their mark for comprehension/fluency.

Most candidates had a sufficient range of vocabulary and structures at their disposal, which were used accurately and idiomatically. Most candidates remembered to ask questions of the Examiners either in the natural course of conversation or, in some cases, after prompting, although a few asked only one question.

Part 3: General Conversation

As reported previously, there were tests where no clear distinction was made between the two conversation sections. The General Conversation must be treated as a separate section from the Topic Conversation and must not be a continuation of the candidate's chosen topic. Teachers/examiners should not return to the same issues as in the Topic Conversation. The start of the section should be clearly announced on the recording. Although there are no prescribed areas for the General Conversation, topics should be at an appropriate level, both with regard to content and to linguistic complexity. Common areas included the pandemic, current events, health, education, the arts, sport, the environment, the economy, future plans. In some centres, the conversation did not develop to the required depth for this examination,

The range and style of questioning should encourage candidates to show competence in structures and vocabulary at a suitably advanced level. As in the Topic Conversation, candidates should ask the Examiner questions to gain credit for 'seeking information and opinions'. Such questions should arise naturally in the course of the conversation; it is not sufficient for the teacher to state an opinion without actually being asked.

Pronunciation and intonation

Pronunciation was generally good and there were some examples of very good pronunciation and authentic intonation, though both could suffer if candidates recited on auto-pilot. This mainly affected the Presentation.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/21
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

The examination provided an appropriate level of challenge and discriminated well, with a wide range of marks awarded to candidates from across the ability range. The standard of entry was often good or very good, especially among the 9719 candidates. Linguistic competence was generally excellent and, provided that there were no penalties for lack of comprehension, top marks for quality of language were very often awarded.

Most candidates appeared to have been well coached in the techniques required. Better candidates produced skillful paraphrasing in their answers to comprehension questions, although lifting, (the direct copying of five or more words from the text), occasionally invalidated a mark for comprehension. A minority of candidates still exceeded the permitted number of words in **Question 5**, which meant that part, or sometimes all, of their personal response could not be assessed.

The presentation of the papers was generally good, although there were still some candidates whose handwriting made their answers difficult to read. Where certain details could not be deciphered, a mark could not be given. Very few candidates seemed troubled by the time constraints of the examination. Comprehension of the two texts, dealing with illegal street selling in Madrid and begging in a Colombian city, was usually clearly demonstrated.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

This opening exercise was answered well – especially by 9719 candidates – with errors mostly comprising superfluous words at the beginning or ending of the answer.

- (a) The majority of candidates identified this phrase, although some missed the mark by prefacing the correct answer with any number of words from *podrían incurrir en una sanción que...*
- (b) There were very few incorrect answers.

- (c) Quite a lengthy answer was required, and some candidates omitted elements of *cuándo le toca hacer...*
- (d) This was identified correctly by most, although some incorrectly prefaced the phrase with *que...* A tiny minority incorrectly opted for *debe abordarse el problema*.
- (e) Again mostly correct. A few lost the mark by adding *...a estas personas*.

Question 2

This is traditionally a more challenging exercise, although this year's candidates generally handled it well.

- (a) Most candidates came up with the correct answer *al ver a la policía*. Sometimes the mark was missed when the police became a single, individual policeman, as in *cuando ven al policía*.
- (b) Full advantage was taken of the many permutations which were possible to construct this answer. These included *mi salud está sufriendo/está sufriendo mi salud/estoy sufriendo (problemas) de/con por mi salud* and several others.
- (c) This was answered well by most candidates. Again a variety of possible permutations of *cómo esto/eso puede estar/ser permitido* were acceptable.
- (d) There were many good answers. Nearly every candidate recognised the need for a subjunctive, and the orthographical change that was often required. Either an active verb (*se persigan*) or a passive construction *sean perseguidos* was acceptable.
- (e) This manipulation caused a little more difficulty, although most came up with a correct answer *euros no ganados* or *que (ya) no se ganan*. A not uncommon incorrect answer was *euros que no se dejan de ganar*.

Question 3

Most candidates showed good comprehension of the text about the activities of illegal street vendors in Madrid.

- (a) Candidates scored well on this opening comprehension question. Very few failed to pick up marks for stating that the *manteros* feared the police because they did not want to be fined or imprisoned. The third point – that the activity that they were engaged upon was illegal – was sometimes overlooked.
- (b) Most candidates directed their attention to the fact that *manteros* were selling false replicas of the genuine items which *Manolo* was selling and at a considerably lower price. All the details were necessary to score this mark. The other marks were scored by adding that customers no longer entered his shop and that the banks would no longer offer him any credit. The adverse effect that this was having on his health was not relevant to the question.
- (c) Maximum marks were commonly scored here. All that was necessary was to state that the routine of the *manteros* consisted of positioning themselves outside the shop, disappearing when the police did their rounds, only to reappear afterwards. In other words, that their presence was intermittent but continuous.
- (d) The challenge here was to include all the relevant details which answered the question – and to avoid lifting five or more words directly from the text. What *Flora Salazar* was seeking was a more rigorous enforcement of the law, and to go to the source of the problem by rooting out those who supplied falsifications to the vendors. The fact that the former were also likely to be involved in other criminal activities such as people trafficking was not relevant.
- (e) The severe economic impact and consequences that illegal street selling was having on the labour market were commonly noted. (A common lift was *unos 150 millones de euros*). Fewer marks were scored for adding that a desirable outcome would be give training to the *manteros* to enable to take up jobs which were needed.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

A comparable level of comprehension was shown of this second text, dealing with the problem of begging in Colombian city.

- (a) Very few candidates failed to score both marks for noting that a person begging during the thirty seconds that it took for the traffic lights to change could make the equivalent of the minimum wage earned by a full-time employee.
- (b) This proved to be more of a challenge. Most candidates were quick to point out that an important reason for not giving money to beggars was that it was likely to be used to purchase drugs. More details were required for the other two marks. It was necessary to state that food was freely available for the needy through official outlets, (*los programas de la alcaldía* was a common lift), and also that, if given money, beggars would be disinclined to attend rehabilitation centres and seek professional help,
- (c) Those who sought out four distinct points in answer to this four point question scored well. Candidates who opted for brevity often lost out. It was very commonly noted that beggars had a negative impact on tourism. Fewer pointed out how this highlighted the inequality which existed in the city. It was also necessary to state somewhere that these beggars were active in public places, and to add that on occasions they might react unpleasantly or violently if denied.
- (d) Most candidates scored well on this question about the use of babies in begging. Nearly all mentioned that the infants were sometimes drugged to placate them whilst being used to encourage sympathy. The other points – that these infants were sometimes hired and from families in difficult economic circumstances – were commonly added.
- (e) It proved to be more of a challenge to tease out the three points about action taken by the police. Firstly the *Comandante* stresses that they are permanently checking on the use of children in begging, and then that they are stepping up efforts to counteract such exploitation. The fact that any adult found guilty of involvement in such activities would be imprisoned was commonly noted. Marks were sometimes lost for a direct lift of *el delito de tráfico de menores*.

Question 5

There were signs of better preparation in the techniques required to answer this question, although a number of candidates are still not getting all the marks they are capable of. Occasional answers exceeded the word limit.

- (a) To achieve a good mark it is essential to note, in the limited number of words available, details from the texts which answer the question which has been asked. In this exercise, candidates are not penalised for copying directly from the texts. There are very few words to play with in **Question 5** and candidates should aim at not many 100 words for this part of the question. Occasionally, candidates introduced personal opinions in their answers, which are not credited here.

Those who paid attention to the question asked and picked out specific details about the activities of *manteros* and *mendigos* and their consequences – many of which had already formed part of answers to comprehension questions – scored well. For example:

Los manteros realizan la venta ilegal en las calles ✓ de productos falsificados ✓ a menor precio que los originales. ✓ Hacen que los comerciantes legales terminen en la ruina. ✓ Además baja por 150 millones de euros las ganancias anuales ✓ y por 1500 los nuevos puestos laborales. ✓ (6 marks scored in fewer than 50 words).

By way of comparison, the first two sentences of this second summary lack relevant detail and use up some 60 words without scoring:

Como bien sabemos y leímos en ambos textos el desempleo y la desigualdad es una realidad en todos los lugares del mundo y cada uno busca su forma de ganar su pan de cada día. Por más que la forma sea ilegal hay personas que no ven alternativa, como es el caso de la gente de que se habla en ambos textos.

- (b) Most candidates were aware that what is required here is one or two details which answer the question and which are, whenever possible, different from anything contained in the texts, and a clear personal opinion. Additionally, this is an opportunity to display familiarity with more complex linguistic structures.

The issues of illegal street selling and begging appeared to be ones that candidates were familiar with in their own countries. Many answers focused on the reasons for the inequality in their societies which gave rise to these activities, with education, ethnicity or corruption being root causes. Better responses introduced original ideas which had not been mentioned in the texts, such as gender or disability inequality.

Quality of Language

Unless they had been penalised for scoring zero in any of the comprehension questions (a fairly rare occurrence), 9719 candidates were awarded maximum marks in all three quality of language assessments. In 8685, marked ranged mostly from Below Average to Good.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/22
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- **Question 1:** seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question. Candidates should take care not to omit words or to include extra words.
- **Question 2:** rewrite the phrases to include the word(s) in brackets. A grammatical manipulation will be required, and care should be taken to ensure that the answer would fit back into the original text, retaining the same meaning.
- **Questions 3 and 4:** comprehension of texts. Candidates should attempt to answer in their own words. Direct copying of five or more words from the text will usually invalidate an answer.
- **Question 5(a):** summary of relevant details from both texts in answer to the question set. Introduction, conclusions and vague generalisations are not required. Specific, relevant details attract marks.
- **Question 5(b):** personal response. Candidates should give a point of view and, if possible, offer ideas which 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

The paper provided an appropriate challenge to candidates across the ability range and the wide spread of marks awarded reflected the varying levels of ability of candidates. Comprehension of the two texts, dealing with the treatment of animals was generally good. Scripts were legible and clearly presented, and the vast majority submitted work which was well up to the required standard. There was an understandable difference in performance between the 9719 candidates, many of whom were native speakers, and those taking 8685, who were invariably candidates of Spanish as a foreign language.

Candidates appeared to have been well coached in the techniques required, and it was pleasing to note awareness of more complex linguistic structures, with subjunctive constructions featuring prominently.

Lifting, (the direct copying of five or more words from the text), sometimes invalidated a mark for comprehension. A small number of candidates exceeded the permitted number of words in **Question 5**, which meant that part, or sometimes all, of their personal response could not be assessed.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

This opening exercise was answered well – especially by 9719 candidates – with a number scoring maximum marks. AS candidates had more difficulty.

- (a) The majority of candidates identified this phrase. Some omitted *los* at the beginning, which invalidated the answer.
- (b) Some candidates were unable to find this phrase and answered with *estuviera a favor*, which was not a match. Those who found the correct phrase sometimes missed out the verb *tiene*.
- (c) This was completed well by most candidates. Some omitted *aún* at the beginning.

- (d) A number of candidates had difficulty finding this in the text and answered incorrectly with the phrase *han recibido muchos elogios*. Other candidates missed out *en cuanto al destino* in their answers. Others added *de los animales*.
- (e) Most candidates identified this phrase. A few missed out the preposition *en* at the beginning.

Question 2

This was a more challenging exercise – especially for 8685 candidates.

- (a) Strong candidates offered a variety of possible successful transformations. The most common incorrect answers included the use of the past tense (*tuvo*), or omission of *reinventarse*, (*el circo ha conseguido tener éxito; su circo ha sido un éxito*), which, although grammatically correct, did not fully express the meaning of the original phrase.
- (b) This manipulation proved challenging for candidates. Some answers were correct grammatically but did not fit back in the text: *es poco usual adaptarse; no es usual adaptarse*. The most able candidates identified the need for the present subjunctive in the third person singular to agree with *la gente*.

It is worth reminding candidates that including words that do not appear in the original sentence might invalidate their answer, for example, *no es usual que la gente se adapte*. Were this phrase to be inserted back in the text, it would immediately be followed by *la gente*, and thus *la gente* would have appeared twice in the same sentence.

- (c) This was answered well by most candidates, although some omitted *por el espectador*. A future tense was needed.
- (d) There were many good answers. Pitfalls included using *solo* at the beginning of the sentence: (*solo*) *quedaron 80 animales más*, giving the opposite meaning of the original phrase, or using the present tense (*quedan*).
- (e) This manipulation caused considerable difficulty. More able candidates successfully used an imperfect subjunctive and placed *el destino* after the verb, so that the resulting transformation could fit back into the text: *para que se controlara/se controlase/se pudiese/-era controlar el destino (de los animales)*.

Question 3

Most candidates showed good comprehension of the text about the consequences of banning animal acts in Mexican circuses

- (a) Nearly every candidate scored a mark for the idea of the law banning the use of animals in the circus – provided that they did not directly copy *el uso de animales en circos*. Some precise details were required for the other two marks. It was necessary to say that Montoya's circus lost 70 per cent from their box office rather than a lot of money, and that the technological images to be used would be of animals.
- (b) Most candidates referred to circus goers not accepting the ban of animals in circuses. Not so many were able to add that the consequence of this was that they stopped going to the circus. Only the more able candidates scored full marks by successfully adding Montoya's explanation of the apparent contradiction between the public being in favour of the ban yet being unwilling to adapt to the change.
- (c) This proved to be a comparatively accessible question, and 2 or 3 marks were commonly awarded. Most candidates referred to holograms being used and that these holograms would be of the same size as real animals. Quite a few also mentioned that people would experience the animals as if they were there in front of them..
- (d) This was another accessible question for the majority of candidates who mentioned that the animals were sent to a small piece of land, with the idea of creating a zoo. Some did not score full marks if they did not mention that after a year only 80 animals were left.

- (e) Marks were commonly awarded to candidates who stated that the animals were kept in cages and that their health was getting steadily worse. Only the most able candidates were able to outline the idea of animal rights groups complaining about the lack of provision for where the circus animals would end up.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

A comparable level of comprehension was shown of this second text, dealing with the work of an animal sanctuary.

- (a) The question proved to be fairly accessible and most candidates scored well. It was commonly identified that some of the animals to be found in sanctuaries have participated in animal testing or shows and, that once they are here, live freely like all the others. Not so many were able to state that the majority came from cattle rearing or farming, possibly because of difficulty with the noun *ganadería*.
- (b) This proved to be more of a challenge. Most candidates attempted to refer to Mónica trying to show how animals have suffered and how important it is to keep fighting to free other animals. Only the most able candidates indicated that she wants to show how animals in sanctuaries live freely now, or that they can trust human beings again.
- (c) Not many maximum marks were awarded for this question. Most scored at least one mark for expressing the idea that people working in animal sanctuaries come from a variety of careers. A number of candidates appeared to find difficulty in putting across the idea of these people having had in common some involvement in the fight for animal rights or liberation. The third mark for the idea of being prepared to do a variety of jobs at the sanctuary to look after the animals was commonly missed.
- (d) Of the five questions on this text, this proved to be the most accessible of all. There appeared to be little difficulty in stating that the expenses incurred by animal revolved around feeding the animals, upkeep of facilities and veterinary costs. Although lifting of phrases such as *la alimentación diaria de los animales* or *la manutención de las instalaciones* could easily be avoided, a few unwary candidates lost easy marks.
- (e) The majority of candidates were able to state that animal sanctuaries depended upon individual donations and events, such as concerts, that they organised as sources of funding. Sponsorship of animals proved a little more difficult to identify, possibly because of lack of recognition of *apadrinamiento*.

Question 5

There were signs of better preparation in the techniques required to answer this question, although a number of candidates are still not getting all the marks they are capable of. Occasional answers exceeded the word limit.

- (a) To achieve a good mark it is essential to note, in the limited number of words available, details from the texts which answer the question which has been asked. In this exercise, candidates are not penalised for copying directly from the texts. It should be remembered, however, that any copied material will not be considered in the Quality of Language mark. There are very few words to play with in **Question 5** and candidates should aim at not many more than 100 words for this part of the question. Occasionally, candidates introduced personal opinions on animal welfare in their answers, which are not credited here.

Those who paid attention to the question asked and picked out specific details of how animals' lives have changed and difficulties encountered by their owners – many of which had already formed part of answers to comprehension questions – scored well. For example:

*La prohibición de animales en los circos ✓ resultó en grandes pérdidas económicas. ✓
Reemplazarlos con hologramas resultó en mayores gastos. ✓ Los animales fueron mandados a un
hábitat reducido ✓ para vivir en jaulas ... ✓ (5 marks scored in fewer than 40 words).*

By way of comparison, the first two sentences of this second summary lack relevant detail and use up 40 words before scoring:

Acorde con el primer texto, hubo una prohibición en México sobre los circos que llevó a cabo un grave problema que les sirvió de oportunidad para descubrir nuevas cosas. La gente volvió a los circos gracias a la tecnología usada. Los animales jubilados ✓ fueron transportados...

- (b) Most candidates were aware that what is required here is one or two details which answer the question and which are, whenever possible, different from anything contained in the texts, and a clear personal opinion. Additionally, this is an opportunity to display familiarity with more complex linguistic structures.

Apart from the issues of strays in the streets (and bull fighting in Spain), animals appeared to be treated well in candidates' countries. Those who managed to avoid text-based material stressed how common it was to grow up with pets about the house, and that their governments had legislation in place to support animal welfare.

Quality of Language

Unless they had been penalised for scoring zero in any of the comprehension questions (a fairly rare occurrence), 9719 candidates were awarded maximum marks in all three quality of language assessments.

In 8685, the quality of most non-native speaking candidates' Spanish throughout the paper was generally up to the standard required. Marks awarded ranged from Below Average to Good, with most marks falling in the Sound range.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/23
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.
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- **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

The paper provided an appropriate challenge to candidates across the ability range and the wide spread of marks awarded reflected the varying levels of ability of candidates. Comprehension of the two texts, dealing with the effects of plastic pollution was generally good. Scripts were legible and clearly presented, and the vast majority submitted work which was well up to the required standard. Candidates appeared to have been well coached in the techniques required, and it was pleasing to note awareness of more complex linguistic structures, with subjunctive constructions featuring prominently. The presentation of the papers was good, most answers were easy to read, and very few candidates seemed troubled by time constraints.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

This opening exercise was answered well – especially by 9719 candidates – with many scoring maximum marks. AS candidates had more difficulty.

- (a) Errors in identifying the target phrases were extremely rare.
- (b) Similarly, nearly every candidate was successful in identifying this phrase.
- (c) This was more testing, although most candidates were able to link *se quema* with *incinerados*.
- (d) A number of candidates were led astray by *se utilizaron dos elementos* in the same paragraph, and overlooked that *cortadas en dos* was the real match for *partidas por la mitad*.
- (e) Most candidates answered correctly.

Question 2

This was a more challenging exercise, with only a minority of candidates able to return scores of three or higher.

- (a) A number of candidates successfully incorporated the noun *acumulaciones* in their answer whilst overlooking that *acumulaba* was an imperfect verb. Answers required *había* not *hay*.
- (b) Difficulty was often found in identifying an appropriate verb to accompany *esfuerzo*. The most suited was *hicieron*, giving *hicieron un esfuerzo para reutilizar sus propios residuos*.
- (c) Frustratingly, many candidates who seemed aware of the expression *tener ganas* spoiled their answers, either by using a tense other than the imperfect *tenía*, or by omitting *de* before the infinitive which followed.
- (d) There was good awareness that a subjunctive was needed after *para que*; in this case, either the present or the imperfect, active or passive would fit. Common errors amongst those attempting to answer in the active form included the omission of *se*, or overlooking the orthographical change to *se prolongue* required in the present subjunctive.
- (e) This manipulation caused considerable difficulty. Very few candidates came up with the correct answers, although a few permutations were possible: *el lugar es de tal rareza/el lugar tiene tanta rareza/la rareza del lugar es tan grande/alta/hay tanta rareza en el lugar*.

Question 3

Most candidates showed good comprehension of the text about an ingenious way of recycling some forms of plastic waste.

- (a) Most candidates got off to a good start with many scoring both marks. Nearly all mentioned the piles of rubbish accumulating on the beach, although a few missed details about the type of animals and how they were suffering as a consequence.
- (b) Good scores were commonly recorded here. To answer the question fully a lot of relevant facts were required, and omission of one or more of these, rather than lack of comprehension, appeared to be the reason why not so many maximum marks were awarded. The detail that *Grenier* worked with a team of volunteers, and that they cleaned up both the beaches and the town were occasionally missed from answers.
- (c) This question discriminated well with only better candidates managing to score two or three marks. The vast majority scored a mark for stating that *Grenier* built a house from all those plastic bottles which had been collected. (Although those who said that he built *una estructura* were not rewarded). More able candidates were able to add to their mark by noting that if plastic bottles were sent to the tip they would be burnt, and this would unleash a considerable amount of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.
- (d) Candidates who gave full details of the materials used to construct the house were duly rewarded here. The detail that the walls were made from bottles filled with sand was not always clearly stated. Nearly every candidate was able to show understanding that the windows were made from CD cases. Details such as the fact that cardboard packaging had been flattened to form a base for the roof and that bottles had been cut in half to form tiles were often overlooked.
- (e) At least one mark was commonly scored for stating that the construction costs had been practically nil. (Many candidates quite legitimately used the phrase from the cue to 1e in their answers – *ha equivalido a casi cero*). More difficulty was found in stating that furniture had also been made from plastic bottles and other recycled materials, and that the house had been declared to be of national interest.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

The second text, dealing with plastic pollution in the seas, proved to be more challenging for a number of candidates.

- (a) The opening question was relatively accessible, and most candidates managed to score at least some of the four marks on offer. Many were able to state that contamination from plastic is a serious problem, and that eight million tons of it are dumped in the sea every year. (Several were unable to avoid copying five or more words from *8 millones de toneladas de plástico* when making the second point). The fact that large islands of plastic are subsequently formed was commonly noted. The detail that the largest of these islands exceeded the size of three major European countries combined was also clearly grasped.
- (b) To score either of the two marks for this question a certain amount of precision was needed. Firstly, it was necessary to convey all the details that Spaniards consume ten per cent of all single use plastic in Europe. (Better candidates came up with ways to avoid the lift *plásticos de un solo uso*). Similarly, all the details that Spain is the second country in Europe which dumps most plastic in the Mediterranean were needed.
- (c) This was another two mark question which required precise details to be given. Although many clearly understood that the amount of plastic dumped in the Mediterranean was the equivalent to 66,000 lorry loads, this needed to be qualified by 'every year'. Candidates picked up the second mark when they stated that the 'concentration' (not the 'extent') of plastic in the Mediterranean was four times greater than that of the Pacific.
- (d) This was another four mark question and a range of scores were recorded. The phrase *amenaza con la extinción* was misinterpreted by some candidates, who incorrectly stated that 134 species were now extinct. Although some candidates found difficulty in expressing that plastic gets into the food chain, they showed good comprehension of the results of this. Most noted that we consume 250 grams of plastic every year, and several were able to add that this is the equivalent in weight to eating a credit card every week.
- (e) Those candidates who were able to make a distinction between international and national measures and objectives fared well here. The international measure was to ban plastic being dumped into the sea. This was to be complemented by national objectives to achieve higher levels of recycling and eliminate the use of single use plastics.

Question 5

Most candidates appeared to have been well prepared in the techniques needed to answer this question. Occasional answers slightly exceeded the word limit, but more by oversight than ignorance.

- (a) To achieve a good mark it is essential to note, in the limited number of words available, details from the texts which answer the question which has been asked. In this exercise, candidates are not penalised for copying directly from the texts. It should be remembered, however, that any copied material will not be considered in the Quality of Language mark.

The question asked for *un resumen de lo que se dice ... sobre la contaminación por plástico y cómo se podría combatir*. Better candidates realised that more information to answer this was to be found in the second of the two texts and based their summaries accordingly. Those who tried to divide their attention equally between the texts often wasted words by including details that were not relevant to the question which had been asked.

Occasionally, candidates introduced personal opinions of what should be done with plastic waste. This is not credited in this part of the question.

- (b) Most candidates were aware that what is required here is one or two details which answer the question and which are, whenever possible, different from anything contained in the texts, and a clear personal opinion. Additionally, this is an opportunity to display familiarity with more complex linguistic structures.

Opinions were divided as to how successful candidates' countries were in dealing with plastic waste. Positives included efforts by supermarkets to reduce plastic, especially the banning of plastic bags, and also the work which was being done to keep the beaches tidy. However, not every country could boast of such achievements. Overwhelmingly, the conclusion was that more needed to be done.

Quality of Language

It was evident that nearly every candidate had been learning Spanish as a second (or perhaps third) language, and it was rewarding to see the level that had been achieved. Although there was often first language interference in sentence structure, the essentials – such as verb endings, agreements and appropriate vocabulary – seemed to be well known. Able candidates were able to demonstrate their knowledge of more complex structures. Quality of Language marks awarded were predominantly in the Good or Sound ranges.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/31
Essay

Key messages

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- Use Spanish which is accurate and of a suitably advanced nature, as well as demonstrate a good use of idiom and appropriate topic-related vocabulary.
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General comments

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Also in this session, there was a common tendency to omit accents from many words where they are required. Unsurprisingly, the lack of accents often affected both accuracy and clarity. In sentences such as *'...mi madre llevo a este país hace muchos años...'* (sic) and *'...los periodistas querían que el gobierno tomará acción...'* (sic) the misuse of accents causes confusion for the reader and alters the meaning of individual words, regardless of the context. It is also worth pointing out that quite a few candidates still manage to deceive themselves that letters can be dropped in certain words without it causing any bother with examples such as *'...en general la juventud a adaptado bien a las nuevas tecnologías...'* (sic) and *'...muchos avances médicos an salvado mucha vidas...'* (sic).

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- The lack of awareness of some very basic punctuation with, for example, full stops being left out at the end of paragraphs and sentences often beginning with no capital letter.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *La juventud*

Una vez cumplidos los 18 años, los jóvenes deberían ser más independientes y no vivir con sus padres. ¿Qué opina usted?

This was a very popular title indeed. There was, unsurprisingly perhaps, a wide variety of different approaches to the title set and a good range of different conclusions were reached. It would be fair to say, however, that most candidates who attempted this title felt that leaving home at the age of eighteen was both economically and psychologically challenging. Many argued quite passionately that once this age has been reached, every young adult should be aiming to be as independent as possible and not see themselves being obliged to rely too heavily on their parents.

Question 2 *Los medios de comunicación*

Tanto la prensa tradicional como las redes sociales son necesarias para mantener una sociedad libre. ¿Hasta qué punto está usted de acuerdo?

This was a reasonably popular title. Many responses dealt well with the differences between traditional media and social media. Many felt that both are indeed vital in a society that aims to be free. Some essays concentrated a little too much on the impact of social media and then neglected to mention the role of

traditional media in modern society. A great deal of emphasis was also placed on freedom of expression and the crucial role it plays in a society that wishes to remain open and free.

Question 3 *La igualdad de oportunidades*

¿Deberían las parejas no casadas que viven juntas tener los mismos derechos que las parejas casadas?

This was a less popular title amongst candidates. Those who responded, however, were more inclined to believe that there should be no discrimination between married couples and unmarried couples living together. Some were keen to emphasise the importance of marriage in society and how it can offer stability but most tended to accept that the strength of any given relationship does not necessarily depend on a marriage certificate. Many also pointed out that couples nowadays are more inclined to live together prior to making any marital commitment, hence the belief that all couples should have access to the same set of rights.

Question 4 *El tiempo libre*

Hace falta relajarse menos y trabajar más. ¿Hasta qué punto está usted de acuerdo?

This was quite a popular title. Most agreed that the importance of free time is vital both to physical and mental health but went on to add that work is just as important, if not more so. Many felt that people today work far longer hours than in previous generations and are therefore having to cope with higher levels of stress-related illnesses. This, according to many of the essays, may not be sustainable for much longer primarily on health grounds. Some essays argued passionately that it is the right of each individual in society to work as much or as little as they please.

Question 5 *Los avances científicos y médicos*

La modificación genética trae mejoras para la humanidad, pero está rodeada de conflictos éticos. ¿Qué piensa usted?

This was a less popular title. For those who opted to respond, there was little doubt that genetic modification does indeed have many benefits in terms of medical progress and the agricultural production of food but almost all were in agreement that the ethical issues cannot be overlooked. Some essays argued that animal welfare must be a crucial element in research laboratories working on genetic manipulation. Concern was also expressed about the potential for abuse amongst scientists anxious to meet targets for development imposed upon them.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/32
Essay

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Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *La juventud*

¿Por qué es tan estresante la vida para los jóvenes hoy en día?

This was a very popular title, perhaps unsurprisingly. The overwhelming majority of candidates who responded to this title were clearly convinced that life today for young people is indeed very stressful. The pressure put on candidates to succeed academically both by schools and by parents tended to be the main cause for such high stress levels. Many also pointed to the negative impact of social media on young people both socially and psychologically. A few responses argued that life for young people has always been stressful and that this could be considered a normal part of growing up.

Question 2 *Los medios de comunicación*

Hoy en día, nadie confía en los medios de comunicación. ¿Qué opina usted?

This was a reasonably popular title. The general feeling appeared to be that there is most definitely a lack of trust in the media given that the reliability of media companies is often called into question by social commentators. The notion of 'fake news' was discussed by many candidates who then went on to call out the political manipulation of newspapers, television news channels and the like that is very much part of many modern societies. Some argued that traditional journalism (namely in newspapers and magazines) could be seen as slightly more reliable and trustworthy but that this could not be taken for granted.

Question 3 *La igualdad de oportunidades*

¿Cuál debería ser la edad mínima para votar?

This was a less popular title. Those who wrote in response to the question argued that most democratic societies offer the vote at the age of 18 and that this seemed to be the most sensible suggestion. Some argued, however, that lowering the voting age to 16 might result in more young people taking an interest in politics. Hardly any essays suggested that the voting age should be raised any higher than 18. Some essays even discussed the notion that voting in elections should be obligatory for every citizen once they reach the agreed age.

Question 4 *El tiempo libre*

¿Cuál es la mejor manera de ocupar el tiempo libre y por qué?

This was also a popular title. Many different suggestions were on offer with regard to how best to spend the spare time that one has but the overwhelming majority of essays concluded that activities that get people out of the house and that involve some degree of physical exertion are the best option both for the physical and mental health of all members of society. There were also many essays that argued very strongly that each individual should be able to choose how to spend their spare time in the best way they see fit given that the stresses of modern-day living are never far away.

Question 5 *Los avances científicos y médicos*

¿Son los avances científicos y/o médicos siempre beneficiosos?

This was a less popular title. Most essays argued that, in general terms, such advances are indeed of great benefit to society but that some scientific advances, in particular in terms of arms production, have done very little to help mankind to progress. The treatment of disease was often quoted as the main area where medical advances have had an extremely positive impact on the health of all nations on the planet. It came, therefore, as no surprise that many references were also made by candidates to the way in which huge numbers of people benefitted from the development of the Covid-19 vaccine.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/33
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Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *La juventud*

Las influencias más importantes sobre los jóvenes hoy en día tienden a ser negativas. ¿Hasta qué punto está usted de acuerdo?

This was a very popular title and the majority of candidates who selected it were very much of the opinion that many of the important influences on the lives of young people today are indeed negative. The obsession with social media was the main reason given for such bad influences although plenty of candidates were keen to point out that there are also some very positive aspects of the various social media platforms such as keeping in touch with friends and family. Celebrities airing their political opinions on line was also mentioned as a source of concern given that many of them tend to have millions of followers who can be readily influenced by such pronouncements.

Question 2 *Los medios de comunicación*

Es imposible erradicar las noticias falsas en los medios de comunicación. ¿Qué opina usted?

This was a reasonably popular title. The consensus view seemed to be that it is all but impossible to eradicate fake news both in newspapers, magazines, television and radio as well as on the variety of different social media platforms. Many essays set out the need for governments to take stronger action against organisations that promote such fake news whilst at the same time accepting that the definition of

fake news itself is not as simple as it may seem. Most essays concluded that it is a regrettable aspect of modern society and one that we simply have to live with.

Question 3 *La igualdad de oportunidades*

Garantizar la igualdad de oportunidades en la sociedad es una idea ridícula. ¿Qué opina usted?

This was also a reasonably popular title. Very few candidates argued that the idea of equality of opportunity is a ridiculous one. On the contrary, there was a widely held view that we should be doing far more to ensure that everybody has access to equal opportunities regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation or ethnic origin. Many candidates discussed the desirability of stricter laws to tackle the issues but many also talked up the importance of education, especially at an early age, as being the most effective way of achieving equal opportunities for all.

Question 4 *El tiempo libre*

La importancia psicológica del tiempo libre ha sido exagerada en nuestra sociedad. ¿Está usted de acuerdo?

This was a popular title. The view expressed most widely was that the psychological importance of free time needs to be talked up even more given the levels of stress that so many people have to deal with nowadays. Some felt that the pressures to work long hours and to be successful can lead to more mental health issues than ever before. A few essays did suggest that we have indeed exaggerated the psychological importance of leisure time but this was a minority view.

Question 5 *Los avances científicos y médicos*

¿Cuál es el avance científico o médico que más necesita nuestra sociedad?

This was a less popular title. There was a wide range of different views on the issue, as one would expect. Cures for illnesses (the Covid 19 vaccine was often mentioned) together with the developments in eco-friendly transport systems and clean energy production were regularly discussed. Many candidates, perhaps surprisingly, talked up the importance of the advances being made in wireless technology and mobile phones. A good number of essays also suggested that the most necessary and sought-after technological advances should be the ones that help to tackle climate change.