

SPANISH

Paper 8665/02
Reading and Writing

General comments

This June's examination followed a tried and tested format which most candidates appeared to be very familiar with. The paper discriminated well and a wide range of marks was awarded across the ability range. Candidates responded well to the different aspects of the topic of violence presented by the two texts; sometimes a little too well by adding extra information which was not being tested to their answers.

The time allocation for the exam was adequate for all but the very weakest of candidates. Occasionally parts of questions or even whole questions were omitted, apparently by oversight rather than through incomprehension. There was a marked improvement in candidates keeping within the 140 word limit in **Question 5**. (Anything beyond that limit, sometimes an entire **Question 5b**, will be disregarded.)

There was some very good paraphrasing of relevant points in **Questions 3** and **4**. Even candidates of more modest linguistic ability made valiant efforts, clearly being aware that an attempt to say things in their own words had a chance of scoring, whereas more than four consecutive words lifted directly from the text would not.

Comments on specific questions

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

This multiple choice vocabulary test provided a very accessible start to the exam. Few candidates failed to identify at least two correct definitions and a considerable number successfully identified all five. On the few occasions when candidates answered with both a number and a non-matching definition the number alone was marked, as in the example on the paper.

Question 2

The transformation exercise, designed to test knowledge of grammatical structure, proved to be a sterner task. Only the very good candidates succeeded in scoring full marks whilst less able candidates frequently had difficulty in scoring one or more. With this type of exercise it must be remembered that a correct linguistic manipulation may not be enough in itself; the answer should fit back into the original text and retain exactly the same meaning.

- (a) This was generally done well, the commonest error being a failure to make the agreement for *presentadas*.
- (b) The use of *soler* did not appear to be so widely known and many candidates came unstuck here.
- (c) The element of comparison contained in *mayores* was sometimes overlooked with *más* being omitted from answers.
- (d) Although this structure is not uncommon to language manipulation tests many candidates tried to link *al* with *hombre* rather than a verb.
- (e) Only a minority of candidates identified the need for the subjunctive.

Question 3

Although this was quite a challenging text it was comfortably within the range of those taking an exam at this level. The better candidates took the linguistic difficulties comfortably in their stride and were able to come up with some excellent paraphrasing whilst less able candidates frequently struggled with comprehension and then resorted to 'lifting'.

- (a) There was some good paraphrasing of *violación a los derechos humanos* and also *represalias*. Candidates sometimes just missed scoring the other marks not giving full enough answers: *la principal causa de muerte* and *separación...del domicilio familiar* were both elements sought by the mark scheme.
- (b) The first part of this question was generally answered well. The second part was often omitted, possibly because of the presence of the unfamiliar term *pincelada*. Candidates who did recognise this word, or those who were able to guess at its meaning because of the context in which it appeared, gave good answers in their own words.
- (c) There were answers which began *En mi opinión...* and then went on to discuss the matter without making any reference to the text. It should be remembered that whenever the candidate's personal opinion is sought this will always be clearly signposted in the question. Apart from this, the question proved to be a very good discriminator, challenging candidates to compare the different reactions of women who are well-off and those from a more disadvantaged background.
- (d) The first part of this question produced a wide variety of excellent paraphrase for the idea of women who have more control in a relationship. Sometimes the second mark was missed when candidates said that this provoked attacks rather than giving a reason for it such as *los hombres se sienten inferiores o amenazados*.
- (e) The mark scheme allowed for five different aspects of domestic violence which could be mentioned, although only three were needed to score full marks. Many candidates scored well here, although weaker candidates sometimes had difficulty in avoiding copying directly from the text.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA**Question 4**

Questions on this text dealing with a different aspect of violence (violence among young people) also discriminated well. Good candidates achieved scores which were comparable with those of the previous question but it was noticeable that weaker candidates often appeared to run out of stamina here and preferred to concentrate their efforts on the final question.

- (a) A surprising number of candidates failed to convey both elements of the comparison. Either the bustle and activity of a workday morning was missing or the fact that this was being likened to the crowds of young people going out on the town after midnight.
- (b) This was another question which sometimes prompted answers from candidates' personal experience and not from the text (*porque un insulto lo toman personal y éste quiere vengarse*). Apart from this the question was generally well answered despite a tendency to overlook the crowds of people in a confined space, or simply to 'lift' *una gran masa de personas*.
- (c) The fact that this question was divided into two sections helped candidates to score marks, if not always full ones.
- (d) Although marks were readily available for identifying the causes of violence only better candidates picked up on the fact that films or computer games are to be blamed for outbreaks of youth violence within the family. Some candidates wrongly returned to the topic of domestic violence at this point.
- (e) If candidates were able to avoid directly copying phrases from the text they generally did well here. However, it was another of those questions where there was a tendency to offer personal opinions in addition to, or even instead of, the information given.

Question 5

- (a) There were some good summaries written this year. Centres appear to be making their candidates aware that this question carries 10+ very accessible marks and have practised the technique required. The 90-100 words available leave no room for lengthy introductions; it is necessary to plunge straight in and select details from the text which are relevant. Many of these details will often have featured as answers to questions in earlier parts of the exam but on this occasion there is no penalty for failure to paraphrase.

Candidates who had understood the two texts and who were able to succinctly summarise the salient details fared well. Those who did not fare so well gave answers which were vague and generalised or included their own views or information which had not appeared in the texts.

- (b) There was an interesting range of response to the question of the presence of violence in the candidate's own society. This is the question where the candidate will always have the opportunity to express his or her own opinion. The technique (not an easy one) required is to try and cram as many different ideas as possible into the two or three sentences available. Although there has been an improvement on previous years there were still candidates, including some very good ones, who scored zero for their answer as they had already written in excess of 140 words in their summary.

SPANISH

Paper 8665/04

Texts

General comments

The overall standard this year was good, with very few poor scripts but also a small number of candidates scoring at the highest level. Handwriting was less of a problem than in previous years – candidates must be reminded that they cannot be rewarded for work which Examiners are unable to read. It was pleasing to note that all texts listed had been studied with Machado as the least popular author.

The most significant factor this year was that the majority of candidates were able to answer three questions equally well. In previous sessions, Examiners have noticed that many candidates knew two texts thoroughly and the third less so, resulting in an unbalanced set of marks. This year all three texts were better known giving candidates the opportunity to access higher mark bands in each answer.

Individual questions:

1 Pérez Galdós: *Doña Perfecta*

Both options were popular and were well answered. Candidates used the extract to good effect in (a) but need to be reminded that in responding to (iii) they must refer to the novel as a whole. 1(b) was straightforward, with much material available to discuss and there were many good answers.

2 Isabel Allende: *Eva Luna*

This was also a popular text with the majority of answers on (a). Candidates wrote well in (i) and (ii) but many did not give sufficient detail from the rest of the novel in (iii). Option (b) gave a number of candidates the opportunity to examine the concept of reality and imagination both in the ending of the novel and in Eva's approach to life generally.

3 Mario Vargas Llosa: *Los jefes/Los cachorros*

Both options attracted a large number of answers, almost all good, with few candidates failing to refer to other stories from the collection. The main themes were well understood and supported with references to the text.

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

The questions on this text were chosen by many candidates but tended to be disappointing. The issues were understood and the extract was used well in (a), however candidates struggled to find other material to discuss with reference to (iii) and option (b) and essays were often insubstantial. Perhaps candidates need to be reminded that (iii) requires reference to the whole text. In (b) there were some good essays which showed how survival instincts came into play as the individuals coped with increasingly difficult situations.

5 García Márquez: *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*

This text attracted a large number of answers. Option (a) seemed to appeal to many as it allowed candidates to approach the issue in an individual way – Examiners read a variety of interpretations, which were mostly very good and well supported by reference to the text. Option (b) responses were more varied in quality ranging from those which simply related how characters were described to those which considered the author's purpose and the function of description within the novel as a whole.

6 Lope de Vega: *Fuenteovejuna*

Candidates showed good knowledge and understanding of the play and produced detailed and arguments for both options.

7 García Lorca: *La casa de Bernarda Alba*

As expected, the majority of candidates chose one of these options. There was plenty of scope to find material to support both questions and most answers were good. The difference in standard tended to be a matter of the way the argument was presented, finding a clear response to the question given and judicious choice of references or quotations.

8 Antonio Machado: *Campos de Castilla*

Fewer candidates had prepared this text than the others but the answers were competent. Option (a) allowed candidates to explore a number of themes within the scope of the question and most found no difficulty in making reference to three poems. Option (b) also gave a range of possible approaches, including those referring only to thematic issues and others which gave a critical assessment of the language and verse.

Conclusion

The two essential elements in preparing for this paper are secure knowledge and understanding of the three texts and the ability to construct an argument. Many Centres are attending to both of these which is reflected in the improvement in performance in this examination.