

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 is required, and care should be taken to ensure that the answer fits 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, revise the basic agreements, tenses and verb endings.

General comments

The two texts dealing with the different problems faced by children in cities in Honduras and Spain were accessible to all. The comprehension questions gave candidates not only the opportunity to show understanding, but also the chance to display skills in paraphrasing original text. This often proved to be a discriminating factor between the varying levels. Another common discriminator was the way in which the summary was approached in **Question 5(a)**, where vague generalisations counted towards only the Quality of Language mark.

All scripts were generally well presented, and there was only very occasional evidence of difficulty with time management.

Comments on specific questions

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

The majority of candidates were aware of the required technique in this question, with many taking the trouble to copy the paraphrase in the question before writing their answer on the line beneath. As it is important to answer with a phrase from the text which is a precise match to that of the question, this is a good way to check at a glance that an answer contains no extra words or omissions.

Additional or omitted words invalidate otherwise correct answers. Instances of this were most likely to be found in:

- (b) Answers incorrectly prefaced by *Todos los días*.
- (c) Omission of *le*.
- (d) Answers incorrectly prefaced by *para*.
- (e) Answers incorrectly prefaced by *Yo y todo el personal*.

For the vast majority of candidates this exercise proved to be a sound start to the exam, with most target phrases being readily identified.

Question 2

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

- (a) Most candidates were successful in manipulating the phrase to include the noun *suceso*, and a number of verbs were correctly used – *ocurrió*, *pasó*, *se dio* etc. Occasionally answers were invalidated by the use of the present tense.
- (b) This was the least well done of all the manipulations with only a minority of candidates correctly producing the passive construction *los centenares que son vistos en las calles*. Too many offered answers such as *son centenares que se ven en las calles* which, despite being correct Spanish and using the prompt *son*, would not fit back into the original text. A few candidates found a way to avoid the passive which would fit in the text with *los centenares que son y se ven en las calles*.
- (c) There were many permutations available in substituting *falta* for *necesito*, and most candidates were successful. There was occasional carelessness in using *faltan* instead of *falta*, (even if the answer was correct Spanish the mark could not be awarded), or omitting *me* and writing incorrectly *falta algunos cartones*.
- (d) Supplying a suitable subjunctive construction after *es imposible que* generally presented few problems for candidates. Some, however, added *lo* or *se*, providing a transformation that did not fit back into the text. Others added *no*, which changed the meaning of the original sentence – *es imposible que su institución no enfrente*.
- (e) Nearly every candidate was able to come up with a finite form of either *poder* or *lograr* to follow *cuando*. Again, neglecting to check whether their answer would fit back into the original text led to a number of candidates losing the mark by using the present rather than the preterite tense, or by including an unnecessary *lo*.

Question 3

The text about the difficulties of a young boy having to fend for himself on the city streets and the work of an agency to help such children was generally well understood and candidates who gave clear, detailed answers in their own words achieved very high marks. Some candidates lost marks when they copied more than four words directly from the text.

- (a) This was a very accessible opening question with most candidates noting that Agustín did not go home because he could not remember the way. The other reason why he did not go home – because he had been abandoned by his parents – was not so widely stated.
- (b) Many candidates scored full marks for this question, pointing out that in trying to earn a living Agustín faced abuse or violence from drivers and also the risk of being run over.
- (c) Most candidates successfully described Agustín's sleeping arrangements, although a few overlooked the remainder of the question which asked about his reasons for sleeping in this fashion. Provided that candidates focused on his loss of freedom and the bullying at the *centros para menores*, rather than focusing on the number of times that he had escaped, the other two marks were easily achieved.
- (d) The fact that the *IHN* is the only agency attending to the needs of the street children was often clearly stated. Many clearly understood the director's plea that the whole community should pull together to help with this problem, although a number overlooked that by writing *todos los sectores de la sociedad* they were directly copying more than four words of the text.
- (e) Many candidates noted that politicians only seemed to address this issue when they were seeking votes, and that the government had not increased but reduced the *IHN's* budget. Not so many added the director's final complaint that there were difficulties in paying the personnel.

- (f) (i) Quite a few candidates scored one mark for *para que vean cuánto trabajan*, but missed out the second point *para hacerles ver las cosas desde su punto de vista*. Occasionally the direct copying of *la labor de los empleados* invalidated the answer. Some responses wrongly focused on the *Directora's* final sentence, which did not answer the question – *hará todo lo posible para que la institución siga en pie*.
- (ii) Many candidates successfully noted that the *IHN's* most recent initiative was to set up mobile clinics for the street children. Some candidates could not score because they missed out *atención médica*, simply writing *pondrán a empleados deambulando por las calles para atender a los niños*, or *para atender a los niños en la calle*.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

The second text, dealing with different difficulties encountered by children in the streets of Madrid, provided a similar degree of challenge which most candidates understood well.

- (a) The majority of candidates scored one mark by noting either that the mother did not want to let her daughters play alone outside or that children could no longer play in the streets. A number overlooked the second point, that she did not want her children to spend too much time watching television.
- (b) There was some overlapping with the previous answer here, which was acceptable as long as candidates made the point that cities no longer have spaces where children can play safely. Most candidates correctly stated that cities were designed for cars.
- (c) The contents of the third paragraph seemed to have generally been well understood. When candidates scored two marks instead of three it was usually because they left out the element of the current economic crisis. Sometimes a mark was lost because of the direct copying of *el miedo de los padres*.
- (d) Many candidates answered this question well by noting that certain streets were closed, allowing the children to play and the parents to relax.
- (e) The reasons why *Menéndez* was opposed to childrens' playgrounds were a little more challenging to grasp. Nonetheless, many were able to correctly state that such structures removed children from the element of risk experienced when playing in the street which is so essential for their growth and development. Quite commonly a mark was lost by directly copying *a los niños de la calle*.
- (f) As long as candidates correctly stated that neighbours or the local community would take responsibility for watching out for children on their journeys to and from school both marks were scored.

Question 5

Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks awarded. Most, but not all, candidates were aware of the need to keep to the limit of 140 words for both parts of the question. Anything in excess of 160 words is disregarded, and in extreme cases this can lead to no marks being awarded for part (b).

- (a) This question generally produced the most disappointing answers in the entire exam. Candidates who had achieved good or even excellent marks elsewhere frequently struggled to reach even half marks here. The problem was invariably a lack of familiarity with the required technique, which may be very different from the technique which candidates have been encouraged to use in other forms of summary writing.

For this task the technique required for achieving a good mark is to note, in the limited number of words available, details from the texts which answer the question which has been asked. Generalisations, often required by other forms of summary writing, are usually too vague to score. It is the relevant specific details which score the marks. Therefore, answers beginning with, for example, *En los dos textos se habla de los niños con relación a la calle. Pero cada uno tiene*

aspectos y visiones diferentes. En el primero se habla de los problemas de pobreza infantil y cómo combatirlo para que no haya más chicos en la calle. Por otro lado, en el segundo texto... waste fifty-two words (about half the total available) and score nothing, apart from contributing to the Quality of Language mark. By contrast, an answer which began, *En Honduras hay niños abandonados por sus padres que arriesgan la vida limpiando coches en un semáforo. Pasan la noche en gasolineras y no recurren a centros para menores porque allí son maltratados* scores four marks in fewer words by giving relevant specific details. Candidates should also refrain from offering personal opinions in this part of the question.

- (b) In the two or three sentences available for this last part of the examination the vast majority of candidates wrote good answers. Most included opinions and backed these up with examples. It appeared generally to be the case that children were only able to play outside in the middle class, suburban areas of cities, and that the candidates' differing countries had had greater or lesser success in dealing with the problem of street children, which was caused by poverty and lack of education of the parents.

Quality of Language

The quality of candidates' written Spanish, here and throughout the paper, was generally well up to the standard required by this examination, with most marks in the Very Good or Good bands.

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/22
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- **Question 1:** seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question. Candidates should take care not to omit words or to include extra words.
- **Question 2:** rewrite the phrases to include the word(s) in brackets. A grammatical manipulation is required, and care should be taken to ensure that the answer fits 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, revise the basic agreements, tenses and verb endings.

General comments

The two texts dealing with the supply and use of water were accessible to the vast majority of candidates with the appropriate linguistic skills. The comprehension questions gave candidates not only the opportunity to show understanding, but also the chance to display skills in paraphrasing original text. This often proved to be a discriminating factor between the varying levels.

Scripts were generally well presented, although there was occasional evidence of difficulty with time management.

Comments on specific questions

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

This exercise was generally done quite well, with a number of candidates showing signs of having practised the skills needed. **Part (b)** and, to a lesser extent **part (e)**, appeared harder to identify than the others.

The majority of candidates were aware of the required technique in this question, with many taking the trouble to copy the paraphrase in the question before writing their answer on the line beneath. As it is important to answer with a phrase from the text which is a precise match to that of the question, this is a good way to check at a glance that an answer contains no extra words or omissions.

Additional or omitted words invalidate otherwise correct answers. Instances of this were most likely to be found in:

- (a) Omission of *se* at the start.
- (b) *Se* was occasionally omitted here too.
- (d) *con esta crisis* was often added unnecessarily.
- (e) Omission of *a* at the start.

Many candidates got off to a sound start to the exam, with the target phrases being readily identified. Occasionally *al que más grita* was offered as an incorrect answer to (e).

Question 2

In addition to performing the language manipulations required in this question, it is important to check that the answers fit back into the original text and retain the same meaning. The technique mentioned above of copying out the phrase as it appears on the question paper before writing the answer underneath can help to ensure whether this is the case.

This can be a very challenging exercise but there were a number of correct answers which had been arrived at by the application of grammatical rules rather than by instinct.

- (a) Candidates suggested many valid ways to change *solucionar* to *solución*. It was essential to retain the same meaning as the original phrase, and a number omitted the idea of 'try' or 'find'.
- (b) A number of candidates realised that a subjunctive verb was needed after *es imposible que*. Many provided a correct answer, although a mark could not be awarded to those who omitted *se* and offered *es imposible que lave la ropa*.
- (c) Not all candidates were able to form this passive construction. Only some were able to make the correct gender agreement for the past participle (*creada*) or change *ha* to *han*.
- (d) Those candidates who were aware that a gerund should follow *siguen* often then struggled with the correct spelling of either *distribuyendo* or *manteniendo*. A way to avoid using either was *siguen con la distribución de(l) agua*. A few otherwise correct answers were invalidated by writing *la* *agua*.
- (e) The subjunctive of futurity, as used after *cuando*, did not seem to be widely known. Some candidates neglected to check how the original phrase had been used in the text, and mistakenly offered a preterite verb instead.

Question 3

This text, about problems with the water supply in Panamá, was generally well understood. Most candidates were very good at identifying the key parts of the paragraphs which contained information relevant to the questions, but there were varying levels of success in candidates' ability to communicate their answers. Those who correctly identified the points which were being tested but who answered in brief phrases, or had difficulties in producing a successful paraphrase, were credited for content – provided that they had not copied more than four words of the text – but could not then access the full range of marks available for Quality of Language.

- (a) Answers to this four-mark question were accessible in the opening paragraph and many candidates were able to make simple vocabulary changes to the original text in order to avoid directly copying five or more words: *creó una comisión de emergencia; distribuir agua embotellada; aumentar los camiones cisterna; mejorar la producción de agua*. A certain amount of French language influence was apparent in the not uncommon mistaken use of *nombre* for *número*.
- (b) The key to answering this question correctly was to address the phrase *se siente engañada*. Even if candidates were uncertain of its meaning, it was clearly signposted in the middle of the paragraph and the points which followed – the unfulfilled promise, the never-ending situation, the change of lifestyle – were the answers which were needed. Some candidates attempted to find answers from the first half of the paragraph.
- (c) This was generally done well, provided that candidates did not copy five or more words from the text. A number of candidates did not notice that *la venta de agua embotellada* was a direct quote from the text (easily avoided by changing *embotellada* to *en botellas*).
- (d) There were also a number of good answers to this question. The disorderly nature of water distribution was commonly noted, and many candidates realised that they could use **Question 1(e)** as a legitimate way of paraphrasing *a quien le da la gana*. Some candidates did not see a connection between *barriadas* and *barrios* and incorrectly suggested water distribution here as one of the criticisms.

- (e) Provided that candidates did not copy *en sus lavanderías y cocinas* from the text, they were able to state that these hotel services would suffer most. The majority were also able to point out that the hotel's reserves would also soon be exhausted. The fact that many tourists were expected to arrive imminently was often not so clearly stated.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

Comprehension of the second text seemed to provide a slightly higher level of challenge than the first. This was apparent among a number candidates who, after making a determined effort in the previous question to answer in their own words, perhaps because of pressures of time, often copied chunks of the text into their answers in this question.

- (a) Some candidates found the opening paragraph quite challenging and, although they often identified the relevant sections of the text, had difficulty in coming up with suitable paraphrases. Others answered well and often arrived at some interesting explanations for *menos elitista*, (*ya no es valorado como un deporte de las clases altas*).
- (b) This question proved to be more accessible. The vast majority of candidates scored a mark for stating that the opponents of golf complain about the demands it makes upon natural resources. Fewer were able to state that economic interests take precedence over environmental issues.
- (c) There were four marks available for this question and the full range was awarded. Many correctly stated that the amount of water required by a Spanish golf course was equivalent to that of a small city, although some omitted to mention that this was annually. Marks were also often scored for noting the high demands for water in areas of little rainfall, and also the problems of evaporation experienced by the water features. Some candidates appeared to be unfamiliar with the word *centenares*, often leading to its misinterpretation as another structure which consumed water.
- (d) This second four-mark question also produced a similar range of marks, with most candidates able to identify relevant phrases in the paragraph which would answer the question. The noun, or even the conjugation, of the verb *oler* was not widely known, although it did not provide a barrier to communication. Most candidates who were able to avoid copying directly from the text were able to note at least one of the three other reasons why recycled water was not favoured by golf course owners: insufficient quantity, high cost, and diversion from priority usage.
- (e) Candidates were not generally so successful on this final question. The first point about the use of desalinated water was often marred by copying the exact words *sal del agua del mar*, or by stating that salt could be used to irrigate golf courses. The point about reducing the high cost of desalination often proved difficult to tease out.

Question 5

Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks awarded. There were a number of candidates who appeared to be unaware of the need to keep to the limit of 140 words for both parts of the question. Anything in excess of 160 words was disregarded by Examiners, and in extreme cases this led to no marks being awarded for part (b).

- (a) The technique required for achieving a good mark in this task is to note, in the limited number of words available, details from the texts which answer the question which has been asked. Generalisations, often required by other forms of summary writing, are usually too vague to score. It is the relevant specific details which score the marks. Vague introductions, such as *El agua es básica para la vida humana en cualquier aspecto. Los conflictos por el agua van en aumento debido a su decrecimiento...* waste words and score nothing, apart from contributing to the Quality of Language mark. Neither are marks awarded for personal opinion here.

There were lots of specific details in the texts which were relevant to *problemas asociados con el agua*, and many candidates with the correct technique were able to score high marks. Weaker responses often reproduced relevant sentences from the text safe in the knowledge that, other than being disregarded when considering the Quality of Language mark, there would be no penalty applied. The disadvantage of this approach is that, as the text is likely to be far more verbose than

a candidate using their own words to summarise, fewer points will be included and there is an increased risk of exceeding the word limit.

A few candidates wasted words by writing about the emergency measures adopted by the Panamanian government, which did not address the question of *problemas*.

- (b) The personal response was generally done well, (if candidates had not already reached the word limit), with most agreeing that water was generally well managed in their respective countries. The majority seemed to be aware that, in the two or three sentences which are usually available for this task, they should try to combine a personal opinion with ideas that are different, if possible, from those expressed in the texts.

Quality of Language

The quality of candidates' written Spanish, here and throughout the paper, was generally well up to the standard required by this examination. Marks awarded ranged from Below Average to Very Good, with most marks falling between the Sound to Very Good range. Although there were some exceptions, the majority of candidates had been prepared to an appropriate standard for this examination.

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/41

Texts

Key messages

Candidates who performed well on this paper:

- showed detailed knowledge and understanding of their three chosen texts;
- had read the questions carefully and defined the terms they were using;
- answered the whole question as set on the question paper;
- constructed an argument and supported it with relevant quotations;
- came to a clear conclusion;
- ensured the main focus of **(a)** questions in *Sección Primera* was on part **(iii)**; answers to parts **(i)** and **(ii)** should be brief and to the point;
- avoided careless errors such as giving a character the wrong name;
- did not simply tell the story or use very long quotations.

General comments

Many candidates achieved satisfactory or good results, but few were very good or outstanding. The key points above indicate some of the issues identified by Examiners, and further details are provided below under the individual questions. In addition, some candidates did not appear to be familiar with the rubric and thought that in **Questions 1(a), 2(a), 3(a) and 4(a)** parts **(i), (ii)** and **(iii)** were alternatives to one another. Others answered only two questions in total or answered two questions on the same text. The number of candidates who infringed the rubric was relatively small, but it is essential that all are fully aware of the requirements of the examination.

Comments on specific questions

Sección Primera

Question 1 Ernesto Sábato: *El túnel*

- (a)** This was a very popular choice. The best answers gave brief responses to parts **(i)** and **(ii)**, picking out a few details from the extract. Part **(iii)** required candidates to identify Castel's sense of superiority to and disdain of '*los amigos de la pintura*' and his feeling that they did not understand him, and to relate this to his relationship with others in general. María, of course, is the exception, as he believes she does understand him and therefore becomes the focus of his obsession.
- (b)** This option was one where candidates needed to define their terms by explaining the key phrase '*árida intensidad*' in the question. There are a number of possible interpretations; some considered *intensidad* to mean 'gripping'; others felt it referred to the way in which the opening line prefigures the tragic ending or the fact that the whole novel is a biased account from Castel's own point of view. The reference to *árida* pointed to the prose style, and Castel's personality. There were also some good answers, which argued that it was not *árida*, and presented a convincing case.

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

- (a)** Most candidates gave brief and focused answers to parts **(i)** and **(ii)**. In part **(iii)**, there was often insufficient reference to the play as a whole, but candidates showed good understanding of the themes.

- (b) The best answers responded to the reference to the '*injusticia inicial*' with a detailed argument showing how the individuals overcame this and resolved the initial injustice in different ways. Weaker essays were too focused on narrating the story and did not spot the word *inicial* in the question.

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

- (a) Candidates generally knew the text well and responded positively to it. Part (iii) required candidates to identify key themes in the extract and relate these to the novel as a whole. Examiners read essays that expressed the isolation of the old man and the challenge of the natural environment. He uses novels as a form of escape and a way to open up the rest of the world to him. Some answers mistakenly indicated that he had visited the cities mentioned. There was considerable scope for interpretation of the importance of the extract but all answers must begin with the issues in the extract itself – it is not permissible to state that the extract does not help the reader to understand the text and simply write an essay about something else of the candidate's choosing.
- (b) This was well answered in general as candidates were aware of the ecological theme in the novel. The best answers gave precise examples and were able to analyse the effects on the indigenous population and the natural world without diverting to a more general discussion of issues outside the scope of the novel.

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

- (a) This question was answered well and candidates correctly identified the cause of the conflict evident in the extract and were able to discuss the tragic consequences of it.
- (b) This option was less popular than (a) but was very accessible to those candidates who had studied the importance of the subtitle.

Sección Segunda

Question 5 Carmen Laforet: *Nada*

- (a) There were some good answers where candidates discussed how Román controlled the household, and that excluding contact with the outside world was part of this. The best essays then analysed how the motives for his suicide could be understood.
- (b) This gave rise to some interesting and perceptive responses. Ena was seen as a complex character who was generous and welcoming to Andrea, but also seemed to be motivated by darker forces and could be accused of using others for her own ends. Analysis of her relationship with her mother and her reasons for approaching Román gave depth to the argument.

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

- (a) Many candidates chose this question. The best answers began by explaining the phrase in the question: '*la necesidad de un cambio político*'. It was important to refer to the need for political change and not simply relate the changes that occurred. This required knowledge of the situation before and after political change, and the timeline in the novel. Some pointed out that changes are always necessary from someone's point of view, which was a valid interpretation. A number of essays showed that candidates were not really aware of the different political stances in the novel.
- (b) This was another popular question. Candidates mostly identified the appropriate characters and the best answers analysed the significance of the names and showed how they were linked to one another and to the overall theme of the novel. Some essays remained too descriptive as candidates gave character studies or wrote about the role of women in general. As has been mentioned before, it is imperative that candidates answer the question as it is set.

Question 7 Federico García Lorca: *Yerma*

García Lorca is a popular author in this examination and candidates clearly know a lot about Lorca's life. However, they are advised that biographical detail is rarely required in answering a question on his work.

Background research is valuable in itself, but candidates do not have time or space to give a general introduction to the essay, which is not directly focused on the point of the question.

- (a) The best answers used the quotation as a way into discussion on oppression by social norms. Others were unsure of the context of the play and answers tended to be too general. Most essays were well supported by reference to the text.
- (b) One of the determining factors for attaining a good outcome here was attention to the detail in the question. Candidates were asked to consider the conflict caused by '*querer y necesitar*'. As mentioned above in the key messages, definition of terms, in this case by explaining the difference between the meaning of the two verbs, was a feature of the best essays. Good essays discussed how these words not only relate to Yerma herself, but also to her relationships with Víctor and Juan, and the other women in the village. Those who decided that other conflicts were more central to the play without considering the question as it was set did not fulfil the assessment criteria. It is also advisable to avoid narration and giving long quotations.

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

- (a) Candidates responded well to this and there were some good and very good essays. The best answers did not simply catalogue natural references but gave detailed analysis and all-round appreciation of the poem. These essays were able to deal with the technicalities of poetry in terms of choice of vocabulary, imagery and so on.
- (b) Most agreed with the statement in the question and were able to refer to three poems, with Poem 20 a good choice.

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/42

Texts

Key messages

Candidates who performed well on this paper:

- showed detailed knowledge and understanding of their three chosen texts;
- had read the questions carefully and defined the terms they were using;
- answered the whole question as set on the question paper;
- constructed an argument and supported it with relevant quotations;
- came to a clear conclusion;
- ensured the main focus of **(a)** questions in *Sección Primera* was on part **(iii)**; answers to parts **(i)** and **(ii)** should be brief and to the point;
- avoided careless errors such as giving a character the wrong name;
- did not simply tell the story or use very long quotations.

General comments

Many candidates achieved satisfactory or good results, but few were very good or outstanding. The key points above indicate some of the issues identified by Examiners, and further details are provided below under the individual questions. In addition, some candidates did not appear to be familiar with the rubric and thought that in **Questions 1(a), 2(a), 3(a) and 4(a)** parts **(i), (ii)** and **(iii)** were alternatives to one another. Others answered only two questions in total or answered two questions on the same text. The number of candidates who infringed the rubric was relatively small, but it is essential that all are fully aware of the requirements of the examination.

Comments on specific questions

Sección Primera

Question 1 Ernesto Sábato: *El túnel*

- (a)** Essays on this question showed detailed knowledge of the text and the narrative in terms of locating the extract and answering parts **(i)** and **(ii)**. Part **(iii)** required analysis of the role of humour throughout the novel. Some stated that the novel was humourless and wrote on other aspects which they deemed important – this did not fulfil the assessment criteria. The best essays found examples of humour, often ironic or at Castel's expense, which lightened the tone of the novel and also gave insight into his personality. A good example was the episode in the post office where he demanded the return of the letter he had just posted. Similarly, other candidates began with the extract, where the reader is led to laugh at Mimi's pretentiousness and then went on to show how humour can be found in other contexts.
- (b)** This was an example of the need to read the question carefully and answer all aspects of it. Candidates were required to analyse the theme of isolation within the context of '*el mundo moderno*' as it is presented in the novel. The best answers showed how Castel is isolated from a society which he considers alien to him, and analysed how the social situations depicted in the novel help the reader to understand this situation.

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

- (a) Candidates tended to focus too much on parts (i) and (ii), to the detriment of part (iii). Some were able to show how Basilio redeemed himself towards the end of the play.
- (b) This question was answered well. Candidates were able to trace and analyse how Segismundo was able to overcome his unfortunate circumstances by virtue of his own resources and ability to learn, and his relationship and empathy with others.

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

- (a) As in previous (a) questions, some candidates put too much emphasis on their answers to parts (i) and (ii). The incident in the extract was mostly well known, but many did not analyse the mayor's role in the novel as a whole in sufficient depth. Good essays considered what he represented – a white outsider from the city – and how his way of thinking was at odds with the inhabitants of the village as well as the indigenous people. This contrast was then analysed in terms of the themes presented.
- (b) This question was dealt with competently as candidates were able to express views on the ecological themes of the novel. It was essential to refer to specific events or situations and give concrete examples from the text rather than discuss the crisis in the Amazon in general terms. Good essays found some positive effects of progress, for example dental care, and the ambivalence of the launch in bringing benefits but also problems with it.

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

- (a) Candidates responded well to this question and were able to discuss to what extent justice was served in the outcome.
- (b) This question was chosen by few candidates. The problems of seemingly intractable attitudes, but the belief in hope for change, bolstered by the presence of committed individuals, was the essence of the argument.

Sección Segunda

Question 5 Carmen Laforet: *Nada*

- (a) Candidates were able to empathise with Andrea and show how her emotional development, exposure to the wider world and greater self-confidence helped her to understand life better. Some essays analysed this in terms of her relationship with Román as well as that with Ena.
- (b) There were some interesting responses to this question, particularly those which paid full attention to the '*preguntas sin respuestas*'. The sense that individuals are never fully in control of their lives was dealt with perceptively.

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

- (a) This was the more popular of the two questions on this text, although the number of answers was still relatively small. Candidates tended to focus on Esteban Trueba, who was both impersonal in being an absent landowner much of the time but still vented personal power over his farmworkers and their families. There was reference to revenge and the cycle of violence. The more open attitude evident at the end of the novel was seen by some as a sign of hope.
- (b) There were few answers to this question. Candidates were aware of the variety of literary styles present, mostly concentrating on magical realism, but other aspects were dealt with.

Question 7 Federico García Lorca: *Yerma*

García Lorca is a popular author in this examination and candidates clearly know a lot about Lorca's life. However, they are advised that biographical detail is rarely required in answering a question on his work. Background research is valuable in itself, but candidates do not have time or space to give a general introduction to the essay, which is not directly focused on the point of the question.

- (a) Many candidates tackled this well. It was essential to deal with both parts of the question – the importance of the scene within the play itself, and the use of poetry. It was not necessary to narrate events, rather to show how these followed from earlier events and why, and to consider the characters' reactions in that light. The best answers analysed the use of poetry in detail, interpreting the images and showing how it contributed to the atmosphere and meaning of the play.
- (b) This question was also answered well. Candidates tended to describe Juan's point of view with emphasis on his interest in material wealth and security for Yerma. Those who considered his own problems related to his position in society and his background gave a more rounded analysis. Many essays empathised with Juan and found his situation as difficult as Yerma's, in a different way.

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

- (a) This poet seems to appeal to candidates and there were some thoughtful responses. Candidates should not be tempted to answer this type of question unless they have had experience of commentary as it requires some background understanding of the use of poetic language and versification.
- (b) There were many examples to be found as a basis for this answer, and candidates have some freedom in interpretation of the chosen poems. Candidates must be sure to include the minimum number of poems, and it is better to focus on a few highly relevant examples, rather than be tempted to be too ambitious with a large number and lose detail and focus in the argument.