

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/21
Reading and Writing

Key messages

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

General comments

Comprehension of the two texts dealing with community and government initiatives to deal with nutritional issues was generally good. Awareness of the techniques required for this examination was variable and often made a considerable difference to the final mark. In **Questions 3 and 4**, lifting, (the direct copying of five or more words from the text), often invalidated a mark for comprehension. In **Question 5**, there was still a number of candidates who exceeded the permitted number of words, which meant that part, or sometimes all, of their personal response could not be assessed. A considerable number of candidates would have benefited from more preparation in how to approach the summary question in **5(a)**.

Scripts were usually well presented and legible, and very few candidates seemed to have had difficulty with time management. On the whole, candidates displayed a good communicative level of Spanish but spelling and use of accents were often found wanting.

Comments on specific questions

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

Good scores were often achieved for this question. Rather than misidentification of the target, the most common error was a lack of precision in reproducing the exact equivalent of the paraphrase and adding or omitting words at the beginning or at the end.

- (a) The majority of candidates were successful. Sometimes *están* was omitted, or preceded by *que*.
- (b) This was also answered well, although *se* was occasionally omitted.
- (c) A number of candidates included *de Villaverde* at the end.

- (d) The mark was sometimes missed here when *nosotros* was omitted.
- (e) This was nearly always correct, although the spelling of *inauguración* was often inaccurate.

Question 2

Despite, in the majority of cases, having the language competency to provide correct answers, candidates need to remember that their answers must fit back seamlessly into the original text. This was a common reason why some candidates did not get full marks.

- (a) This caused few problems, although some candidates lost the mark by using the preterite e.g. *tuvimos éxito atrayendo*, or writing *hemos tenido éxito en...* without including *traer*.
- (b) It is important that candidates do not consider these language manipulations in isolation, but use the line reference given to see how the phrase fits in the text and then construct an answer which will also fit. For example, answers which began *se hacen esfuerzos...* or *los esfuerzos son para...* could not be awarded the mark.

There were instances of some answers which changed the cue word to the singular *esfuerzo*, and candidates should be reminded that this is not permitted.

- (c) This was generally well answered. A very few candidates missed the subjunctive and wrote *las comidas son ofrecidas*.
- (d) A lot of success was achieved with this manipulation. However, a small minority of candidates offered *viven a distancia*, which had the opposite meaning. Also, there was occasional incorrect use of prepositions such as *viven en poca distancia*.
- (e) Answers needed to include a first person plural, either with *el gobierno nos ha dado una subvención* or *hemos recibido una subvención que ha dado el gobierno*. Misspellings of *ha* were quite common e.g. *el gobierno nos a dado una subvención*, and could not be awarded the mark.

Question 3

Comprehension of the text about a community's efforts to alleviate hardship among its residents was generally good, and candidates who gave clear, detailed answers to the questions in their own words achieved high marks. Some responses were invalidated as they were copied directly from the text.

- (a) Although this was a four mark question, not many candidates succeeded in scoring maximum marks. This was mainly because of an absence of some of the relevant details required by the mark scheme. Common omissions were: *100 comidas; cada día; por la crisis / el paro; a 200 familias*. A 5-word phrase commonly copied from the text was *paro y la crisis económica*. Candidates would have benefitted from being able to paraphrase this to demonstrate comprehension. Information from other paragraphs occasionally was included, such as *organizará talleres para que la población se alfabetice y se profesionalice*, which could not be credited here.
- (b) This was well answered generally. Sometimes the origin of the volunteers was not accurately noted, or one of the elements of comfort or dignity was overlooked.
- (c) Many candidates scored full marks for this question. Some candidates would have scored more highly if they had been able to paraphrase *talleres de alfabetización y capacitación profesional*.
- (d) Often *la renta* was missed for the first point, although the *subvención* was almost always given, as was the point about individuals contributing. However, often the last point was lost because of direct copying from the text (the most common example being *más de 40 toneladas de*).
- (e) This rarely caused problems and candidates usually scored two marks. On occasions, however, candidates conveyed the opposite meaning of the required answer by using *faltar* in the wrong sense e.g. *que no van a faltar*, showing poor understanding of the expression *hacer falta*. Some candidates would have scored more highly if they had been able to paraphrase *el valor de la solidaridad* to demonstrate comprehension.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

The second text, dealing with Cuba's success in eradicating malnutrition in children, provided a similar level of challenge, with candidates commonly showing a clear understanding and achieving good marks. As in **Question 3**, an absence of detail in answers often prevented candidates from getting full marks.

- (a) The overwhelming majority of candidates scored the first point (that Cuba was the only country with no infant malnutrition), although some failed to include *infantil* which lost them the mark. However, another very large majority lost the next mark because they copied directly from the text, most commonly, *de 10 millones de dólares* or *un presupuesto de 10 millones*. A number of candidates failed to get the final mark by omitting *a los sectores más vulnerables*.
- (b) Only the more meticulous candidates responded with the required level of detail and scored maximum marks. A lot of candidates missed the four months aspect of the first point or copied more than four words from the text, e.g. *de la lactancia materna hasta*. Some missed the next point by either failing to include the *sana* or the *infantil* element. Candidates would have scored more highly if they had not copied *un litro de leche fluida* directly from the text, or missed out the *diario* aspect. More success was noted with the final point for this item.
- (c) This was usually well answered by most candidates. However, a few seemed to misunderstand the meaning of *voluntad política*, thinking in some cases that it was to do with volunteers.
- (d) This was another question requiring detailed answers, and not so many candidates scored full marks. A notable number of responses were invalidated because they had copied *la igualdad de género en* directly from the text. Also, the final point was often missed because *atención sanitaria para los niños* was not specified. The other two marks were usually achieved except when, as happened in a lot of cases, *no hay ningún niño en la calle* was lifted from the text.
- (e) Most candidates scored at least one mark in this question, the most usual one coming for the first part. However, some candidates referred only to the *población cubana* as a whole without specifying adults. For the second mark, both elements of *nuevos cultivos* and *aportar más variedad* needed to be included.

Question 5

Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks allocated. 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 is disregarded, and in extreme cases this can lead to no marks being awarded for part (b).

- (a) It was extremely noticeable in this session that many candidates were in need of further guidance in the techniques of performing well in this question. There were a lot of general summaries referring to problems of nutrition around the world and how important it is to get together to address the problem. Reference to the texts was often merely cursory.

The technique required for answering this question is very probably different from that which candidates have been encouraged to use in other forms of summary writing. Here candidates need to understand the importance of extracting specific details from the texts. There are no marks just for giving a general summary of the theme of the two texts, and looking for similarities and differences between them. Incorporating titles of the texts into the body of the summary will waste precious words.

In this exercise, candidates are not penalised for copying directly from the text(s). It should be remembered, however, that any copied material will not be considered in the Quality of Language mark.

A good example of the required technique from a candidate who has carefully considered the information that is being sought begins:

El recién abierto comedor social ✓ ha recibido una subvención del gobierno ✓ ayuda financiera de una familia vecina para pagar la mensualidad ✓ y de otros individuos como señoras que dejan la mitad de sus compras ✓ y donación de empresas de alimentación gratuita. ✓

El gobierno de Cuba ofrece \$10 millones para mejorar la alimentación ✓ campañas de educación alimentaria para los vulnerables, ✓ publicidad de los beneficios de la lactancia materna ✓...
(8 marks scored in 66 words).

An example of poor technique begins:

En los dos textos se le da importancia a la alimentación. El texto 1 prioriza la alimentación a todas las personas por igual y cree que la alfabetización y la capacitación profesional es importante. El texto 2 también está a favor de este último pero a la hora de alimentación prioriza la de los niños...
(0 marks scored in 54 words).

- (b) In the two or three sentences available for this last part of the examination the vast majority of candidates wrote good answers. They usually had something interesting to say about eating habits in their countries, and many volunteered opinions about why these habits existed. Most scored 4 or 5 marks.

Quality of Language

The quality of 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

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- **Language:** when preparing for the exam, make sure to revise the basic agreements, tenses and verb endings.

General comments

Awareness of the techniques required for this examination was variable and often made a considerable difference to the final mark. In **Questions 3 and 4**, marks for comprehension were sometimes invalidated by the practice of copying directly from the text. In **Question 5**, there was still a number of candidates who exceeded the permitted number of words, which meant that part, or sometimes all, of their personal response could not be assessed.

Scripts were well presented, and no candidates appeared to have had difficulty in meeting the time constraints of the examination.

Comments on specific questions

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

Good scores were often achieved for this question.

- (a) The majority of candidates were successful.
- (b) This was also answered well. A common error was to omit *como tal*.
- (c) Very few candidates were unable to identify the phrase targeted.
- (d) This was the most demanding item of Question 1. Not many responses were able to correctly identify *(la) punta del iceberg*, and those which did sometimes invalidated the mark by prefacing with *eso solo es*.
- (e) This was done well, although frequent omission of the initial *se* meant that the mark was not awarded to all candidates.

Question 2

- (a) There was widespread awareness that a subjunctive is required after *es posible que*. However, not all candidates were able to supply one correctly.
- (b) This passive construction was not always successfully rendered.
- (c) Moderate success was achieved. In a few instances, candidates did not render the subjunctive correctly and could not be awarded the mark.
- (d) Correct use of *gustar* regularly proves to be a challenge for non-native speakers. Occasionally the wrong pronoun *le* or *las* invalidated otherwise correct answers. Although the phrase *las joyas les gustan más a las mujeres* is correct Spanish, it could not be awarded a mark as it does not fit in the original text.
- (e) Only the most able were able to perform the manipulation for this item.

Question 3

The most able candidates successfully presented the required information in their own words, often using complex linguistic structures. Instances of copying five or more words directly from the text were rare in these responses.

- (a) Nearly every candidate was aware that the answers to this question were to be found in the quoted speech in the first paragraph. The full marks for comprehension were often scored, but a lack of ability to convert first person verbs to third person was noted and this had an impact on the mark for Quality of Language.
- (b) Most candidates picked up on the idea that shopaholics need to buy products that are considered a status symbol. Not so many noted the second point, which was also occasionally invalidated by directly copying *cuanto más tienes más eres*.
- (c) Many instances of maximum marks were recorded here. Candidates sometimes found difficulty in clarifying whether they were writing about the Christmas shopper or the shopaholic, and occasionally five or more words of *el consumo abusivo debe mantenerse en el tiempo para considerarse* were copied directly. Very few failed to mention the negative consequences for the shopaholic.
- (d) Only the most able candidates picked up maximum scores for this four-mark item. Many answers lacked the idea that women are thought more likely to be shopaholics, according to the text. Sometimes it was not established that the only difference was in the type of product bought by men and women. Candidates would have scored more highly if they had been able to paraphrase *las joyas, la lencería o los cosméticos*, (perhaps by changing the order of the items in the list, or using synonyms). Some answers were not specific enough, for example *Regas recalca la diferencia entre disfrutar y ser adictas*, which was not given a mark as it does not specify that, according to the text, women enjoy shopping more than men.
- (e) Comprehension for this second-four mark question was well demonstrated, and this was reflected in the marks which were awarded.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

Comprehension of this text about the ways in which retail outlets attempt to manipulate their customers was generally good.

- (a) Many candidates scored maximum or at least two of the three marks available for this item. Comprehension of *vaciamos nuestros bolsillos* proved to be an obstacle for some, whilst others encountered linguistic difficulties in finding an appropriate conversion of *cosas que...no las necesitas para nada*.
- (b) Candidates seemed to relate well to this question, and the majority were able to show clear comprehension of shops' tactic of leaving certain parts of their display in disarray to give the appearance of popularity of a product. A number of candidates omitted to add the third point that this tactic worked particularly well with young people.
- (c) This question was also done well. Many chose to incorporate *una experiencia inesperada* into their answers, whilst successfully avoiding copying too much of the surrounding language in the text. However, ability to paraphrase *provocando que se quede más* and so demonstrate comprehension of this phrase was lacking in some responses.
- (d) Where candidates scored zero on this item, this was usually due to copying directly from the text. Those who had demonstrated comprehension by using their own words often scored at least one of the available marks here. Only the best candidates successfully noted that the screens are activated when a bottle of perfume is touched, the direction in which we are looking is tracked and persuasive images are transmitted.
- (e) Only a minority of candidates scored maximum marks. Phrases commonly copied from the text included *el carrito de la compra* and *a la altura de los ojos*. Only the most able candidates understood that *los pasillos estrechos nos hacen comprar más*.

Question 5

Examiners noted that responses in this examination series demonstrated better summary technique and adherence to the word limits, as evident in the marks awarded. Candidates should be reminded that it is of fundamental importance to observe the word count of 140 words for both parts of the question. Anything in excess is disregarded, and in extreme cases this can lead to no marks being awarded for part (b), the personal response.

- (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. In this exercise, candidates are not penalised for copying directly from the text(s). It should be remembered, however, that any copied material will not be considered in the Quality of Language mark.

Those who selected information according to the question, and provided specific details of addiction to shopping and tactics used by shops, scored well. No introductions or conclusions are required and the recommended technique is to plunge straight in:

En el primer texto nos cuentan que la adicción no es fácilmente reconocida. ✓ Mucha gente compra productos impulsivamente ✓ para mostrar su estatus social. ✓ Ambos sexos compran así, no solo las mujeres. ✓ Pueden curarse, ✓ admitiendo su problema a familiares... ✓
(6 marks scored in 38 words).

An illustration of a poor technique for this question:

En ambos textos se trata la problemática de la adicción a las compras. En el texto 1, el psicólogo Javier Regas nos explica las diferencias entre gastos esporádicos y un consumo excesivo, nos da su punto de vista acerca de las mujeres y los hombres y su diferente mentalidad a la hora de comprar y podemos apreciar sus consejos para un adicto...
(0 marks scored in 61 words).

- (b) Candidates who had left 40 or so words for this part of the answer were usually able to pick up another 3 to 5 marks, provided that they answered question. Prudent shopping appeared to be the norm in most countries with excesses being confined to a rich minority or tourists. Many candidates pointed to the significance of economic recession, and quite relevantly linked this to their own or their family's practices.

Some answers could not be marked as the word limit had already been exceeded. One or two candidates struggled with the meaning of *prudentemente*.

Quality of Language

The quality of candidates' Spanish, here and throughout the paper, was generally up to the standard required by this examination. Marks awarded ranged from 'Below Average' to 'Good', with most marks falling in the 'Sound' range.

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/41
Texts

Key messages

- The presentation of candidates' work needs to be legible and logical.
- Candidates who opt for an **(a)** question in **Sección Primera** are advised to note that **(i)** and **(ii)** make direct reference to the printed extract from the text and require short responses. This may mean a few words, when identifying a character or location, for example, or up to two or three sentences if required to explain events or reactions. The third part, **(iii)**, always asks the candidate to refer to the whole text and consequently must be written as an essay.
- Candidates should identify the key words in the question and keep focused on these throughout the essay. The introduction should set out the candidate's approach, explaining key points. The following paragraphs should fulfil the central task of the question. This would involve analysis, explanation or comparing and contrasting points of view, but **not** description or narration. Candidates are reminded to write well expressed conclusions, as this will enhance the marks awarded.
- Candidates are reminded to ensure that the answer given is focused and relevant to the question in the examination. Pre-rehearsed, generalised essays do not attract marks.
- Quotation from the text is only effective when used judiciously and selectively. Candidates should not include long passages from the text. Brief, relevant quotations, which are integrated into an essay, show the depth of a candidate's knowledge and support the argument.

General comments

The questions which attracted the largest number of answers were:
5(a), 7(a), 4(b), 1(a), 3(b), 7(b).

The comments in this report do not constitute required content; rather they give an indication of the material which could be used to answer the question. Examiners assess a combination of factors including knowledge of the text, focus on the question, strength and quality of the argument, understanding of the themes, characters and literary techniques, and controlled structure.

In all cases, the essential requirements are an answer which responds precisely to the question, and, except for **(a)(i)** and **(ii)**, a well-structured argument, supported by thorough knowledge of the text.

Comments on specific questions

Sección primera

Question 1 – Juan Rulfo: *Pedro Páramo*

- (a) Answers to (i) could simply be Juan Preciado and Abundio and (ii) likened to Hell. In (iii), there were a number of central themes mentioned. These included the importance of place and atmosphere in the novel; the references to Pedro Páramo, introducing the reader to his character and the theme of violence; the description of Comala, which was such a contrast to the vision of the town created for Juan Preciado by his late mother; references to the dead in Comala and the idea of purgatory. The fact that these men were half-brothers may have been hinted at in the '*gota de confianza*' which Juan Preciado sensed in Abundio. The characters were moving downhill into a suffocating atmosphere, presaging the fact that Juan Preciado would not escape, and the nature of his death. The best answers chose a theme, such as Comala representing Hell or purgatory and linked other aspects to this, showing why it was such an important image. Some candidates made the thoughtful comment that Rulfo's text was densely written and benefits from close reading in order to appreciate the quality of the language, and supported this with relevant examples.
- (b) This question asked candidates to discuss whether *Pedro Páramo* can be described as a tragic novel. The essay should then begin with a definition of tragedy in the literary sense. This does not need to be lengthy, but should make reference to the essential points. A number of candidates understood the term, but many interpreted it as 'sad', in the general sense. The most effective essays focused on Pedro Páramo himself, as both the instigator of tragedy in the lives of many people within his sphere of influence, and also as a tragic figure, due to the fatal flaw in his personality. Páramo was also seen as representative of a figure of authority, a '*cacique*', and analysed how the author showed the tragedy of society and politics in Mexico. One answer described the novel as tragic because it was full of failed dreams. This was an excellent starting point.

Question 2 – Lope de Vega: *Peribáñez y el Comendador de Ocaña*

- (a) Part (i) referred to the plot to get the Comendador into Casilda's home, involving Leonardo seducing Inés. Answers to (ii) merely needed to state that Inés was impressionable, easy led, not loyal to Casilda. The third part of the question asked candidates to discuss whether the sense of morality displayed in the extract was carried on throughout the whole play. Candidates selected elements such as selfishness (Comendador, Inés), cruel and abusive behaviour (Leonardo, Comendador) and betrayal (Inés – of Casilda, Comendador – of his position, of King). Many compared the attitudes shown here to those of Peribáñez and Casilda. Peribáñez was guilty of lying also, but for a different reason. Casilda showed loyalty at all times. The King and Queen understood the reason for Peribáñez's actions and showed good judgment. In many cases candidates compared and contrasted the moral centre of the main characters and analysed how the decisions made affected others, threatening the balance of society as a whole.
- (b) In this option, candidates were asked to assess whether Peribáñez behaved recklessly. The question was open to debate, as although Peribáñez was generally thoughtful and law-abiding, he was tempted by the trappings of luxury offered by the Comendador, for example. He was in a difficult position in that the established order of society was jeopardised when the person in charge, in this case the Comendador, was weak. This puts the murder of his superior in a different light as Peribáñez was restoring order in a chaotic situation. The Comendador was perhaps more guilty of recklessness in elevating Peribáñez's status for his own selfish ends. The behaviour of other characters could also be analysed, for example, Inés and Leonardo. Finally, after some consideration, the reaction of the Monarchs was also reasoned and not reckless.

Question 3 – Jorge Luis Borges: *Ficciones*

- (a) (i) required candidates to identify that is a law student and (ii) that he believed he had killed a Hindu in a sectarian riot. The last part of the question focused on two features which often appear in Borges' work, and seem to suggest the concept of a quest (in this case some steps are missing, indicating that the quest is not an easy one), and the idea of returning to or never reaching a destination or understanding. If the quest is a spiritual one, it could be said to be the search for goodness.
- (b) The theme of ambiguity is well represented in the *Ficciones* of Borges and candidates were able to identify at least two stories to analyse in their answer. The most popular were '*El sur*' and '*Tema del traidor y del héroe*'. Candidates are reminded that simply re-telling the story does not attract marks. The question focused on analysis of the presentation of ambiguity or confusion, in the stories, so candidates needed to focus on why Borges used the device and how it was used. Some candidates clearly found this text intriguing and responded well to the author, with appreciation of his individual style and approach.

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

- (a) The '*escándalo*' referred to in (i) was the publication of Manolita's photograph in the magazine '*Cinegramas*'. The changes referred to in (ii) included differing attitudes in society and more freedom for women, for example. In (iii), the changes caused by the effects of the Civil War could be traced throughout the play. The best essays tended to find that women were more adversely affected than men in the action portrayed in the text. Most focused on Manolita and the physical and emotional travails she endured. María was another victim and all the other women experienced penury, hunger, worry and disappointment in addition to the fear of the conflict. The male characters suffered also as the war changed their lives in so many ways. Luisito lost the opportunity of a good education. His father, Luis, could not support the family and expected to be imprisoned at the end of the war because of his political stance. One of the scenes analysed in many essays, showing how even the most caring individuals can act in a selfish way in a crisis, was that of the lentils. The reaction of the family members revealed the suffering of all. It was important to be sure to answer the question with reference to the play, and not to venture into detailed historical accounts. The playwright gave a specific interpretation of the event, from a limited point of view, and this must be the focus of candidates' responses.
- (b) This question asked candidates to discuss why the author set the play largely within the confines of the building where the characters lived. Most identified the importance of the prologue and epilogue in showing the physical devastation caused by the fighting and the changes in both Luis and Luisito, and the contrast with the setting of the rest of the play. A number of essays focused too much on narrating events inside the apartments rather than analysing why the author chose to place the action there. The Civil War was very much in the background, on the radio, in occasional conversations and sometimes heard as bomb blasts. The central focus was on the claustrophobic situation endured by the families and their friends and how they coped in an extreme situation. The idea of a '*personaje colectivo*' was an interesting interpretation. Those imprisoned in their homes could be said to represent a microcosm of society, developing a sense of community and surviving despite material deprivation and emotional and psychological distress. Others interpreted the setting as a way for the author to depict the Civil War from the point of view of civilians, possibly thus making a greater impact on the audience.

Sección segunda

Question 5 – Gabriel García Márquez: *El coronel no tiene quien le escribe*

- (a) There were three key words in this question and candidates needed to refer to all of these in the response: '*celebra*', '*sobrevivir*' and '*corrupto*'. Most answers focused on the colonel and compared him to Sabas. In expressing the idea of celebrating the life of the colonel, candidates often referred to the way the author showed how the main character maintained his dignity and principles throughout, despite grinding poverty and illness. In a fairly large number of essays it was clear that candidates had interpreted '*celebra*' as '*presenta*' or '*demuestra*', which changed the nature of the answer. Corruption was seen in the behaviour of the mayor, the lawyer and of course Sabas. The fact that the doctor agreed with the colonel's view of censorship and injustice reinforced the stance taken. The reader was prompted to admire the colonel and condemn the situation he lived in. The wider message of political comment was also understood. There was some tendency for candidates to answer on 'hope'. It was possible to make reference to this in analysing the colonel's attitude, and the importance of the cockerel to the townspeople, but did not answer the question directly as the main point of the argument.
- (b) There were some very good responses to this question, where candidates analysed aspects of literary style such as Márquez's clear language, the use of dialogue, choice of vocabulary, creation of atmosphere, symbolism, cinematic technique, omniscient narrator and use of contrast. Analysis of themes did not focus directly on the question; candidates are advised to concentrate on the key words and to plan the essay around these.

Question 6 – Isabel Allende: *Eva Luna*

- (a) The majority of answers challenged the question by arguing that the less prominent characters were significant as they all contributed to Eva's life in some way. In a number of instances the relationship seemed negative at the time but all added to her experiences and the process of moving on. In order to avoid a long list of characters and encounters it was more successful to take a small number of individuals and analyse how their interaction with Eva changed her life in some way.
- (b) The idea of '*transformación*' offered more than one interpretation and candidates are reminded to define their terms before embarking on a response. Most candidates focused on the change seen in Eva as she grew into a woman and developed her personality together with the physical and emotional change in Melecio/Mimí. There was another layer to this, namely the political commentary. The best answers combined these, showing how the themes overlapped within the stories of the individuals.

Question 7 – Federico García Lorca: *Bodas de sangre*

- (a) Virtually all candidates chose this text. The key focus in this question was that although the play is essentially Spanish in nature, the ideas can be understood by all. Candidates were expected to recognise the characteristically Spanish elements and also to show how these were universalised by the author. The play was set in an Andalusian village in southern Spain, thus the circumstances were significant in the depiction of society and attitudes. The music and other references in Act 3 were an important part of the response. Themes such as marriage, family ties and honour were often analysed. The specific experience in a very rural and conservative society was culturally and geographically correct, including the use of knives as weapons of choice as they were also essential for day to day work in the fields. The use of generic names except for Leonardo was one way in which the author moved the work from the specific to the universal. In the main, candidates recognised the overall themes but were not so confident in analysing the Spanish cultural, social or economic references.

- (b) The question focused on the concept of change. There were many good answers which tended to show how social forces limited change, or the dramatic force of fate or destiny. Candidates succeeded in embracing a range of characters in the responses. It was unusual to find both social and dramatic elements in one essay. If an essay began with the importance of the title, which seemed to presage a tragic destiny, the argument moved to an analysis of Act 3, with focus on the drama and symbolism. Those answers which began with the social aspects sometimes veered off to speculate on the future of characters after Act 3. This suggests a misunderstanding in the reading of the play as a literary text. As has been mentioned above, it was important for candidates to define what change they were referring to and to maintain a clear focus throughout the argument.

Question 8 – Rosalía de Castro: *En las orillas del Sar*

- (a) There were fewer answers on this text than the others on the Paper. Centres which chose to study the collection of poems tended to prepare students carefully in the specific task of critical commentary. Examiners are open to individual interpretation of the poem given, provided the candidate is aware of the context and has the skills and vocabulary to analyse the work effectively. There were some competent and thoughtful responses to this question.
- (b) As with (a), most candidates were well prepared and were able to choose relevant poems and to analyse them effectively. Examiners do not have preconceptions regarding the poems used and there were some very good answers to this question.

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/42
Texts

Key messages

- The presentation of candidates' work needs to be legible and logical.
- Candidates who opt for an **(a)** question in **Sección Primera** are advised to note that **(i)** and **(ii)** make direct reference to the printed extract from the text and require short responses. This may mean a few words, when identifying a character or location, for example, or up to two or three sentences if required to explain events or reactions. The third part, **(iii)**, always asks the candidate to refer to the whole text and consequently must be written as an essay.
- Candidates should identify the key words in the question and keep focused on these throughout the essay. The introduction should set out the candidate's approach, explaining key points. The following paragraphs should fulfil the central task of the question. This would involve analysis, explanation or comparing and contrasting points of view, but **not** description or narration. Candidates are reminded to write well expressed conclusions, as this will enhance the marks awarded.
- Candidates are reminded to ensure that the answer given is focused and relevant to the question in the examination. Pre-rehearsed, generalised essays do not attract marks.
- Quotation from the text is only effective when used judiciously and selectively. Candidates should not include long passages from the text. Brief, relevant quotations, which are integrated into an essay, show the depth of a candidate's knowledge and support the argument.

General comments

The texts which attracted the largest number of answers were: **4, 5** and **7**.

The comments in this report do not constitute required content; rather they give an indication of the material which could be used to answer the question. Examiners assess a combination of factors including knowledge of the text, focus on the question, strength and quality of the argument, understanding of the themes, characters and literary techniques, and controlled structure.

In all cases, the essential requirements are an answer which responds precisely to the question, and, except for **(a)(i)** and **(ii)**, a well-structured argument, supported by thorough knowledge of the text.

Comments on specific questions

Sección primera

Question 1 – Juan Rulfo: *Pedro Páramo*

- (a) The answer to (i) was Pedro Páramo and his grandmother. In (ii) Pedro seemed gentle and already infatuated with Susana. He also showed practical sense in his comments on the repairs for the mill. The grandmother displayed the ability to cope in difficult financial circumstances and powers of understanding of her grandson. Answers to (iii) could cover a wide range. The main contrast between this scene from Pedro Páramo's childhood to more recent times was that in the extract, there was a sense of life and community rather than death, purgatory and misery. The mention of Susana linked both together and gave candidates the opportunity to analyse the impact she had on the life of Pedro and of Comala.
- (b) This question asked candidates to name the interlinked stories and show how the author united them. Most candidates identified the stories of Juan Preciado, Pedro Páramo and either Susana San Juan or Dolores Preciado. The stories were linked by the way Pedro Páramo entered their lives and affected them.

Question 2 – Lope de Vega: *Peribáñez y el Comendador de Ocaña*

- (a) Part (i) referred to the song about Casilda and the Comendador. In (ii), Peribáñez had concerns about the gossip circulating about his wife and the Comendador, threatening his reputation. The best responses to (iii) would include information about the nature of the relationship between Casilda and Peribáñez, with reference to their speeches at the beginning of the play. The Comendador had no respect for marriage and Leonardo was prepared to demean it also in his seduction of Inés for the benefit of his master. It was relevant to consider the relationship between the King and Queen, as it was possible to observe how they responded to one another in a spirit of trust and respect, in the same way as Casilda and Peribáñez. The stability of society depended on such institutions as marriage and just government.
- (b) In this option candidates were asked to analyse how the author presented the psychological development of two characters. Most chose Peribáñez and the Comendador. Both of these individuals changed over the course of the play, largely due to the decisions made by the Comendador. He chose to act in a way which threatened the stability of society and the lives of Peribáñez and Casilda in particular. As the Comendador continued to abuse his position, Peribáñez rose to fulfil the duties conferred on him, to protect his honour and that of his wife. The violence of the Comendador's execution saw a significant change in Peribáñez, but this was to benefit the greater good, not a selfish act. The Comendador recognised his mistakes, but too late.

Question 3 – Jorge Luis Borges: *Ficciones*

- (a) In (i), the importance of Martín Fierro's presence explained the reason behind the vengeance sought by 'el negro'. Part (ii) referred to Recabarren, the paralysed onlooker, witness of the incident. In the third part of the question, candidates were asked to analyse how the final sentences contributed to the overall understanding of the themes of the story. In essence this could be expressed in the idea that one man represents every man, that the victim could also be his own killer, and whether it is possible to reverse guilt. These concepts can be found in other stories by Borges. In responding, candidates were expected to analyse how the author built up the narrative to the point of denouement, but not to tell the story.
- (b) The theme of chaos, including the sense of the individual being lost in the world, is well represented in the *Ficciones* of Borges and candidates were able to identify at least two stories to analyse in their answer. The most popular were '*Funes el memorioso*', '*La biblioteca de Babel*' and '*Tlon, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius*'. Candidates are reminded that re-telling or narrating the story does not attract marks. The question focused on analysing to what extent Borges succeeded in creating a chaotic world in the stories. Candidates needed to focus on where it appeared and what it represented, in their view. Some candidates clearly found this text intriguing and responded well to the author, with appreciation of his individual style and approach and a unique way of interpreting the world as he saw it.

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

- (a) The response to (i) only needed to identify Luisito's wish that Charo should take the piece of paper with her, as he had written a poem for her. Part (ii) followed on from this, as Luisito seemed to be nervous and unsure of himself, typical of a young teenager. In (iii), candidates were asked to analyse how Luis grew up over the course of the play, taking into account the effects of the Civil War. Many essays covered the contrast seen in Luisito in the Prologue and Epilogue. It was important not to narrate Luisito's life but to select significant episodes, show how he reacted to them and analyse how his perceptions and beliefs developed as a result.
- (b) This question asked candidates to analyse how the author explored the challenges faced by the characters and to what extent they succeeded in maintaining a strong moral stance. There were a number of possible approaches to this, for example, concentrating on the decisions taken by a few specific characters or by selecting incidents and examining how these showed moral dilemmas. Many analysed the 'lentils' episode and the events surrounding the relationship between Luisito and María. There were some thoughtful observations on the change in moral attitude, for example the way Doña Antonia accepted Pedro's girlfriend in her home.

Sección segunda

Question 5 – Gabriel García Márquez: *El coronel no tiene quien le escribe*

- (a) This question asked candidates to focus on two elements, namely the fact that the colonel was a proud character and whether this attitude was positive or negative for him. There were several approaches to this. Some felt that the colonel suffered unduly, and inflicted misery on his wife by creating a false impression of coping, others argued that his fierce independence was what kept him going. His wife colluded in this by boiling stones when they had no food, for example. The best essays succeeded in comparing and contrasting positive and negative effects.
- (b) This question focused on how the title helps the reader to understand the novel overall. The most effective responses began with an analysis of the title itself, mentioning, for example, the military rank of the main character, the sense of isolation, and pathos because no-one ever writes to him. The title also suggests that the outcome is pre-determined and this could influence the way the reader approaches the text. The analysis could then consider how the colonel was presented, why his situation had arisen and the way in which the reader was drawn in to his life and understood the focus of the novel.

Question 6 – Isabel Allende: *Eva Luna*

- (a) Candidates were asked to analyse the structure of the novel and determine to what extent the text showed careful planning, or whether it seemed confusing. A possible starting point could be that the novel was written in such a way as to reflect Eva Luna's life – a series of episodes which at first sight may be unconnected, but which eventually coalesce into a unified whole. In a similar way, the break in narration from Eva to Rolf seemed to interrupt, but it was eventually brought into the main story and enhanced it.
- (b) This question asked candidates to analyse to what extent the novel could be said to be a criticism of society at the time. Candidates needed to keep the focus of their answers firmly on the text. Providing detailed knowledge of the history of Chile did not attract marks. It was possible to give a good response by selecting examples of specific aspects of society raised in the novel and then analyse how these were presented. Such topics could include the role of women, poverty, racial minorities, understanding of other minority groups, dissent and political awareness.

Question 7 – Federico García Lorca: *Bodas de sangre*

- (a) Virtually all candidates chose this text. In this question the quotation from the Novia was given as the stimulus to the response, where candidates were asked to show to what extent her comment helped the reader to understand the play. The best answers dealt with the quotation itself in the opening paragraph, defining the sentiment expressed. Most felt that the Novia was proclaiming her sincerity and honesty – she fully intended to marry the Novio and had not planned to run away with Leonardo. The essay would then proceed to analyse what had driven her to behave the way she did. This was generally explained as the force of passion, which completely overwhelmed her.
- (b) In this question, candidates had to consider whether there was any kind of resolution at the end of the play. This involved analysing to what extent the ending was presaged throughout the play; if the circumstances were inevitable; how far the characters deserved the outcome. It was essential to keep focused on the events in the play as some candidates speculated on the future lives of characters, which was not appropriate.

Question 8 – Rosalía de Castro: *En las orillas del Sar*

- (a) There were fewer answers on this text than the others on the Paper. Centres which chose to study the collection of poems tended to prepare students carefully in the specific task of critical commentary. Examiners are open to individual interpretation of the poem given, provided the candidate is aware of the context and has the skills and vocabulary to analyse the work effectively. There were some competent and thoughtful responses to this question.
- (b) As with (a), most candidates were well prepared and were able to choose relevant poems and to analyse them effectively. Examiners do not have preconceptions regarding the poems used provided they are integrated into the argument, which is focused directly on the question.