

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

The majority candidates taking the examination were first language speakers who were able to show clear understanding of the topics in good Spanish. Comprehension of the two texts dealing with the need for appropriate waste management 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.

The papers were usually well presented, although there were still a few candidates whose handwriting made their answers difficult to read. 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 1

Question 1

Most candidates scored at least three marks, and marks higher than this were not uncommon. Only a few tried to paraphrase the expressions in their own words, rather than try to find the expressions in the text.

- (a) Nearly every candidate was successful in identifying this phrase.
- (b) This phrase was also readily identified, although marks were commonly lost for the omission of either *con el fin de...* or *...en ellos*.
- (c) Again there was very successful identification of this phrase. A small number of candidates did not score when they omitted an adjective to qualify *actividades*.

- (d) Widely well-answered, although some candidates incorrectly chose *inundan las costas or se acumulan en el sedimento*.
- (e) This was well-answered too. Some answers were invalidated by the omission *los...* or the unnecessary inclusion of *algunos de...*

Question 2

The first language candidates all performed well on this challenging exercise. Scores higher than three were not uncommon.

- (a) Most came up with a correct version of *la importancia de/que tiene no contaminar*. When candidates went astray it was often because they tried to include the *es* from the text and produced answers such as *la importancia es no contaminar* which just did not work.
- (b) Nearly every candidate appeared to be familiar with the construction *hay que + infinitive*. However, finding the infinitive from which *prevengamos* derives caused occasional unexpected difficulty. Incorrect answers included *prevengar, preventar, previnir* and *prever*.
- (c) Very few correct answers were recorded. A need for the subjunctive after *para que...* was almost universally recognised, but not the fact that when following *llevaron...* the tense required was the imperfect subjunctive. Accurate answers of *(la) llevaron para que fuera/fuese pesada* were very few and far between and, frustratingly, sometimes invalidated by the omission of *llevaron*. Incorrect answers of *llevaron para que sea pesada* proved to be the norm.
- (d) Mixed results were recorded here. When candidates realised that they should begin their answer with *no solo...* they knew where *sino que* would fall into place and invariably completed the transformation correctly. Some candidates used synonyms of the verb *provoca*. This was acceptable in most cases, but should not be encouraged.
- (e) This was done well by the vast majority of candidates. Occasionally the mark was lost when the present perfect *han sido* was used instead of *fueron*.

Question 3

The text, reporting on initiatives to clear rubbish from beaches in Ecuador and why these were necessary, was generally well understood. Candidates who gave clear, detailed answers to the questions in their own words achieved high marks. Some candidates lost marks when, possibly involuntarily, they copied five or more words directly from the text.

- (a) Most candidates got off to a good start with many scoring at least two marks out of three. The objectives of ridding the beaches of rubbish and reminding people of the importance of not contaminating the natural environment were readily identified. Many candidates, quite legitimately, used the cue from 2a as a means to avoid lifting. Showing comprehension of the third point, about changing the attitudes of those who cause contamination, often proved to be a little more challenging, with attempts such as *concienciar a la poblacion sobre sus comportamientos* ruled as not being close enough to the idea.
- (b) Again, two from three, was quite a common score. Some candidates clearly noted all three of the Minister's calls to action – that everybody should play their part in caring for the beaches, act before the damage is done and prevent the ruining of the natural environment. A number of others were distracted by the example of how a cigarette end contaminates fifty litres of water and attempted to use this as their third action point. Perhaps this is an indication that some candidates think they need to summarise everything in each paragraph rather than focus on the question asked.
- (c) Answers here were to be found in the first and final sentences of the paragraph. A number of candidates focused solely on one of these sentences, thereby missing out on maximum marks.
- (d) Two from three was again often the mark achieved. The unpleasant sight of rubbish in the sea and on its shores was readily identified. Nearly every candidate recognised the toxic effect it had on marine life. To score the third mark full details were required about how plastic disintegrated into particles which get into the sediment and are then ingested by fish and invertebrates.

- (e) A number of candidates did not give sufficient detail in their answers to score the marks available here. Firstly, it was necessary to say that environmental awareness should be developed in those who use the coastal areas – not people in general. Many suggested that rubbish needed to be collected, when idea was that it had to be done in an appropriate way. The final part was often answered *hay que mejorar la depuración de las aguas*, without the essential *residuales* or *negras*.

Sección 2

Question 4

Candidates showed good understanding of perceived deficiencies in waste management in Spain, although some of the finer points were only appreciated by the more able.

- (a) The full range of marks was awarded for this question. Although there were a number of ways of scoring the first mark – *no recicla la mitad/una gran parte etc. de los residuos, no cumple con la normativa europea* or *hay bajos niveles de recuperación de la basura* – not so many candidates successfully stated one of them. Most scored the second mark, provided that they made clear that most of Spain's rubbish ended up in landfill sites. The third point, although usually clearly understood, was often negated by the direct copying of *...de reciclaje de restos orgánicos*.
- (b) Most candidates seemed to be very familiar with the recycling concept involved here, and it was only those who omitted some of the details or copied five or more words who did not score all three marks. It was necessary to say that the bottle should be returned to the point of purchase, where the customer would receive a small sum of money (*recibe 10 o 20 céntimos por...* was often a common lift) which had been included in the purchase price.
- (c) Four marks were on offer for this question and most candidates scored well. An avoidable stumbling block was direct copying of phrases from *...recicla el 70% de sus envases de plástico y cartón, y más del 60% de sus botellas y envases de vidrio*. The points about the director's opinion that Spain already had an efficient recycling system and the reliability of the audited figures were usually clearly stated.
- (d) This proved to be a fairly accessible question and scores of two or three were often the norm. The idea of false figures and statistics was highlighted twice in the paragraph and very few candidates neglected to mention it. The allegation that some of the production of packaging was concealed was readily identified, although *parte de la producción de* proved to be a common lift. The inclusion of other waste, such as metals, was usually successfully noted.
- (e) To score both the final comprehension marks it was necessary to make a distinction in the answer between consequences for the Spanish public and the local authorities: the former having to pay more for their rubbish collection and the latter having to investigate new ways of disposing of it. Candidates who did not make this distinction or those who directly copied *...para la gestión de residuos* (easily avoided by using an infinitive *para gestionar los residuos*) ended up with one mark.

Question 5

A small, but not insignificant, number of candidates disregarded 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 the second part.

- (a) This question generally produced disappointing answers with scores higher than half marks being the exception rather than the norm. Gifted candidates who had achieved good or even excellent marks elsewhere often struggled here. Although there appeared to be a certain amount of increased familiarity with the techniques required for this type of summary, too many candidates simply did not answer the question and listed the initiatives rather than stating why they were needed.

There was still a tendency to give general summaries of the texts, to point out how the two were linked, to waste words with superfluous starters such as *en el primer texto/en el segundo texto* and to make generalisations which were usually too vague to score. Answers such as *En el texto 1, se habla acerca de la contaminación de las playas y los planes para promover la limpieza de estas. Por otro lado, en el texto2, se hace mención a la situación actual en España, que se encuentra en*

una crisis debido a los programas de reciclaje que no están funcionando... use up 51 words and score 0 for content.

What is required in order to achieve a good mark is to note, in the very limited number of words available, details from the texts which answer the question which has been asked. For example, the answer which begins *Son necesarias para prevenir la destrucción del medioambiente ✓ y educar a la gente de la importancia de no contaminar. ✓ Hay basura en la costa ✓ que no es solo una vista desagradable ✓ sino que también afecta la vida marina ✓ ...* scores 5 marks in only 37 words. It is the relevant specific details, here with no restraints on copying directly from the text, (other than that this will not be considered when awarding the quality of language mark), which score the marks.

It should also be remembered that the mark scheme does not reward personal opinions in this part of the question.

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

Waste management in their own countries was an issue which every candidate had something to say about and, as was to be expected, answers varied according to the locations. A common theme seemed to be that there was a lot more that needed to be done.

Quality of Language

As was to be expected from predominantly first language candidates, the quality of written Spanish was generally excellent. Customary blemishes included the lack of accents, misspelling of words, (particularly *v* for *b*, or vice versa, *y* for *ll*, and *c* for *s*), and widespread use of anglicisms.

Unless they had been penalised for scoring zero in any of the comprehension questions, candidates were almost always awarded maximum marks in all three quality of language assessments.

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/22
Reading and Writing

Key messages

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

General comments

The examination provided an appropriate level of challenge and discriminated well, with a wide range of marks awarded to candidates from across the ability range. Most candidates taking 9719 were first language speakers who were able to show clear understanding of the topic in good Spanish. Candidates taking 8685 were invariably candidates of Spanish as a foreign language who, despite lacking the same fluency of expression, were also able to demonstrate comprehension commensurate with their ability.

Scripts were well presented, and few candidates appeared to have had difficulty in meeting the time constraints of the examination. Awareness of the techniques required for this examination was good on the whole 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), sometimes invalidated a mark for comprehension. In **Question 5**, a small number of candidates exceeded the permitted number of words, which meant that part, or sometimes all, of their personal response could not be assessed.

Comprehension of the two texts, dealing with demands made upon health services in different parts of the world, was generally good and gave candidates ample opportunity to demonstrate their skills in paraphrasing original text.

Comments on specific questions

Sección 1

Question 1

Most candidates scored at least three marks, and marks higher than this were not uncommon.

- (a) The target phrase was usually identified. Some 8685 candidates incorrectly answered *la gravedad de su condición es subjetiva*.
- (b) Nearly every candidate was successful in identifying this phrase. A few omitted ...*suced*.

- (c) There were two expressions – (*mejor*) *valorados por los ciudadanos* and (*lo*) *que gusta al público*– which matched the cue. The majority of candidates successfully identified one of them.
- (d) Widely well-answered, although some answers were invalidated when prefaced by *que...* A few thought that *no subestime el riesgo de error humano* could be the answer.
- (e) This was well-answered too. Some answers were invalidated by the addition of *...de la incidencia* at the end of the phrase.

Question 2

This proved to be a challenging exercise.

- (a) Quite a few candidates used the verb *llevar* or *son*. This invalidated the answer. Equally some answers which correctly used *están* could not be accepted as they were arranged in such a way that would not fit back into the original text e.g. *desde hace varias semanas que están saturados*.
- (b) This was a great challenge, especially for 8685 candidates. They often found difficulty in using a passive infinitive or subjunctive after *está pendiente de...* and incorrect answers such as *está pendiente de le ha llamado* or *está pendiente que llamado* were not uncommon. Others wrongly used a tense that indicated that the patient had already been called e.g. *está pendiente de que le hayan llamado*.
- (c) This was answered well by 9719 candidates. Quite a few 8685 candidates showed unfamiliarity with the construction *soler* + infinitive and submitted incorrect answers such as *el servicio suele bastante rápido*, or *el servicio suele es bastante rápido*.
- (d) This proved to be challenging for candidates of all abilities. A common incorrect answer was *a quien podría ser atendido*.
- (e) This was well done by 9719 candidates. Quite a few 8685 candidates did not supply the subjunctive after *es importante que...* In other instances, they did not use the pronoun *lo*, even if they had used the subjunctive *vea*.

Question 3

The text, reporting on the difficulties experienced by A&E units in Spain during winter months, was generally well understood. A number of less able candidates often successfully identified parts of the text that would answer questions, and then endeavoured to ‘tweak’ the word order in order to avoid copying directly. Only when this technique produced coherent answers was it rewarded. Candidates who showed comprehension by answering in their own words fared better, especially in the mark awarded for quality of language.

- (a) Most candidates got off to a good start with many scoring at least two marks out of three. A few were not specific enough when they answered that *hospitales estaban saturados*, rather than A&E units. Provided that direct copying was avoided, most were able to give examples of the result of overcrowding *pacientes – duermen en pasillos/en camillas* etc. Similarly, the fact that medical personnel were exhausted or worried about making mistakes was often correctly identified.
- (b) The mark awarded for saying that people go to A&E as they know that there will always be a doctor available was scored by many. The idea of not wanting to wait for an appointment with the family doctor, or the need to go somewhere where they would be seen more quickly, was also readily identified, although there were a few lifts of *la cita con su médico de cabecera*. The concept of a medical condition perceived to be worsening in advance of a surgical intervention proved to be a little more difficult to unpick, and even more so to paraphrase. Less precise answers such as *si el problema es urgente acude a urgencias* were not rewarded.
- (c) The question discriminated well and a full range of marks was awarded, with candidates endeavouring to supply a range of details to meet the demands of a four mark question. To score two of the marks it was necessary to clarify the reasons why people go to A&E, namely that they receive rapid attention and that they like the number of tests which are carried out. A number of answers missed the point that A&E services were highly valued, and some copied directly from the text *mejor valorados por la población*. The final point about the percentage of patients truly

requiring urgent medical attention was usually successfully made, unless it contained the lift *10% de los que llegan*.

- (d) Only the more able candidates scored maximum marks here, with the majority finding difficulty in understanding that medical personnel should not view less acute patients as a problem. The need for the personnel to be alert to spotting serious cases amidst a crowd of non-urgent ones appeared to be widely understood and, slightly less so, that they should not underestimate the risk of making mistakes. There were quite a few lifts of *reconocer un paciente grave entre la multitud* and *en su centro de atención primaria*.
- (e) Less able candidates found this to be a challenging question. Answers often mixed the verbs *prever*, *prevenir* and *anticipar*, or did not mention that the flu occurred every year and no prior plans had been made. There were quite a few lifts of *la incidencia de la gripe*.

Sección 2

Question 4

Candidates showed good understanding of how new technology was being used to cover gaps in healthcare in Bolivia, although some of the finer points were only appreciated by the more able.

- (a) This question was well answered in general, with many candidates scoring maximum or near maximum marks. The points about using advanced technology or telecommunications to exchange medical information and to provide medical attention at distance were clearly understood. Marks were lost when it was stated that medical information was changed (*cambiar información médica*), or when there was direct copying of *el intercambio de información médica* or *servicios de salud a distancia*.
- (b) Many candidates scored one out of three. This was for answers related to *la propagación de enfermedades contagiosas*. Some candidates neatly avoided the common lift *dos de cada diez personas* by expressing the numbers in an equivalent form *1 de 5*. Some became muddled and expressed the opposite idea by not using a negative form of the verb: *dos de cada diez tenían acceso a servicios sanitarios*. Only a few candidates understood that *la salud era un lujo*.
- (c) A lot of candidates understood that rural health care centres had been equipped with advanced technology. Not so many were able to show understanding that these centres can be connected with A&E departments from the regional capitals where specialists might assist with diagnosis. Quite a few answers copied from the text *unidad de emergencias de la capital de la región*.
- (d) The idea that rural doctors would be able to work with consultants from hospitals was understood by most. More difficulty was encountered in expressing that they would be able to control their stock of medicines and do in-service training without leaving their place of work. Sometimes both these ideas were incorrectly combined: *puede pedir más fármacos sin abandonar su trabajo*. The verb *capacitarse* seemed to be a barrier for quite a few candidates. Frequent lifts were *especialistas de los principales hospitales del país* and *en su centro de salud*.
- (e) Quite a few candidates scored two out of three marks. They understood that Bolivia's international reputation had increased, but some did not mention that this was related to health services. Equally they were not awarded the mark if the answers did not include that the government had been able to reduce their expenditure in health services. Provided that lifts were avoided, there were many correct answers to the third point: that rural communities would experience less social exclusion. There was extensive lifting of *prestigio internacional del país en terminos sanitarios*, *gastos estatales en la salud* and *exclusión social de comunidades aisladas*.

Question 5

The majority of candidates had been well prepared in the techniques needed to answer this question. A small, but not insignificant, number of candidates 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 is disregarded, and in extreme cases this can lead to no marks being awarded for the second part.

- (a) To achieve a good mark it is essential to note, in the limited number of words available, details from the texts which answer the question which has been asked. In this exercise, candidates are not

penalised for copying directly from the text(s). It should be remembered, however, that any copied material will not be considered in the Quality of Language mark. Candidates should also refrain from offering personal opinions in this part of the question.

Better scores were often achieved by candidates who wrote in their own words, allowing themselves to be considerably more concise than those who relied heavily on sentences from the texts. Quite a few candidates scored $\frac{5}{6}$. Some candidates still persisted in wasting words on unnecessary introductions: *Entre los textos 1 y 2 se puede identificar varios problemas relacionados con la sanidad...* Some answers scored lower marks because, when referring to the second text, they described what Telesalud consisted of, rather than answering the question and summarising the difficulties which it helped to overcome. Some wasted valuable words with comparisons between the two texts, instead of selecting relevant details from both.

- (b) Most candidates were aware that what is required here is one or two details which answer the question, which are, whenever possible, different from anything contained in the texts, and a clear personal opinion. Additionally, this is an opportunity to display familiarity with more complex linguistic structures. Access to healthcare in their own countries was something which every candidate had something to say about and, as was to be expected, answers varied according to the locations. A common theme seemed to be that healthcare was excellent – if you paid for it!

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 Sound, Good, or Very Good bands.

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/41
Texts

Key messages

The best answers combined a clear response to the question, detailed knowledge of the text and a well-constructed argument.

Candidates showed better organisation in their answers, and focused more closely on the question set. The formula of 'point, example, explain, link' was successfully employed by many.

Candidates must answer 3 questions in total in order to attain a satisfactory grade in this Paper. A significant number of scripts had fewer than 3 answers.

Centres are encouraged to remind candidates that the answers must be legible, as examiners can only assess what they are able to read.

General comments

The entry this Session showed positive improvement in examination technique in approaching questions. Most answers showed understanding and application of essay writing skills as well as knowledge of the texts. There were fewer examples of rubric infringement where both **(a)** and **(b)** options of a question were answered. Unusually, a significant number of scripts did not include 3 full answers.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Benito Pérez Galdós: *Misericordia*

- (a)** Candidates identified Juliana as the speaker and explained that she turned to Benina for help as Benina had always shown kindness and understanding to Paca and her family.

The 'tema central', as seen in the final pages of the novel, centred on Benina. Some identified this as 'misericordia', showing how she had worked selflessly all her life to serve others, with examples of her acts of charity. Many compared Benina's attitude to life with that of other main characters, to very good effect. Benina was the moral compass, the confessor who at the end of the novel tells Juliana to go home and sin no more. The parallel with Jesus was often discussed, as was Benina's virtually saint-like status.

- (b)** This question was generally well answered. Money has a pivotal role to play in the novel both in terms of physical survival and as an indicator of social standing. The best essays considered Galdós' intentions in writing the novel and discussed the plight of the impoverished majority of characters in the text, from several strata of society. This then led to analysis of the nature of society depicted by Galdós, in particular its values.

Question 2

Lope de Vega: *El caballero de Olmedo*

- (a) Most candidates responded correctly to (i) and (ii), identifying Alonso advising Rodrigo and showing kindness towards him. Rodrigo suffered physical injury in his fall, but was most distressed by the public humiliation he felt.

Alonso's key failing was not always identified clearly, leading to over use of narrative and generalised comments. As could be seen in the printed extract, Alonso reacts in a humane and generous way towards Rodrigo, unaware that this action could be construed negatively. This inability to assess the effect of his actions on others, together with a generous nature and possibly arrogant self-belief meant that he would not heed warnings and could not imagine that another noble would be a threat to him. Good answers analysed his recklessness, acknowledging his sincere feelings for Inés and his parents as well as respect for Rodrigo. His relationship with Fabia was also seen as a weakness.

- (b) The best answers to this question analysed Tello's role without narrating his involvement in the plot. As the 'gracioso' to be expected in a Golden Age play, Lope de Vega made Tello more interesting and unusual than the norm. He plays the traditional role of supporting his master, but seems to highlight Alonso's lack of common sense and is more instrumental in encouraging and guiding him. Tello moralises by warning Fabia that using magic could end badly, warns Alonso to behave with more decorum but at the same time recommends and engineers schemes whereby Alonso and Inés deceive Pedro. Tello plays the stereotypical role as the witty servant who boasts, is materialistic and cowardly at heart. Tello acts as the link between different groups of characters, which keeps the plot moving. His loyalty to Alonso is clear in the final scenes where again Tello's pragmatism contrasts with Alonso's more unwordly approach to life.

Question 3

Laura Esquivel: *Como agua para chocolate*

- (a) This was a popular text. Virtually all candidates commented correctly on (i) and (ii), although some answers to (ii) were over-long. This part of the question only requires a brief response using material from the printed extract.

In (iii), some candidates analysed all the characters without focusing on the precise wording of the question '... Esquivel presenta a los personajes para que, aunque tengan aspectos poco simpáticos, podamos comprenderlos.' Those individuals who lend themselves more appropriately to this response would be Rosaura, Pedro and Mamá Elena. There were some very good analyses of these characters showing how the author presented their actions in light of social conventions and past experiences in such a way that although the reader may still not be sympathetic to them, he or she understands why they behaved in a particular manner.

- (b) A number of candidates interpreted this question too literally and described the family's house and how the rooms were used. The essence of the question was to see the home as a microcosm, reflecting a wider social setting and presenting a range of contemporary issues. The basic conflict could be defined as tradition versus progress. This can be analysed in terms of the Mexican Revolution, the background of the text; the role of women – challenged specifically by Gertrudis; traditional/family expectations as defined in the Manual de Carreño and imposed by Mamá Elena; the rich heritage of Mexico as shown in the influence of the native skills in cooking and medicine; the USA, to mention some.

Question 4

Rodolfo Usigli: *El gesticulador*

- (a) This text attracted many answers. Most candidates answered (i) and (ii) briefly and correctly. Estrella represents the political party and César Rubio takes on the persona of his historical namesake.

The theme of myth in the text was sometimes discussed only as lies or deception. The best answers showed that myth is more than that. Mythical status represents ideals. César Rubio

certainly lied but he responded to what the Mexican people needed – to personify the ideals of the Revolution rather than the failure and corruption it had come to be. César had experience in creating an illusion in his previous life as a university teacher; the family borrowed furniture when entertaining to hide their relative poverty. Bolton was his closest collaborator; man is susceptible to believe in fiction when it suits his own ends. The mythification of César was seen in his presence in the placards after his death, symbolising his immortality. These essays showed understanding of Usigli's intention to show how the people need a hero figure and how myths can be created or at least kept alive.

- (b) Answers to this question were generally more focused on the question than those on option (a). Candidates showed understanding of the political setting and the message of the play. The consensus was that Usigli found the Mexican Revolution to have failed. The people had been deceived by politicians like Navarro, who were corrupt liars, and therefore had no voice. The most blatant example of this manipulation was perhaps Navarro himself, who had killed the real César Rubio, then colluded in the deception of the resurrected hero but then orders the murder of the false César Rubio, again, for his own political gains. Historical truth is hidden.

Section 2

Question 5

Ramón J. Sender: *Réquiem por un campesino español*

- (a) This was a popular text and question. The best answers considered the effect of both titles in terms of the themes and the author's intentions. The second title was supported as more apt because it emphasised the role of Paco as a representative of the Spanish people in the period before the Civil War. Mosén Millán was still a key character, and provided continuity. The Church, in the person of Mosén Millán, and the nobility were criticised through their behaviour towards Paco, and by extension, the villagers as a whole and the majority of the population without privilege. The scene was set for the future conflict.
- (b) Effective answers to this question tended to focus on Paco and his developing awareness of the inequalities in the society in which he lives. Mosén Millán appears to be a benign influence but gradually the reader, alongside Paco, discovers that Christian charity only goes so far. Paco has to challenge the person who has been a second father to him and to stand up to the forces of tradition in the absent landowners. The tragic outcome, a result of betrayal, underlines how entrenched the old ideas are and that it took considerable courage to stand up to them. Paco's requiem was not attended by any of his friends or supporters a year after his death, showing solidarity with his views against the establishment.

Question 6

Isabel Allende: *Eva Luna*

- (a) Many candidates chose to study this text and both question options were popular.

It was important to approach this question with an analytical rather than narrative focus. Good answers examined the range of Eva's experiences and relationships throughout the novel, with the parallel account of Rolf's life. The lessons Eva learned on the way seemed to lead to a successful relationship with someone else who had had to become self-reliant. Both individuals reached a position where they understood themselves as a result of the challenges they had faced and had a clear vision of their future aims.

- (b) Answers to this question were most successful when candidates gave detailed analyses of several characters, showing to what extent the individuals succeeded through strength of character and/or selfishness. The majority decided that strength was required and some degree of self-protection for survival was common. This did not mean that the character was egotistical by nature, but sometimes had to behave in this way in order to survive a difficult situation. Most main characters had a social conscience. Many essays made thoughtful assessments of the depiction of the socio-political setting of the novel, to good effect.

Question 7

Federico García Lorca: *La casa de Bernarda Alba*

- (a) Virtually all candidates answered on this text and both options were popular.

The question asked candidates to analyse Martirio's role in the play. Although most knew the narrative, a number were unclear about Martirio's actions in the final scene. The majority of answers concentrated on the relationship between Martirio and Adela throughout the play. This was helpful but tended to omit a number of aspects of her character. The most successful essays found a way of structuring the response to cover her role both dramatically and thematically. The significance of her name was often discussed – she suffered in many ways, both physically and psychologically. She is closest in age to Adela, but not as beautiful; she had been let down by a prospective suitor at Bernarda's insistence due to the difference in social rank; she has directly suffered because of Bernarda's pride; she resents Angustias' engagement and Adela's illicit affair with Pepe as she is jealous of them both; she voices the plight of women in that society who are subject to the whims of men; she supports Bernarda's condemnation of women who sin. Martirio is a complex character and links all aspects of the play dramatically, and is the instigator of Adela's suicide by implying that Bernarda has killed Pepe.

- (b) This question was probably the most widely answered of the whole Paper. Candidates understood the concept and identified it as a central theme in the play. The best essays included a wider range of aspects, supported by references to the text. All referred to the plight of the daughters and the triangle of Angustias/Adela/Pepe. Interestingly, few commented on Pepe's acceptance of the arrangement or of the way he was prepared to take advantage of Adela. La Poncia also contributed to the analysis of 'esta crítica'; she counselled Adela to wait until Angustias died in childbirth to have her chance to marry Pepe and gave the impression that this was common practice. La Poncia depended on Bernarda for her income, as did her sons, so her first instinct was for self-preservation, maintaining the reputation of her employer. At the same time she was aware of an impending tragedy within the household and attempted to avert it. Both Bernarda and la Poncia behaved hypocritically. Amelia and Magdalena offer insights into the suffering of the daughters, and are rarely included. Amelia has no confidence and is afraid of everything, especially the world outside, seen when she talks about the stars. Magdalena is direct and clear-thinking; she is under no illusions about the prospects of marrying, rather pragmatically would prefer to work like the men rather than waste her life away in the prison of the house. Interestingly she was the one who mourned her father most and presents a contrast to the other sisters in her down-to-earth attitude. It is important to show the effect of society's hold on the way of life as depicted in exchanges with Prudencia and the tragic incident of 'la hija de la Librada'. The figure of Bernarda has to be central to the essay and her statements in the final scene emphasise how entrenched her views are.

Candidates generally know this text well. One of the main factors in producing a good essay is to structure the answer carefully to cover a range of aspects without repetition. As mentioned above, it is also helpful to consider the impact of all characters in the play rather than concentrate on the central few; this includes the role of María Josefa who offers valuable insights.

Question 8

Varios, ed Gordon Brotherston: *Spanish American Modernista Poets*

- (a), (b) There was a small number of answers on this text.

As is always the case in poetry, Examiners are keen to reward individual interpretation of the work, provided this is supported by reference to specific examples and understanding of the particular poet's work. Essays tend to be very individual, and are marked as such.

SPANISH

Paper 8665/42
Texts

Key messages

The best answers combined a clear response to the question, detailed knowledge of the text and a well-constructed argument.

Candidates showed better organisation in their answers, and focused more closely on the question set. The formula of 'point, example, explain, link' was successfully employed by many.

Candidates must answer 3 questions in total in order to attain a satisfactory grade in this Paper. A significant number of scripts had fewer than 3 answers.

Centres are encouraged to remind candidates that the answers must be legible, as examiners can only assess what they are able to read.

General comments

The entry this Session showed positive improvement in examination technique in approaching questions. Most answers showed understanding and application of essay writing skills as well as knowledge of the texts. There were fewer examples of rubric infringement where both **(a)** and **(b)** options of a question were answered. Unusually, a significant number of scripts did not include 3 full answers.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Benito Pérez Galdós: *Misericordia*

There were few answers on this text, therefore comments are brief.

- (a)** Having completed the brief response to **(i)** and **(ii)**, the majority of the answer was in part **(iii)**. This could be tackled in a number of ways. Fantasy and reality appear in several contexts in the novel. Almudena has his own beliefs which could be interpreted as fantasy. Many individuals live in a world of fantasy in that they do not acknowledge their real situations. Benina, perhaps the most pragmatic character in the novel, creates a fantasy of an imagined benefactor to conceal the fact that she begs in the street for money, only to find the fantasy made reality.
- (b)** This question focused on Galdós' intention in writing the novel. He wished to show the depth of problems suffered by the poor, the inequalities in society, lack of Christian charity and the perceived importance of social status and lack of a moral centre. The omniscient narrator is able to paint an objective picture to allow the reader to experience the lives of the characters without prejudice.

Question 2

Lope de Vega: *El caballero de Olmedo*

Candidates generally showed understanding of the text and the main themes.

- (a) In (i) and (ii), candidates were able to explain that the King saw his main role as that of supreme judge, and that the traitors denounced by Tello are Rodrigo and Fernando. Responses to part (iii) outlined the structure of society, with the King at the top of the pyramid, followed by the nobility, with the peasants, in the largest numbers, at the bottom. The King had complete control; the nobles were bound by a code of behaviour but those at the bottom of the scale had no status. However all citizens were able to appeal to the King for justice, as seen here by Tello. Alonso generally behaved honourably 'imaginando bodas' when he first saw Inés. He lived by the code of honour for knights, whereas Rodrigo did not. Alonso was not entirely blameless in his actions but any shortcomings were overwhelmed by Rodrigo's shameful betrayal of the code in ambushing Alonso, alone, at night, with no hope of defending himself. Such actions threatened the harmony of society, challenging the status quo. The King therefore punished Rodrigo and Fernando severely and immediately, thus re-establishing a harmonious society.
- (b) Rural life versus city/court life was a frequent theme in Lope de Vega's plays. Here, the characters are not members of the peasantry and the setting is used to both dramatic and thematic effect. Tradition is represented in the ballad and customs in the fiestas and bullfight. The nobles bring confusion and disruption to the lives of Inés and her family and introduce deception and lies to the stable home. The setting of Alonso's death is deep in the countryside and the author creates an atmospheric and frightening scene where the wildness of the landscape is reflected in the violence played out.

Question 3

Laura Esquivel: *Como agua para chocolate*

This was a popular text with many answers to both options.

- (a) Most candidates explained that Pedro had married Rosaura in order to be near Tita. Her response to this information was one of anger as this admission came too late, having ruined her life. Part (iii) focused on the way the author depicted Pedro and the reader's impression of him. The consensus was that of sympathy for his situation as Mamá Elena's decision to forbid Tita marrying Pedro was final. His true feelings were expressed to his father after the interview with Mamá Elena. However his decision was condemned, as unfair to both Tita and Rosaura. The sisters faced a sad future due to Pedro's selfishness as he did not love Rosaura and could not love Tita. He was a moral coward. Perhaps one of the worst examples was his failure to challenge the decision to take Roberto to Texas as Tita was too close to the baby, in Mamá Elena's opinion, resulting in the baby's death. It was only when Tita was engaged to be married to John Brown that Pedro finally finds the courage to speak his mind – but possibly prompted by jealousy, so still a selfish act.
- (b) This question tempted some candidates to recount many recipes without analysing their function in the novel. Tita is placed in the kitchen as the person who provides food, but more importantly, nurture to the family. This is particularly important for the children as Rosaura is unable to do this herself. Tragically Roberto dies when he is removed from Tita's care. The recipes serve another function as they represent Mexican culture and tradition, a sense of continuity in a time of unrest. The division of the novel into months, though not a precise time scale, gives a sense of structure to the text, which could be said to lack a defined plot. Perhaps the most original aspect to the recipes is the way Tita is able to express her feelings through her cooking. Most essays referred to the wedding cake prepared for Rosaura and Pedro which is imbued with Tita's tears and upsets all the guests. The contrast to this was the dish prepared with rose petals from flowers given to Tita by Pedro. In this case her passion was communicated to those who ate it and Gertrudis, overwhelmed by desire, escaped from the ranch to live her own life and express herself freely. The recipes were seen to have an intrinsic role both structurally and thematically within the novel.

Question 4

Rodolfo Usigli: *El gesticulador*

The comments here are brief as there were few answers on this text.

- (a) Parts (i) and (ii) focus on the false reality created by César Rubio and the politicians. The role of the people is key in the play. César Rubio the historical figure was a hero of the Revolution, held in high esteem. The idealism and hope of the armed struggle has now given way to corruption and

deception. The new political elite manipulate the people to their own advantage. César Rubio takes on the persona of the hero to give new hope to the people. Usigli criticises the failure of the Revolution and the deliberate creation of new false myths as a means of controlling the Mexican people who have no voice.

- (b) This phrase encompasses the essence of the whole play – where is the truth? Candidates could explore the issue of identity; the influence of the US on Mexico; individuals' acceptance of lies or deception to promote their own personal or political interests; using lies and deception to control others.

Section 2

Question 5

Ramón J. Sender: *Réquiem por un campesino español*

The comments here are brief as there were few answers on this text.

- (a) Answers to this question are centred on the figure of Mosén Millán. At first he seems to be a positive influence in the life of Paco and the Church is central to life in the village. However Paco begins to understand that Christian charity is limited and the priest is keen to leave the poorest inhabitants in the caves, showing little concern for their plight. The Church is aligned with the landowners and those with vested interests in avoiding change to the status quo. Paco's subsequent involvement in politics on behalf of the people, and his betrayal at the hands of the priest are a consequence of his relationship with the Church. Notably no one attends the requiem mass – Paco's friends and family have turned away from the institution.
- (b) The novel is set in the period before the Civil War. Candidates correctly quoted references to the departure of the King and the establishment of the Republic. Although the conflict has yet to break out, the author sets out the divisions in society and the inequalities which will fuel the war. Paco learns about the wider society from his experience with Mosén Millán, the priest. Ironically this turns him from the Church, which has no interest in active involvement in the community and he begins a political career to defend the rights of the people. The opposing groups – Church, landowners, versus the villagers are clear.

Question 6

Isabel Allende: *Eva Luna*

- (a) Candidates approached this question in a number of ways. The best answers analysed how different characters developed as a result of their own experiences to find the confidence to make the right choices for their own happiness. For some, this meant a considerable struggle against tradition (Mimí), for others escape from cruelty (Rolf). Humberto chose political struggle over personal fulfilment, and of course Eva herself struggled in many ways but found kindness and guidance from many individuals in her life. Essays which included comment on the presentation of society as a whole tended to express the view that happiness was elusive for many due to the forces of repression.
- (b) This question does not state that the novel is feminist, rather that Allende has created powerful male, as well as female, characters. Both Eva and Rolf had to defeat many obstacles which were not of their own making in order to be successful personally and professionally. Candidates analysed the presentation of Mimí and Humberto also, with good understanding, as well as the main male influences on Eva's early life, both positive and negative.

Question 7

Federico García Lorca: *La casa de Bernarda Alba*

Virtually all candidates chose to write on this text.

- (a) The quotation from the text refers of course to Pepe el Romano. La Poncia has recognised the tumult caused in the house by his presence, even though he never appears physically in the play. The best essays analysed the nature of the problem – five daughters, four of whom have little

chance of ever leaving their home because they do not have sufficient dowries to attract a husband of high enough social standing to satisfy their tyrannical mother. The imposition of eight years of mourning with sewing their trousseaux as the only distraction feels like a prison sentence. Angustias is engaged to Pepe, for her money. Adela is conducting an illicit affair with him and Martirio is jealous as her prospective suitor did not come to see her as planned, because Bernarda did not approve of his family's status. Martirio did not know this. La Poncia knows that the situation needs to be defused to avoid disaster. This does not mean that Pepe should be sent away, rather that a solution could be found. Candidates analysed the relationship between La Poncia and Bernarda, showing how recalcitrant Bernarda is, refusing to accept reality and ultimately facing tragedy. Many pointed out the irony in that Bernarda declares herself to be perfectly sane whereas her mother is mad. María Josefa only describes what could be said to be normal desires for a happy family life.

- (b) Some candidates were able to combine two interpretations of the question most effectively. They analysed the atmosphere of fear created by Bernarda, in which nothing could be done unless approved by her, and any transgression was punished violently. This applied to all the residents of the house, including the servants, as they depended on their work for their livelihood. The other aspect was the fear Bernarda felt of being humiliated – she had to maintain a façade of status and wealth to preserve her reputation and that of her family. This question was generally well answered with a good range of references and a sense of understanding.

Question 8

Varios, ed. Gordon Brotherston: *Spanish American Modernista Poets*

- (a), (b) There was a small number of answers on this text.

As is always the case in poetry, Examiners are keen to reward individual interpretation of the work, provide this is supported by reference to specific examples and understanding of the particular poet's approach. Each essay tends to be individual and is assessed as such.