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## FOREWORD

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This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

# SPANISH

## GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level

Paper 8673/04  
Texts

### General comments

Examiners found many competent scripts this session, fewer excellent ones and a number of answers where candidates struggled to express themselves adequately in Spanish. The majority of candidates had prepared texts thoroughly for the examination and there was much good teaching discernible in thoughtful responses. Candidates also showed familiarity with the format of the Examination Paper and their answers were usually focused on the question set. However, there is some concern regarding **Section 1**, option (a) where a significant group of candidates treated the question almost as a reading comprehension with no reference to the text beyond the extract given on the Question Paper. Such a response cannot provide a full answer to part (iii).

Examiners were pleased that candidates seem genuinely enthusiastic about many of the texts and respond confidently to the questions set. Centres have prepared them well in general, but need to pay some attention to the demands of option (a) questions in **Section 1**.

### Comments on specific questions

#### **Section A**

##### **Question 1**

- (a) This was the most popular question on the Examination Paper. The quality of the answers varied enormously. There were some very good responses analysing the links between the protagonists' physical ailments, their poverty and the political state of the country. Part (iii) was less well answered as candidates did not always refer to the novel as a whole. This issue of referring only to material from the extract applies to all texts in **Section 1** and is something that Centres should address as part of candidates' examination preparation.
- (b) Another popular choice. Many candidates found evidence of both pessimism and realism in the colonel's wife but were able to substantiate their views and express their ideas well.

##### **Question 2**

- (a) A mixed response. Some Centres had clearly studied Lorca's poems in much detail, enabling candidates to give a thorough analysis with good understanding of imagery and symbolism. It was a pity that many answers did not address the final part of the poem in part (iii).
- (b) This question gave rise to some interesting responses as candidates made their own links between poems, concentrating on themes or imagery.

##### **Question 3**

- (a) Esquivel's text attracted a large number of answers. There was a temptation to storytell in part (i), but other parts of the question were answered well, with a good level of detail. Candidates seem to enjoy this text and relate to it easily.

- (b) There were a number of interpretations of this question. Some candidates focused on the story only and compared it with the stereotypical form. They tended to argue that the elements of the traditional format – lovers having to overcome difficulties before they can find happiness – but also gave detailed interpretations of other aspects of the novel. Different types of love as described in the text, the role of women and the forces of tradition within the society were presented as alternative themes.

#### Question 4

- (a) This was well answered generally, although some candidates mistakenly interpreted part (iii) as referring to blindness as a condition, without sufficient reference to the text. Several Centres had studied the play in close detail and candidates showed insight and understanding.
- (b) This was the less popular choice for the text but gave much scope for candidates to give an individual interpretation of Buero Vallejo's play.

#### Section 2

#### Question 5

- (a) Martin Gaité's text was chosen by a relatively small number of candidates. Most showed good knowledge of the novel, but were tempted to relate rather than analyse, and to focus too much on the female characters in their response when the question was directed at Pablo.
- (b) Again, a good level of knowledge and a number of different interpretations of the meaning of the question resulted in some good answers. The candidates empathised with the main characters and were aware of the historical period in which it is set.

#### Question 6

- (a) This question gave rise to good answers as candidates analysed the events in the bullfight scene and showed how this presaged the tragic outcome of *El caballero de Olmedo*. It was also possible to compare this scene with others nominated as 'key' by the candidate and consider their relative impact.
- (b) It was pleasing to note the thorough preparation undertaken by some Centres in answers to this option, where candidates were fully aware of the nature of the society portrayed in the play and the role of the King specifically. There were many convincing responses that did not have the benefit of such detailed background knowledge.

#### Question 7

- (a) The level of detailed knowledge of such a long novel pleased Examiners. In this option, candidates tended to give an account of Pedro Tercero's life without being able to balance the events with an overview of how his experiences affected and changed him.
- (b) Many thorough answers with thoughtful reflection. It was interesting to note that 'pessimistic' was frequently seen as synonymous with 'unpleasant'. A number of varied approaches were successful in tackling this question, from a wide view considering political change to a more narrow focus with reference to a few individual characters.

#### Question 8

- (a) Essays on Neruda tended to fall at the extremes of the mark range. Candidates trained in literary analysis presented detailed answers, which went beyond the most obvious two or three images and considered theme and tone as well. It is essential to name the poems chosen in response to a question of this type. Most candidates used quotation effectively and appropriately.
- (b) There were some very good answers reflecting thoughtful teaching and preparation. The focus was clearly on one poem and very detailed references were required. This did not, however, preclude mention of other poems to illustrate a wider understanding of the poet's work or show how the named poem related to Neruda's writing overall.