

# SPANISH

Paper 8673/04

Texts

## General comments

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

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

## Individual questions:

### **1 Pérez Galdós: *Doña Perfecta***

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

### **2 Isabel Allende: *Eva Luna***

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

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

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

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

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

### **5 García Márquez: *Crónica de una muerte anunciada***

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

**6 Lope de Vega: *Fuenteovejuna***

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

**7 García Lorca: *La casa de Bernarda Alba***

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

**8 Antonio Machado: *Campos de Castilla***

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

**Conclusion**

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