

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/01
Speaking

Key Messages

For candidates:

- Prepare your Presentation on a topic which interests you and which allows you to clearly refer to Hispanic culture or society.
- It is important to structure the Presentation to fit into the allowed time, and to express not only facts, but ideas and opinions.
- Answer the questions asked by the Examiner.
- Remember to ask the Examiner questions in both Conversation sections.

For Centres:

- The test consists of three distinct sections: **(i)** Presentation (maximum 3½ minutes); **(ii)** Topic Conversation (7–8 minutes) on issues arising from the Presentation; **(iii)** General Conversation (8–9 minutes) on themes completely different from those raised in the Topic Conversation.
- Each section should be clearly announced on the recordings, and the prescribed timings observed.
- Examiners should, if necessary, prompt the candidate to ask questions in both Conversation sections.
- Examiners' replies to questions should be concise – it is the candidate and not the Examiner who is being marked.

General Comments

Most candidates had been well prepared for the examination. They were interested in the topics they had chosen and spoke for the required time.

The majority of Centres conducted the tests in full accordance with the syllabus and instructions, and as a result candidates could gain access to the full range of marks and were offered the opportunity to perform to the best of their ability. We thank Centres who made every effort to comply with the instructions. Nearly all Centres were careful to enclose all the required documentation.

Regrettably, and in spite of comments or warnings in previous reports, there was still a persistent minority of Centres that did not conduct the tests correctly, or did not submit the required paperwork. In particular, the Working Mark Sheet (WMS) was sometimes missing in packets from Centres and had to be requested separately. Such failures to observe instructions caused disproportionate disruption and delay to the moderation process. In extreme cases, this meant that Centres' marks could not be moderated or confirmed.

Most Centres recorded the tests on CDs. We remind those conducting the tests in all Centres to announce very clearly the Centre number, candidate name and candidate number at the start of each test: this should not be left to the candidate to do. Each candidate's test should be a separate track or file.

Please remember that candidates must actually ask the Examiner questions; it is not sufficient for the Examiner just to state a personal opinion and then award the candidate credit for seeking information and opinions. Examiners conducting the test are reminded that they should, if necessary, prompt the candidate to ask questions in both the Topic Conversation and General Conversation sections. For example: "*¿Tienes alguna (otra) pregunta para mí?*".

There was wide variation in the quality of language. In many cases accuracy was very good and candidates showed their willingness and ability to handle an advanced range of structures and vocabulary. On the other hand, some weaker candidates were hampered by faulty syntax and a lack of basic vocabulary.

The quality of pronunciation was generally good or at least acceptable; quality of intonation was less successful. Problems with some more difficult sounds occasionally impeded ready communication. An over-reliance on prepared material sometimes led to flat or inaccurate intonation and stressing. Nevertheless, many candidates made real efforts to sound authentic.

It is important that the Working Mark Sheets are fully completed and submitted for all candidates – including those whose test may not have been formed part of the recorded sample – and enclosed with the recording. Please ensure that samples submitted reflect the whole of the candidate range. Samples submitted for moderation should include recordings of candidates at the highest and lowest mark. We remind Centres that their marks cannot be confirmed or moderated unless the full break down of marks is shown.

Some Centres did not make a clear distinction between the Topic and General Conversations. In some cases, candidates had insufficient opportunity to discuss a variety of issues or offer a suitable range of higher-level language. Marks cannot be awarded for a General Conversation if this has not been conducted.

Comments on Specific Sections

Part 1: Presentation

Guidance on topic areas for the Presentation and discussion may be found in the syllabus. Topics must relate clearly to aspects of Hispanic life or culture and candidates should take care to make specific reference to this context.

Marks for 'Content' are halved if there is no specific reference to a Spanish-speaking country or context.

Presentations should be a formal and coherent introduction to the subject: pronunciation and clarity of delivery are assessed. The best Presentations showed evidence of preparation, organisation and relevant factual knowledge. Good Presentations also provided a personal overview of the issue which then formed the basis of a debate in the Topic Conversation section. Candidates who spoke in a casual or disjointed manner did not tend to reach the upper bands of the Mark Scheme. Candidates did not gain credit for any work which exceeded the prescribed 3 ½ minute time limit for this section.

Part 2: Topic Conversation

Candidates generally had sufficient information to respond to questions in the Topic Conversation and offered ideas and opinions. They were usually aware of the need to ask the Examiner at least one question but sometimes needed prompting to ask a second question.

The Topic Conversation should develop points arising from the Presentation section. Candidates whose responses were confined to pre-learned answers, with little evidence of spontaneity, could not be awarded high marks for 'Comprehension & Responsiveness'. Candidates should actually take part in a discussion, including justifying or refuting a point of view, as well as giving relevant examples or information.

Candidates should ask the Examiner at least two substantial questions. Marks could not be awarded for 'Seeking information and Opinions' where no questions were asked by the candidate.

Part 3: General Conversation

The General Conversation section, as in previous sessions, frequently proved more challenging, owing to the unseen nature of topics that can arise. Candidates at the higher end of the mark range participated readily, whereas others were less forthcoming or hesitant, especially when dealing with ideas and opinions.

Most candidates remembered to ask the Examiner at least one question but, as in the Topic Conversation, these sometimes seemed rather contrived and did not relate naturally to the matter being discussed. Simple questions such as "¿Qué piensa usted?" or the more frequent "¿Y tú?" do not score highly. Many candidates, including those of otherwise quite a high standard, had difficulty in formulating questions. Most candidates would benefit from further practice in asking questions.

The General Conversation must be a separate section from the Topic Conversation and the start of this section should be clearly announced on the recording. It is important that different issues from those addressed in the Topic Conversation should be discussed. Some of the issues raised by the Examiners in the General Conversation were rather basic and did not provide adequate scope for the discussion and

development of ideas and opinions. Successful areas for discussion included current affairs, the arts, sport, the environment, the economy, politics and social concerns. All conversations should go beyond the descriptive. The range and style of questioning should further allow candidates use more sophisticated language and to show competence in structures at a suitably advanced level. Without this, candidates could not attain the higher mark ranges.

As in the Topic Conversation, candidates should ask the Examiner questions in order to gain marks for 'Seeking Information and Opinions'. The best candidates' questions followed naturally in the course of the discussion and were phrased appropriately. Limited, all-purpose or rhetorical questions did not gain much credit. Centres should remind candidates to ask at least two substantial questions.

Language

The quality of candidates' language is assessed in all sections. Candidates should be prepared to use as wide a range of language as possible, and those conducting the tests should take care that candidates have the opportunity to do so by asking open-ended questions (such as "*Explicame...*", "*¿Por qué...?*" and "*¿Cómo...?*").

To gain access to the higher ranges of the mark scheme, an appropriate level of vocabulary and structure is required. Candidates needed to show competence in dealing with hypothetical and abstract situations as well as factual or descriptive areas. Candidates could improve their marks for 'Accuracy' by perfecting commonly used structures such as numbers, a range of tenses, correct use of *ser* vs. *estar*, and agreements.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/21
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 topic of population movement within rural areas or between rural and urban environments was one that candidates seemed to be familiar with. Comprehension of the two texts was generally good. Scripts were usually well presented and legible, and very few candidates seemed to have had difficulty with time-management. A number of candidates would have benefited from more preparation for the techniques required in the summary question in **5(a)**. 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 – to be read in conjunction with the Mark Scheme and Question Paper.

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

For the vast majority of candidates, this exercise proved to be a sound start to the examination and a considerable number scored full marks. Other than misidentification of the target phrase, the most common error was to include additional words from before or after the targeted phrase in the text, or to omit part of this phrase. Additions were most seen in **Question 1(d)**, and *desde que* was sometimes omitted from **1(c)**.

Question 2

Most candidates scored high or maximum marks in this question. A small number of candidates were under the misapprehension they needed to change all of the vocabulary in the phrases given, rather than change the sentence to include the given word or words in the question. This sometimes resulted in phrases which would not fit properly into the original text, thus failing to gain the mark.

- (a) This caused few problems, although some candidates lost the mark by changing *diaria* to *diariamente* which changed the meaning of the phrase. There were a few answers with the verb in the singular (*cuando cocina*). These responses could not be accepted by the Mark Scheme, as they did not fit back in the original text.

- (b) Most were successful. A few candidates added *las* before *plantas* which meant the phrase could not fit back into the text and still make sense.
- (c) This was the question which was answered least well, due to a widespread misspelling of *recojan* with *g* instead of *j*. Some responses lost the mark by inserting *la* (presumably for *la leña*) thus invalidating the phrase.
- (d) A lot of success was achieved with this manipulation, although some candidates lost the mark for missing off the initial *a* before *los productores* or missing the *s* off *les* before *interesa*.
- (e) Most candidates answered correctly.

Question 3

Comprehension of the text about the hardships endured by nomadic sugar cane workers in Mexico was generally good, and candidates who gave clear, detailed answers to the questions in their own words achieved high marks. Some candidates lost marks due to copying five or more consecutive words directly from the text.

- (a) Most scored three marks on this question, with the most commonly overlooked point being that the *jornaleros* travel to look for work. However, a good number who did mention this had copied *México en busca de trabajo* directly from the text, which invalidated the point. A lot of candidates mentioned that the workers were paid very little without saying how hard the work was, or vice versa; both these elements were required by the mark scheme.
- (b) Many candidates scored full marks in this question, although two out of three was more common. Candidates often only mentioned one of either *no pasan frío* or *tienen una vivienda más cómoda*, and a few showed misunderstanding of the text by answering *prefieren pasar hambre en esta época que aguantar el frío*. A phrase commonly copied from the text was *es más cómoda y caliente*.
- (c) A lot of candidates scored full marks for this question. However, a number merged the first two points with not quite enough information to score separate two marks, e.g.: *cultivan plantas que crecen allí*. Many candidates copied *leña para calentar la comida* directly from the text, which disqualified them from gaining the last mark.
- (d) If candidates did fail to score all three points in this question, it was usually because they were not specific enough to mention *dos colchones*.
- (e) Some candidates misunderstood that the men block the *lavaderos* after work with all their dirt. A number of candidates appeared a little confused about the open aspect of the *lavaderos*. Some thought that they were only open in the afternoon or that there would not be enough water for the women and men to wash at the same time. A few thought that the women washed before the men came back so that there would not be queues. A phrase commonly copied from the text was *antes de que lleguen los hombres*.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

The second text, dealing with the *éxodo rural* and its reversal, provided a similar level of challenge to the first text, with candidates commonly showing a clear understanding and achieving good marks.

- (a) The overwhelming majority of candidates mentioned that *los jóvenes se ven atraídos por las ciudades* but a far smaller number also mentioned that there were no new births in rural areas. A number of candidates were not awarded a mark because their answers focused only on the beginning of the paragraph (*la mitad de la población vive en las ciudades*).
- (b) Many answers failed to include all the information required by the Mark Scheme. The first point was usually mentioned but the second, which required mention of construction workers being unemployed, was most frequently incomplete in candidate responses.

The third point, regarding large companies wanting all their workers in the same urban area, was almost always attempted but often failed to gain a mark, either because *grandes* was not included before *empresas*, or because candidates had copied five or more consecutive words from the text. The most common such copied phrase was *a todos sus trabajadores en el mismo*. The mention of more comforts and services in the city, however, was often successfully made, provided that the phrase *cantidades de servicios y facilidades* was not directly copied.

- (c) Many candidates failed to score full marks in this question because they did not give the correct information regarding what was being offered in some rural areas. It was common to see answers such as *dar casas gratis y con parcelas muy baratas* which was not what the text was saying.

The first point (that rural areas could make these offers which the big cities could not) was nearly always mentioned. However, a good deal of candidates had copied five consecutive words from the text, for example: *que las grandes ciudades no pueden*.

- (d) It was unusual for candidates not to achieve the two marks available for this question. However, a number lost a mark for directly copying the phrase *más ecológicos, sostenibles y saludables*. Although, many realised they only had to swap two of these adjectives around to give the required answer.
- (e) Full marks were often missed because of the omission of certain key details. Candidates who managed to talk about people who want to *escaparse de la ciudad un par de días* were successful in gaining the first point. However, all too often candidates copied the phrase *escape de fin de semana*. Nonetheless, the point about retired people searching for tranquillity in the country was nearly always mentioned, as was the point about improvements to transport, (although reference solely to *infraestructura* was not sufficient). A lot of candidates did not quite get the last mark, often because they only mentioned the improvement in communications without adding that this allowed people to work from home. Another commonly copied phrase was *y la red de telecomunicaciones*.

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) Candidates who had achieved good or even excellent marks elsewhere frequently struggled to reach even half marks here. One reason for this arose from candidates not answering the question that had been asked, which was about population movement within and to rural areas, and not to cities.

The other reason for low marks was a lack of the required technique. Here, candidates need to understand the importance of extracting specific details from the texts succinctly in order to gain the marks available. 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.

An example of poor technique, scoring just 1 mark (for *buscar trabajo*) in 51 words (over a third of the permitted word length of the whole of **Question 5**) begins: *Ambos, el texto 1 y el texto 2, hablan sobre las migraciones y la zona rural. El primer texto se concentra en un país pobre como México y como la pobreza (sic) de la gente que vive en la sierra los hace moverse a otros lugares para buscar trabajo y sobrevivir.*

By contrast, an excellent example of the required technique for this question begins: *Los jornaleros migran en busca de trabajo por escaso pago a las plantaciones. Las condiciones de vida mejoran, ya que la vivienda es más cálida y caliente, aún cuando viven en condiciones deplorables de higiene. Tienen una dieta basada en frijoles, huevos y pollo, viven en casas pequeñas sin privacidad.* In 50 words this candidate scored 7 marks, and also left ample opportunity to increase this score by going on to answer the question with regard to how the *éxodo rural* is being reversed in Spain.

- (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 and most scored 4

or 5 marks. However, there were also a number who seemed to confuse *la vida rural* with *la vida urbana* and proceeded to give their opinions on what life in urban areas was like in their countries rather than the other way round. Such candidates scored little or no marks for this part.

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.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/22
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- **Question 1:** seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question. Candidates should take care not to omit words or to include extra words.
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- **Language:** when preparing for the exam, make sure to revise the basic agreements, tenses and verb endings.

General comments

The topic of new technology and how different generations reacted to it was one that seemed to appeal to candidates. 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**, direct copying of five or more consecutive 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.

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

Comments on specific questions – to be read in conjunction with the Mark Scheme and Question Paper.

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

Correctly identified answers were sometimes invalidated, either by omitting words or including extra ones.

- (a) The majority of candidates were successful.
- (b) This was also answered well. Answers without the initial *le* were accepted.
- (c) This phrase proved to be a little more demanding. Sometimes the initial *debían* was omitted.
- (d) Often answers were invalidated because they had been prefaced by *de*.
- (e) Several answers were invalidated because they began with *yo le dije que*.

Question 2

This proved to be a challenging question for candidates at the lower end of the ability range whereas those candidates at the higher end of the ability range scored consistently well.

- (a) Less-able candidates rarely knew that *una nieta mía* is an alternative way of expressing *una de mis nietas*.
- (b) Although a number were able to form an appropriate construction of *borrar*, many less-able candidates were not able to put this into the subjunctive.
- (c) Confusion between *ser* and *estar* and also not selecting the imperfect tense were common pitfalls.
- (d) The use of *soler* meaning 'to usually do something' was not widely known.
- (e) Again, very few were able to perform this manipulation. Those who did come up with *al llegar*, often invalidated their answer by adding *de*.

Question 3

More able candidates successfully presented the required information in their own words, with some using complex linguistic structures. Candidates of more modest ability, who found comprehension more of a challenge, were often unable to avoid copying lines of original text. Other candidates often successfully identified the material required, and then endeavoured to alter the word order in order to avoid copying directly. If this technique produced coherent answers, it was rewarded.

- (a) Nearly every candidate realised that the three points which answered this question were to be found in the last sentence of the paragraph. Phrases commonly copied from the text proved to be: *para hacer frente al aislamiento, en común con las nuevas generaciones, and contacto con seres queridos lejanos*.
- (b) A number of candidates mistakenly offered answers along the lines of *para comunicarse con sus nietos de Barcelona* to the first part of this question, overlooking the fact that Pilar's motivation was triggered by seeing her entire family totally absorbed by technology. In the second part of the question, although they had been asked *¿de qué manera...?* candidates sometimes only suggested one way in which the granddaughter had helped her, even after answering the first part of the question correctly. A phrase commonly copied directly from the text was *que viven en Barcelona*.
- (c) Although there were one or two apparent misconceptions, these did not generally affect comprehension of the point targeted. Although this was a four mark question, candidates sometimes only offered three ways in which life was different. Phrases commonly copied directly from the text included *y la ropa se lavaba a mano* and *se reunían alrededor de la radio*.
- (d) The fact that new technology was a big challenge for older generations was often omitted. Linguistic skill was needed to show understanding that the negative in *no padecen de artritis o cataratas* applied to younger and not the older generations. A number of answers were unsuccessful in clarifying this, and so could not be awarded the mark.
- (e) The majority of candidates scored one mark for saying that the boy thought it impossible for grandmothers to use chat networks. Not so many identified the second mark: that he thought he was chatting to the granddaughter.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

The second text, about the effect that technology is having on young children, was also well received. Some of the comprehension points proved slightly more demanding.

- (a) Most success was achieved in pointing out that the tablet allowed Jorge to play with all manner of things (occasionally invalidated by the direct copying of *con toda clase de objetos*) on just one tiny screen. Many candidates managed to increase their score by adding that the use of technology / tablets should be moderated or compensated with other forms of play, and that it is impossible to escape from screens / technology these days.
- (b) Only the more able candidates managed to score all three marks here. Phrases commonly copied directly from the text were *en el desarrollo intelectual de los* and *el gusto y el olfato*, although the latter could easily have been avoided by simply changing the word order to *el olfato y el gusto*. Also, a simple alteration of *no transmitan una correcta representación* to *no representan correctamente* would have avoided the need to paraphrase *el mundo tridimensional*.
- (c) Nearly every candidate scored marks on this question. However, maximum marks were not so prevalent, either because the first point about the enormous impact of technology on children was sometimes overlooked, or because copying five or more consecutive words directly from the text invalidated otherwise correct answers.
- (d) Most candidates succeeded in noting that the psychologist's view that children should be supervised when using new technology, and many were able to add that they should not be given devices regardless, to keep them entertained or because it was the fashion. Unpicking the third piece of advice contained in *es absurdo dejarlos fuera de ella* often proved more of a challenge.
- (e) The nature of the little boy's frustration appeared to be well understood and two marks were commonly scored. Phrases commonly copied directly from the text included *los dibujos no se mueven* and *del vídeo y de la animación*.

Question 5

It is of fundamental importance to observe the word count of 140 words in total 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 picked out specific details of the positives and negatives of new technology for the young and the old scored well. No introductions or conclusions are required; the recommended technique is to give the details from the text as succinctly as possible e.g. *Las nuevas tecnologías permiten a la gente mayor combatir el aislamiento, estar en contacto con seres queridos lejanos y establecer enlaces con los jóvenes...* (3 marks scored in 24 words).

By contrast, answers which start: *Tanto en el texto 1 como el texto 2 la importancia de la tecnología es inmensa, ya que en uno los ancianos intentan adaptarse a ella, y en el otro los niños dan sus primeros pasos con las nuevas tecnologías...* waste valuable words (0 marks scored in 39 words).

- (b) Candidates who had left 40 or so words for this part of the answer were usually able to pick up another 4 or 5 marks, provided that they answered question. In most countries it appeared that new technology is being used by every generation – with some difficulty amongst the elderly, and excessively by adolescents. Better answers included originality and opinions about these trends.

Quality of Language

Cambridge International Advanced Subsidiary Level
8685 Spanish Language November 2015
Principal Examiner Report for Teachers

The quality of candidates' Spanish, here and throughout the paper, was generally up to the standard required by this examination. Marks awarded ranged from Mark Scheme bands 'Below Average' to 'Good', with most marks falling in the 'Sound' range. A significant number were awarded maximum marks for Quality of Language.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/23
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.
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- **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

Candidates coped well with understanding two fairly challenging texts which dealt with some of the prejudices and lack of recognition encountered by sportswomen. They had been very well prepared in the techniques demanded by this examination, and the vast majority submitted work which was well up to the required standard. Scripts were legible and clearly presented, and there were few signs of pressure caused by the time constraints of the examination.

Comments on specific questions – to be read in conjunction with the Mark Scheme and Question Paper.

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

Most candidates scored at least three marks, and many achieved the maximum on this opening exercise.

- (a) The target phrase was usually identified, although the unnecessary addition of *olímpico* invalidated answer.
- (b) This was more of a challenge and was handled well by those who fully understood the cue phrase and its target. A frequent incorrect answer was *hubiera regresado con escasos motivos de satisfacción*.
- (c) Candidates were very successful in identifying this answer.
- (d) Less-able candidates offered a variety of incorrect answers, often *¡Ni en sueños!*
- (e) This was almost universally answered correctly.

Question 2

The set of manipulations proved to be a real challenge this year, and only the very best candidates scored three or more of the five marks.

- (a) More success was achieved with this manipulation than with any of the other four. Even greater success would have been achieved if candidates had remembered that their answer should fit back into the original text. *Descubrieron que existía el deporte* would do this, whereas *descubrieron que el deporte existía* would not.
- (b) Only a minority of candidates managed to come up with a phrase such as *las 114 mujeres que hicieron el viaje* which would allow the noun to fit back into the text with an appropriate meaning.
- (c) Incorrect formations of the third person imperfect tense of *ser* invalidated answers.
- (d) Not many candidates picked up on the fact that a manipulation using *volver a* was needed, perhaps because they did not associate the past participle *vuelto* being used in this way.
- (e) Answers were often invalidated because of conjugation errors in verbs requiring radical change *e>ie*.

Question 3

The questions were based on a fairly challenging text about women's sport in Spain only receiving media coverage when achieving major successes. Maximum marks often proved hard to come by, but a mark of zero, which has a knock-on effect to the Quality of Language mark, was not very common.

Candidates often successfully identified parts of the text that would answer questions, and then endeavoured to change word order in order to avoid copying directly. When this technique produced coherent answers, it was rewarded.

It was often necessary to clarify linguistically, (with an article or by adjectival agreement), the gender of the *deportistas* who needed to be mentioned. There was also fairly widespread confusion of *suceso* and *éxito*.

- (a) Most candidates successfully identified the three elements which would score marks. The Baron's views that taking part was more important than winning, and that there was no place for women in sport other than giving prizes, were usually noted. The third mark often depended on a suitable synonym for *precarias*.
- (b) This proved to be relatively straightforward to answer. The fact that women won the majority of Olympic medals for Spain was almost universally identified.
- (c) The paragraph which this question targeted posed a fair number of linguistic challenges. It was a good discriminator, and marks ranged from zero to four. Not every candidate picked up on the mark that was available in the first sentence for noting that media coverage was *diferente*. There was sometimes inaccuracy in distinguishing between the one newspaper which ran a twelve page spread on the achievements of the Spanish sportswomen, and the others which ran front page photos of them every day. Nearly every candidate mentioned that sportswomen were featuring in the press.
- (d) Most candidates noted that coverage of women's sport has disappeared from the media. Not so many added to this by noting that this was just as it had been before the Games.
- (e) Two marks were often scored for noting that sports journalists were acting irresponsibly by not writing about women's sport and, moreover they were promoting a distorted, sexist view of sport. Only a few candidates went on to say that this was compounded by the disproportionate amount of attention which was paid to men's football.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

As with **Question 3**, care was sometimes needed in clarifying the gender of words ending in *-ista*.

- (a) Maximum marks were commonly scored for this question. The incident involving the commentators' sexist remarks and their subsequent sacking appeared to be clearly understood.
- (b) The points targeted to show comprehension of this paragraph were readily identified. To score the first point it was insufficient to say that *las mujeres son inferiores a los hombres* without a reference to footballing technique. Most were able to note that football was commonly considered too violent a sport for women, and also the concerns that mothers had about their daughters playing this sport.
- (c) To score the first mark it was necessary to state that female football reporters experienced resistance from the public and colleagues alike. It was essential to show the correct gender of *periodistas* to score the second mark. The criticism that female reporters were only employed for their looks was well understood.
- (d) This was generally answered well, with most candidates noting Cuéllar's call for a greater presence of girls' football in schools, along with a more varied recreational programme. Many good paraphrases of *cambiar las actitudes de los padres* were evident among candidates who scored the third mark.
- (e) Maximum marks were harder to come by here, although the majority of candidates scored at least one for stating that women's football lacked financial backing. To score the second point, it was necessary to stress the belief or fear that it would not fill stadiums, rather than say that this is what already happens.

Question 5

Most candidates had been well prepared in the techniques needed to answer this question. Only a very small minority of candidates appeared to be unaware of the need to keep to the limit of 140 words in total for both parts of the question. Anything in excess 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.

The social obstacles encountered by sportswomen were more conspicuous and accessible in the second text, and those who selected a number of relevant details here scored well. Apart from the impartiality of sporting journalists, other examples of how women's sport is adversely affected by media coverage often proved more difficult.

- (b) Most candidates were aware of the technique for answering this question well: give one or two details which answer the question, whenever possible different from anything contained in the texts, and a clear personal opinion. Additionally, many seized the opportunity to show off their familiarity with more complex linguistic structures. A range of interesting views were expressed on the varying degrees of support for women's sport in the candidates' countries.

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 of the Mark Scheme.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/31

Essay

Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- select the title with which they feel most comfortable;
- write a response that is clearly relevant, well illustrated, coherently structured and well informed;
- use Spanish which is accurate and of a suitably advanced nature, as well as demonstrate a good use of idiom and appropriate topic-related vocabulary;
- use sentence patterns which show some evidence of complexity in a style which is easy to follow.

General comments

A range of ability was demonstrated in this essay paper. Many candidates were able to produce essays which fulfilled the 'Very good' bands of the mark scheme in terms of content and linguistic capability. Weaker essays tended to demonstrate only basic ideas, expressed with less complex linguistic range.

There was a variety of different approaches to all the essays titles on the paper. There is no preordained approach favoured by Examiners. What remains important is that candidates are able to present an articulate case with intelligent discussion and also support their views with evidence of understanding of the topic under analysis.

There were very few responses this year in which candidates had written pre-learnt essays having little relevance to the title set. Many candidates were inclined to refer to the title of the essay on a regular basis as they wrote. This served to keep the essay relevant, thereby avoiding a loss of marks for weak content or misinterpretation of the actual title.

There were very few essays which exceeded the word count. Candidates are always strongly advised to observe the stipulated word count as this has an impact on the success of the essay.

Despite the common errors listed below, there were also many examples of essays that were conceived and presented sensibly and written with admirable accuracy. The very best candidates readily embraced the importance of stylistic clarity, linguistic accessibility, self-evident relevance to the title and the use of a range of grammatical constructions. Nevertheless, candidates are strongly advised to manage their time in the examination room to allow for sufficient and effective checking for linguistic errors, especially in spelling and accents.

Examples of good use of the language included:

- the accurate use of the past subjunctive with the conditional tense in "if" clauses e.g.: *Si hubiera menos fumadores, nuestra salud seguiría mejorando.*
- an ability to employ a wide range of tenses appropriate to an advanced level of essay writing.
- the accurate use of pronouns in all their forms.
- consistently correct singular/plural subject and singular/plural verb agreements.

Common errors included:

- inaccurate use of reflexive pronouns.
- misunderstanding of the differences between *hay*, *es* and *tiene*.
- addition of extra syllables to common words such as *la personalidad*, *el transporte público* and *el desempleo*.
- inaccurate superlatives e.g.: *es más major*.

- confusion of singular verbs with plural subjects and vice versa e.g.: *mucha gente piensan que*
- adjectival agreement e.g.: *la comunidad hispánico*
- confusion between the letters “s” and “z” in phrases such as *la sociedad ha avanzado*
- omission of the letter “h” when using the auxiliary verb “haber” e.g.: *muchos individuos an decidido*
- use of the gerund instead of a verbal noun in phrases such as *trabajando es mejor que quedándose en casa*
- insufficient checks for spelling, accents and agreements e.g.: *una sistema, responsibilidad* and *el dieta* - all of which appeared in the essay titles on the Question Paper correctly.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *La vida diaria*

This was a popular title and prompted a wide range of responses. Many essays made reference to the environmental importance of having a good transport system and a good number of essays bemoaned the lack of political commitment to the funding of public transport. The very best essays also tended to make suggestions as to how their own particular national systems for public transport could be improved. Many candidates also wrote convincingly about the need for safety and security for passengers using public transport.

Question 2 *La justicia y el orden público*

This was another popular title on this paper. There was plenty of analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of legalising soft drugs and making them available in high street shops. The notion that soft drugs can often lead individuals to also try hard drugs was discussed, as were the general health implications for regular soft drug users. Particular mentions were made of alcohol and tobacco. Some responses were in favour of a more liberal approach to drug legalisation as a way to reduce the involvement of organised crime gangs.

Question 3 *La salud*

This was a reasonably popular title. Most candidates were able to confine themselves to a focused discussion of ‘miracle’ diets and their effectiveness or otherwise. Only a small number of essays discussed the more general topic of healthy eating with little reference to the diet industry. Numerous essays drew upon personal experience of so-called miracle diets and how they not only often fail to work as promised but also how they can have a detrimental effect on the health of the individual.

Question 4 *El empleo y el desempleo*

This title proved a popular one and the responses were considered, mature and analytical. The need for academic qualifications was well accepted, but most essays also went on to deal with the importance of a positive personality and intellectual integrity when it comes to being selected at interview for a particular career. Many responses discussed the importance of being able to work as part of a team.

Question 5 *Los avances científicos y medicos*

There were fewer responses to this title. There was balanced discussion regarding the importance of medical research in the fight against diseases such as malaria and the need for governments to invest heavily in such public health issues. The difficulties encountered by less economically developed countries was also analysed in a very mature fashion. All the essays argued vociferously that the first duty of all governments is to protect its own people from such harmful diseases.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/32

Essay

Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- select the title with which they feel most comfortable;
- write a response that is clearly relevant, well illustrated, coherently structured and well informed;
- use Spanish which is accurate and of a suitably advanced nature, as well as demonstrate a good use of idiom and appropriate topic-related vocabulary;
- use sentence patterns which show some evidence of complexity in a style which is easy to follow.

General comments

A range of ability was demonstrated in this essay paper. Many candidates were able to produce essays which fulfilled the 'Very good' bands of the mark scheme in terms of content and linguistic capability. Weaker essays tended to demonstrate only basic ideas, expressed with less complex linguistic range.

There was a variety of different approaches to all the essays titles on the paper. There is no preordained approach favoured by Examiners. What remains important is that candidates are able to present an articulate case with intelligent discussion and also support their views with evidence of understanding of the topic under analysis.

There were very few responses this year in which candidates had written pre-learnt essays having little relevance to the title set. Many candidates were inclined to refer to the title of the essay on a regular basis as they wrote. This served to keep the essay relevant, thereby avoiding a loss of marks for weak content or misinterpretation of the actual title.

There were very few essays which exceeded the word count. Candidates are always strongly advised to observe the stipulated word count as this has an impact on the success of the essay.

Despite the common errors listed below, there were also many examples of essays that were conceived and presented sensibly and written with admirable accuracy. The very best candidates readily embraced the importance of stylistic clarity, linguistic accessibility, self-evident relevance to the title and the use of a range of grammatical constructions. Nevertheless, candidates are strongly advised to manage their time in the examination room to allow for sufficient and effective checking for linguistic errors, especially in spelling and accents.

Examples of good use of the language included:

- the accurate use of the past subjunctive with the conditional tense in "if" clauses e.g.: *Si hubiera menos fumadores, nuestra salud seguiría mejorando.*
- an ability to employ a wide range of tenses appropriate to an advanced level of essay writing.
- the accurate use of pronouns in all their forms.
- consistently correct singular/plural subject and singular/plural verb agreements.

Common errors included:

- inaccurate use of reflexive pronouns.
- misunderstanding of the differences between *hay*, *es* and *tiene*.
- addition of extra syllables to common words such as *la clonación* and *el desempleo*.
- inaccurate superlatives e.g.: *es más mejor*.
- confusion of singular verbs with plural subjects and vice versa e.g.: *mucha gente piensan que*

- adjectival agreement e.g.: *la comunidad hispánico*
- confusion between the letters “s” and “z” in phrases such as *la sociedad ha avanzado*
- omission of the letter “h” when using the auxiliary verb “haber” e.g.: *muchos individuos an decidido*
- use of the gerund instead of a verbal noun in phrases such as *trabajando es mejor que quedándose en casa*
- insufficient checks for spelling and accents e.g.: *la publicdad, la pubreza* and *la prioridade* - all of which appeared in the essay titles on the Question Paper correctly.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *La vida diaria*

This was a popular title on the paper. Candidates generally argued that television advertising can often target vulnerable younger viewers, leading them to have concerns about their weight and body image. The notion that television advertising tends to give young people false expectations about life was also discussed at length.

Question 2 *La justicia y el orden público*

This was also a popular title. The effects that poverty can have in societies across the globe were analysed thoroughly and most essays suggested that when an individual is suffering in terms of poverty then s/he is more likely to consider criminal activity as a way of providing basic requirements such as food and shelter. Many essays also went on to suggest that fraud was prevalent in rich societies and that the motivation for this was greed rather than necessity.

Question 3 *La salud*

This was another popular title. Most essays concluded that whilst the fight against drug abuse ought to be a real priority for governments everywhere, there also has to be an acceptance that it is almost impossible for society to eradicate it completely.

Question 4 *El empleo y el desempleo*

This title prompted many good essays. Some essays were pragmatic in their approach to the title whilst others were more idealistic. Many essays examined the practical, everyday problems of needing money to survive whilst others made mention of the importance of workplace camaraderie, decent conditions of service and the desirability of doing a job that you can enjoy. There were also many references to the current situation in Spain regarding high levels of unemployment.

Question 5 *Los avances científicos y médicos*

There were few responses to this title. Those candidates who opted to respond to it were able to produce convincingly written essays on the whole. Some were in favour of cloning, whilst others opposed it on ethical grounds and felt that it should be strictly controlled by governments in all countries.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/33

Essay

Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- select the title with which they feel most comfortable;
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- use Spanish which is accurate and of a suitably advanced nature, as well as demonstrate a good use of idiom and appropriate topic-related vocabulary;
- use sentence patterns which show some evidence of complexity in a style which is easy to follow.

General comments

A range of ability was demonstrated in this essay paper. Many candidates were able to produce essays which fulfilled the 'Very good' bands of the mark scheme in terms of content and linguistic capability. Weaker essays tended to demonstrate only basic ideas, expressed with less complex linguistic range.

There was a reasonably equitable distribution of questions attempted and a variety of different approaches to all the essays titles on the paper. There is no preordained approach favoured by Examiners. What remains important is that candidates are able to present an articulate case with intelligent discussion and also support their views with evidence of understanding of the topic under analysis.

There were very few responses this year in which candidates had written pre-learnt essays having little relevance to the title set. Many candidates were inclined to refer to the title of the essay on a regular basis as they wrote. This served to keep the essay relevant, thereby avoiding a loss of marks for weak content or misinterpretation of the actual title.

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- confusion between the letters “s” and “z” in phrases such as *la sociedad ha avanzado*
- omission of the letter “h” when using the auxiliary verb “haber” e.g.: *muchos individuos an decidido*
- use of the gerund instead of a verbal noun in phrases such as *trabajando es mejor que quedándose en casa*
- insufficient checks for spelling and accents e.g.: *la responsibilidad, aceptar* and *la oportunidad* - all of which appeared in the essay titles on the Question Paper correctly.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *La vida diaria*

This was a reasonably popular title on the paper. Those who selected it argued, on the whole, that the responsibility for providing shelter lies fundamentally with government at local or national level in every country on the planet. The importance of the individual taking some responsibility was also discussed in detail. Mention was also made of the rapid rise in house prices being problematic for people on lower incomes.

Question 2 *La justicia y el orden público*

This was a popular title. Most candidates who chose this title took the view that crime is a reality of modern life but we must make every effort to combat it and reduce criminal activity, whilst accepting that it will never disappear totally. The importance of having a well resourced and well organised police force was also a priority for many who responded to this title.

Question 3 *La salud*

This was a very popular title on the paper. Many candidates wrote about their personal experiences of smoking and suggested that the addictive nature of tobacco is much stronger than we think and went on to state that it is indeed a drug and needs to be controlled more by governments. Increasing taxes on tobacco was a common point made by many candidates as a way of reducing the popularity of cigarettes, although many essays also argued for the individual’s right to smoke in public places.

Question 4 *El empleo y el desempleo*

This title produced many elegantly written essays. Most essays argued the need for governments to reduce unemployment and to regard this as an absolute priority. Short-term unemployment was considered more bearable than long-term unemployment and most felt that a job is a fundamental human right.

Question 5 *Los avances científicos y médicos*

This title generated the fewest responses. Those candidates who selected it were able to argue convincingly that exploring the possibility of living on another planet could be one way of guaranteeing the future of the Human Race. A small number of essays argued against space exploration, on the grounds of excessive cost.