

**MARK SCHEME for the October/November 2011 question paper
for the guidance of teachers**

0488 LITERATURE (SPANISH)

0488/03

Paper 3 (Alternative to Coursework), maximum raw mark 20

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes must be read in conjunction with the question papers and the report on the examination.

- Cambridge will not enter into discussions or correspondence in connection with these mark schemes.

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Answers will be marked according to the following general criteria:

Band	Mark	
1	18–20	Detailed, well-written, well-organised answer, completely relevant to question and showing sensitive personal response to book. For passage-based questions, detailed attention to words of passage.
2	15–17	Detailed answer, relevant to question and with personal response; may be a bit cut-and-dried. For passage-based questions, close attention to words but may be a few omissions/superficialities.
3	12–14	Competent answer, relevant but limited; signs of personal response, good knowledge of book. For passage-based, some attention to words but some significant omissions and/or misunderstandings.
4	9–11	Answer relevant to question but may show some misunderstanding and/or limitations; effort to communicate personal response and knowledge. Passage-based: significant omissions/misunderstandings, but some response comes over.
5	6–8	Attempt to answer question and some knowledge of book; limited, scrappy answer; clumsy expression. Passage-based: attempt to respond, but with severe limitations.
6	4–5	Short, scrappy answer; confused; signs that book has been read. Passage-based: has read the passage and conveyed one or two basic ideas about it.
7	2–3	Has read book and absorbed some very elementary ideas about it. Passage-based: may have glanced at passage and written a few words.
8	0–1	Nothing to reward. Obvious non-reading of book, or total non-appreciation.

Please note that although the candidate is invited to answer the questions on the paper, and the overwhelming majority will do so, this is not obligatory and there is no notional allocation of marks to any particular question. The vast majority of candidates will probably use the questions as guidance. Note, however, that they are not obliged to deal with them separately and must not be penalised in any way if they do not do so. An integrated response may answer all the questions satisfactorily by implication, and may indeed flow better and avoid redundancy. There is no prescribed application of marks to each question and the response should be marked holistically.

Although candidates are not obliged to make any further comments and must not be penalised if they do not, any that are made will of course be fully credited.

The detailed questions are intended to help the candidate respond. Candidates are required to answer them, but need not do so in a rigid sequence. Some of the answers may be implicit in the essay, although it is expected that candidates will be able to spell out their views and interpretations with sufficient clarity. There is no prescribed application of marks to each question and the response should be mark holistically. Candidates who do not answer the prescribed questions will penalize themselves automatically, as the questions are central to the passage.

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This short story is a contemporary work and it is hoped the candidates will be in a position to understand the language of the passage almost in its entirety, therefore being able to gain a good understanding of the extract and convey an appropriate response to the quality of the writing. The questions are designed to help them do so. At the lower levels (up to 9 marks) we shall probably be expecting evidence of this basic understanding, hopefully with a simple personal response. At the (10–14) levels we should be looking for a clear, if not sophisticated and more complex answer to each of the questions and some attempt to support ideas from the passage. Be aware of inert, mechanical quoting or simple paraphrasing that adds little to the interpretation or expects the examiner to make the connections by implication. As we go up to 15+ marks we shall be looking for an ability to read between the lines, with appropriate support from the passage and a motivated personal response. Towards the top band (18–20 marks) a confident, consistent and detailed argumentation supplemented by a personal appreciation should be required.

Lea atentamente el siguiente pasaje extraído del cuento corto 'Plebster y Orsi, del Planeta Procyon', del escritor argentino Roberto Fontanarrosa, publicado en 1993. Luego conteste la pregunta:

Dé sus impresiones de cómo el autor presenta el planeta que exploran Plebster y Orsi. En particular, debe considerar, en detalle, los siguientes aspectos:

- **Lo que son Plebster y Orsi y cómo nos enteramos de esto.**

It is expected that most candidates will be able to determine that Plebster and Orsi are two extra-terrestrial beings. Various elements of the passage seem to suggest that such is the case and it is expected candidates will be able to resort to these specific elements to substantiate their understanding. A "Band 3" candidate ought to be able to convey this essential point in some form and provide an adequate illustration of how this is manifested throughout the passage, expressing some personal response to the different elements presented in the extract. For a 'Band 2+' grade the candidate should be able to comment unequivocally on a fair number of indicators and even attempt a description of the physical appearance of the extra-terrestrial beings (aliens).

Some of the key elements to be mentioned are:

- The immediate reading of the title of the story: '...del planeta Procyon'
- The reference to the meteors – they are travelling through space in a spaceship.
- The reference to various planets and moons.
- The mentioning of earthlings ('terráqueos').
- The description of their lower limbs ('...las redondeadas extremidades inferiores ...')
- The description of their planet's surface ('...la pocada superficie de Procyon...')
- The reference to the colour of the space ('el espacio...más azul y mórbido ...')
- The reference to Orsi & Plebster as 'researchers' from outer space, etc.
- The reference to Orsi's 'huge head' ('...giraba su cabezota..', etc).

In terms of assessment it should be considered that inert quoting or paraphrasing and simple description may be enough for a 4/5 Band grade; any attempt at interpreting should be rewarded and generously so as it appears to demonstrate some insight. Needless to say, the interpretation may differ from the one suggested here, yet it would need to be consistent and adequately supported.

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- **Lo que se puede decir de sus personalidades y de cómo se tratan.**

One of the most entertaining elements of the extract is the way in which the personalities of the extra-terrestrials are portrayed. Thus, Orsi comes across as an inquisitive/curious character, always ready for an adventure and with a friendly disposition, particularly shown when they meet the 'earthlings'. Plebster, on the other hand, appears to be unfriendly, is at odds with Orsi – as if a history of bad interrelations between the two may precede this episode – and does not appear to have the same degree of interest in exploration/or curiosity as his partner. When he meets the 'humans' he does not feel as excited as Orsi does. Nevertheless, he joins the expedition and lands on 'Vendelinus' with Orsi to search for signs of human existence. It is particularly striking the way in which the author depicts the personalities of these aliens. In doing so he makes us feel very close to them. We find them very familiar and even friendly. He makes us like them. There is no element of fear associated to the reading of this story. On the contrary, we feel invited to like the aliens, particularly Orsi, and even the nature of their relationship makes us feel close to home, as they appear strongly 'humanized'. It is interesting to see that in this story, it is the aliens who are the explorers and we, the 'humans' the object of their attention and not the other way round. Candidates may express different ideas and/or reactions to this part of the reading but in so far as they are plausible and well supported they should be appropriately rewarded. Here again, the general rules for assessing the quality of the candidates response apply. Paraphrasing and simple or limited description/repetition may be enough for a 4/5 Band grade; any attempt at interpreting, etc. etc.

- **Lo que el autor quiere sugerirnos con sus descripciones de 'Vendelinus'.**

The term 'Vendelinus' should be clearly associated to the planet earth as this information is openly provided to the candidates to avoid possible misunderstandings.

The author appears to suggest that the story takes place after the occurrence of a massive war on earth. It is not said between whom (a war between humans or a war with extra-terrestrials?) or why this happened but it is suggested that everything disappeared from the surface of the earth. There were no buildings to be seen, no people, not the slightest trace of nature, in other words, nothing at all. In fact, after landing on the surface of Vendelinus, Orsi and Plebster could see nothing, not even a single sign of human existence. The landscape is described as in a state of complete desolation ('todo era desolación'; 'densas nubes de polvo') and references are made to ashes and to metal fragments all over the place, perhaps suggestive of fires, burning and destruction of metal objects, typical of the aftermath of a war. Then, a reference to the possibility that the humans may be sheltered underground because of the 'catastrophe' is also made, together with the idea that the war had been long anticipated by the humans and that they were well prepared for it ('...tenían de todo allí abajo...'). But, then, suddenly, the story moves to closer quarters, when the 'aliens' make their way into a subterranean refuge and find some two dozen 'earthlings' in a tavern.

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- **Cómo se las arregla el autor para sorprendernos e intrigarnos con su presentación de 'seres humanos' y su reacción frente a Plebster y Orsi.**

The author surprises and intrigues us as the particular group of 'earthlings' found by the aliens are 'Argentinian' men and women ('Los humanos eran, al menos de dos sexos diferentes... Bebían extraños tragos, hablaban poco entre ellos y no parecían demasiado jóvenes...'), particularly fond of 'Argentinian' tango. In actual fact they are in a tavern where a musical show is going on. It is an unexpected turn of events because the reader does not anticipate the earthlings to be 'Argentinian' or from any particular nationality, for that matter. This really has the effect of making the story very 'localized' to say the least. Also, this adds an amusing element, particularly for an international readership, although probably the author was addressing the Argentinian public when he wrote the story. To add to the sense of humour, the inhabitants of the tavern show no particular reaction to the physical appearance of these strange visitors that, after all, are aliens. They do not show signs of surprise or fear, not even curiosity. They appear as extremely civilized human beings that offer the 'visitors' a welcoming salute. And, to reinforce the fun tone of the story, the response of the aliens is equally unexpected, as they react to the locals as if they were mutual acquaintances who see each other frequently. Orsi, in particular, is delighted by the greetings. It is also rather amusing when, at the end of the story, the author resorts to 'rioplatense' jargon to announce the name of the song to be interpreted, and the 'tango' is made to feel so popular as to be able to attract 'an audience' even from beyond the planet earth. Plebster and Orsi are said to have gone to their tavern to listen to the Argentinian singers (¡Y es porque vienen a escuchar a Angelito Delfino...). On this particular question we will expect the candidates to be able to exploit the humorous side of the story and offer a personal appreciation of it. Previous experience tells us that candidates have a particular difficulty at dealing with humour. Either they do not recognise it or find it difficult to convey their appreciation of it as if the seriousness of the exam may prevent them from making references to humor. Thus, it is likely that many candidates may overlook at the fun elements of the story. On the other hand, any 3+ Band candidate should be able to recognise at least one or two distinctive humorous points in addition to fulfilling the other requirements of the question.

- **Usted puede añadir cualquier otro comentario que le parezca pertinente**

It is rare for candidates to take up this invitation and they should not be penalised if they do not. However, any interesting comments should of course be taken into account in the overall reward. I refer here to the distinct possibility that candidates may be able to comment about the fun features of the story but present them under a different 'label'. Thus, some candidates may refer to the use of 'irony' by the author or to 'unexpected reactions' from the characters but fail to address them as intentionally humoristic. This should be taken into consideration in so far as it is dealing with the text although under a different light and a generous reward should be considered. However, this alone should not be a substitute for the required response to the preceding sections.