

1995 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

SPANISH

In 1995, 394 candidates presented themselves for the examinations in Spanish. Of these, 82 presented for the 2UZ course, 174 for the 2/3 Unit course and 138 for the 3 Unit course.

2/3 UNIT (COMMON)

WRITTEN PAPER

Section I

Part A : Reading Comprehension

Question 1

The article was clear and coherent, so that candidates had little difficulty in finding the correct responses. It was difficult, however, to paraphrase some of the terms which appeared throughout the text, e.g. *Renaissance*. Those who responded in English tended to paraphrase more than those who answered the questions in Spanish.

Question 1(b) was the most difficult question. It was poorly answered because of the abstract references required for the correct response. Questions (c), (d) and (e) were not difficult, yet a number of candidates were unable to answer these questions in their own words. The poorer candidates, in some cases, provided the right answer but for the wrong question and were penalised. Individual questions that were answered both in Spanish and English were also penalised.

Question 2

This passage was fairly straightforward and the questions on it lent themselves quite easily to copying straight from the text. This is definitely not advisable. Students are reminded to answer questions, wherever possible, in their own words. Answers copied directly from the text, without any effort's being made to paraphrase were penalised. The better candidates used suitable synonyms and successfully answered the questions.

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Part B : Writing Skills

Question 3 : A short story based on pictures

The majority of candidates performed satisfactorily in this section, following the story line presented by the pictures in chronological order and incorporating specific details from the pictures into their writing, e.g. waving farewell, driving along without a care in the world, driving the wrong way up a one-way street, and the state of the driver in the last illustration.

It was pleasing to observe that the majority of candidates supplied a title to their story, thus adhering to the conventions for story-telling.

Students in general are advised to keep to the story-line suggested by the pictures in the correct sequence as presented. Although creativity is encouraged, it needs to be within the bounds of the visual cues supplied.

The majority of candidates experience difficulties with:

- spelling, with confusion between *b/v*, *s/c*, *ll/y/g*, *h* where it was not needed or missing when required.
- verbs and tenses, sequence of tenses.
- word order in sentences.
- punctuation, especially with regard to accents. Answers written in a *stream of consciousness* mode, without any punctuation, were extremely difficult to fathom.
- forms of address between those speaking:
tú is inappropriate in a conversation between the police and wrongdoer.
- many Anglicisms were used:

<i>mejor hombre</i>	for	best man
<i>una para la calle</i>	for	one for the road
<i>pagar atenc ón</i>	for	to pay attention
<i>turno</i>	for	turn
<i>me dieron una lectura</i>	for	they gave me a lecture

Candidates need to devote more time to the assimilation of vocabulary and grammar in order to improve their performance. There appears to be a certain degree of complacency with some, who appear to consider that, as they can speak the language, no effort need be made to ensure that what is written is accurate.

Question 4

(a) Letter to an aunt

This continues to be the most popular choice with candidates and many were well aware of how to set out a letter.

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Some, however, had no concept of the correct layout for letter-writing in Spanish. They wrote their full names and home addresses here in Australia as well as that of their aunt.

It cannot be stated often enough that the candidates must not at any time identify himself/herself.

Marks were lost in this question for the same reasons as those outlined in Question 3.

Some need to acquaint themselves with the appropriate Spanish for family relationships because, in writing to their aunt, they signed off as *tu primo/tu nieto* rather than *tu sobrino*.

(b) Dialogue

This was chosen by a small number of candidates, almost all of whom observed the correct format for the presentation of a dialogue. One lone candidate, however, appeared to have a well-rehearsed essay ready and went on to deliver it in toto, despite the need for dialogue.

Many also appeared to have only read part of the question, hence their responses failed to address the issues at stake. Moreover, the majority did not appear to be conversant with the conventions required for successful dialogue presentation.

Marks were deducted for the reasons already outlined in Question 3.

(c) Essay

Very few candidates attempted this question. Of those who did so, many wrote an introduction outlining their personal point of view, followed by the body of the argument, and summed up in the conclusion.

Some, however, would have been better suited to the letter (4a), given that they chose a chatty and informal style rather than a well-developed, structured, formal piece of writing with vocabulary and tone befitting the topic.

It is emphasised that personal anecdotes are not acceptable in an essay.

Marks were deducted as for Question 3.

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Section II : Options

Part A : Hispanic Prose

Question 5 : Camilo José Cela, La familia de Pascual Duarte

- (a) The majority of candidates answered this question quite well, showing a detailed knowledge of the relevant aspects of the text. Some concentrated only on the childhood of the protagonist, Pascual, and their answers were not as good as those of candidates who were able to develop the theme more fully, by referring to the cases of Mario, Rosario and Pascualillo too. The majority successfully gave a sufficiently detailed account of the hardship and neglect experienced by the children in the novel.
- (b) About half of the candidature realised that the question referred not to the body of the text, but to the additional material which serves as its prologue and epilogue respectively. The intervention of the *transcriptor*, and the framing of the main body of the text through this device, were the main points sought by the question. A few candidates rightly considered the manner in which this relates to the credibility of the main text. Those who referred in detail relevant to the beginning and ending of the main body of the text were given some reward for their efforts.
- (c) Most candidates answered this question well and were able to give quite detailed accounts of the relationship between the protagonist and his sister, Rosario. These included those moments in the text in which Rosario is the only person who is supportive of Pascual. Her effect on his character, in bringing out a more human, and humane, side was generally well described.
- (d) Most candidates again were sufficiently familiar with the text to give at least adequate descriptions of the marginalised community shown in the text. Many, however, were content simply to list the manifestations of marginalisation, such as poverty, illiteracy, *machismo* and violence. The better prepared candidates related these to the process of marginalisation, to the class divisions of the *pueblo*, and to the broader historical and social reality reflected in the text.

Question 6 : Manuel Puig, El beso de la mujer araña

Only one candidate answered this question, showing a close knowledge of the text but failing to give a convincing account of the major narrative devices employed in it, as requested in part (d).

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Part B : Hispanic Theatre

Question 7 : Federico Garcia Lorca, *Yerma*

- (a) Fortunately all candidates realised that the title was the name of the play's protagonist. Furthermore, most of them were able to relate the title to the word *yerma*, and its associations with barrenness and infertility. The better candidates related this fact to the central thematic concerns of the text, while a few were aware of the potential irony in the title for those who see Yerma as the victim of Juan's *infertility*.
- (b) This question was generally quite well answered, with most candidates showing a good knowledge of the text. Many were able to give detailed accounts of Victor's central function, effectively acting as a counterpart to Juan. The better answers showed an awareness of the manner in which Yerma projects her own ideas and obsessions onto the figure of Victor, and of the fact that his response is quite ambivalent.
- (c) Almost no candidates knew the text sufficiently well to be able to locate this quotation at the end of the scene at Dolores' house, after Juan has arrived and berated his wife for being there. The majority, however, were able to give a reasonable explanation of the meaning of the words. The most common response related them to Yerma's frustrated maternal desire. The more perceptive candidates also saw them as reflecting intimately on the nature of her relationship with Juan.
- (d) Almost all candidates were able to describe the end of the play adequately. There was, however, confusion amongst some as to the exact circumstances of Juan's death, and some interesting, if at times wrong, speculation regarding Yerma's motivation. Those candidates who gave a detailed account of events in the last scene received high marks, as did those who saw in Yerma's final words a declaration of relief and release.

Question 8 : Griselda Gambaro, *La malasangre*

No candidate chose to answer this question.

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Part C : Hispanic Song

Question 9 : Mecano - Dalai Lama

- (a) Most candidates answered this question very well.
- (b) In general, the majority related to the historical event of the Chinese invasion. Many, however, failed to relate to the traditional values of the town such as liberty, justice, respect for religion, etc.
- (c) Approximately half of those attempting this question answered it very well. The best students referred particularly to the economic condition of the country and to the Nobel Peace Prize: Dalai Lama.
- (d) The few who were well prepared answered the question quite well, showing their familiarity with the themes and musical arrangement of the song. A number of candidates, however, wrote very short answers.

Question 10 : Juan Luis Guerra - El costo de la vida

No candidates chose this question.

ORAL/AURAL

Listening Skills

Candidates generally found the News Items section, with its use of formal Spanish, more difficult than the dialogue section in which the majority scored high marks, thus compensating for their performance in the News Items section.

The examination text was divided into 17 questions, of which Questions 6, 12, 13 and 14 were the most difficult.

Questions 3, 4 and 5 proved to be the easiest to answer from the dialogue, as were Questions 9, 11 16 and 17 from the News Items.

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Speaking Skills

The performance of candidates was generally satisfactory since most were able to express themselves fluently, specially in the familiar register.

Those who were awarded the highest marks showed a wide command of vocabulary, grammatical structures and different syntactic forms, e.g.

*Preferiría que no me criticases más abuela
No deberías pensar que todas nacimos para tener cuerpos de modelos
El punto de vista que expones me parece muy apropiado
Si usted tuviera la bondad de ayudarme señor
Pensamos que somos lo suficientemente responsables, señora.*

Such candidates made the conversation interesting, challenging and spoke loudly enough, taking the leading role. It was, therefore, not necessary *to push* them to perform.

Those who obtained lower marks showed a limited knowledge of aspects such as gender, number, grammatical structures and used a very restricted vocabulary, which often contained Anglicisms, e.g.

*No estaré atendiendo al colegio
No quiero traicionar a ella
Yo puedo hacer mucho provecho pa' esta agencia
Si yo quisiera hacer cosas malas yo las hiciera
No se meta dentro de mi vida
Bueno abuelo, ahí tenés un punto.*

Many candidates were unable to use the formal register consistently, e.g.

*Señor profesor, entiendo que tú estás enojado
Si usted me da el trabajo, yo te aseguro que seré responsable.
Te aseguro señor que yo haré bien este trabajo.*

Others used "Spanglish" widely, e.g.

*Esto reflecta mucho tu actitud
Tuvimos que movernos de casa
No quiero perder marcas por estar atrasada.*

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2 UNIT Z

ORAL/AURAL

Section I : Listening Skills

This examination proved to be quite a challenge for the majority of the candidature. Generally their level of understanding fluctuated according to the item focus and the amount of detail required for a complete response. Most difficulty occurred with vocabulary and situations of weather, tickets for performances, giving more complex directions, food items and modifiers such as *por lo menos* and *siempre*. In such instances candidates resorted to direct translation and not interpretation, and performed better in situations concerning numbers, family relationships and clothing.

It is strongly advised that candidates must:

- read each question carefully to determine exactly what is required before providing a response
- their responses must contain all relevant details
- write legibly in either blue or black ink

Students are also reminded to transfer the information for their response from the notes column to the printed lines.

Item 1

On the whole candidates responded reasonably well here; significant problems arose, however, with providing the **full** set of directions.

Item 2

This was a most challenging situation, with the majority of candidates failing to grasp the context.

Item 3

Most candidates responded well, but in many instances the modifiers were omitted.

Item 4

A number of candidates grasped the context of this situation, but their answers were not complete.

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Item 5

This situation proved quite challenging, with candidates failing to grasp the clothing item, and the details of the sale.

Item 6

On the whole this situation was well answered but, again, **all** relevant details were omitted in many responses.

Item 7

This was well done by the majority of the candidates but many still failed to grasp fully the reasons for action.

Item 8

This was the most challenging situation for most candidates.

Item 9

This item was reasonably well done but many candidates simply translated details and did not interpret the information.

Item 10

Although this item was reasonably well answered, candidates still failed to provide a **full** explanation.

Item 11

The concepts involved in this situation were generally well understood.

Item 12

Once again, **all** the details eluded many candidates.

Item 13

This situation was answered reasonably well.

Item 14

Candidates responded well here.

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Item 15

Although most answers here were good, some candidates still failed to supply a **full** response.

Item 16

The majority of the candidates provided incomplete responses.

Item 17

Here candidates did not provide complete answers, and showed a limited understanding of weather vocabulary.

Item 18

Candidates answered this item reasonably well but, again, not **all** details were supplied.

Item 19

This situation was well answered.

Item 20

Answers to this situation were mostly good, but there was some confusion as to what happened to whom and who went where.

Section II : Oral Reading and Speaking Skills

Oral Reading

Students are reminded that the title forms part of the Oral Reading passage and, as such, must not be ignored. The Oral Reading passage is chosen in order to provide candidates with many opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of Spanish pronunciation, stress and intonation. Many paused incorrectly, interrupting the flow of their reading. Others attempted only more challenging vocabulary.

Candidates are encouraged to sound words out if they prove difficult, but to go back and repeat the whole word fluently once they have grasped it. Some Spanish words are written with an accent to indicate the placement of the stress but many candidates ignore this assistance. Certain vocabulary caused difficulty - *gargaras, ineficaces, chillar, refugiaba, notablementé*.

Candidates are urged to read loudly and clearly, and to pace themselves when recording in order to give themselves every possible advantage.

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Speaking Skills

Situation 1

Candidates failed to observe the formal register and could not make the agreement between *jacket* and *small*. Many appeared to lack the basic vocabulary required by the situation, and also experienced problems with longer utterances and word order. Students are advised to read the English clue and to think of how best to communicate the concepts in Spanish, but not to provide a literal translation.

Situation 2

Candidates lacked familiarity with the vocabulary of basic directions and failed to observe the formal register. Problems were again encountered with longer sentences involving more than a simple concept. Candidates experienced difficulty with *el hotel Plaza* and *la plaza mayor/principal*. A number incorrectly expressed *another* as *un otro*. Students are reminded of the need to include appropriate prepositions for clearer communication.

Situation 3

Once again candidates showed a lack of familiarity with the basic vocabulary required in this situation. Problems arose when they tried to express themselves articulately in (c), although most were still able to communicate their needs. The expression *not feel like eating* was rendered as *no me gusta comer*, which was not wholly acceptable. In spite of these problems, candidates appeared to handle this situation better than the most of the others.

Situation 4

Few candidates greeted the lady correctly, omitting her title. Students are reminded that the person spoken to is specified, and that that person must be addressed in some way, usually by title. Candidates found it difficult to translate *more than*. Many lacked basic fruit vocabulary, as well as knowledge of Spanish syntax with weights, rendering 2.5 kilos as *dos y medio kilos*. *Ripe* was omitted by the majority.

Situation 5

Few could render the past tense accurately and lack of vocabulary was also a problem. Most candidates provided an appropriate rendition of (a).

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All students are urged to revise:

situational vocabulary,
the use of the formal register, Spanish syntax,
idioms (e.g. *ganas de comer*), placement of qualifiers (e.g. *plaza mayor, segunda calle*), and
agreement between articles, nouns and adjectives.

Practice and careful preparation will enhance a candidate's performance in this section.

Section III : Reading Skills

Candidates obviously found difficulty in identifying the information required by each question.

Question 1 : Hasta las palomitas de maíz son dañinas.

- (a) Many candidates indicated the amounts of calories and grammes of fats but did not refer to the apparent harmlessness of popcorn.
- (b) Full marks were gained by providing a comparison between the ingredients in a hamburger and the popcorn.
- (c) A significant number of candidates answered *coco* oil instead of *coconut* oil. Many obviously did not interpret *sabe mejor* as *tasting* better, and very few referred to *huele bien*.

Question 2 : Los satélites

This passage was generally well handled and many candidates scored full marks for (a), (b) and (c). Part (d) presented some problems because of the amount of information needed for a complete answer.

Question 3 : Los dinosaurios

- (a) This question was generally answered well.
- (b) Here many candidates omitted many of the details required for a complete response. Others were unable to communicate their understanding clearly.

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- (c) Most candidates understood that dinosaurs evoke the image of size, but did not make the connection with *adults*. In addition, candidates could not express the concept of children's seeing in dinosaurs the *myth of dragons*.
- (d) Most candidates could not give a complete answer to this question.

Question 4 : El Yoga

- (a) The majority of candidates answered this question very well.
- (b) Many were confused about which details to incorporate in answering this question.
- (c) Candidates grasped the concept of *relaxation* but very few included the idea that it was *total* or *perfect* relaxation.
- (d) Candidates generally understood the concept but failed to express their understanding clearly, or to include all relevant details.

Section IV : Writing Skills

Although candidates have a choice within this examination paper, the majority chose to complete the Guided Dialogue (Question 5), while the remainder completed the Letter in Question 7(a). Very few chose Question 7(b), and no one completed the Free Dialogue (Question 6).

It is again emphasised that this is a *writing* exercise. This means that what is written *should* be neatly presented, in legible handwriting. It is in this type of task that spelling, accents, punctuation, word order and grammar count. Marks **are** allocated to these aspects as well as to the creativity of what has been written and the way in which it is communicated. Candidates need to meet these criteria to be able to gain marks.

Question 5

In completing this writing task, candidates failed to *interpret* the English clue and resorted, in the main, to a simple translation. Students are encouraged to be more flexible when completing a task of this nature, as this rigid adherence to the English clue caused problems when vocabulary items were not known. Very few showed a knowledge of any tense other than the present tense. Many candidates could not express *I love*. A number confused the spelling of stem-changing verbs and could not remember to make the agreement between verb and subject. Few could translate *sensible*, with many opting for the English word. Some failed to show their knowledge of number by failing to write the time in words. Students are

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reminded that an activity of this nature requires thought and careful consideration of what the clue is actually saying and, therefore, their task is to couch their answer in correct and precise Spanish rather than provide a basic translation of the words that appear in the English clue.

Question 7

The majority failed to answer this question fully because they did not check whether they had made a statement about each of the aspects identified in the instructions.

Candidates were not sufficiently careful when writing words which are similar and tended to provide the English spelling rather than the Spanish one. This results from a task done in haste and costs valuable marks. A few moments of careful concentration at the end while re-reading the piece of writing could avoid this waste. Many candidates showed a lack of understanding of appropriate verb endings, usually ignoring the number and gender, others were unable to spell commonly used verbs correctly. This proves to be costly when a little time spent in careful thought could avoid this.

The majority avoided using the definite article and had difficulty in allocating the correct article to an item. Students are expected to know the gender of common items. Many found it difficult to choose correctly when the situation involved either *ser* or *estar*. Problems also occurred with the placement of the adjective in a Spanish sentence.

While most candidates could provide the correct format for an informal letter as required by the question, a large number placed a comma after the salutation rather than a colon. Students are urged to revise basic word groups, such as hobbies, subjects and sports.

3 UNIT ADDITIONAL

WRITTEN PAPER

Question 1

(a) Letter

This task was not successfully handled by most candidates who did not show adequate knowledge of letter form conventions. Grammatically the use of appropriate register was one of the strongest skills displayed, although the following areas presented difficulties for some candidates:

- use of passive voice was taken literally from the English and was used inappropriately in the Spanish language, *deseo traer la atención*
- inappropriate use of the gerund in Spanish.

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In addition there was a lack of creativity and coherency in some letters, while most students lacked the vocabulary to express themselves adequately. The majority of the students did not take notice of the prescribed length as stated in the question.

(b) Essay

This was the least popular question, with few candidates attempting it. The quality of the answers was, in general, quite poor, with students disregarding the register and the vocabulary needed for a successful answer. Candidates did not often justify their points and kept repeating the same ideas couched in different words. More than half of the candidature had difficulties in developing a concise, logical argument.

(c) Topic Sentence

The answers of those who attempted this question were slightly above average. Most observed the 200 word limit and attempted, with some success, to provide an adequate story, responding to the creative and imaginative potential of the stimulus sentence. Students should be aware of the verb tense in any stimulus sentence and should construct a text that comfortably includes it. The stimulus sentence must be an integral part of the story/text - it should not simply be used as a title.

LITERATURE : Gabriel García Márquez

Question 2

(a) Crónica de una muerte anunciada

Most of those who answered this question showed a reasonable knowledge of the text. The majority explained the concept of honour and related it to virginity and *machismo*, sex roles, religion, and the law. Here almost all candidates were able to cite relevant quotations in support of their answers, while weaker candidates provided some general views on the notion of honour and virginity.

(b) Crónica de una muerte anunciada

Very few candidates attempted this question, and those who did so did not answer it well. The few who did answer well, however, tried successfully to explain the consequences of the prejudices of a conservative society. A few candidates, in referring to one of the main ideas, viz *virginity*, quoted:

"unas mujeres en el pueblo estaban como predestinadas a ser desflorecidas antes de estar casadas"

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"If the town knew that she was not a virgin", i.e. used goods.

"Angela Vicario is taken back to her family like faulty merchandise for failing to meet the requirements".

AURAL-ORAL

Résumé of a Recorded Passage

Although this text was very difficult, a few students did perform reasonably well. Most candidates did not answer this question well. The majority, however, kept to the word limit and, by doing so, they acquired a limited number of main ideas and, in some cases, repeated these ideas because they did not fully understand the text.

Some of the most common errors in the summaries were:

pasaje instead of *texto* to render *passage*;

probar instead of *comprobar* to translate to *prove*;

wrong forms of *cerebralmente*, such as *celebrarmente*, *serenalmente*, and so on.

Articles were frequently omitted, as in *científicas ha demostrado*. Similarly, the influence of English was seen in the supposition that words like *gente* are plural, resulting in *gente que creen*, *la gente hacen*, and also in the use of English syntactical forms such as *dependiendo de la situación*, *dependiendo de estos estudios*, and so forth.

Attention should be called to those literal renditions in the course of the year.