

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/01
Speaking

Key messages

This component is made up of three sections and to perform well candidates need to:

- make a formal presentation of a topic clearly related to a Hispanic context
- take part in a discussion of issues arising from the presentation
- discuss issues of a more general nature at an appropriate level.

The use of Spanish should be generally accurate and of a suitably advanced nature and should demonstrate good use of idiom and appropriate vocabulary. Interaction with the examiner is an important criterion in the conversations. Candidates must ensure that they ask questions of the Examiner in both the Topic and General conversation sections in order to access the marks available for Seeking Information and Opinions.

General comments

Most Centres conducted the tests in full accordance with the requirements of the syllabus, which ensured that candidates had the opportunity to perform to the best of their ability, and which helped the moderation process to run smoothly.

The majority of Centres recorded the tests onto CDs, with a good sound quality. However, Examiners are reminded that they must announce the Centre number and the candidate's name and number at the start of each test. Please save each test to a separate track or file.

It is important that the Working Mark Sheet is fully completed for all candidates – including those whose test is not submitted as part of the sample – and enclosed with the recordings. There were still a few Centres that omitted to complete all the appropriate columns, or that just gave overall totals for sections. We remind all Centres that their marks cannot be confirmed or moderated unless the full breakdown of marks is shown.

Centres are also reminded that the Moderator's copy of the MS1 Internal Assessment Mark Sheet (or a signed printout of the marks file if marks are submitted electronically) must also be enclosed with the moderation materials.

Although not widespread, there were still some Centres that did not make a clear distinction between the Topic and General conversations sections. These must be separate sections, with the start and end clearly indicated to enable Moderators to see how the marks were awarded across each section. In some tests, the Topic conversation ran on to the end of the test, repeating issues already discussed, perhaps in a wider context, but nevertheless not allowing the candidate to respond to a sufficiently wide range of topics. Marks cannot be awarded for a General conversation if there is no clear evidence that it has been conducted.

Please remember the prescribed timings: Presentations should not exceed three and a half minutes; the Topic conversation section should not exceed eight minutes and the General conversation section should last no longer than nine minutes. Candidates cannot receive extra credit for tests that go beyond the time limit.

Comments on specific sections

Section 1: Presentation

General topic areas are outlined in the syllabus and topics must relate clearly to aspects of Hispanic life or culture. It is important to make this relevance explicit in the Presentation. Although some themes may have a general application, for example, the environment, technology, etc., candidates need to show how the topic has particular application in a Hispanic context. The 'Content and Presentation' mark out of ten is halved if no specific Hispanic focus is included.

Presentations should be a formal and coherent introduction to the subject and ideally provide a lead in to the Topic conversation by perhaps giving a personal viewpoint to indicate items for debate. The Presentation should show evidence of preparation and organisation and contain relevant factual knowledge. Pronunciation and quality of delivery are also taken into account. Candidates who recited an over-learned script in a monotone, with little attempt to engage the listener, lost some credit here.

Section 2: Topic Conversation

In this part of the test candidates should discuss and develop points arising from their Presentation; it should not just be an invitation to the candidate to give a further series of mini presentations. Interaction is important and Examiners should encourage the candidate to justify an opinion, or refute a differing point of view. Candidates whose responses were confined to pre-learned answers, with little evidence of spontaneity, could not be awarded high marks for 'Comprehension and Responsiveness'. Discussion should relate as far as possible to the Hispanic context.

In both the Topic and General conversation sections, candidates should ask the Examiner questions in order to seek information and opinions. If necessary Examiners should remind candidates to ask such questions, and should take care not to give lengthy responses which reduce the amount of time available to the candidate to demonstrate his/her skills. Marks cannot be awarded for 'Seeking Information and Opinions' if no questions are asked by the candidate.

Section 3: General Conversation

This must be a separate section from the Topic conversation and different issues should be discussed. Although there are no prescribed topic areas for the General conversation, those that are discussed should be at an appropriate level of demand. Common areas included current affairs, a news item, the arts, sport, the environment, the economy, politics – almost anything likely to spark a discussion according to the candidate's interests.

There were still some cases of questioning at a level more appropriate to IGCSE or Ordinary Level. Although some basic, personal or factual questions may be useful to start a discussion, candidates must be given the opportunity to show they can give and justify opinions of more advanced issues, as well as having sufficient general knowledge to substantiate a point. All conversations should go beyond the descriptive.

As in the Topic Conversation, candidates should ask the Examiner questions in order to seek information and opinions and should be reminded to do so if necessary.

Language

Range and accuracy of language are assessed in both Conversation sections. Examiners are again reminded to encourage candidates to use as wide a range of language as possible, both in terms of vocabulary and structure. To gain access to the higher ranges of the mark scheme, candidates should show competence in dealing with hypothetical and abstract situations as well as factual or descriptive areas. Accuracy tended to be more shaky in some basic structures, including verb endings and tenses, or noun / adjective / verb agreements.

Resources

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SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/21
Reading and Writing

Key message

In order to access every mark on this paper, candidates should follow the instructions in the rubrics carefully, avoid lifting five or more words from the text to answer comprehension questions, keep to the word limit in **Question 5**, and make sure that they attempt an answer to every question.

General comments

All scripts were generally well presented, and response to the two texts, dealing with different approaches to resolving economic difficulties, was often good. There was little evidence of any difficulty with time management.

Comments on specific questions

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

The majority of candidates were aware of the technique required to answer this question, although there were some who thought it was necessary to copy out the whole sentence which contained the targeted phrase, and a few who treated this as an exercise in paraphrasing.

It is important to answer with a phrase from the text which is a precise match to that of the question, and careful cross-checking should ensure that no additional words are included either before or after the matched phrase. Any such additions invalidate otherwise correct answers. A good way to check at a glance that an answer contains no extras or omissions is to copy out the paraphrase in the question and then write the answer phrase on the line beneath. Often, although not always, the targeted phrase is of a similar length to the one in the question.

The answers which most often contained unnecessary additions were:

(a) – answers continued with *...un sistema*.

(c) – answers continued with *...para*.

A common incorrect answer for (e) was *favorecer los valores de cooperación*, or occasionally the answer for (d) was offered here instead.

Question 2

This usually proves to be one of the more demanding exercises on the paper. In addition to performing the language manipulations required in this question, it is important to check that the answers fit back into the original text and retain the same meaning. The technique mentioned above of copying out the phrase as it appears on the question paper before writing the answer underneath can help to ensure that this is the case. It should also be possible to tell at a glance whether in making the manipulation any elements have been added or omitted.

(a) Common errors included the omission of *de* or the retention of the negative *no carece fondos*.

- (b) This was generally well done, with the majority of candidates being aware that *siempre que* is followed by the subjunctive.
- (c) Candidates who realised that *buscada* was a past participle and not an alternative to *búsqueda* usually completed the manipulation successfully.
- (d) Many candidates came close to answering correctly, but omitted to change *estar* to the subjunctive form *estén*.
- (e) There were many different ways of performing a manipulation to give a correct answer. There was widespread awareness that *tanto* needed to be paired with *como*.

Question 3

Comprehension of the text was generally good, and candidates who gave clear, detailed answers in their own words were able to access the higher mark ranges. Candidates who correctly identified the points which were being tested but who answered in brief phrases, or had difficulties in producing a successful paraphrase, were credited for content where appropriate – provided that fewer than five words of text had been copied – but were unable to access the full range of marks available for Quality of Language.

- (a) Most candidates scored two marks for noting that items or services to be exchanged should be comparable in value and that the two parties should trust one another. A few answered incorrectly that no money being exchanged was another necessary factor.
- (b) Good answers made it abundantly clear which services each company was either acquiring or offering. Examiners were unable to award marks when answers talked generally about the exchange of services being of mutual benefit to both companies without giving specific details. The fact that no money changed hands was sometimes omitted.
- (c) (i) Candidates who had not fully grasped the meaning of the word *banco* in this context were sometimes further confused by the references to *euros* and *moneda de cambio*. There were several instances of copying five or more words from the text.

(ii) The second part of the question proved to be more accessible and there were four different routes to the three marks. The requirements for using a *banco de tiempo* were fairly readily identified, although the idea of *en la localidad del banco* tended to be either omitted or it was copied without any attempt to paraphrase. The expression *impreso de adhesión* sometimes gave rise to anglicisms such as *aplicación* and *forma*.
- (d) It was quite common for only one of the two available marks to be scored here. The point about equal job value was often confused with the importance of the time factor, and the second point regarding helping others was missed possibly because of difficulty with the word *gratificante*.
- (e) There was a similar tendency here for one mark to be scored rather than two. The notion of promoting cooperation amongst citizens was frequently put forward as a response.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

Candidates seemed to find the second text, dealing with the rise in popularity in the use of pawnbrokers' shops, more challenging than the first.

- (a) Many candidates were able to readily identify the three points in the text and there were some successful attempts at producing appropriate verb forms for *encarecimiento* and *restricción*. Several candidates sometimes copied key phrases directly from the text which meant that marks could not be awarded.

- (b)(i) One out of two was a common score here. The first mark was sometimes not awarded because candidates did not mention the fact that the immigrants were impoverished. The phrase *la crisis económica está afectando a la economía real* caused some difficulties in comprehension.
- (ii) Candidates who were able to distinguish clearly between the ways in which *tiendas de compraventa* were used in the past and now in the present day scored the two marks.
- (c) This was a reasonably straightforward question but not many candidates were able to score maximum marks. It was a four-mark question, indicating that four distinct points were being sought. To score the first mark candidates needed to clarify that *Josefina* was now only able to take on one domestic employee. Most candidates were able to note that she now had to rent out some of her rooms. One of the last two points about how she spent the money acquired by pawning her jewels was often omitted, or the phrase *materiales para la nueva temporada* was commonly copied without any attempt to paraphrase.
- (d) Many candidates answered by mentioning the interest rates referred to in the early part of the paragraph and were therefore unable to score a mark.
- (e) Again, candidates appeared to be distracted by parts of the paragraph which were irrelevant to the question asked, despite the fact that the word *imagen* appeared in both the question and the relevant part of the text. Marks were often scored for paraphrasing that pawnbrokers' shops *no son muy disimilares a los bancos*, although the force of the double negative was sometimes missed. The concept *están a la vista de todos*, if correctly identified and understood, often proved difficult to express.

Question 5

Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks awarded. Most candidates seemed to be aware of the need to keep to the limit of 140 words for both parts of the question. Anything in excess of 160 words is disregarded, and in extreme cases this can lead to no marks being awarded for the second part.

- (a) The technique required for achieving a good mark in this task is to note, in the very limited number of words available, details from the texts which answer the question which has been asked. Generalisations, often required by other forms of summary writing, are usually too vague to score. Each relevant specific detail corresponds to one mark. Generalised introductions, such as *Actualmente vivimos en un mundo capitalista, el cual es un tanto ambicioso y egoísta. Así que las personas tienen la necesidad de creer en la esperanza y que aún hay solución para sus problemas...*, waste words and score nothing for content. Candidates who applied the required technique scored well, and the question was a good test of overall understanding of the two texts. Sometimes the distinction between the *bancos de tiempo* and *tiendas de compraventa* became blurred, and statements were made about both which, in fact, applied only to one or the other. Nevertheless, a good number of candidates were able to note the main points and produced a summary and explanation that read very well.
- (b) The personal response was generally done well. In the two or three sentences which are usually available for this task any ideas that are different from those expressed in the texts, combined with a personal opinion, will usually score highly. The vast majority of candidates confirmed that the economic crisis is, indeed, worldwide, and many included personal details of how family or friends had been affected.

The quality of candidates' written Spanish, both here and throughout the paper, was generally up to the standard required by this examination, with the marks falling between the Sound and Very Good range.

Resources

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SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/22
Reading and Writing

Key message

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General comments

All scripts were generally well presented, and response to the two texts, dealing with the related topics of renewable energy and sustainable transport, was often good. There was little evidence of any difficulty with time management.

Comments on specific questions

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

The majority of candidates were aware of the technique required to answer this question, although there were some who thought it was necessary to copy out the whole sentence which contained the targeted phrase, and a few who treated this as an exercise in paraphrasing.

It is important to answer with a phrase from the text which is a precise match to that of the question, and careful cross-checking should ensure that no additional words are included either before or after the matched phrase. Any such additions invalidate otherwise correct answers. A good way to check at a glance that an answer contains no extras or omissions is to copy out the paraphrase in the question and then write the answer phrase on the line beneath. Often, although not always, (e.g. **Question 1(c)**), the targeted phrase is of a similar length to the one in the question.

The most likely answers to contain unnecessary additions were:

(b) – answers continued with *...de panel solar*.

(c) – answers continued with *...de energía*.

Otherwise correct answers in **(c)** were sometimes invalidated by the omission of *para* at the start of the phrase.

Question 2

This usually proves to be one of the more demanding exercises on the paper. In addition to performing the language manipulations required in this question, it is important to check that the answers fit back into the original text and retain the same meaning. The technique mentioned above of copying out the phrase as it appears on the question paper before writing the answer underneath can help to ensure that this is the case. It should also be possible to tell at a glance whether in making the manipulation any elements have been added or omitted.

(a) The conversion from the passive present continuous to the active form was successfully achieved by most candidates.

- (b) The use of *llevar* + present participle in temporal expressions was recognised by some candidates, and several different permutations of the structure were used. Others appeared less familiar with the structure.
- (c) Many candidates recognised that the conditional, *sería suficiente*, was needed here.
- (d) Many realised that *poder* would be required in the answer but not so many put this into the conditional form, and only a minority were successful in using the impersonal *se podría comparar*.
- (e) There were many different ways of performing a manipulation to give a correct answer. Most candidates correctly opted for a subjunctive construction but some did not offer the necessary plural *capturen*.

Question 3

Comprehension of the text was generally good, and candidates who gave clear, detailed answers in their own words were able to access the higher mark ranges. Candidates who correctly identified the points which were being tested but who answered in brief phrases, or had difficulties in producing a successful paraphrase, were credited for content where appropriate – provided that fewer than five words of text had been copied – but were unable to access the full range of marks available for Quality of Language.

- (a) Most candidates scored two marks for noting that the solar panels could change the way in which we travel and obtain energy. The expression *aprovechamos la infraestructura de red de carreteras* was not well understood.
- (b) Marks for identifying the high costs of the project and lack of advanced technology were commonly awarded. Only a few candidates added that an insufficient amount of asphalted road surface was also a barrier to the implementation of the project.
- (c) Most candidates readily identified the facts which were required to answer this question, and those who were able to express them clearly scored maximum marks. Most difficulty was encountered in stating that the 'solar highways' would have similar construction costs to conventional roads.
- (d) The marks in brackets at the end of each question give a clear indication as to how many points are being sought in the answer. This was a four-mark question and four distinct points were needed to score the maximum. The four separate advantages of the 'intelligent roads', although often successfully identified, proved less easy to paraphrase without copying five or more words of text. Some answers carelessly indicated that *las nuevas carreteras generarán energía para 500 casas*.
- (e) Many candidates scored two marks here, although some copied the entire phrase *hasta 17 000 horas de luz al año* which meant that they missed out on one of the available marks.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

There was possibly greater familiarity with the topic in this text on sustainable transport and marks were on average higher than those for the previous exercise.

- (a) Nearly all candidates mentioned the fact that transport is a major contributor to global warming, and many were able to paraphrase the details relating to greenhouse gases and increases in CO₂ emissions. Occasionally marks were lost when vague over-generalisations were offered for the very specific data contained in the paragraph.
- (b) Raising public awareness of the importance of sustainable transport, improving air quality in the cities and counteracting climate change were all commonly identified. Marks were occasionally lost when, perhaps more by oversight than intention, the phrases *la importancia de la movilidad sostenible* and *mejorar la calidad del aire* were copied directly from the text.
- (c) The question and the relevant parts of the text were clearly understood, with the result that many candidates scored the two marks available. The copied phrase *cooperación de todos los ciudadanos* occasionally invalidated an otherwise correct answer.

- (d) This was another four-mark question, indicating that four distinct points were being sought. Comprehension was generally good. The phrase *el sistema de transporte público* was occasionally copied directly from the text and marks were sometimes lost by stating that public transport should be used rather than it should be improved.
- (e) The best responses successfully noted that to ride a bicycle in traffic was perceived to be dangerous in Spain, and also mentioned the cultural barriers to this practice without copying the phrase *la bicicleta esté mal vista*. Most candidates were able to state that it was uncommon to see VIPs on bicycles in Spain.

Question 5

Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks awarded. Most candidates seemed to be aware of the need to keep to the limit of 140 words for both parts of the question. Anything in excess of 160 words is disregarded, and in extreme cases this can lead to no marks being awarded for the second part.

- (a) The technique required for achieving a good mark in this task is to note, in the very limited number of words available, details from the texts which answer the question which has been asked. Generalisations, often required by other forms of summary writing, are usually too vague to score. Each relevant specific detail corresponds to one mark. Introductions, such as *Ambos textos tienen como finalidad proporcionar medidas para crear un mundo más verde y ecológico para equiparar todo el daño causado* waste words and score nothing for content. It should also be noted that marks are not awarded for personal opinion here. As environmental issues are clearly very familiar subject matter, a few candidates added information and opinions which did not feature in the texts and therefore could not be credited. Despite a noticeable tendency to focus more on details from the second text, candidates who employed the required technique scored well.
- (b) The personal response was generally done well, and most candidates were of the opinion that the car is a problem where they live. In the two or three sentences which are usually available for this task any ideas that are different from those expressed in the texts, combined with a personal opinion, will usually score highly.

The quality of candidates' written Spanish, both here and throughout the paper, was generally up to the standard required by this examination, with the marks falling between the Sound and Very Good range.

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SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/23
Reading and Writing

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- (b) The use of *llevar* + present participle in temporal expressions was recognised by some candidates, and several different permutations of the structure were used. Others appeared less familiar with the structure.
- (c) Many candidates recognised that the conditional, *sería suficiente*, was needed here.
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- (b) Marks for identifying the high costs of the project and lack of advanced technology were commonly awarded. Only a few candidates added that an insufficient amount of asphalted road surface was also a barrier to the implementation of the project.
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SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

There was possibly greater familiarity with the topic in this text on sustainable transport and marks were on average higher than those for the previous exercise.

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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 and write a response that is clearly relevant, well illustrated, coherently structured and well informed. The use of Spanish should be generally accurate and of a suitably advanced nature, as well as showing a good use of idiom and appropriate, topic-related vocabulary. Sentence patterns should show some evidence of complexity and the style should be easy to follow.

General comments

The relevance of the essays written in response to the titles set was clearly a top priority for the overwhelming number of candidates. This session there were far fewer examples of candidates writing pre-learned essays that did not respond to the actual title set. Understanding the importance of giving a personal response to the chosen title, and not just thinking aloud about the general topic from which the title comes, is something which has improved considerably over recent sessions.

The overall quality of Spanish used by many candidates was good. The majority of essays showed a confident use of complex sentence patterns coupled with an extensive range of vocabulary appropriate to the topic being discussed. The amount of grammatical control in evidence was impressive and many candidates were able to produce essays that showed an unequivocal and in-depth understanding of the topic under discussion.

Some candidates, however, did indeed lose marks for writing an essay which was hugely in excess of the maximum of 400 words permitted by the rubric. Such essays tend to be structurally careless and also result in fewer marks being awarded for linguistic accuracy, given that the longer the essay goes on, the more likelihood there is of grammatical errors being made. Centres are encouraged to advise their candidates to write within the required word length of 250 – 400 words.

In linguistic terms, the main problems noted by Examiners were similar to those seen in previous sessions. Once again, many essays omitted accents and a lack of understanding of the rules governing accentuation in Spanish will lead to a loss of marks in the Language element of the mark scheme. Equally, the use of singular verbs for plural subjects in statements such as ... *los medios de comunicación es muy importante...* and ...*existe muchos comerciales...*, the lack of adjectival agreement in phrases such as ...*esos anuncios televisivo...*, the misspelling of key words, for example, *la responsibilidad*, *frequentemente* and *la neccesidad*, together with *el dessarrollo*, *el problem*, *jovene* and *la naturalesa* also had an effect on the mark awarded for Language. Other common errors were the omission of the letter 'h' in the auxiliary verb used in the perfect tense (...*a decidido que...*), the substitution of 's' for 'c' in words like *ambición* and the use of 'c' for 'z', especially in words such as *globalización*.

With regard to the five essay titles on offer, candidates were able to deal with the issues under the spotlight with sound knowledge and an ability to develop arguments and, rather importantly, draw sensible conclusions. There was some evidence amongst the weaker responses of a more limited capacity to argue a particular case, but on the whole ideas were debated with maturity and intelligence. Most candidates took the decision to tackle the issues from a variety of different approaches. The stronger responses addressed the chosen title in depth and showed good levels of analysis.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

El trabajo voluntario es una pérdida de tiempo. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

This was a popular title, possibly because candidates felt that they could relate to it using personal experience of voluntary work. Good answers were characterised by a variety of points stating not just how important voluntary work was but also stating that, although there was no actual remuneration, the work brought emotional rewards and gave the opportunity for positive social interaction.

Question 2

La televisión es una fuerza negativa en la sociedad moderna.

This title was generally well answered. The best responses provided a variety of reasons as to why television was a bad influence. The reason most often referred to was its potential for encouraging, amongst other things, 'copycat' violence on the streets.

Question 3

Hoy en día, la conservación no es tan importante como el progreso. ¿Qué opinas tú?

This was a hugely popular title. The majority of candidates resisted the temptation to write out a pre-prepared essay on the many types of pollution without referring specifically to the title. The very best essays pointed out that conservation and progress were linked and went on to analyse how they were mutually dependent.

Question 4

Con respecto a la enseñanza, el papel de los padres es mucho más importante que el de los profesores.

This was a generally well answered essay title. Some candidates strayed into irrelevant territory and wrote mainly about what was involved in applying for a job or went on at length about how good (or bad) some of their own teachers have been over the years. The best essays, however, used a balanced approach and explained ways in which parents and teachers needed to work together with both providing different aspects of a child's upbringing and education.

Question 5

La cultura es una parte fundamental de la identidad nacional de cualquier país. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

This was the least popular title on the paper. Nevertheless, those candidates who responded managed to produce essays that were balanced and well-illustrated, listing the aspects of what constitutes culture and why it is so important in modern society.

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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 and write a response that is clearly relevant, well illustrated, coherently structured and well informed. The use of Spanish should be generally accurate and of a suitably advanced nature, as well as showing a good use of idiom and appropriate, topic-related vocabulary. Sentence patterns should show some evidence of complexity and the style should be easy to follow.

General comments

The relevance of the essays written in response to the titles set was clearly a top priority for the overwhelming number of candidates. This session there were far fewer examples of candidates writing pre-learned essays that did not respond to the actual title set. Understanding the importance of giving a personal response to the chosen title, and not just thinking aloud about the general topic from which the title comes, is something which has improved considerably over recent sessions.

The overall quality of Spanish used by many candidates was good. The majority of essays showed a confident use of complex sentence patterns coupled with an extensive range of vocabulary appropriate to the topic being discussed. The amount of grammatical control in evidence was impressive and many candidates were able to produce essays that showed an unequivocal and in-depth understanding of the topic under discussion.

Some candidates, however, did indeed lose marks for writing an essay which was hugely in excess of the maximum of 400 words permitted by the rubric. Such essays tend to be structurally careless and also result in fewer marks being awarded for linguistic accuracy, given that the longer the essay goes on, the more likelihood there is of grammatical errors being made. Centres are encouraged to advise their candidates to write within the required word length of 250 – 400 words.

In linguistic terms, the main problems noted by Examiners were similar to those seen in previous sessions. Once again, many essays omitted accents and a lack of understanding of the rules governing accentuation in Spanish will lead to a loss of marks in the Language element of the mark scheme. Equally, the use of singular verbs for plural subjects in statements such as ... *los medios de comunicación es muy importante...* and ...*existe muchos comerciales...*, the lack of adjectival agreement in phrases such as ...*esos anuncios televisivo...*, the misspelling of key words, for example, *la responsibilidad*, *frequentemente* and *la neccesidad*, together with *el dessarrollo*, *el problem*, *jovene* and *la naturalesa* also had an effect on the mark awarded for Language. Other common errors were the omission of the letter 'h' in the auxiliary verb used in the perfect tense (...*a decidido que...*), the substitution of 's' for 'c' in words like *ambición* and the use of 'c' for 'z', especially in words such as *globalización*.

With regard to the five essay titles on offer, candidates were able to deal with the issues under the spotlight with sound knowledge and an ability to develop arguments and, rather importantly, draw sensible conclusions. There was some evidence amongst the weaker responses of a more limited capacity to argue a particular case, but on the whole ideas were debated with maturity and intelligence. Most candidates took the decision to tackle the issues from a variety of different approaches. The stronger responses addressed the chosen title in depth and showed good levels of analysis.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Trabajar es tan estresante como estar desempleado.

This was generally well answered, with a variety of approaches detailing the advantages of employment, while at the same time pointing out the stress sometimes caused by the working environment. The best essays also examined the economic and social pressures of unemployment with many highlighting the current economic climate. The inevitable stigma of being labelled as unemployed was also mentioned as was the belief that being in work can often, in itself, bring a degree of pressure on family life and relationships in general.

Question 2

¿Es verdad decir que la influencia de la publicidad televisiva es enorme?

This was the most popular title on the paper. There was little doubt amongst candidates that the statement in the title was indeed true. Most essays mentioned the impact that television advertising can have on young people and how fashions and trends can be initiated by the relentless promotion of items such as skin products or fast food. Some candidates missed the word *publicidad* in the title and wrote merely about television programmes they liked or disliked. Such essays could not gain access to the higher mark bands for Content.

Question 3

A pesar de todo lo que hacemos los humanos para conservar la naturaleza, logramos muy poco. ¿Qué opinas tú?

This was the second most popular title. Candidates argued that the environment can and should be respected more by humans and that we should continue to do all we can to improve recycling rates and reduce air pollution through increased use of public transport. Basically, all agreed that every little helps. Some candidates resorted to listing different types of pollution without relating their words to the title. The best answers were balanced, pointing out with concrete examples what had already been done to counteract pollution of the environment.

Question 4

¿Prepara la enseñanza a los jóvenes para el mundo del trabajo?

Some of the essays produced in response to this title were of a very high quality indeed. Points made were backed up by specific references and it was often suggested that preparing for the world of work involved far more than just acquiring qualifications.

Question 5

Cada gobierno debe asumir la responsabilidad de proteger y fomentar el patrimonio artístico de la nación. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

A generally well answered question and all candidates agreed that governments should indeed assume such a responsibility towards artistic heritage.

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