

2672: ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY GCE SPANISH – LISTENING, READING & WRITING 1

General Comments

Once again, candidates seemed generally well prepared for the demands of this paper and almost all were able to finish, despite the time pressure. The paper itself produced a wide range of marks and provided the scope for sufficient differentiation, enabling a fair assessment to be made.

Contrary to the instructions given on the first page, a number of candidates wrote in pencil. This is to be discouraged, as, at certain points in the marking process, Examiners have to use pencil and when these marks are erased, it becomes very hard not to erase script at the same time. Most candidates were able to cope with the linguistic level, although there were Centres where all candidates gained low marks, suggesting that they were not yet ready for AS level.

Candidates were generally able to produce the level of Spanish required, but there was still evidence of basic problems with verb forms, genders and adjectival agreement, use of pronouns, etc. As ever, *gustar* was invariably mishandled when used.

The general level of English was also to be commended, with fewer marks being lost through inability to spell, punctuate or use the appropriate grammatical structures.

As usual with this paper, time was a key element and, although the vast majority were able to finish all questions, there was evidence that others were unable to complete either Tarea 6 or Tarea 7.

Comments on Individual Questions

TAREA 1

This proved to be a good test and provided a wide range of marks. Few candidates were able to score full marks and even in the best answers there were difficulties with the key phrase needed to answer Q.d) – *la salida del sol*. Candidates were obviously unable to decide whether the sun was coming or going, presumably linking, with a certain logic, *salida* with *exit*. Many were also unable to make the link between the *misa solemne* of the spoken text and *un acto religioso* of Q.b).

TAREA 2

A much more accessible task, with most candidates scoring over 50% and many achieving full marks, suggesting perhaps that they are more comfortable with a shopping context than one relating to *fiestas*. The question most commonly missed was (g), where *facilidades de pago* was not seen as the link to *crédito*. The two alternatives that were frequently ticked incorrectly were (i), where *visitar la fábrica* was confused with the spoken *visítanos en nuestro nuevo comercio*, and (n), where *muebles de dormitorio infantil* led some candidates to feel that this constituted *atracciones para divertir a los niños*.

TAREA 3

Most candidates were able to score reasonably well on this question, but as with Tarea 1, very few achieved full marks, with questions (b) and (e) causing the most problems. In (b), recognition of the time phrase *pasado mañana* was required to determine whether the *Feria* began in the past or was to begin in the future and many were lured by the introductory *pasado* to give the wrong answer.

TAREA 4

The unusual story of the *tiburón* proved to be an excellent discriminator and caused significant polarisation. Although all candidates made a creditable attempt, they tended to score very well or very badly, depending on how they coped with the linguistic complexity, where structures such as *el complejísimo mantenimiento que se exige para albergar a un tiburón adulto, y en la absoluta necesidad del traslado* must have proved overwhelming for candidates with limited language experience.

TAREA 5

This was another very accessible task where in weaker answers the candidate was able to transcribe the spoken word with reasonable accuracy and therefore achieve an acceptable mark. It was possible to answer some questions, such as (g), in note form or with bullet points. This enables candidates to achieve a good content mark but the best language marks are given for full sentences.

This exercise always produces confusion as to who is addressing who and there is a constant conflict between direct transcription and indirect reported speech. The context is fundamentally the same each year, with a British company at one end and a Spanish one at the other. Candidates should practise working out who is who, i.e. who is “I” and who is “he” or “she”. Many of the best answers repeat the names frequently and if it is clear in the candidate’s mind who is doing what, then the answers will come over clearly. Question c) may serve as an example. Candidates were asked to explain the *motivo de la llamada del Sr. Paz*. The correct answer was something along the lines of *El Sr. Paz llamó para confirmar que quiere asistir a la Feria*. Many candidates were content to transcribe the spoken word directly and gave the answer *para confirmarles que sí* (mostly without the accent) *queremos asistir a la Feria*, which was acceptable. However, as soon as there was an attempt to combine this with indirect speech, then there was confusion as to the persons involved, e.g. *llama para confirmarles que queremos asistir a la Feria*.

The non-verbal answers to questions a), b), and d) were well done and showed good understanding of the spoken text, although in b) it was important to be able to link *vacaciones* with *descanso*. In Q.c) some thought that *asistir* meant “to help”. This is a word that frequently occurs in this section and should be high on the preparation list. In the following questions the key words and phrases were well understood and highlighted – *lo más cerca de la entrada*, and *agua* in e), *la semana anterior* and *por camión* in f). In g) those who had not sorted out who was speaking often did not realise that Rodolfo Paz was the director he was referring to, or that he was among those who would be attending the *Feria*. In h), *al lado de* was not well transcribed and *recinto* was accurately recognised by only a few. Finally in (i), there was again confusion with the reasoning and it was often difficult to sort out the senders from the receivers of the fax. The direct transcription *necesitarán una idea* left the implied subject of the verb unclear (*ustedes, ellos?*), as did the simple *para una idea*. *Supongo* was rarely recognised and the majority gave *idea* as masculine.

TAREA 6

Although some candidates had difficulties presenting a logical overall picture, there were fewer than in previous years and most were able to score well despite the considerable problems caused by the vocabulary. Some candidates opted for adventurous, free versions, with loose though quite competent summaries. Unfortunately, with this approach, marks are often lost because significant points are omitted or inadequately explained.

A further point to be made is that candidates should be discouraged from presenting alternatives on the grounds that the Examiner can select what he or she thinks is the most appropriate translation. Only the first or the unbracketed offering will be considered.

A good number were unable to correctly identify the meaning of *azulejos*, which put them at an initial disadvantage, despite the fact that it was used in direct connection with the London Tile Fair and that the meaning was given in a footnote in Tarea 5. This emphasises the need to read all instructions very carefully.

The false friend *asistirán* again caused havoc, as did the phrase *de tanta categoría* where it was important to stress the quality or importance of the Fair rather than the type. The difficulty of producing an acceptable English version of such a phrase also presented itself in other areas of the text – *han tenido buena aceptación, facilidad de limpieza, han resultado muy populares*. Individual lexical items also, and often surprisingly, created difficulties – *paredes*, for example, appeared to be known by few candidates, as was *carteles*, which was often seen as synonymous with *cartas*, *anuncios* was often given as “announcements”, while only a few candidates recognised the importance and meaning of *fuentes*. In the phrase *entre las novedades*, candidates appeared all too ready to translate *entre* as “between”, which made little sense in this context, and compounded this by avoiding any idea of “new” in their rendering of *novedades*. On the subject of “new”, quite a few candidates gave this as a translation of *nuestros*, as in *nuestros azulejos*, “the new tiles”. The final, extremely difficult clause, *el suministro de agua al stand será imprescindible*, was a knock-out blow for many, who, with a certain logic, drifted into the area of ministers and deputy ministers of water being impressed by the stand.

The quality of English was generally of a high standard. The words “English” and “Spanish” were often written without the capital letter, but punctuation was usually clear and accurate and misspellings restricted to a few random examples. Very few candidates struggled in this area and on occasions more marks were allowed for the English than for comprehension.

TAREA 7

Despite the apparent complexity of the instructions, which sometimes appeared to throw the candidate off balance (“to meet his requirements”, “suitable”, “to discuss the final arrangements” for example), the general standard of performance appeared to be higher this year than previously and would seem to demonstrate that candidates are being well prepared for this section of the paper. Good answers used the formal language required in such a task and were inventive and flexible in their approach. It is worth pointing out that, unlike Tarea 6, close translation is not essential to ensure marks for content, provided the point would be understood by a sympathetic native speaker. In the case of “a suitable hotel”, for example, even the most basic phrase, such as *el hotel está bien* would make the point, whereas sticking in English words (*el hotel es suitable*) would not.

This section almost invariably starts by thanking someone for a particular item (letter, fax, message, etc.). It is therefore disappointing to see so many candidates unable to use even the basic *gracias por* accurately.

Report on the Units taken in June 2007

Basic verbs, as usual, created problems, with many candidates unable to cope with the demands of the future, (of which there were a number of examples in this letter – “I shall do my best”, “I shall be able to reserve”, “he will find it suitable”, “I will need to talk”), or the past (“I have reserved”). Pronouns again proved difficult to handle and phrases such as *reservar un stand para su*, or *necesito hablar con su* were all too common.

A lot of candidates, after carefully opening with *su confirmación*, very quickly lapsed into the inappropriate use of *tú* and *vosotros*. This usage is much less apparent than previously, hopefully a result of the annual appeal in this report, but it is still fairly common and it is disappointing to see whole Centres adopting this approach.

Use of accents is becoming an increasingly rare phenomenon, even though in certain instances they can be vital.

Other problems include *lo que/todo lo que*, *preguntar para for pedir*, *todavía* for “already”. “I regret that” proved unexpectedly difficult with solutions such as *regreso que*, *regreto que* being regularly offered. Even candidates who were able to use *sentir* frequently confused two distinct uses and produced *lo siento que*. Few were able to write the correct subjunctive forms where (and if) required.

2673: ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY GCE SPANISH – READING & WRITING

General Comments

This year's examination was an appropriate test in which candidates achieved marks ranging from the maximum down to single figures. In the writing question it was pleasing to note a confidence and willingness to express ideas, with even weaker answers attempting such structures as *es importante que* + subjunctive. Time management did not appear to be a problem, indeed some candidates felt comfortable enough to produce essays which were of twice the recommended word length.

Differences were apparent between Centres in the amount of coaching given to candidates in the technique necessary for tackling this paper. Candidates who had been well acquainted with the requirements of a typical Task 3 rubric and the OCR marking grids for comprehension, response and quality of language were able to produce work which scored well. On the other hand it was often disappointing to see candidates with a superior command of the language fail to achieve their full potential through ignorance of technique.

Tasks 1, 2 and 4 produced fairly typical performances and there appeared to be fewer instances of candidates leaving answers blank when only a letter or a one in three guess was required.

Comments on Individual Questions

TAREA 1

This question produced a very good degree of differentiation with candidates having to think carefully about how the substance of the idea might be conveyed by using different vocabulary. Confusion over *naturismo* / *naturaleza* / *naturales* and *recorrer* / *hace footing* led to (d) and (f) being the most commonly offered wrong answers.

TAREA 2

This was the first time that a numerical variation of a standard matching exercise had been set and most candidates seemed to find it very much to their liking. Perhaps this was because the numbers immediately flagged up in the text the location of the information being sought. Scores of seven or eight were fairly widespread, the most common error being **C** and not **I** for **1957**.

TAREA 3

This is the most demanding task on the paper, (worth 50% of the total mark), and it gave good students the opportunity to display their command of Spanish and discriminated well. As ever, candidates were divided into those who tried to keep to the 200 word recommendation and those who attempted to write as much as they could in the time. Although perhaps not within the spirit of the rubric, it is the latter tactic which often favours candidates who score well for comprehension and response (10+10) at the expense of the language mark (10).

The topic of the stimulus text proved to be relevant to many candidates' experience, either directly or through recent events reported in the media. As a general rule candidates scored better marks for demonstrating comprehension by succinctly paraphrasing relevant parts of the text than they did for their response. There was widespread misunderstanding of *ha dejado de ser un privilegio* which led to nannies still being considered a privilege of the monied classes. In many cases nannies were also called upon to pay the mortgage and buy petrol and food or, if they were luckier, received all of these as part of their salary package.

Despite these and certain other common misapprehensions, candidates generally picked up useful marks for showing comprehension of the text. The mark scheme identified 16 significant points to be rewarded (up to a maximum score of 10) and these were accessible to many.

In their response to the text a number of candidates were guilty of penalising themselves by paying too little attention to the rubric which asked for a consideration of the pros and cons of having a nanny *para el niño*. They often wrote at length about difficulties experienced by parents, how tough a nanny's job is, or even personal experiences of being looked after by a nanny (without drawing general points for children from them), and scored few points.

For the majority who heeded the rubric this was an accessible topic which produced many imaginative comments regarding benefits and disadvantages. Arguments in favour included the continuity a nanny gives to a child, having a friend and being entertained, the possibility of learning another language, gaining confidence with adults who are not immediate family, receiving help with homework and having a confidante. Arguments against included the necessity of small children being brought up by their parents, lack of a good relationship leading to problems in the family later on, jealousy from the parents when the nanny becomes *más madre que la madre* and the more sinister possibilities of neglect, abuse and abduction.

The best answers produced accurate, idiomatic language, using a good range of vocabulary, and were a pleasure to read. There were also pleasing signs that candidates had been well coached in the use of appropriate structures for presenting opinions. There seemed to be fewer candidates with little to say or who were not able to express themselves coherently.

The list of common linguistic failings has a somewhat familiar ring to it:

problems with *gustar*;

ser and *estar* with *bien* and *bueno*;

quien being the automatic choice for 'who';

missing definite articles, e.g. *todos niños*;

confusion with *por* and *para*, *saber* and *conocer*, *creer* and *crear*;

lack of personal 'a';

todas las días, *una problema*, *un otro*;

sentences ending in prepositions e.g. 'a nanny is somebody to *jugar con*' or 'somebody you can't *vivir sin*'.

There were also certain neologisms:

pasar tiempo calidad con;

no es vale la pena.

And a new Spanish custom has appeared '*cuando hay fiesta por la tarde (14.00-17.00) más o menos*'.

TAREA 4

This question discriminated well and gave candidates a real opportunity to show off their knowledge of Spanish grammar. Full marks were achieved by some but a more typical score for candidates who did well throughout the rest of the paper was 13. Marks attained here frequently showed a close correlation with the marks given for language in the previous essay question.

Wrong answers which were frequently given included:

- (1) *por* for *para*
- (3) *tu* for *al* (probably the most common error of all)
- (5) *bien* for *buena*
- (6) *necesitas* for *hay*
- (7) *habla* for *hable*
- (8) *Cuando* for *Al*
- (9) *has hecho* or *hagas* for *harás*
- (11) *a ellos* for *a ella*
- (14) *algo* for *algún*

2674: ADVANCED GCE SPANISH – SPEAKING & READING

General Comments

As was the case last year, Examiners are able to report that the vast majority of Centres entering candidates for this session conducted the A2 Speaking and Reading tests very efficiently indeed. The awareness of the demands of this test is most apparent and Teacher/Examiners can feel a justifiable sense of pride with the way in which many of their candidates performed. This oral examination is a considerable test for many students and yet the impression Examiners get is that most candidates are very familiar with the format, cope well with their own stress levels and get on with the task in hand despite the microphone being unavoidably pointed at them.

The three stimulus texts were suitably accessible to all but a few candidates. It would appear that *Texto A (El tabaco en sitios públicos)* was the most accessible text given the very topical nature of its content. It would be fair to suggest, however, that *Texto B (El coste de la vuelta al colegio)* and *Texto C (Los beneficios de veranear junto al mar)* equally appeared to provide many candidates with reasonably approachable issues to discuss. Centres are reminded of the need to avoid a clash of topics between the selected text and the candidate's topic/s for discussion in Section B of the oral test. Accordingly, a candidate wishing to discuss issues relating to education in the General Conversation should not be given *Texto B*.

As was mentioned in last year's report, exceeding the maximum of 18 minutes for the test is a genuine waste of time and linguistic energy for both Teacher/Examiners and candidates. Thankfully, there were fewer such problems with timings this year. Disappointingly, however, a small number of Centres failed to check recording levels before sending their tapes to the Examiner. Any oral tests which are so badly recorded that the voice of the candidate cannot be heard will be sent back to the Centre in order for them to be recorded a second time. Marks cannot be awarded on the basis of what an Examiner thinks s/he can hear.

Administratively, the vast majority of oral tests once again went very smoothly indeed. Each candidate's recording must have **TWO** accompanying documents – the Working Mark Sheet (WMS), duly filled in with the candidate's details, and the topic sheet (Form OTF) with a list of **three** possible topics for discussion. Examiners are hugely grateful to Centres for ensuring that such documentation is in the script parcel prior to dispatch.

Comments on Individual Questions

Textos A, B and C

The key discriminator for all three passages was the ability of the candidate to explain and develop the issues under discussion rather than merely repeating verbatim the point made in the text. The ability to interpret the text and give responses promptly and with some degree of detail will always attract high marks. It is worth repeating the point made in many previous reports, namely that candidates wishing to score good marks in this section need to respond to and understand both the text and the questions asked by the Teacher/Examiner on the text itself as well as the issues relating to it. The linguistic challenge in all three texts was, in general terms, handled well by the majority of candidates although surprisingly a good number of candidates working with *Texto B* misunderstood the phrase "...gastar una media de mil euros..." which resulted in them interpreting the idea as "...gastar quinientos euros...". Similarly, in *Texto A* quite a few candidates were convinced, in answer to the question "¿...para quién sera la multa de hasta 600 euros?", that the Spanish local authorities would actually be fined every time a member of the public was caught smoking in a public place.

General Conversation

The delivery by candidates of pre-learnt material when asked to go into more detail with regard to their chosen topic/s was much less apparent this year. Although it still causes concern amongst Examiners, candidates need to be informed very clearly that they are not delivering a presentation in the style of the AS oral examination. The idea is that they are engaging in a conversation. In general terms, however, most candidates were able to respond well to the questions put to them. It needs to be repeated yet again that candidates will lose many marks if they fail to make reference to the target language country whilst discussing their topic/s. Previous years' reports advised Centres to give candidates a photocopy of the mark scheme for this unit (pages 71–76 of the Specification) so that they are fully aware of what is required and, more importantly, what is not. This advice still stands.

Inappropriate choices of topic/s for discussion in this part of the test once again resulted in a number of candidates automatically losing marks in Grid 4E. The Specification clearly requires candidates to select topics for discussion from the list in Section 5.2 (page 34) of the Specification. Topics such as “La Sagrada Familia” and “Mi viaje a la Sierra Nevada” **do not** comply with this list and are therefore considered as rubric infringements.

In linguistic terms, it remains the case that too many candidates are confusing Spanish intonation with that of Australian and American soap operas. Rising intonation at the end of a simple statement may be common in English at the present time but it has no place in a Spanish conversation unless, of course, a question is being asked. Equally, ending sentences with “creo que” also seems to have developed further in popularity amongst some candidates. On a more positive note, the accurate use of Advanced Level verb forms and grammatical structures was a joy to behold with many candidates successfully endeavouring to show off their oral skills with considerable flair. This, needless to say, is what this test is all about.

2675: ADVANCED GCE SPANISH – LISTENING, READING & WRITING 2

General Comments

This year's paper was accessible to candidates of all levels of ability; marks ranged from the very high to the very low. All tasks were attempted competently by a significant proportion of the candidates. Candidates in general seemed well prepared for the specific needs of the exam and had no problems finishing the paper. No candidate who had prepared for the exam appeared to have had difficulties in approaching the questions.

There were better performances on listening and writing, while the reading comprehension tasks, particularly Tarea 3 and Tarea 5, proved more challenging. Candidates demonstrated quite a wide vocabulary in Spanish, yet were surprisingly unfamiliar with basic words; for example "cost" was often rendered as *la cuesta* and *prisa* was often taken as "prize" or "price". The Spanish words and phrases for referring to this country and its inhabitants, such as the United Kingdom, Britons, Great Britain and England were not known to a surprisingly large percentage of the candidates. Correct use of a variety of tenses was often evident, but the passive voice and the various alternatives were less well known. While the need for the present subjunctive was often not detected in Tarea 5, it tended to be used to excess in Tarea 6 (e.g. *es necesario que se tenga un abogado... for es necesario tener...*). There was sometimes a tendency to invent words and a parallel reluctance to think about the meaning of unknown words; for example *bilingual* was used as a Spanish word, rather than a simple explanatory phrase to say the solicitor needed to speak the two languages. The failure to use accents continues; indeed some candidates used not one. Spelling in Spanish was, apart from that, generally better than in previous years; it was often considerably better than the standard of the English in Tarea 2, where the low levels of accuracy sometimes impeded comprehension and therefore led to a loss of marks.

Handwriting and poor presentation were also issues that should have concerned some candidates. Centres are asked to point out to candidates that the illegibility of handwriting may hinder an accurate assessment of their scripts.

Comments on Individual Questions

TAREA 1 Listening

The subject matter was obviously within the experience of most candidates. The passage and the task were well understood and very well answered by the majority. Very few candidates failed to get at least 14 of the total 20 marks and there were several who scored full marks.

- (a) Candidates frequently answered incorrectly, because they tended to miss the idea of exams and went for concerns or similar responses.
- (d) One of the points was often missed, or there was a lack of precision in the detail. There was sometimes no age reference and there was confusion between *formarse* and *informarse*.
- (e) This was generally well done, with both parts clearly expressed, even though many candidates missed the subjunctive.
- (f) Some candidates did not see that there were two parts to this answer. Many candidates only scored one mark because they missed the idea of enjoying or liking the job or studies you do. There was again confusion over the use of the word *formación*. The significance of *formación integral de la persona* was missed by some.

Report on the Units taken in June 2007

- (g) This was generally well done. There were, at best, neat ways of expressing *afiliarse* in the candidate's own words; some simply transcribed, not always with success. However, some candidates suggested she should study something rather than join a political party.
- (h) Quite a number of candidates thought that it was a question of studying in England; some thought *enfermería* was a person; there were also problems for some candidates in referring to the relevant people correctly. The significance of *hay muchas salidas en Inglaterra* challenged some candidates.
- (i) and (j) were generally answered well, although there were often transcription problems, e.g. *adapción* for *adaptación*, and *avanca or advanca et al* for *avanza*.
- (k) This was a challenge to some candidates who thought that all universities were the same or who wanted to compare the facilities in different universities.
- (l) Most candidates answered this question well, but the idea of league tables escaped some.
- (m) The most frequent error here was with the final verb, thus destroying the meaning, i.e. instead of *querían*, Examiners read *crean creían, creen et al*. Some candidates failed to spot the past reference, but a pleasing number hit the target precisely.

Overall there were fewer transcription errors than in previous years. The main problems were caused by *muchas salidas* (no initial 's' on *salidas*), *afiliarse* (many deviations), *formarse*, *adaptación*, *coordinar*, *enseñanza*, *avanza* (a major stumbling block for many), and *vivimos* which became *pidimos et al* which nullified the answer. It was good to see that many candidates scored high marks for language.

TAREA 2 Questions to be answered in English

Again this part of the text and the task were well understood and were answered soundly by the majority. However, there were often cases of nonsensical literal translations.

- (a) There was reference to organisers, rather than organisations, and sometimes a failure to see that two sets of public bodies were involved.
- (b) It was not uncommon to miss *abandoned* or to fail to specify that the areas to be opened up were precisely those through which the lines went.
- (c) Poor expression often led to the loss of marks here. Many had references to residents of big cities, rather than citizens, or missed the specific idea of exercise in a particular environment or of active tourism (often rendered as "tourist activity"). It was not uncommon to read that the aim was "to impulse tourism" or "to closer city people to nature".
- (e) This question presented a significant challenge. There were wild guesses which made no sense (e.g. *suave earrings*). *Gentle slopes* were mentioned by very few candidates; there were many *air-conditioned* paths that one could use *at no cost* or *winning no prizes (sin prisas)*.

The remaining questions were generally well done, although some candidates seemed to have looked at the wrong part of the passage for the answers to (h) and (i). The idea of *convivencia* was frequently confused with *convenience*.

There were some instances of rubric infringement, with the questions answered in Spanish, which scored zero.

TAREA 3 Writing explanations in Spanish of a series of numbers taken from the text

This section differentiated noticeably between the candidates. In some Centres, this Tarea was well done; it was usually poor expression that denied the mark or the use of the wrong tense.

However, some candidates had difficulty in identifying the concepts required (*ayuntamientos / distancia en Km / coste / precio* etc) and also in distinguishing what the figures really meant. Many failed to distinguish correctly between the finished phase of the *Vías Verdes* and the projected phase.

Many candidates showed that their written Spanish skills have advanced little beyond GCSE level and Centres may wish to advise candidates to practise more for this kind of definition exercise.

- (a) Generally not a problem; it was pleasing that some candidates could answer this question without lifting *ayuntamientos* from the text.
- (b) and (c) There was often not the clear reference to the fact that these numbers referred to what had been done so far and currently existed.
- (d) Many candidates failed to express the idea that this number referred to what was still to come.
- (e) and (f) Weaker answers interpreted these numbers as numbers of workers, or the daily wage they earned, or the price the public had to pay to go on the paths. As noted before, the need to express "cost", whether as a noun or a verb, represented a challenge for some candidates.

TAREA 4 Non-verbal task

This task was often – but not always – well done. Answers (g) and (h) were often chosen. One or two of (c) (d) (i) and (j) were often missed.

TAREA 5 Completing sentences

As usual, this provided a range of marks, both for comprehension and language. Many candidates used good language and were very aware there would be subjunctives; they had even been taught to highlight the trigger phrase.

There was plenty of good comprehension and many candidates found (a), (b) (c) and (d) straightforward. For others (b) and (c) were more of a challenge.

In (e), candidates were often uncertain how to answer the second part but quite a few managed to get the idea across.

(f) This was a challenge to those who did not understand that you needed a light to proceed through the tunnel.

The first part of (g) caused few problems, but only the better answers tended to realise how to answer the second part.

(h) and (j) These proved more difficult for many candidates but (i) was understood by most.

TAREA 6 Writing in Spanish

This proved to be a good topic; candidates obviously liked it and were able to respond.

In (a) most candidates identified that each question related to a particular paragraph and then sometimes wanted to include every detail from that paragraph. Some candidates wrote more selectively and – from a linguistic point of view – more carefully and were able to achieve higher marks; the key was perhaps for candidates to select those points which they were able to express in Spanish.

In (b) all candidates could express some views, even if they covered little other than the language issue that was mentioned at the end of the text. Despite the brevity required, there were also sensitive appreciations of other cultural issues. Some, however, commented on the pros and cons of buying a house abroad rather than on adapting to living abroad.

It was noticeable that the standard of Spanish was often lower in (a) rather than (b). In the “transfer of meaning” task, some candidates were mistaken in always trying to produce a word-for-word translation, as opposed to expressing the idea; concepts that caused problems of this kind included “permits” or “withdraws”, which can in fact easily be rendered in simple Spanish. While very few candidates were unable to write simple sentences, many had little sense of the idea of agreements in Spanish, whether adjective and noun or verb and subject. It was of concern that irregular preterite forms were clearly not known by many candidates at this level. The gerund was used for the infinitive. The correct use of *gustar* was an issue for many. The gender of nouns such as *problema* and incorrect use of the article *lo* (for *el*) were other common errors.

2676: ADVANCED GCE SPANISH – CULTURE & SOCIETY (Written Paper)

General Comments

The level of the paper was appropriate: it gave scope to all the candidates to show the quality of their Spanish and the extent of their study, knowledge and understanding of the texts and topics. At the top end, it was a pleasure to award deservedly high marks to first-class work. Many candidates had been well prepared for the examination, both in their study of chosen topics and in learning language skills. Indeed, there was a higher proportion of such candidates this series who were able to use their material more effectively in the planning of their essays. Candidates who scored in the middle and lower mark ranges were able to use the questions to show the degree to which their skills had developed; there was no evidence of suitably prepared candidates being unable to approach any question.

This year a wider range of literary texts appeared in the scripts; in Section A, all the prescribed texts were discussed. It was a pleasure to see some Centres using Section B in the way that was intended, i.e. not to provide extra, sometimes less than suitable, questions for the prescribed texts, but as topics for which any appropriate literary text can be studied. In both literary Sections, some candidates fell into the trap of doing no more than “tell the story”, which made it impossible to determine whether they were able to analyse them.

All three Sections of the paper required the same pattern of a concentration on relevant detail, with specific examples, along with thoughtful evaluation and reasoning so as to answer the question. It was a particular pleasure to read those answers which had all of these qualities, plus some personal touch – from private research or experience or straightforward enthusiasm – which took the essay beyond the predictable recital of facts or episodes.

Among the non-literary topics, there were some very interesting essays on topics such as *El cine*, *La salud en España*, and *El turismo en España*; this report includes details of some of the areas covered in the more open questions. In the best answers, candidates had a variety of information at their fingertips, which they were able to apply to the question. One failing was the way in which some candidates did not seem to read the question; they apparently saw the sub-heading in bold print and wrote using all the information that they had about that sub-topic. Centres should perhaps warn candidates even more forcefully that the paper they are given in February does not contain the actual question they must answer.

In all three Sections, candidates scored best when they wrote essays that had relevant, well organised information. The essays kept to the point and answered the question. They were well structured. They were written in accurate and suitably advanced Spanish. Candidates expressed themselves fluently and made perceptive comments on the topics. Some Centres' candidates displayed a pleasing variety of styles of writing; in a few cases, it was noticeable that the same, sometimes unnecessarily complicated, pre-learned essay phrases occurred at particular points in all the essays from a single Centre. In some cases, there were whole essays that appeared to have been pre-learned, with only a passing attempt to use the information provided to address the question as set on the paper. In such cases candidates were not allowing themselves access to the highest marks.

Rubric infringements suggested that some candidates were not well prepared for this paper, e.g. writing only one essay, answering two questions on the same text or topic, or answering perhaps a dozen questions instead of two. It was noticeable that some candidates were not able to sustain a consistent level of performance over two essays. Some essays were very short; most were within the recommended range of 300 to 500 words; some were considerably longer than that, but frequently these candidates were well able to make use of the extra length. The poor handwriting of candidates was a common problem for Examiners, who, in some cases, were simply unable to decipher parts of the script in front of them.

Unfortunately, some candidates approached this paper as a general essay paper and consequently had access only to very low marks for the content. It was rare for pre-existing knowledge, as opposed to formal study, to be sufficient to answer any of the questions on this paper. Some candidates attempted the literary extracts but showed little evidence of having read the book; others attempted questions relating to particular locations, with scant knowledge of the issues involved. Given that the assessment was weighted heavily towards the content, this approach was unlikely to lead to high marks.

Comments on Selected Questions

1 *Eva Luna*

On the extract, there were measured carefully thought out responses to the question.

2 *Los de abajo*

There were some interesting character studies of Demetrio Macías, appreciating his charismatic qualities as a leader, as well as his less positive traits.

3 *Los árboles mueren de pie*

On the extract, there were good attempts to relate the extract to the rest of the play as well as enthusiastic responses to the play as a whole.

4 *Yerma*

Candidates were able to place the passage in its correct context. The best answers dealt with the significance of what is revealed in this extract and which will become important later on. Candidates commented with passion on Yerma's deeply felt emotions. In the essay question, there was often muddled thinking, due to difficulties in comprehending the different morality which governed the society in the play, compared with our own. Even the better answers sometimes failed to come to grips with the idea that *Yerma cae en su propia trampa*. Some ignored the words altogether, while others used them in such a way as to give the impression they had not really understood them.

5 *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba*

Many candidates had no difficulty in identifying the extract and made some good points while assessing it. Some agreed that it is the lowest point, while others reasonably cited other low points and made the case for one of them. There were many good answers to the essay question, as candidates drew on the list provided in the question to show their knowledge. Some added examples not mentioned there, which was refreshing. The question gave plenty of scope to analyse the different elements of the book.

6 *Campos de Níjar*

There were excellent reactions to the extract and to the essay question; candidates understood the complexities of the author's attitude to what he described. Almería was presented as a place where it was possible to appreciate *lo verdadero y lo auténtico*, which compensated for material poverty. The daily challenge of life was noted, a challenge which ennoble the human spirit, making the people of Almería more generous and sincere towards outsiders.

8 *Réquiem por un campesino español*

Candidates who had studied this book clearly knew it well and made valid comments on the extract and in the essay, in which clear views were expressed as to the negative and positive aspects of the depiction of the locality. In the extract the close relationship between the ecclesiastical and earthly powers was noted, alongside Paco's struggle for freedom with the common people. The use of silence as a vehicle of protest was also noted.

10 *Las mujeres en la literatura*

A fair number of candidates answered this question using plays of García Lorca, not only the prescribed text *Yerma* but also making good points based on a detailed study of *La casa de Bernarda Alba*.

11 *La guerra y sus efectos*

Some candidates used the situation from *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba* to deal with this question. Although this text did not seem entirely appropriate, the best answers made good points to illustrate the opinions expressed.

12 *El individuo frente a la sociedad*

This was addressed effectively using Buero Vallejo *En la ardiente oscuridad*. The theme of alienation was discussed in the relationship between the protagonist, Ignacio, and the unreal world of those who live in the school for the blind.

13 *El amor en la literatura*

Candidates again used *El Coronel no tiene quien le escriba* and were able to make some good points on the idea of love being long lasting.

14 *La vida urbana o rural*

There were good answers on this question, using *El Camino*, short stories of Horacio Quiroga and *El Coronel no tiene quien le escriba*.

15 *España desde la muerte de Franco*

The media question was answered by candidates who had a clear knowledge of the media in Spain; there was a temptation to be too factual and descriptive, but at best, the facts were used to make points. The question on regionalism was answered by well informed candidates.

16 *El cine de lengua española*

There was an encouraging tendency to refer in detail to a wide range of films, rather than deal in generalisations. Candidates had clearly appreciated what they had seen and they dealt with more than the obvious directors. They were very much in favour of Spaniards going to see their own films; again, there were good references to the variety of films produced in Spain. Some candidates commented on there being two kinds of film in Spain – those which are popular and are simply entertainment, and those which deal with social issues – and wondered which kind of audience went to see each kind of film.

17 *La salud en España*

Some candidates fell into the trap of talking in general terms about drugs and not making their answers relevant to Spain, but many were familiar with statistics to do with Spain and had ample information. In some cases, the conclusion was reached that alcohol was more dangerous than what are normally labelled as “drugs”. Regarding a healthy lifestyle, some had an astonishing awareness of food and nutrition; they made the question of obesity relevant to Spain rather than giving just general information that could fit any country. The lack of control by parents was noted, with the fridge always full and open, whether it is healthy food or not.

18 *El turismo en España*

Some candidates had plenty of information about alternative modes of tourism and used their material successfully. Others had only a sketchy knowledge of the significance of the question. The question on the countryside was answered by candidates who were aware of the tensions that continue to exist in rural areas of Spain.

19 *La industrialización y el consumo de energía*

Those that chose the essay on nuclear energy clearly did so from a standpoint of good information. They knew of the nuclear installations in Spain and the government's plans; they were able to analyse the situation with industrialisation. Regarding the individual and the environment, some candidates fell into the trap of making this answer too general, without referring to the actions of individuals in Spain. The good use in Spain of solar and wave energy was often discussed in this section.

20 *Una región o ciudad...*

These questions were often related to Spanish-speaking America, which gave scope for discussing social exclusion. The issues related were sometimes based exclusively on sketchy personal awareness rather than study. Topics covered included traffic and pollution in Mexico City; the social divisions in Bolivia despite the wealth of the country's natural resources; the embargo by the United States against Cuba and its determining effect on the economy of Cuba. Problems related to Spain included the negative effects of industry in a national park; the alienation of some Spanish citizens in areas where Castilian is not the only official language; the alienation of immigrants in Spain despite their importance as an essential labour force.

21 *Cuestiones sociales de Hispanoamérica*

Some were written from personal knowledge. There was a clear awareness of present situations and suggestions which the respective governments should follow. Some essays consisted of rather shallow comments; but there were successful essays on the situation in Colombia and about Mexico's situation on the drugs route between the south and the north and the consequences for the country in terms of crime and violence.

2677: ADVANCED GCE SPANISH – CULTURE & SOCIETY (Coursework)

General Comments

Moderators found the overall standard of work to be similar to that of previous years. As the specification is now well-established, Centres are becoming more adept at advising candidates and the vast majority are achieving a satisfactory grade.

Choice of Topics and Formulation of Titles

Candidates show an amazing range of interests in the topics studied. These include the popular texts by Lorca and García Márquez, the films of Almodóvar and the work of Gaudí; Castro and Cuba, Che Guevara and Eva Perón; young people and their problems with alcohol; issues arising from immigration, tourism and racism in Spain; specific South American topics such as literacy/illiteracy, drugs and general political issues; ETA. It is pleasing to note the continuing improvement in the way candidates formulate titles. These are generally worded as questions and need to have a clear focus and purpose.

Research and Bibliographies

The quality and quantity of research varies enormously. It is possible to give one title in the bibliography if the coursework is focused on a named text. Otherwise, candidates need to have read sufficiently around the topic in Spanish to be able to tackle the issues in the title and to marshal enough evidence to support the argument effectively. Moderators expect to see references to source material, either in footnotes or within the body of the essay and there must be a full and complete bibliography attached. As part of the moderation procedure a web search may be carried out and any plagiarism is reported. Centres should not submit any work which cannot be authenticated.

Amendment of Marks

Moderators' intervention has remained stable, covering minor arithmetical errors in transcription to change in the order of merit and individual marks.

The main areas of difference continue to be Grids 6A 1/2 where candidates do not substantiate points made and do not succeed in constructing an argument. Candidates who have been helped to gain essay-writing skills are at a clear advantage here.

The Role of the Teacher

It is essential that every teacher has access to an up-to-date copy of Coursework Guidance published by the Board. The value of the role of the teacher is immense in guiding and advising the candidate up to the point when the coursework is written – no help can be given after the plan and title have been discussed and corrected. The teacher may seek advice from the Moderator regarding the wording of titles, although there is absolutely no requirement to have titles verified by the Board. When marking the completed essay, the teacher should firstly check the word count. If the essay does not conform to the required length, it is possible to return it to the student, unread, to give them the opportunity to remedy the error if they choose. Otherwise the essay should be marked and the necessary penalties imposed. In addition, the teacher should ensure there is no evidence of plagiarism by checking source material. If any irregularity is found, the coursework must not be submitted. Please send all required documentation to the Moderator, with the coursework, by the published deadline.

Conclusion

Moderators are grateful to Centres for the careful attention to detail shown in processing coursework in the majority of cases. It is helpful to read teachers' comments. Much valuable work is carried out in preparation for coursework and many very impressive pieces of work are seen, reflecting the candidates' enthusiasm and commitment and the teachers' guidance.

**AS GCE/Advanced GCE Spanish 3863/7863
June 2007 Assessment Series**

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	a	b	c	d	e	u
2671	Raw	60	47	41	36	31	26	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2672	Raw	80	67	59	51	43	35	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2673	Raw	60	45	40	35	31	27	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2674	Raw	60	48	43	38	33	29	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2675	Raw	80	66	60	54	48	42	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2676	Raw	60	46	41	36	31	26	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2677	Raw	60	50	45	40	35	30	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (i.e. after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
3863	300	240	210	180	150	120	0
7863	600	480	420	360	300	240	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
3863	28.7	52.0	71.3	86.3	95.4	100.0	1538
7863	39.5	66.9	84.6	94.2	98.5	100.0	1236

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see;
http://www.ocr.org.uk/exam_system/understand_ums.html

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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