CONTENTS

FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned**.

SPANISH

GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level

> **Paper 8665/02**
>
> **Reading and Writing**

General comments

Examiners can report once again that, in general terms, the performance of candidates on this paper was very good indeed. It would appear to be the case that the majority of candidates (and therefore the majority of Centres) are more familiar now with the demands of this particular paper. Consequently, they are more likely to score high marks, given that they are able to organize their time better during the examination and, as a result, give a very good account of themselves. The problem relating to word count in **Question 5** has, in most Centres, been addressed in so far as candidates are now restricting their mini-essays to 140 words, as stipulated in the rubric. Those who continue to write in excess of 200 words are simply wasting time that could be put to better use. Once an upper limit of 150 words has been reached, Examiners draw a line and ignore the remainder regardless of linguistic quality or accuracy.

The stimulus articles appeared to be accessible to all but the weakest candidates and many were in a position to respond fully and enthusiastically to the tasks set.

However, it needs to be stated once again that those candidates who ignore the rubric in **Questions 3** and **4**, namely that answers should be written "…*sin copiar frases completas del texto…*", and merely lift their answers from the stimulus material will lose marks heavily.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Well answered by the vast majority of candidates. Very few problems caused by this question.

Question 2

Some candidates did not use the "…*forma exacta de la palabra o palabras que parecen entre paréntesis*…" and so lost marks.

Question 3

(a)   Well answered by most candidates. It is worth noting here that the number of marks available for each answer is a good indication of the amount of detail required.

(b)   Many correct answers here, but some candidates wrote far more than was actually asked for in the question.

(c)   This question caused very few problems at all.

(d)   Some candidates used parts of the texts not stipulated in the question (lines 14-18) and therefore wasted time and often lost marks.

(e)   Generally well answered, but some candidates simply missed the point and, it is felt, many simply failed to read the lines stipulated (lines 19-21) in order to get the correct answer.

(f)   There were some excellent personal responses to this question with many candidates scoring full marks.

Question 4

(a)   Some candidates omitted to mention the idea of living independently in their own homes and so only scored a half mark for mentioning the lack of money.

(b)   Hardly any problems in answering this question correctly.

(c)   Almost every single candidate scored the mark in this question.

(d)   The three difficulties were spotted by many, but too often candidates lost marks in this question because they lifted too much from the text.

(e)   A hard question for many candidates, but there were still some excellent responses. Again, many examples of simple textual lifting scoring no marks at all.

(f)   Another tough question, well answered by many candidates.

Question 5

There were some excellent pieces of writing from a large number of candidates in this question and, as mentioned earlier, most responses fell within the word limit. Being able to write concisely and using evidence from both texts are essential ingredients for success in this question and that is precisely what many did. Candidates who exceeded the word limit lost marks for content mainly because they were unable to make sufficient mark bearing points within the 140 word limit. Those candidates who showed a clear line of thinking, who wrote accurately and with some style and who kept to the word limit were rewarded well.

```
        Paper 8665/04
        Texts
```

General comments

Examiners were impressed by the quality of answers and the high degree of engagement with the texts shown by the vast majority of candidates. In most cases candidates paid close attention to the question set and were able to use detailed knowledge and understanding of the texts to substantiate their response. The only area of slight weakness was in relation to the poetry option, where answers tended to focus on individual poems only without addressing the question sufficiently.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Both options were popular and gave candidates ample opportunity to show their knowledge and understanding of the text.

(a)   There were several interpretations of part **(ii)**. Although **(iii)** gave rise to some thoughtful analysis, some candidates did not take a sufficiently wide perspective to do justice to this part of the question, which is intended to encompass the whole of the text. This issue required good reference to the text to justify opinions given.

(b)   Many candidates showed considerable insight and were able to look at the whole society portrayed in the novel, considering the relative suffering of most characters within the context of the political situation.

Question 2

(a)   It is important to emphasise that although only part of the *Romance de la pena negra* is given, candidates are expected to refer to the whole poem in their answer, particularly with regard to part **(iii)**. In fact this question cannot be answered without considering the entire poem. Candidates responded well to the sentiments of the poem but part **(ii)** which focused on the technique was less fully answered.

(b)   Candidates had a wide choice open to them and the majority of answers dealt either with Lorca's view of the gypsy race or the theme of death. As mentioned above, candidates must be sure to address the question set directly, as well as give a detailed analysis of two or three poems. The best examples explained why the chosen theme was seen to be original and then gave specific references to illustrate this from the poems selected. It was not necessary to analyse the whole of each poem, rather focus on the specific theme being explored.

Question 3

Both options were well answered. Candidates seem to enjoy this text and understand the issues discussed.

(a)   The best answers showed the ability to see events from Rosaura's perspective and give a considered view of her role. This went beyond the stereotypical 'bad' character seen by many as a point of contrast to Tita and analysed to what extent she had the opportunity to decide her own destiny and indeed how unhappy she was.

(b)   Answers both supported and challenged the statement. There are sufficient humorous instances in the novel, but these had to be quoted in the context of an argument. There was a tendency to refer to the episodes without drawing them together in a coherent way. It was perfectly possible to emphasise the tragic nature of the novel and present a good argument with reference to Tita as well as Rosaura.

Question 4

Answers to both options were thoughtful and perceptive.

(a)   Some candidates missed important details in responding to **(i)** in option **(a)**, but the majority gave a full explanation for **(ii)** and understood how Valindin's treatment of Adriana is mirrored in many ways in his relationship with the blind beggars.

(b)   This gave much scope for detailed analysis of the main theme – there were some excellent interpretations of the many instances of 'blindness'.

Section 2

Question 5

Most responses to this text were more specific than in the previous examination session and there were some good comparative studies with reference to option **(a)**, showing insight into the author's intention in varying the narrative voice. Option **(b)** needed a clear focus or theme to give substance to the answer if the candidate did not consider the 'novela documental' issue.

Question 6

Candidates who choose to study this text tend to have a very good detailed knowledge and are able to quote effectively. Of the two options, candidates seemed to relate most easily to **(b)** and were able to consider to what extent Alonso was responsible for his own death in a wide context, including the contribution made by Fabia to his demise. Answers to **(a)** also made reference to Fabia but needed a detailed analysis of Rodrigo's character and his perception of morality.

Question 7

Examiners were very pleased again by candidates' response to this novel. Despite its length, there was a good degree of detailed knowledge. Both options were well answered – in **(a)** there were many instances of violence and vengeance leading to Alba's decision to break the pattern. The best answers placed the novel in its political context, widening the perspective from the purely personal. Answers to **(b)** showed much understanding and indeed empathy with Esteban Trueba's situation. Most were able to give detailed accounts of his character and motivation and gave a balanced assessment, explaining how he was now asking for the return of a favour he had granted many years ago – not for himself, but for Alba.

Question 8

This question gave most cause for concern with regard to examination technique. Candidates were familiar with the collection and had no difficulty in choosing appropriate poems for either option **(a)** or **(b)**. The problem came in constructing an effective argument which answered the question set directly. There was a tendency to refer to the question in an opening sentence, give a full commentary on two poems and end the essay without any conclusions being drawn. In the course of the commentary, all aspects of the poems were considered, rather than focusing on the themes being studied. Candidates need to be prepared to select and order material from the chosen poems to fit the question rather than depend on a commentary including enough references to the theme to constitute an acceptable answer. It was pleasing to note the variety of poems chosen and the enthusiasm of candidates in discussing Neruda's work.