

SPANISH (SYLLABUS B)

Paper 3035/01

Translation and Composition

General comments

The number of candidates entered for this Session was lower than in previous years but the overall standard was as good if not better. Candidates seem to be prepared for the type of questions set and fewer are making basic errors in, for example, including narrative in **Question 2(b)** and telling the story in **Question 1** or **2(a)/(b)** in the perfect tense instead of the preterite. As in earlier Sessions, candidates who attempt **Question 3** need to have been specifically taught the necessary skills of prose translation. There were some good renditions but also a number where candidates would probably have scored higher by choosing a **Question 2** option.

Comments on individual questions

Question 1 Picture essay

Most candidates who attempted this option managed to give a good account of the events depicted. Examiners do not expect all details to be described but the basic outline should be there. Candidates coped quite well with the Theme Park section with some very specific vocabulary, e.g. *montaña rusa* known. Frequent errors occurred in describing the poor weather and in particular the flooded road. In this case it was perfectly acceptable to say that the car stopped because it was raining a lot – Centres can encourage candidates to use the language they know rather than lapse into English or leave gaps. There was good use of the imperfect tense in describing how the children were feeling and how they spent the time in the car. There were some over-long essays, which were not given any language marks after the 150th word. It is good practice to give a word count, as many candidates did.

Question 2(a) Letter

This was a popular choice and was generally well done. Candidates seemed to relate to the topic and wrote some interesting essays on going to a musical concert. Many valid descriptions included details of the venue, the crowds and the songs performed. Some enthusiastic music fans could not speak the next day after singing and shouting so much at the concert. Many described their favourite performer and one lucky person met them afterwards. There were no problems with vocabulary in this option.

Question 2(b) Dialogue

This, as usual, was done by fewer candidates, but the standard was a little better. The dialogue tended to flow quite well, with most organising a party for their mother, with the food and drink paid for by their father. There were some varied plans ranging from Mum's favourite club to a family picnic on the beach. A number of enterprising candidates proposed to "borrow" their mother's mobile phone to get the numbers of her special friends and their father was also involved in taking her to the venue under false pretences.

There were even some 'themed' parties planned and special arrangements for changing into the appropriate clothes.

Candidates are reminded not to include any narrative as this is discounted in the marking process.

Question 2(c) Narrative

This option was also quite well done. Candidates did not have any special difficulties with vocabulary and managed to give a fair account of events. There could perhaps have been more attempts to contrast preterite and imperfect tenses and to use known language, for example descriptions of the people or vehicles involved, the weather and time phrases.

Question 3 Translation into Spanish

As stated in the introduction, this is only an option for those candidates specifically trained in prose translation. An exact translation is required and a very high degree of accuracy in all aspects – spelling, agreements, verb forms, appropriate vocabulary and awareness of style. The vocabulary was accessible ; errors occurred in gender of '*artista*', rendition of 'seriously ill', 'when the war was over' 'hundreds of examples', 'it is worth a visit' and, more surprisingly, 'shop'. Irregular preterites still need some attention, as well as verbs which require prepositions – decided to, continued to. The majority of translations were in the preterite tense, as required with the exception of the final paragraph, but use of accents was not always consistent. As in previous reports, Examiners can only continue to emphasise the need for absolute accuracy.

SPANISH (SYLLABUS B)

Paper 3035/02

Reading Comprehension

GENERAL COMMENTS

This autumn's paper 2 was well tackled by the large majority of candidates. As is usually the case, **Section 1** was completed confidently and well by most, particularly exercises 2 and 3. **Section 2** was also tackled very competently, with the top half of the candidates managing full marks in the first exercise. And so it was left to the Cloze Test in **Section 3** to discriminate most pronouncedly between the strong and the weak: whereas the former could hope for 12 or more out of 20, the latter struggled to get a handful of marks, if that. Very few candidates obtained a total mark of below 20 out of 60 for the whole paper, the full range of total marks being from 18 to 59 out of 60. The large majority of the Centres are to be congratulated on doing an excellent job in preparing the candidates so thoroughly for this paper. Nearly all of the students tackled the exercises purposefully, really entering into the spirit of the questions and producing some first-rate answers to quite difficult questions, and an encouraging proportion did themselves justice with a fine total mark.

COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Section 1

Exercise 1

This was done well by most candidates, though only about half of them obtained full marks on the exercise. There were several mistakes in **Question 1**, perhaps because in some Hispanic countries the word *bocadillo* is not used. In **Question 4** several opted wrongly for A or B, perhaps because of the limitations in their vocabulary.

Exercise 2

This was very well done, around 40% of candidates scoring full marks. The most common error was in **Question 10**, perhaps because the answer was somewhat concealed in both clauses of the final paragraph of the text.

Exercise 3

This exercise was particularly well done, with around 80% of candidates scoring full marks on it. The most common error was to write E (which was plausible) or F (because of the large volume of necessary water in a pool?) for **Question 11**.

Exercise 4

This exercise proved an interesting challenge for many candidates. About one third of them managed to score 9 or 10 out of 10 for communication, and many of the rest scored 7 or 8. Only the weakest scored below 50%. The exercise was marked generously, errors involving verb endings being usually tolerated, though the same leniency was not on offer in **Section 3**. Teachers should stress that questions follow the same order as the paragraphs, and so it is unlikely that **Question 25** would be referring back to material in the middle of the text which has already been covered by other questions.

Section 2

Exercise 1

This comprehension and correction exercise proved rather difficult for average or weak candidates, although there were plenty of strong candidates who scored full marks or just short. In addition, several quite weak candidates scored six out of six for the basic true-or-false ticks. The correct answers were along the following lines:

Exercise 2

This comprehension exercise proved rather demanding for average or weak candidates, although numerous strong candidates scored full marks or just short. It was necessary for candidates to use verbs that were correctly altered so as to fit the sense of what the answer had to convey, and no marks were awarded where this was not attempted, especially where candidates just lifted relevant phrases from the text without amending the verbs.

Section 3

Exercise 1

The Cloze test, although marginally easier than in previous years, still proved a very demanding exercise for most candidates. Only 50% scored half marks or more, and no candidate managed to obtain full marks.