

# SPANISH

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<p><b>Paper 9781/01</b> <b>Speaking</b></p>
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## **General comments**

Online examining changed the exam dynamic slightly and candidates responded really well to the new setup.

It was really encouraging to observe that candidates of all levels had prepared thoroughly for both exam sections and most of them displayed a first-hand knowledge of the Hispanic world.

Examiners were most grateful to centres for their flexibility in arranging visits and their diligence in sending timetables and Topic Submission Forms.

## Discussion of article (DoA)

All six cards available for this part of the exam were chosen by a good number of candidates. The most popular cards, by far, were card number 2 on 'Environment' and card 4 'Food and Drink'.

Many of the candidates started the exam very well and had either an excellent or a very good understanding of the article. They had been properly briefed by their teachers and they showed initiative in developing their answers. They responded readily and fully, giving plenty of examples to the questions on the article and related theme.

Some candidates chose an article that was too closely related to their prepared topic which could narrow their range language and impact their result. As the cards were not given by the examiner this year, this could not be avoided. This should be addressed next year by schools if the exams are conducted remotely again.

## Topic of Discussion (ToD)

Most candidates managed to convey a genuine interest in their chosen topic and their enthusiasm about their topic was evident in most cases. They not only displayed excellent factual knowledge of their chosen topic, but it was good to see that they also coped well with unexpected questions as most had researched their topic extensively using a wide variety of sources.

It was pleasing to observe that the candidates showed a real interest in and a great deal of enthusiasm for their chosen topic. The selection of topics was varied and there was an increase in topics related to Latin America. When discussing their topic, the best candidates used a vocabulary that was sophisticated and specific show a high level of expertise in the relevant area. There was evidence that they had carried out extensive research and their factual knowledge was impressive. They were able to give good examples and express their opinions.

The prepared topic submission forms had been carefully completed for the most part and only a few forms contained typos or were filled in incorrectly.

## Language

### **Accuracy**

The level of accuracy was good and in some cases was excellent. However, the following errors were present in some of the candidates' Spanish but, even so, the errors did not impair communication in most cases:

El población / la problema / la área / una solución perfecto / el guerra / muchos emisiones / las jugadores / es más calor / muchos críticas/ un parte / la clima/ el crisis / un crisis / las padres/ los oportunidades / las verduras orgánicos/ la monarca/ una tema / tan gente / un ley necesario / una país / se depende / el zona / hace bueno tiempo / los deficiencias / la dieta vegano / bueno comida / sus país / pequeño azúcar / es muy mal por el medio ambiente / ninguno problema / la nivel / el película / el proteína / actitudes machistos / escrito / una solución bastante bien / por corto plazo / el gobierno derecho / un solución / somos pesimistas / este red / los mujeres / muchos mujeres / las problemas / el mismo experiencia / es sorprende / las mujeres son discriminados / son demasiados caros / tanto plásticos / demasiado gente / la dieta es dañoso / sé algunas personas que.../ este problemas / muchos gente / un pelota / las problemas / mucho gente / gasolino / productos plásticos / el gobierno deberían / un otra / vasos vidrio / bueno solución / las barreras son feos / son caro / consiste de... / intentando a encontrar / europeos / salvar energía.

### Range

Many candidates spoke with confidence and used a wide range of structures. The following are examples of some of the good range of structures encountered:

Es posible que haya / es posible que sea / es posible que el gobierno pueda / es importante que usemos / no creo que sea / dudo que sea / espero que sea/ quieren que sus hijos sean.../ no creo que beban.../ hagamos lo que podamos/ es sorprendente que sea.../ espero que esté.../ ha habido estudios.../ es necesario que se tenga.../ es importante que los empleados puedan discutir.../ es posible que elijan / es importante que reciclemos / es importante que limpiemos / no creo que sepa .../ lo difícil es que haya.../ es importante que sea fácil.../ es probable que / es imprescindible que mostremos / por rico que sea / ....para que produzcan / ... quiere que veamos... / no es posible que se pueda....

Sería importante que tuviera en cuenta / si hubiéramos frenado... habría.../ si estuviera... creo que haría.../ si no hubiera tenido.... no habría sido.../ si pudiera elegir, me alojaría en.../ si Cataluña fuera....tendría.../ si no tuviera tanto dinero..../ el gobierno debería subvencionar...

### Pronunciation

Most candidates' pronunciation was very strong. The mistakes of the candidates who committed errors did not impair communication. Some of the pronunciation mistakes encountered were as follows:

Jospital (hospital) / ajora ( ahora) / los huevos (huevos) / vejiculos (vehículos) / alcojol ( alcohol) / projibir ( prohibir) la otona ( autora) / la cosa ( causa) / ecuilibrada ( equilibrada) / futiro ( futuro) / desafortunadamente ( desafortunadamente) / la cultira (cultura) / natirales (naturales).

# SPANISH

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<p><b>Paper 9781/02</b> <b>Reading and Listening</b></p>
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## Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- focus only on the required information and communicate it precisely in their answers
- pay particular attention to conveying the required information to the Examiner in unambiguous language.

## General comments

This report will look at candidates' performance in this session but will also concentrate on giving advice and guidance for future examinations.

This is a mixed-skills paper which allows candidates to show their Spanish-language skills in Reading and Listening. Candidates have 2 hours 15 minutes to complete the paper. They are advised to spend 1 hour 15 minutes on the Reading exercises and 1 hour on the Listening exercises. They may choose the order in which they prefer to tackle the exercises.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Part I – Reading (30 marks)**

There are two passages with a combined limit of 500–650 words. The first passage has reading comprehension questions in Spanish requiring answers in Spanish. Although these answers are not assessed for quality of language, candidates must not 'lift' phrases from the passage. The second passage has questions in English that require answers in English. The third exercise is a retranslation from English into Spanish of a paragraph of about 75 words based on the stimulus of the earlier second reading passage.

**Reading Text 1** was a passage about two social projects aimed at closing the generation gap in Madrid. The test is marked positively and the objective is to communicate the correct response, but not to reproduce the original text word for word. It is important for candidates to use their own words. Full sentences are not required in the answers but the correct information must be conveyed successfully. Accent errors are only penalised if they affect meaning and slight spelling errors are accepted if the word is recognisable, but not if the spelling error leads to another word.

**Question 1** was mostly answered correctly but many candidates missed the idea of 'approximate age' as a translation for *rondar*.

**Question 2** also caused few problems in general, although some candidates failed to mention *inquietudes/opiniones/preocupaciones* and simply focused on the idea of two generations talking about life.

**Question 3** appeared to cause very few problems for candidates. Most got this one right.

**Question 4** proved a bit challenging for some candidates as they seemed to misunderstand the verb *calificar* and, in some cases, they left the answer unfinished.

**Question 5** was mostly answered correctly, with some candidates resorting to a more elaborate answer whilst others opted for *la pedagogía*, which was all that was required.

**Question 6** proved to be too challenging for many candidates who struggled to convey the meaning of *estaban un poco cortados*.

**Question 7** was also rather challenging. Many candidates failed to understand *ligar* as *to develop a romantic relationship*.

**Questions 8 and 9** seemed to cause few problems for most candidates.

This type of exercise can be demanding in places, but overall the Examiners found that the majority of candidates displayed a fairly good understanding of the Spanish material and were able to write their answers with an acceptable standard of Spanish language.

**Reading Text 2** told the story of the efforts made to protect a rare black vulture which had been spotted flying perilously close to a wind farm in northern Spain. The material was generally understood by the candidates, who succeeded in answering the English questions set on the passage in a comprehensible way.

**Question 10.** Unfortunately, a significant number of candidates failed to mention the vulture (or his name, Carrascalinho), hence losing the mark. Some other candidates did not know the meaning of *espalda* and chose different parts of the body.

**Question 11** caused very few problems. Candidates who lost the mark failed to make reference to *casi* (almost/nearly).

**Question 12** was a two-mark question and, whilst most candidates answered the first part successfully, not all explained that the vulture was risking his life.

**Question 13** was not a particularly challenging question, but a significant number of candidates struggled to make specific reference to *land and take off* and only focused on the idea of *sitio predilecto*.

**Question 14** was usually answered correctly, but a significant number of candidates could not convey an accurate meaning of *aspas* which was required for a correct answer.

In **Question 15** the idea of *por estar catalogados* proved rather challenging in some cases, as some candidates did not fully comprehend that the vultures were already featuring in the book of endangered species, not that ecologists wanted to add them to the catalogue.

**Question 16**, a two-part question appeared to be straight forward for the vast majority of candidates.

**Question 17** was mostly answered correctly although some candidates mistook *lobos* with other animals.

**Reading Text 3** was a paragraph in English based on the material in **Reading Text 2**. Candidates had to translate this into Spanish. The previous text contained words and phrases that could help them, but generally some manipulation of language was required. For marking purposes, the text is divided into 30 boxes and these are each awarded one mark or zero. The total score is converted to a final mark out of 10. The correct information should be communicated and suitable and accurate alternative renderings are accepted. Slight spelling errors are disregarded, but not if the meaning of the word is altered. The final mark scheme document gives a detailed list of versions that were accepted or not. Most candidates performed reasonably well in this exercise this year. Although slight errors are permitted, the Examiners point to several common errors. A very significant number of candidates struggled with verbs followed by prepositions such as *enfrentarse a* and *alimentarse de*. Some struggled with the translation of *Both hunger and lack of water* mistakenly opting for *ambos* instead of the Spanish structure *Tanto...como...*. Many candidates were found to write *un otro*, apparently not understanding that, in Spanish, the indefinite article is not needed, and it was surprising how many candidates failed to translate *Sin embargo*, with *aunque* being a common error. Some candidates struggled to use the correct gender when translating nouns, such as *aves* and *medicamento/medicina* and surprisingly few candidates provided a successful translation of *review*.

## **Part II – Listening (30 marks)**

Candidates have control of their own individual listening equipment. They may stop, rewind and replay the recording at will, and they may make notes and write their answers at any point. There are three passages with a combined limit of 700 to 850 words. The first has listening comprehension questions in Spanish requiring answers in Spanish, whereas questions for the second passage are in English and require answers in English. Answers in the target language are not assessed for quality of language but for communication. Candidates then listen to a third recording of about 250 words and summarise it in English using bullet points for guidance (maximum of 100 words).

**Listening Text 1.** The extract was an interview with dancer/choreographer from Seville. The test is marked positively and the objective is to communicate the correct response, but not to reproduce the original text word for word. It is important for candidates to use their own words. Vocabulary items need to be understood but they should be conveyed in an answer that is a logical response to the question. Full sentences are not required in the answers but the correct information must be conveyed successfully. Accent errors are only penalised if they affect meaning and slight spelling errors are accepted if the word is recognisable, but not if the spelling error leads to another word. It would appear that candidates understood the material well and produced sound responses. Many candidates scored highly in this exercise, though one or two areas caused problems for some. **Question 23** was a two-mark question and, whilst most candidates answered the first part successfully, the second part was often missing from answers. In **Question 24** it was particularly important to make reference to the idea of Francisco ‘studying’ and some candidates failed to mention this. **Question 25** also proved rather challenging to those who did not understand the meaning of *egocentrismo* and mistook it for *egoísmo*.

**Listening Text 2** was another interview. This time, however, it was with the founder of a charity which provides dental care to the poor. Candidates appeared to understand the material well and produced some good, thoughtful answers. However, though **Question 30** was not a particularly challenging question, a good number of candidates struggled to make specific reference to the idea of *longer-lasting change (cambio duradero)* which was the target of the question. In **Question 31** a lot of candidates misheard (or misunderstood) the percentage referred to in the interview, thus mistaking 13 per cent for 30 per cent. **Question 33** was not particularly difficult either, but some candidates failed to make specific reference to the idea of *un máximo de 30 horas*. **Question 35** focused on the idea of *aperturas* but a significant number of candidates focused on *expanding* instead.

**Listening Text 3** was a news item about Costa Rica’s efforts to improve the environment. The test required a summary of the report in no more than 100 words in English. There were four bullet points of information to be covered. The full gist of the passage needs to be understood, there has to be detail and it needs to be well selected. The material should be expressed concisely, read well and be informative. The 10 marks available are awarded positively according to these criteria. Length is important. A summary with fewer than 80 words is likely to be self-penalising, as all the above criteria are unlikely to be met. On the other hand, candidates should beware of writing over-long summaries. It should be stressed that the Examiners operate a cut-off point and any material written beyond that point cannot be assessed, even if it is correct. Many candidates appeared to find the material accessible and there were some high marks awarded in this exercise. They appeared to be familiar with much of the vocabulary and concepts in the extract. Candidates were able to infer ideas and showed an ability to select key facts and to communicate this information concisely. Sometimes, however, candidates wrote in note form, only using isolated phrases that they had heard in the text without attempting to make sense of them in coherent statements. Although continuous English prose is not required to answer this test and bullet points are acceptable, they must contain enough information with logical links and coherent statements. Otherwise, the marks cannot be awarded. Some candidates failed to make specific reference to the concepts of *a protected nature reserve* and *electric cargo trains* respectively, whilst others failed to recognise the percentages, thus mistaking 60 per cent for 70 per cent, when referring to the percentage of population using public transport powered by fossil fuels. What particularly stood out for examiners this year, however, was the high number of candidates writing over-long answers losing valuable marks as a result.

## Advice and Guidance to candidates

### Listening and Reading Comprehension

#### What comprehension skills are required?

- The material for the texts may come from any of the Topic Areas in the Syllabus;
- the material could be factual or abstract;
- inference – you have to work out the answers;
- manipulation – you will be expected to manipulate the language;
- explanation – you will need to explain;
- synthesis – you may need to combine points of information;
- full information is always required – answers may be long;
- a high level of Quality of Language is expected – accuracy and sophistication are needed.

#### Answering Spanish questions set on the texts

- Remember that full sentences are not required. However, the full information asked for must be given;
- highlight the question words (*¿quién?*, *¿cómo?*, *¿cuándo?*, etc.), so that it is clear what information is needed;
- note how many marks are awarded for each question, so that no essential information is omitted;
- try to use your own words and do not reproduce the language of the texts word for word;
- practise building a wide Spanish vocabulary, so that you are at ease using synonyms for words in the texts;
- remember that your Spanish answers must make sense. If they do not, then there is something wrong.

#### Answering English questions set on the texts

- Write your answers in good English and check your spelling;
- beware of 'false friends' (words that look alike in Spanish and English but have different meanings);
- realise that some Spanish words can often have two meanings; choose the correct one;
- find the appropriate English word, not necessarily one that looks similar to the Spanish word;
- make sure your whole answer sounds like real English and makes sense to someone reading it;
- make sure that you give the full information required; do not omit any essential information.

#### Retranslation for Reading Task 3

- Study the Spanish stimulus passage in Reading Task 2 carefully: it gives vocabulary and structures to be used and re-worked;
- read the English passage and understand what is required;
- study the setting, context and tone of the extracts;
- use sensible and intelligent guesses where vocabulary is not known;
- never leave gaps;
- think carefully about the grammar of the sentence being translated; examiners regularly point to the failure of candidates to translate tenses correctly, to spot adjectival agreements and to link pronouns with the nouns to which they refer;
- beware of literal translation and poor/meaningless Spanish;
- beware paraphrasing – do not stray too far away from the original;
- but, on the other hand, do not be afraid to change word order, parts of speech, etc.;
- remember that accuracy is more important than creativity.

### Summary skills for Listening Text 3

What are summary skills?

- All the bullet points have been covered.
- The gist of the passage has been understood.
- There is detail and it is well selected.
- The material is expressed concisely.
- The material reads well and is informative.
- There is no incorrect information.

### Advice on summary skills

Writing a good summary is a matter of regular practice and also of acquiring the correct technique. An unsuccessful attempt at a summary may be due to lack of understanding of the original text, but more often than not, it is the way the exercise has been tackled that is at fault.

- Listen to the passage until you have a good idea of what the whole text is about;
- do not start summarising (or even translating) every sentence; you will not be discarding the less significant details and you will quickly run out of words;
- make rough notes on the question paper; you are not likely to have time to write out a full version of the summary and then write out a clean copy;
- it is often not necessary to know the meaning of every word – do not panic if you do not understand something;
- remember this is a summary – be selective – you cannot include every bit of information;
- make sure that you cover all the bullet points;
- spread the words: it is a common error to say too much about the first half of a passage and too little (or nothing at all) about the last parts;
- ‘prune’ written summaries, removing unnecessary words without deleting the main points that you wish to convey;
- absolutely stick within the word limit – do not exceed 100 words;
- check the accuracy of everything you have written.

### The Quality of your Spanish Language

- Remember that essential Spanish grammar knowledge is required; you should aim for responding in accurate language;
- be confident in your use of all Spanish tenses, in particular the present, preterite, imperfect and conditional, both regular and irregular;
- be able to use tenses with all persons, not just the first person;
- be able to switch between the first and third persons with confidence, as this is often required in comprehension passages;
- use pronouns with confidence, in particular *le* and *se*, and be able to switch from first person to third person pronouns and adjectives with ease (e.g. *mi* to *su* and *mío* to *suyo*, etc.);
- use *gustar* and similar verbs properly in all tenses;
- be strict when applying the correct articles and adjectival endings (e.g. *un problema*, *cinco rosas rojas*, etc.);
- know when accents are important (e.g. *trabajo* or *trabajó?* *esta*, *esta* or *ésta?*);
- be familiar with the subjunctive mood: know when and how to use it successfully;

# SPANISH

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<p><b>Paper 9781/03</b> <b>Writing and Usage</b></p>
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## **Key messages**

Overall the Examiners were impressed with this year's cohort, there were a number of outstanding performances right at the top of the range.

When choosing an essay title in the examination, candidates should:

- think carefully about whether they have an opinion they can backup and support with evidence in their response
- consider whether they possess vocabulary in the topic area

## **General comments**

On the whole the paper proved effective in discriminating between candidates of differing abilities, with some relatively straightforward questions and some much more difficult ones. It was pleasing to note that the majority of candidates were well prepared for the examination and that the overall standard of work was comparable to previous sessions.

This year's cohort was well prepared and, on the whole, rose well to the demands of the paper. The top candidates wrote well planned, exciting essays giving plenty of appropriate examples to prove their point. Such essays were a pleasure to read.

Some points of guidance could be made to enable centres to improve candidates' performance. The least effective pieces had very long essays with poor constructions of paragraphs and poor organization and development of the argument. Although this paper does not reward knowledge, it is advised that the information given is not underpinned with false information and statistics or generalizations. Unsupported or unsubstantiated opinions affect the effectiveness of the argument.

In conclusion, praise should be given for the hard work of all those involved in preparing candidates for Spanish and have been impressed by the high standard of work submitted. I do hope the above comments are constructive and helpful as you prepare candidates in the forthcoming year.

## **Comments on specific questions**

### ***Part I : Discursive essay***

The essay is marked following the published marking grids; for accuracy and linguistic range out of 24 marks. Development and organisation of ideas are then assessed out of 16 marks. Candidates are advised to write about 350–450 words in Spanish as a response, most candidates wrote beyond the recommendation.

Candidates are expected to use a variety of lexis and structures to convey ideas and arguments which are effectively organised and illustrated with relevant examples. Candidates should show they possess a wide range of vocabulary and a good sense of idiom.

The quality of candidates' responses to the questions was notable, with most candidates able to understand the key issues and many able to offer exciting and coherent arguments. Linguistically, almost all candidates demonstrated the ability to write fluently, and largely accurately, and most candidates seemed to be familiar with the more advanced grammatical features producing some idiomatic language. The general standard of



essays was high; however some candidates should be aware that too long introductions can alter the effectiveness of the argument presented.

Candidates can approach the questions in different ways and present a well-planned argument, they are free to write whatever they like as long as it fully addresses the question. Many candidates wrote well-structured essays with a clear introduction and conclusion in support of their argument. Weaker candidates wrote more general essays in which central aspects of the set question were not considered. Many candidates show a good sense of idiom and an excellent range of vocabulary.

Focusing on developing a well-planned and organised argument supported with relevant examples remains the advice given in preparation for next year's examinations.

- (a) This was the third most popular choice and candidates showed good knowledge of the topic in a variety of interpretations of the question. Some considered the role of the government in society, others focused more closely on people's right to choose their own path.
- (b) The second most popular choice. This was a very popular question and generally well answered. Candidates had a good knowledge of the topic and on the whole could back up their arguments well with relevant examples.
- (c) The most popular choice in this year examination. This was a very popular question and generally well answered. The best answers were able to discuss social inequality at different levels in the place of work. Some candidates focused on gender inequality instead.
- (d) Surprisingly, fewer candidates chose this option. The best answers gave a considered account of how society depends on technology nowadays, with some discussion as to what extent the new generations have become dependent on the intelligent phones.
- (e) Fewer candidates chose this option. The best answers gave a considered account of the investment needed to keep the National Health Service providing free service to the population. Some argued that in a developed country free health service should be the norm.

## **Part II : Usage**

### **Exercise 1 Questions 2–6**

This initial exercise tested candidates' verbal knowledge. The question type was a gapfill, with the verbs which needed to be manipulated offered in brackets, and a wide range of tenses and moods was tested.

Candidates, as a whole, coped very well with this exercise. If problems occurred, they tended to be on **Question 4**, where the correct use of Passive was tested, and **Question 6** where the Preterite tense of *Poder* was required.

It was very pleasing to see that most candidates used the accent as a mark of the tense in **Question 2** for the future tense and **Question 5** for the conditional tense. **Question 3** proved to be unproblematic for the majority.

### **Exercise 2 Questions 7–11**

This grammar task exercise proved to be more demanding in terms of the language manipulation needed.

### **Question 8**

This exercise proved an interesting challenge for many candidates. Many candidates failed to notice *no tiene*, and therefore fully understand the sentence. The manipulation needed was *Aunque* + subjunctive.

### Question 10

Surprisingly, this question proved to be rather challenging. *No leeré* requires a *no ser que*.

**Question 11**, was a good discriminator, being the most difficult. It proved too difficult for a number of candidates. A few candidates were able to understand the need of the meaning expressed by *cuando* giving the negative answer; *hasta que no*.

**Questions 7** and **9** proved to be unproblematic for the majority.

### Exercise 3 Questions 12–31

This exercise includes a short article about a different way of losing weight: *Atención, se come*. Candidates had to choose the right answer from a choice of four options. All the options provided are correct Spanish, as this exercise is testing the passive grammatical knowledge of the candidates.

Despite a high level of complexity in some areas of vocabulary, idiom and grammar, candidates seemed to have a very good understanding of the text and were able to choose the correct answer in most cases. It was pleasing to see that candidates were well prepared for it. When mistakes were made, they usually occurred on **Questions 28, 25** and **19**.

# SPANISH

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**Paper 9781/04**  
**Topics and Texts**

## **Key messages**

Marks in this Paper are awarded for knowledge of the works, coherence of argument, relevance to the question and use of evidence. Omissions are also a factor for the examiner if a relevant major feature of the work has not featured in a candidate's answer.

Essays that extend beyond the recommended length of 350–500 words for **Part I** and 450–600 words for **Part II** need to ensure that they meet the 'wholly relevant' criterion. In certain cases a combination of excessive length, digression and illegibility put candidates at a disadvantage. There may be a case to make candidates think twice before requesting continuation booklets for their answers.

## **General comments**

This year's candidates answered questions on five of the eight Texts and three of the five Topics. Most candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of key themes and the ability to make critical judgements. The best essays were well planned, focussing on the terminology in the question and using quotations to justify their line of argument. Less successful essays lapsed into narrative and did not target the terms of the question with sufficient precision.

Hardly any candidates attempted context passages (i.e. **Question A** for each text), implying a generalised wariness of this format. Ironically, this left some candidates writing responses on issues with which they seemed unfamiliar (e.g. **10C** magical realism, **13C** role of the narrator). Conversely, the few context passages attempted scored favourably: it is a format that encourages focus on the question and reduces risk of irrelevance.

Starting sentences or paragraphs with '*there's no doubt that*' or '*it's possible that*' (whether in Spanish or English) is ungainly. '*Que yo sepa*' is not a term that fits well in an academic essay.

Candidates should avoid writing on both sides of the page using ink that shows through the paper.

## **Comments on specific questions**

The following questions were answered by a number of candidates:

### **Question 1**

- A** Candidates who answered this question tended to focus mainly on Roma's Antonio, and secondarily on Fermín. Professor Zovek, among others, would have offered further possibilities, but was overlooked. In La Zona Gerardo and Diego caught the candidates' attention. Some found scope for fruitful analysis of the Miguel-Alejandro relationship, though only a few commented on the feral behaviour of other young males. The political/police characters deserved more attention than they received.
- B** La Zona provided fertile ground for discussion of class division and social justice – universal themes, but portrayed here in an identifiably Latin American context. Stronger responses looked at the human consequences of corruption, and whether Alejandro represented the potential for the kind of moral renewal needed to rescue Mexico from the crisis of values depicted. Roma needed closer probing to identify issues such as the shared lot of women as a common (and universal) theme – and the male sense of entitlement to abandon their female partners at will. A few

candidates claimed that Cleo was unhappy and mistreated by the family, despite evidence to the contrary. One, more subtle, response included a reference to la esclavización of domestic servants as a subliminal feature of this work.

## Question 2

- A** The question probably led candidates into describing these works as more violent than they really considered them to be before entering the exam room. For example, a number of responses described Esteban's death – running carelessly into the path of a car on a city street – as an act of violence. This broad definition aside, references to emotional/psychological violence were often backed up with plausible evidence. The assertion that authors/directors use violence to show the depth to which a character has sunk as a way of setting up the story of their recovery was well argued. Some candidates pointed out that Manuela, Tita and La Zapatera are better described as survivors than victims. Many candidates successfully used Agrado to exemplify their answers, though the first sighting of her in the film was not always understood as the prostitute/client role-play it is probably meant to depict: how else to explain Agrado's concern for her client after Manuela has concussed him? (While on this point, the el campo of TSMM is not to be equated with the city of Barcelona.) In Como agua... the case of Gertrudis proved a useful plot-point to mine when answering this question. In LZP the Mayor's propensity to violence was well cited in evidence.
- B** The term 'constante' in the question wording led many candidates into overstating the female characters' degree of struggle in these works. Struggle seems more of a daily reality for La Zapatera or for Tita than it is for Manuela. Not all candidates identified clear social conventions against which women characters were purportedly struggling, resulting in vague and superficial responses. La solidaridad was usefully cited as the key asset of women in TSMM, in contrast to the female protagonists in the other works. Stronger answers identified Rosa as the TSMM character with the clearest struggle underway, given the attitudes of her mother. Agrado's autenticidad speech was often well quoted. The notion that the Kowalski actor's obscene proposition to her represented a 'social convention' struck examiners as stretching the definition of the term. References to La movida... usually led candidates into muddle and irrelevance. For those writing on Como agua..., it was helpful to differentiate the De la Garza family convention with which Tita struggles from the broader machista attitudes that Gertrudis conquers. For La Zapatera..., reference to the Vecinas and the Alcalde helped illuminate the protagonist's struggle.

## Question 4

- A** Candidates showed a good understanding of impunity as the key concept in Rojo. The argument that Patricia in La muerte y la doncella was out for revenge (rather than justice) needed evidence to be sustainable: her cry of ¿Ante quién acuso a este médico? is that of a victim seeking recourse to law rather than a revenge-seeker out for blood.

## Question 6

- B** The key to a successful answer was the gender role-reversal through Castaño's transvesticism. It was also helpful for candidates to establish comparisons with Calderón.
- C** This question was confidently answered, with candidates shrewdly encompassing the social, historical and temporal dimensions of the setting in their answers. Some also included darkness as a setting, which offered fruitful analytical possibilities.

## Question 7

- B** Candidates needed to consider the purportedly contradictory ideas/linguistic ambiguity of the collection. In some cases, they neglected to do so in favour of focusing on the other part of the question - whether the collection presents coherent themes. As with other questions, a good knowledge of the text in some cases partially compensated for imbalance in the structure of the essay.

### Question 8

**B and C** Candidates had a clear understanding of both aspects of the novel addressed by these questions.

### Question 10

- A** The extract gave candidates scope to write about Delaura, the Bishop and the portrayal of the Church. The more insightful responses identified the irony of Delaura's sense of inferiority in facing a 12 year-old girl, and what that tells us about the fitness of the colonial Church to exercise its authority. The last paragraph's haunting allusions to Delaura's forebears, the campos nevados and his recurring dream were less fully explored than the first half of the extract.
- B** Candidates seemed to enjoy working out their thoughts on the relative weighting of parental neglect and institutional oppression on Sierva Maria, arriving at a range of different conclusions. A strong case was made that the colonial Church and, specifically, the Bishop were primarily responsible for her suffering. However, the crucial link to her upbringing was that the Church resented her adopting the culture of the African slaves: by doing so, she had become a traitor to Catholic orthodoxy. The dog bite was merely an excuse for the Church authorities to act against her, since it gave them the justification of demonic possession brought about through infection. However, the reason she integrated into the slave community was parental neglect. It was helpful for candidates to show awareness that 'Colombia' did not exist at the time when the action is set, and that Sierva María did not actually contract rabies.
- C** Magical realism needs clear definition as a framework for discussion. The distinction between it and the fantastical/exotic can be a fine one. The Mark Scheme's Indicative Content features a number of examples of magical realism, to which some candidates successfully added, e.g. the nocturnal animal migration out of the Marquis' family farm. Some claimed that magical realism was a tool for satire or social criticism but were then unable to substantiate this assertion.

### Question 13

- B** This was a challenging question, in that it required judgement on whether the text constitutes tragedy, a definition of 'true heroes', and consideration of the extent to which the Civil War has been forgotten. Stronger candidates were able to chart a coherent path between these ideas. Less successful responses lapsed into narrative.
- C** For this question it was helpful to separate out the roles of Javier Cercas as author and as narrator. This was a rare case of candidates using a technical term ('metafiction') successfully to support the case they were making.