

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/21

Reading and Writing

Key Messages

- **Question 1:** seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question. Candidates should take care not to omit words or to include extra words.
- **Question 2:** rewrite the phrases to include the word(s) in brackets. A grammatical manipulation will be required, and care should be taken to ensure that the answer would fit back into the original text, retaining the same meaning.
- **Questions 3 and 4:** comprehension of texts. Candidates should attempt to answer in their own words. Direct copying of five or more words from the text will usually invalidate an answer.
- **Question 5(a):** summary of relevant details from both texts in answer to the question set. Introduction, conclusions and vague generalisations are not required. Specific, relevant details attract marks.
- **Question 5(b):** personal response. Candidates should give a point of view and, if possible, offer ideas which have not appeared in the texts.
- **Language:** when preparing for the exam, make sure to revise the basic agreements, tenses and verb endings.

General Comments

Presentation of the scripts was generally good and only one or two papers showed evidence of poor time management. Overall, candidates had a good communicative level of Spanish, but this was often impaired by incorrect spelling, lack of accents and occasional incorrect register. Able candidates showed clear understanding of the two texts dealing with differing factors which encourage obesity and longevity.

Although performance was generally good, a number of candidates might have achieved higher marks if they had been better prepared for the exam in terms of examination technique. Quite a few tackled **Question 1** as an exercise in making their own phrases to equate to those given in the questions, instead of looking for them in the text. Also, some did not manipulate the sentences in **Question 2** using the given words or phrases. A few candidates used bullet points to answer **Questions 3 and 4**, thereby restricting their access to the full range of marks for quality of language. This year there were, on the whole, fewer instances in answers to these questions of copying of five or more words from the texts but, when candidates had resorted to this, they tended to do so time and time again.

In respect of **Question 5(a)** several marks were lost as a result of lengthy introductions and conclusions to work either presented in the form of a generalised summary or pieces of free writing on the issues raised but without any concrete references to either text. A few candidates also lost marks by exceeding the stipulated total word count.

Comments on Specific Questions

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

This exercise encourages candidates to read the first text carefully. Many would have boosted their overall totals if they had been more aware of what was required. As stated in the Key Message above, candidates should seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question and take care not to omit words or to include extra words.

The paraphrase in the question is printed above the space left for the answer to be written. Therefore, it should be possible to check at a glance that the phrase from the text is a precise match, and contains no extra words or omissions.

- (a) Moderate success was achieved. A common error was to preface the correct answer with *que*.
- (b) This was generally done well. Occasionally, correct answers were invalidated when prefaced with *entre*.
- (c) Whether because of the shortness of the phrase, or *vínculo* not being widely recognised, candidates achieved less success here.
- (d) Many candidates successfully identified the target phrase, although the addition of *...de concienciación* was an occasional error.
- (e) Apart from a tendency to invalidate correct answers with *solo...*, this was generally done well.

Question 2

In addition to performing the language manipulations required in this question, it is important to check that answers will fit back into the original text and retain the same meaning. A line number reference is given for candidates to check quickly that this would be the case.

- (a) Not all recognised that the only way to work *posible* into this clause and retain the same meaning was by using a subjunctive, and there were unsuccessful attempts with infinitives such as *haber* or *tener*. Answers which would have otherwise been correct often contained misspellings of *haya* (*halla*, *haigan*, etc.).
- (b) This was tackled well by those candidates who were familiar with the use of *sober*. Unsuccessful candidates merely attempted to substitute *son* with *suelen*, and omitted *ser* altogether.
- (c) The required manipulation could be performed by using a *seguir + gerund* construction or the adjectival form of the past participle *asociada*, or by a combination of both. Quite a good proportion of candidates answered it correctly. A common mistake was the omission of *se*.
- (d) Candidates provided a great variety of correct answers. Quite a few used the present or the preterite tense rather than the imperfect, e.g. *es la preocupacion de los nutricionistas*, which, although grammatically accurate, did not fit back in the text. Some candidates offered feasible alternatives such as *la preocupación era de los nutricionistas* but, as these would not fit back into the original text either, the mark could not be awarded. There were a number of possibilities regarding the verb used (*causaba*, *creaba*, etc.) and an appropriate preposition that were acceptable.

- (e) The majority of candidates understood that *es necesario que* is followed by the subjunctive, which they knew for *hacer (haga)*. A number came up with acceptable alternatives which did not require the subjunctive, e.g. *es necesario para el Banco Mundial hacer un / el esfuerzo* or *es necesario un / el esfuerzo (por parte) del Banco Mundial*.

Question 3

The text about increasing obesity in Latin America was generally well understood and candidates who gave clear, detailed answers in their own words achieved good marks. Some candidates lost marks when they copied five or more words directly from the text. A small minority seemed to disregard the paragraph reference given in the rubric. Candidates should also always remember that the marks allocated to each question - (2), (3) or (4) – are a reliable guide as to how many pieces of information are being sought. The use of bullet points, instead of writing in complete sentences, will reduce the number of marks available for quality of language.

- (a) This was generally done well, with most candidates supplying the facts and figures required by the mark scheme. The majority successfully noted the year when the report was registered, 2005, and how many millions of obese people there were then. However, a number of answers were invalidated by the direct copying from the text of *un total de 60 millones de obesos en America Latina* or five consecutive words from within that phrase. Almost all candidates mentioned the forecast for 2030 and what that percentage increase would be.
- (b) Most candidates mentioned that the consumption of unhealthy food and its low cost were causes of obesity in Latin America. Many candidates referred to the influence of demographics, but did not elaborate on the specifics of migration from rural to urban areas and simply stated that many people live in cities. A great number of candidates pointed out that jobs in the city were less active or required less physical effort. General statements such as *la vida en la ciudad es más sedentaria* did not score any marks. Phrases which were commonly copied directly from the text included *el desplazamiento del campo a las ciudades* and *los altos precios de los alimentos saludables*.
- (c) Provided that it was clear which part of the American continent they were talking about, most candidates provided satisfactory answers for both points in this question: stating that rich people in the United States were now more conscious of what they eat and therefore look for quality with regards to their food, whereas their counterparts in South America were commonly obese. Unsuccessful answers provided information about poor people instead of rich people in the USA, stated that wealthy North Americans were not fat, (which although possibly implied, was not the correct answer), or said that they looked for quality, without adding that this was in food.
- (d) Most candidates provided satisfactory answers for at least two of the four points required to answer this question. A majority stated that more awareness or education campaigns were needed. Many identified the proposal of sending nutritious meals to schools, but sometimes omitted that these meals were to be sent to schools with low-income pupils, or asserted that the meals should be sent to poor schools, which was not the same thing. The other two answers required proved more challenging. Many candidates referred to the need to increase health services rather than to enhancing their role in promoting obesity awareness. A phrase which was commonly copied from the text was *aumentar el papel de los servicios*.
- (e) Good answers were recorded here. Most candidates were able to state the fact that politicians only dealt with the problem partially or that they only dealt with the problem of lack of basic food. Some answers left out 'politicians', which invalidated the point. The fact that only nutritionists worried about obesity and that no one paid them attention was well understood. A phrase commonly copied directly from the text was *la falta de alimentos básicos*.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

- (a) The majority of candidates mentioned that Spain was the third country worldwide in terms of life expectancy and the second in terms of healthy lifestyle. The third mark was more elusive for many candidates who often stated incorrectly that Spaniards (both women and men) had the longest life expectancy in Europe. It often proved tricky for candidates to communicate effectively without copying directly from the text, and common lifts included: *españolas son las que más viven*, *España es el tercer país*, and *la esperanza de vida más alta*.
- (b) Whilst many candidates managed to identify the right parts of the text to answer this question, they regularly failed to include the required detail to score full marks. In some cases, candidates scored zero for the whole question. The most common omissions were the free element of the health services, the family ties in fomenting community spirit and the fact that deaths from road traffic accidents were in decline (not simply low numbers as many candidates answered). A common lift was *muertes en accidentes de tráfico*.
- (c) This was a very accessible question, although sometimes candidates did not score the highest marks because of omissions or direct copying from the text. Many candidates did not include the specific figures concerning salary increases, life expectancy or literacy rates in Spain. The phrases *los ingresos brutos per cápita* and *la tasa de alfabetización en adultos* were frequently copied.
- (d) Many candidates scored at least three marks by mentioning the low level of participation in sporting or physical activity, the increase in the intake of unhealthy food and the stress caused by the financial situation in Spain. The information about cuts in benefits proved a bit more challenging as *prestaciones sociales* did not seem to be clearly understood.
- (e) Full details were needed to score the two available marks. Quite a few candidates omitted the fact that Spain is the preferred retirement destination, or they did not specify that this piece of information concerned European pensioners. Candidates also understood well that it was where British were happier, however, not all mentioned that this referred to expatriates. *Países donde los expatriados británicos son más felices* and *retiro para los jubilados europeos* were commonly copied phrases.

Question 5

Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks allocated. Most, but not all, candidates were aware of the need to keep to the limit of 140 words for both parts of the question. Anything in excess of this total is disregarded, and in extreme cases this can lead to no marks being awarded for part (b).

- (a) This question generally produced disappointing answers. Candidates who had achieved good or even excellent marks elsewhere often struggled to reach even half marks here. There was a tendency to give general summaries of the texts and point out how the two were linked. Many candidates wasted words by including elements from the texts, such as details about the World Bank initiatives or Spain being the preferred retirement destination for EU pensioners, which were irrelevant to the topic.

The principal problem appeared to be a lack of familiarity with the recommended technique for this form of summary writing. To achieve a good mark, candidates need only to note, in the very limited number of words available, details from the texts which answer the question. Generalisations, often required by other forms of summary writing, are usually too vague to score. It is the relevant specific details which score the marks.

In this exercise, candidates are not penalised for copying directly from the text(s). It should be remembered, however, that any copied material will not be considered in the Quality of Language mark. Candidates should also refrain from offering personal opinions in this part of the question.

Answers such as *En 'El secreto de una vida larga', el autor habla sobre la esperanza de vida en España. El autor habla de los factores que causan estos datos de vida. Igualmente habla sobre los hechos que pueden afectar la esperanza de vida como el estrés o la obesidad en la juventud*, waste 50 words and score 0 marks. In contrast, an answer which includes *En América Latina, se*

estima que en el 2040 la tasa de obesidad se triplicará. Esto se debe al aumento del consumo de comida chatarra. También se debe al desplazamiento a las ciudades, donde la gente es más sedentaria, y a los altos precios de las comidas sanas, scores 4 marks in 48 words by giving relevant specific details.

- (b) Many candidates scored high marks. Most addressed the question correctly and candidates who were less able linguistically often offered some very good answers. Everybody had something to say about health habits and trends in their country. Better answers included issues not mentioned in the texts. Fewer marks were awarded for answers limited to personal habits and preferences.

Quality of Language

The quality of candidates' written Spanish, here and throughout the paper, was generally well up to the standard required. Less able candidates sometimes struggled to perform in **Questions 3 and 4**, yet their Quality of Language mark often improved greatly in **Question 5** when their writing was more free-style.

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/22
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- **Question 1:** seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question. Candidates should take care not to omit words or include extra words.
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- **Question 5(b):** personal response. Candidates should give a point of view and, if possible, offer ideas which have not appeared in the texts.
- **Language:** when preparing for the exam, revise the basic agreements, tenses and verb endings.

General comments

The two texts dealing with environmental changes in Latin America and Spain were accessible to most candidates, and comprehension was often clearly demonstrated. Most candidates attempted all questions and appeared to be aware that they should not copy more than four consecutive words of text in their answers to the comprehension questions. There were skilled attempts at paraphrase. Despite good, overall understanding, marks were lost when specific relevant details were not included in answers. Candidates should look at the number of marks allocated to each question, and gauge the amount of detail to be included accordingly.

Only a very few candidates exceeded the word limit in **Question 5**, thereby curtailing the number of marks they could score in **Question 5(b)**. Occasionally, there were vague generalisations in the summary for **Question 5(a)**, rather than specific details which answered the question.

Comments on specific questions

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

As stated in the key messages above, candidates should seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question and take care not to omit words or to include extra words – a feature which often invalidated answers which were otherwise correct.

Questions (a) and (e) were generally done well.

Instances of additional or omitted words which invalidated otherwise correct answers were most likely to be found in:

- (b) the addition of ...*de perforación*
- (c) the omission of ...*de tierra*
- (d) the addition of ...*energético*
- (d) many candidates opted incorrectly for *es necesario hacer estudios*.

Question 2

In addition to performing the language manipulations required, it is important to check that answers will fit back into the original text and retain the same meaning. A line number reference is given for candidates to check quickly that this is the case.

- (a) Many candidates kept the *se* construction of the original but a lot forgot to add a verb like *usar* or *gastar*, or a singular noun phrase that would fit such as *el uso de*. Others added the *n* to *requiere* to make the sentence grammatically correct keeping the original *grandes cantidades de agua*. However, candidates are not permitted to change the word(s) provided in brackets on the question paper.
- (b) Most candidates scored a mark for this question as there were many possibilities to render this phrase correctly.
- (c) Again, most candidates managed to find a way of re-phrasing this sentence due to the many possibilities available.
- (d) A good deal of candidates realised that the trigger word *creados* needed a passive construction in order to render the phrase correctly. However, many thought they could do so using a *se* construction which, unfortunately, did not work without taking off the final *s*. Some weaker candidates thought *creados* was instead of *llamados* and wrote *se han puesto en marcha los creados Bancos...*
- (e) This proved perhaps the most difficult question in this exercise with many candidates being unable to find a way of coming up with an appropriate sentence in which the infinitive *comprar* could be used. Many used incorrect prepositions (e.g. *permiten a las grandes corporaciones de comprar*) whilst others chose verbs like *querer* which would not fit the original sense of the phrase (e.g. *Dejan que las grandes corporaciones quieran comprar*).

Question 3

The text about fracking provided a fair level of challenge and candidates who gave clear, detailed answers in their own words usually achieved high marks. Some candidates lost marks when they copied more than four words directly from the text. A small minority of candidates wrongly thought that just one detail would be sufficient to answer each question, instead of being guided by the marks allocated, which indicate how many pieces of information are being sought.

- (a) The vast majority of candidates scored the first point for this question, managing to communicate the idea that that fuel sources were running out. However, many failed to score the second point by omitting to convey the fact that other fuel reserves that were available could not be extracted using conventional methods.
- (b) This was usually very well answered, with a lot of candidates scoring three or four marks. The most commonly omitted detail was the pollution of drinking water (it was important to distinguish this from the large quantities of water used in the fracking process). Also, many candidates lost marks for lifting five consecutive words, such as *grandes cantidades de agua y or las resevas de agua potable*.
- (c) The details required to answer this question appeared to be more difficult for most candidates to fully extract or convey sufficiently well to score points. The first point was perhaps the most successfully conveyed, although many communicate the idea of Argentina depending more on fossil fuels. The second point was often lost by the inclusion of a five-word lift (*el uso de energías renovables*), and the third point usually missed a reference to people or communities and was often rendered *las zonas se verán afectadas*.
- (d) Most candidates scored two of the available three marks. Usually, they managed to portray the idea that companies acquire the right to harm the environment and that this damage cannot be reversed. However, the second point proved more elusive and many candidates often failed to convey that the money might not be spent on improving the area.
- (e) While the first point in this question was often answered correctly, about half of all candidates did not manage to make the comparison between the cost of Fracking and conventional methods,

giving answers like *es barato* or *su bajo coste*. Similarly, for the second point, there were three important details needed and many candidates omitted at least one of them. Usually, it was the reference to Spain that was missing. However, the final point was often made, although there was sometimes a lifting of *generar unos 10 000 empleos directos*.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

The second text, dealing with roof gardens in Mexico appeared to be well understood on the whole. However, there seemed to be more lifting of at least five consecutive words from the text, leading to many candidates scoring fewer marks overall than for the previous question.

- (a) In part (i), most candidates understood the two points needed but *los efectos del cambio climatic* was very commonly lifted from the text, thus losing the mark.
- Part (ii), proved more problematic in terms of including all the detailed required for the marks. In the first point, many candidates either missed the introduction of a law or that the law was for the creation of roof gardens (and not, as many put, for *espacios verdes*). The second point was rarely conveyed successfully as usually one of the essential details required (see mark scheme) was missing. Also, many wrote that it was the first roof garden in México which did not fully translate the idea of the region of Latin America. Finally, here too, lifts were not uncommon. In particular, *primer jardín botánico de azotea*.
- (b) At least one mark was achieved by the majority of candidates who managed to get across the idea the gardens improve the appearance of the city. Many managed to convey the second point too, but a great deal of candidates could not avoid lifting *el efecto 'isla de calor'*. In some cases, it appeared that candidates might have made the incorrect assumption that sections from the text in inverted commas are exempt from the rule about copying. This is not so.
- (c) Almost everybody referenced air conditioning (or similar electronic systems) but many maintained that their use is reduced rather than eliminated, as stated in the text. Others wrote that electronic devices were not needed, without referring to the lowering of temperatures. However, most candidates did manage to show how these roof gardens helped people to save money (on energy costs). Some candidates were unclear about air quality being improved, referring to *el nivel del aire* as opposed to *la calidad del aire*. Most, however, managed to convey the last point unambiguously.
- (d) While most candidates understood the problem for buildings to support the added weight of a roof garden, many became a little tangled up in explaining how creating the correctly angled slope to allow for effective drainage was also a problem for consideration. Typically, many candidates mentioned the slope but not the drainage or vice versa. There were also many who lifted *un sistema de drenaje eficaz* directly from the text. The point about obtaining planning permission was also often omitted. As a result, only a minority scored full marks on this question.
- (e) Although there were only two points to explain in this final question, answers again tended to be incomplete, even amongst the better candidates. Many mentioned that roof gardens were expensive, but did not make reference to their installation. Similarly, although a good number of candidates stated that roofs needed to be a minimum of 100 m², they failed to explain that this ruled out a majority of the population.

Question 5

Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks allocated. Most, but not all, candidates were aware of the need to keep to the limit of 140 words for both parts of the question. Anything in excess is disregarded by Examiners, and in extreme cases this can lead to no marks being awarded for part (b).

- (a) Candidates seemed to understand that they needed to identify ten examples of how fracking (text 1) and roof gardens (text 2) have impacted on the environment. Some candidates demonstrated good technique by going straight to the point without writing a long introduction which would have wasted valuable words. However, there were still some candidates who had a tendency to give fairly broad generalisations and omit the key details needed to score the marks.

To score good marks candidates should note only details from the texts which answer the question. Generalisations, often required by other forms of summary writing, are usually too vague to score. It is the relevant specific details which score the marks.

Therefore, answers beginning *En el primer texto se habla de cómo en Argentina se ha optado por crear el fracking que se trata de una forma más barata de extraer combustibles fósiles de la tierra. Podría generar 10 000 empleos y otros países como España lo están adoptando...* use up forty-five words, and score nothing (apart from contributing to the Quality of Language mark). By contrast, an answer which begins *El fracking supone un tremendo coste medioambiental causado por la contaminación del agua, la actividad sísmica producida o las grandes cantidades de agua usadas. Al contrario, las azoteas tienen un impacto positivo sobre el medioambiente. Mejoran la calidad del aire y disminuyen el efecto del calor en las ciudades...* (49 words) scores six marks by giving relevant specific details.

Candidates should write concise statements of relevant facts in complete sentences – not bullet points, which are usually too short to show the clear meaning. They should also refrain from offering personal opinions in this part of the question.

- (b) In the two or three sentences available for this last part of the examination the vast majority of candidates wrote good answers. Everybody had something to say about the measures taken in their country to protect the environment. The question provided ample opportunity to include ideas which had not already been suggested by the texts. Better answers included originality and an opinion on why these changes were occurring.

Quality of Language

The quality of candidates' written Spanish, here and throughout the paper, was generally well up to the standard required by this examination, with most marks in the Sound, Good, or Very Good bands.

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/41

Texts

Key Messages

- Candidates must read the question carefully and clarify exactly what they are being asked to write about. It may help to copy out the key words or phrases before starting to plan an answer.
- It is good practice to define terms in the opening paragraph to show understanding of the question and an indication of the way the response will be presented. Key words or phrases from the question can be used effectively here.
- Ensure all answers are numbered correctly, also indicating option (a) or (b) clearly.
- Candidates should focus only on writing about the text with relevance to the question being answered, without including general background information on the author or the text.
- Candidates must use the appropriate term when referring to a text (novel, play, poem) and refer to the title of the text and names of characters in full, not abbreviating them to initials. It is important to ensure that correct names are used.
- Quotations are valuable in supporting the argument, but should be brief and directly relevant.
- Handwriting must be legible.

General Comments

Overall, candidates were well prepared and the standard was good. Candidates were familiar with the lay-out of the Paper and the vast majority followed the instructions correctly, submitting the correct number of answers without rubric infringement. Candidates had studied the texts carefully. The best answers combined a focused response to the question supported by relevant references to the text without general pre-prepared introductions. In *Sección Primera*, candidates are reminded to give brief answers to option (a)(i) and (ii), comprising only a fraction of the main essay, which is a response to (iii). When referring to the historical or social context of the work, the information must be factually accurate and relevant to the question.

Comments on Specific Questions

Sección Primera

Question 1 Juan Rulfo: *Pedro Páramo*

- (a) This was a popular text, with many answers on both options. In this case, most candidates identified the speakers correctly as Pedro Páramo and his mother and showed how the author used natural images to convey the woman's deep sorrow. The theme of the passage was interpreted in a number of ways – violence, death, sadness – and was generally analysed well, with reference to the text as a whole.
- (b) The large number of candidates who chose this option showed good knowledge of the text and the events surrounding Susana San Juan. There was a tendency to narrate, and candidates are always advised to analyse rather than tell the story. The best essays focussed on the relationship between Susana and Pedro, and the different side of his personality which emerged through his feelings for her, as well as the resulting effect on Comala.

Question 2 Lope de Vega: *Peribáñez y el Comendador de Ocaña*

- (a) This was the less popular of the options on the text. The essays were generally satisfactory and would have benefited from more analysis of the whole text in relation to (iii). Candidates tended to focus too much on the printed extract rather than widen the discussion.

- (b) Some very good answers discussed how the author presented different aspects of love in the play and analysed how these combined to underline the themes. Many also mentioned the more original aspect in the presentation of love between two lowly characters on the social scale and how this informed the wider moral view.

Question 3 Jorge Luis Borges: *Ficciones*

- (a) There was a small number of essays on this option, which makes an overall assessment of performance limited. Candidates were able to express understanding of Borges' work and to appreciate its originality of thought.
- (b) Although this option attracted more answers, the numbers were still relatively small. Candidates were able to choose any two *ficciones* to illustrate their own interpretation of the originality in the work. There were some interesting interpretations with good use of references from the text to support the argument.

Question 4 Antonio Buero Vallejo: *El concierto de San Ovidio*

- (a) Candidates knew the text well and understood the essence of the questions. In (iii), the best answers showed the difference between the characters in terms of perception and insight. This was generally lacking in Valindin, who was motivated by selfishness, but seen in Valentín, the only person to share David's vision. Some candidates were also able to include relevant analysis of the characters in terms of the play as a social satire on the Franco regime.
- (b) Most answers concentrated on the relationships between Adriana, David and Valindin, which was probably the most fruitful approach. A few included Donato instead of David. There was a degree of narration and the best essays kept that to a minimum, concentrating instead on the changes seen in Adriana and to an extent in David as their relationship developed. This then led to wider consideration of the themes.

Sección Segunda

Question 5 Gabriel García Márquez: *El coronel no tiene quien le escribe*

- (a) This question was very popular and generally well done. The best answers began by defining the concept of 'soledad', which appears in a number of guises in the novel. Most concentrated on the colonel and his wife and the effect of poverty, and abandonment, but there were many other aspects including the loneliness of Sabas and his wife, in a loveless marriage, where money did not buy happiness, and in the town and country in a wider context. In all cases, good essays keep a clear plan and argument and use references to the text judiciously.
- (b) There were fewer answers to this question than option (a). The time scale in the narrative has a variable focus, and it is often difficult to interpret. Time also seems to move at a different rate dependent on the character at the centre of attention. It was important to consider the effect of this rather than attempt to determine a time line (how long had the colonel been waiting?) References to magic realism were relevant also.

Question 6 Isabel Allende: *La casa de los espíritus*

- (a) This question attracted fewer answers than option (b). The question focuses on the political bias, if any, of the novel. Candidates wrote about Esteban Trueba in the main, but some also referred to Pedro Tercero and Jaime. The best answers set out a clear argument and then used references to the text to support this. Some candidates tried to cover as many political references as possible without finding a way of presenting a direct response to the question. Most felt that the role of women in society was presented as a political issue.
- (b) Very many candidates chose this question. There were several interpretations of the question, and the candidate's views were not always clear unless they had defined their understanding of the task in the introduction. All knew the text well and were able to make many references to the female characters. The question asked whether the presentation was always positive – most found that there was a balance with some negative interpretation of the actions of some individuals. Success depended to a great extent on the organisation of the argument and well-chosen references.

Question 7 Federico García Lorca: *Bodas de sangre*

- (a) This was a very popular text and a great many candidates chose this option. Most candidates achieved a satisfactory standard or above. They showed good knowledge of the text and had studied the '*cuchillo*' as a symbol and were able to express that. Differentiation between responses relied greatly on the focus and construction of the argument.
- (b) This was also a popular option. Candidates needed to focus on the elements of poetry in the text and especially the characters and events in the final Act. Once again, the best essays began by defining the focus in the introduction and then found a clear line of argument, supported by brief references. There was a temptation in this question to copy long passages from the lullaby, for example. Candidates often tend to want to write about Lorca's life and experiences, and this can be detrimental to the overall outcome of the essay as it is generally not relevant.

Question 8 Rosalía de Castro: *En las orillas del Sar*

- (a) As a new text to the specification, there were relatively few responses to the poems. Candidates who chose this question had studied the themes and the techniques in the poetry and were able to express this effectively.
- (b) This option gave candidates many opportunities to choose those poems which best addressed the focus of their response. Most agreed with the statement in the question but some also found some positive aspects. Examiners looked for a personal response, with a solid understanding of the poems and the ability to select and analyse effectively. The poems selected varied from candidate to candidate, which is what was intended, and were generally well tackled.

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/42

Texts

Key Messages

- Candidates must read the question carefully and clarify exactly what they are being asked to write about. It may help to copy out the key words or phrases before starting to plan an answer.
- It is good practice to define terms in the opening paragraph to show understanding of the question and an indication of the way the response will be presented. Key words or phrases from the question can be used effectively here.
- Ensure all answers are numbered correctly, also indicating option **(a)** or **(b)** clearly.
- Candidates should focus only on writing about the text with relevance to the question being answered, without including general background information on the author or the text.
- Candidates must use the appropriate term when referring to a text (novel, play, poem) and refer to the title of the text and names of characters in full, not abbreviating them to initials. It is important to ensure that correct names are used.
- Quotations are valuable in supporting the argument, but should be brief and directly relevant.
- Handwriting must be legible.

General Comments

Overall, candidates were well prepared and the standard was good. Candidates were familiar with the lay-out of the Paper and the vast majority followed the instructions correctly, submitting the correct number of answers without rubric infringement. Candidates had studied the texts carefully. The best answers combined a focused response to the question supported by relevant references to the text without general pre-prepared introductions. In *Sección Primera*, candidates are reminded to give brief answers to option **(a)(i)** and **(ii)**, comprising only a fraction of the main essay, which is a response to **(iii)**. When referring to the historical or social context of the work, the information must be factually accurate and relevant to the question.

Comments on Specific Questions

Sección Primera

Question 1 Juan Rulfo: *Pedro Páramo*

- (a)** This was less popular than option **(b)**. Some good essays identified the '*padre*' correctly as Rentería and showed how Rulfo used natural images and weather to create the unique landscape in the novel.
- (b)** There were many answers to this question. Candidates are asked to analyse Pedro Páramo as an individual and as a man of his time. The first part was well answered and the best candidates studied his role as *cacique* and his involvement in the Mexican Revolution as well, opening up the whole of the range of marks.

Question 2 Lope de Vega: *Peribáñez y el Comendador de Ocaña*

- (a)** Many candidates chose this question. Answers to **(i)** and **(ii)** were often too long, narrating the plot. In **(iii)**, the best answers analysed Casilda's role in the play in relation to the themes of loyalty, '*honor*' and '*honra*' bringing another perspective on these.
- (b)** Some very good answers discussed how the characters were opposing representatives of classes who also displayed individual human strengths and weaknesses. Lope de Vega gave voice to

those from all strata of society and they were judged equally. The sense of individual responsibility, as well as the overall need for harmony in society, were expressed clearly.

Question 3 Jorge Luis Borges: *Ficciones*

- (a) Parts (i) and (ii) did not present any problems. Part (iii) was answered well by those who analysed the ideas of circles and repetition and the circular references to literature and related it to this and other *ficciones*. A small number of candidates referred to the paradox in the last line of the extract. A significant number of candidates summarised the story without analysis.
- (b) Fewer candidates chose this option. Essays were competent with candidates able to refer to at least two *ficciones* and most interpreted the presentation of the '*biblioteca*' as a metaphor for the universe. The discussion developed into consideration of design, predictability, repetition and the idea of seeking a hidden key to the pattern.

Question 4 Antonio Buero Vallejo: *El concierto de San Ovidio*

- (a) Candidates knew the text well and understood the motivation of the characters and the themes discussed. There were some very good responses where candidates identified the different groups of characters and were able to contrast them well and related them to the theme. Other answers tended to be too narrative in (i) and (ii) and although names were mentioned, the presentation was descriptive rather than analytic.
- (b) Success in this response meant careful reading of the question. Candidates were asked to what extent the playwright celebrated the power of an individual, therefore a detailed resume of strong characters without showing how their contribution to society was a force for good, is not a full answer. This was a case where the historical context was important in assessing the degree and effect of a strong individual and candidates needed to analyse more than one. Some only wrote about Valindin, and it was difficult to address the concept of '*celebra*' in that the playwright's attitude to him was not positive.

Sección Segunda

Question 5 Gabriel García Márquez: *El coronel no tiene quien le escribe*

- (a) This question was very popular and generally well done by candidates who addressed the whole question. The essence of the question lies in the relationship between the colonel and his wife, in light of the comment quoted. Defining terms in the introduction by explaining what is meant by '*te falta carácter*' provided a good starting point. Candidates needed to compare and contrast the personalities of the individuals by analysing how they responded to events, and assess whether the colonel's wife was correct in saying that he lacked character, always within the context of their marriage. Many saw considerable strength of character in both, and mutual respect.
- (b) There were many answers to this question. All essays needed to analyse the '*realidad*' shown in the text, and a definition of this in the opening paragraph would have given a clear focus. There were essentially three realities – the colonel's, his wife's and the socio/political picture of Latin America portrayed in the book. This does not mean that García Márquez is simply presenting an historical account of events in Colombia. References to magic realism were relevant in showing the literary techniques used by the author. Weaker answers tended to try to relate points to current reality and responded to the text as a factual rather than a literary and imaginative piece of writing.

Question 6 Isabel Allende: *La casa de los espíritus*

- (a) This question attracted many answers. The wording of the task asks candidates to show to what extent the concept in the quotation '*La vida es injusta*' is central to the work as a whole. The most successful essays analysed how characters faced the consequences of their actions. Many focussed on Esteban Trueba and others analysed the fate of women in the novel to good effect. Weaker essays tended to list incidents which they interpreted as unfair, without a clear argument.
- (b) Fewer candidates chose this option, but there were some good responses. Many showed empathy for Esteban Trueba, as he struggled to overcome his own problems to establish a stable life, seek '*normalidad*' and maintain it. Defining this normality – for him – was essential, and the best responses then compared this with the lesson he learnt at the end of his life.

Question 7 Federico García Lorca: *Bodas de sangre*

- (a) This was the most popular question on the paper. The question's focus required candidates to analyse the concept of '*la irracionalidad y la sinrazón*' in the era of the play, and show how this led to the tragedy. The most successful answers understood the context of the play and judged the character's actions and the consequences accordingly. Some felt that society was irrational, others that the characters behaved in an irrational manner. The best were clear that the view of society at that time was one interpretation of what is irrational, and differs from what is accepted now, and appreciated what Lorca was almost certainly trying to say. These essays analysed the *novia*'s actions in a thoughtful way and understood the dilemma. Those candidates who presented a pre-learned essay on tragedy could not access the higher mark bands, especially those which dealt with the concept of tragedy as a literary device with little reference to the text. Candidates need to be wary of analysing the play in the light of modern views, or muddling literary techniques between texts studied.
- (b) A large number of candidates chose this question. Examiners saw some lively responses where candidates appreciated the theatricality of these aspects of the play, as well as the influence of the traditions and beliefs embodied in them. It was not enough to list the features without analysing their effect. Several essays were clearly prepared pieces on symbolism which had some overlap but were not clearly focussed on the question. It is always important to consider the play as it would appear on the stage, rather than simply a printed text.

Question 8 Rosalía de Castro: *En las orillas del Sar*

- (a) As a new text to the specification, there were relatively few responses to the poems. This, possibly the most familiar of the poems, was the most popular option. Candidates had prepared the theme and were able to analyse the language effectively. The best answers combine detailed commentary on the poem with a wider awareness of the writer's technique and approach.
- (b) This option gave candidates many opportunities to choose both poems and a theme and present a detailed analysis of the language used. Examiners looked for a personal response, with a solid understanding of the poems and the ability to select and analyse effectively. The poems selected varied from candidate to candidate, which is what was intended, and were generally well tackled.