

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/21
Reading and Writing 21

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

This was the final June appearance of the examination in this format. It provided an appropriate challenge, and the spread of marks awarded reflected the varying levels of ability of candidates. Most scripts were well presented, and response to the two texts concerning shared living and working facilities was pleasing, with comprehension often clearly demonstrated. There appeared to be little evidence of difficulty with time management.

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. It was pleasing to note skilled attempts at paraphrase. On occasions, good candidates, who apparently had clearly understood the texts, did not pick up all the marks available when they answered too generally and omitted relevant details. Candidates should note the marks allocated to each question, as this is a good indication of the number of details being sought.

Some candidates still exceeded the 140 word limit in **Question 5**, thus reducing the number of marks they could score in **5(b)**. Summaries in **5(a)** which focused on relevant specific details scored many more marks than vague generalisations.

At the upper end of the ability range there were many excellent papers which were a pleasure to mark. However, equally satisfying were the answers from candidates who attempted to show off more modest linguistic skills to the best advantage.

Comments on specific questions

Sección 1

Question 1

Candidates who attempted to identify the phrase in the text which perfectly matched the one in the question and took care not to omit words or to include extra words scored very high marks. Contrastingly, some candidates appeared to be unaware of what was expected of them here and did not do themselves justice on what should be a fairly straightforward exercise.

- (a) A number of candidates struggled to find the appropriate phrase or lost the mark by including either *para* at the front of the phrase, or *hoy en día* at the end.
- (b) Most candidates identified the correct expression, but some answers were invalidated when either *un* or *similar* was omitted.
- (c) This was generally answered well. The commonest error was to omit the initial se...
- (d) There were many good answers. Omission of the final *inmobiliario* prevented some from getting the mark.
- (e) The majority of candidates were successful here.

Question 2

This was a more demanding exercise, although a number of good candidates still scored maximum or near maximum marks.

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.

It is not necessary to change any of the other vocabulary not affected by the manipulation.

- (a) Well answered in general. Some answers incorrectly changed the preposition: *se basa del valor*. Although they are grammatically correct, *que se basa* and *esto se basa* would not fit back into the original text. Other errors included attempting to make *basa* a noun or omission of *se*.
- (b) This question presented some challenge. A number of candidates did not change the verb *recordar* to *olvidar* which made the resulting meaning the opposite of that in the original sentence. Some answers omitted *no hay que olvidar que...*, which although a correct phrase would not fit back in the text. Others chose to use the reflexive form *olvidarse* without the appropriate preposition *de* to follow.
- (c) The subjunctive form necessary for this answer was well recognised. In fact, a whole host of acceptable permutations were offered: *aquello/eso/lo que le sea/parezca/resulte/aparente/que se vea/que se le haga atractivo para/a/en/ante la comunidad*. Moreover, a number of candidates recognised that this manipulation could be performed quite neatly without the use of a verb: *aquello/algo atractivo para/a la comunidad*.
- (d) Most candidates returned correct answers although some used the wrong pronoun with *gusta* e.g. *ya que se gusta usar* or mistakenly kept the *de* as in *ya que nos gusta de usar*. A few omitted *ya que*.
- (e) Moderate success was achieved with this manipulation and a number of candidates were able to identify the adverbial form *basta que* plus subjunctive. Various forms worked: *subas*, *se suba* or *subamos* or other verbs such as *mandar* to signify the meaning of uploading or sending the photo to the caretakers. It was not uncommon to see answers such as *basta con subir una foto*, which would have been correct if the question had not required *basta que*.

Question 3

The text about the shared accommodation facilities offered by *Casa Campus* was generally well understood and candidates who gave clear, detailed answers in their own words achieved good marks. A few candidates lost marks when they copied five or more words directly from the text. A minority disregarded the reference given to the paragraph where the information for each specific question was to be found.

Candidates who answered with very brief notes in the form of bullet points were excluded from the full range of marks for quality of language.

- (a) Most candidates were able to state the main characteristics of Coliving by saying that it led to collaboration and that it had shared or common areas which encouraged interaction or a

community. In this question in particular candidates were apt to overlook the requirement that their answers should only be based on the first paragraph of the text and included material which was relevant to later answers.

- (b) Many good marks were awarded for this four-mark question. Most candidates were able to say that Coliving offered flexibility with regard to the duration of the stay, and many also scored by stating that you need not have a guarantee from the bank in order to stay. The meaning of the phrase *sin respaldo de un banco* proved a challenge for some who seemed not to understand what this meant and gave answers such as *no tienes que pagar*. Considerable success was achieved in noting that lodgers could rent their accommodation to someone else when they were away. However, a common lift was *pueden subalquilar sus habitaciones a otras personas*. It was not so common for candidates to include the point about Coliving being a meeting place for people from different backgrounds.
- (c) Almost all candidates understood that there were activities on offer to residents but a good many thought that Coliving offered jobs, misunderstanding the phrase *espacios comunes donde los jóvenes trabajen*). Most candidates understood that young people were attracted to this type of accommodation because of their income or because of its price.
- (d) Candidates usually managed to mention the *últimos avances tecnológicos* or, if not, they mentioned the various services on offer. A majority also managed to explain that it was easy to get repairs made, although many fell into the trap of lifting five or more words from the text, typically *una foto a la app* or *...algo roto, solo tienes que...*. The final point about services being located in social areas was not always accurately expressed, with imprecise answers such as *hay zonas comunes donde puedes lavar ropa* being common.
- (e) This proved to be a challenging question. Few candidates added sufficient detail to the first point concerning whether Coliving would add substantially to the housing stock in the capital. More success was achieved in querying whether this new way of living would be extended to other cities in Argentina. A common lift here was *de una nueva forma de...*

Sección 2

Question 4

The second text, about shared working facilities, provided a similar level of challenge.

- (a) Most candidates mentioned that one of the advantages of Coworking was that the workers shared expenses and that they collaborated on different projects. Frustratingly, a number of answers did not include the idea that the people living in Coworking lodgings were from *diferentes sectores*. This meant they were denied the point about sharing ideas.
- (b) Candidates generally did well on this four-mark question, with two to three marks being the commonest scores. Mentioning *teletrabajadores* was enough for the first point and was usually scored. However, the second point, though often attempted, was rarely accurate enough to score the mark. It was important to convey the idea that work colleagues were new and not previously acquainted co-workers. That a common working space would be offered was often included in answers and probably the most commonly correct point was that the Coworking venues were quieter than city offices. Some marks were missed when *con nuevos compañeros de trabajo* or *con un entorno más tranquilo* were copied directly.
- (c) A good number of candidates mentioned the fact that a good internet signal was needed, although a several overlooked that *una buena cobertura de internet* constituted a lift of five words from the text. Most were successful in spotting that a specific shared space had to be available for working. However, not all candidates scored the last point by explaining that it was the owner of the property who was to get involved with community projects, and so lost a mark there.
- (d) This question was one of the better answered in this section with many candidates scoring maximum marks. Most candidates understood that the owners of rural accommodation wanted to increase the number of clients, although there was occasionally some confusion about how diversification would achieve this.

It was also well understood that tourism should not depend on the holiday months but should be all year round. (Misspellings of *desestacionalizar* were generally recognisable enough to be accepted). The final point about the fact about fighting against depopulation was generally well answered.

- (e) Most candidates understood that *Alejandro Parera* was helping the development of rural accommodation by creating a web page about the Association of Coworking. However, *la Asociación Nacional de Coworking* was a common lift for a great number of candidates, which might have been avoided by just saying *la Asociación* or *la web de Coworking* etc. The second point relating to the set-up of digital strategies in order to interest customers was one that, if copying directly from the text had been successfully avoided, many were able to express well.

Question 5

Many candidates showed awareness of the techniques required for this part of the examination. Most, but not all, paid careful attention to the overall number of words allowed. More summaries gave specific details rather than generalisations, and the better personal responses contained opinions and original ideas. In their free writing, many were able to write more accurately than in **Questions 3 and 4**.

- (a) There were clear differences here in scores between those who had practised this summary question, and those who were not used to the demands of the test. Candidates who had been well-prepared selected their answers from the texts very precisely, usually achieving greater success in extracting relevant details. Although texts about shared accommodation and shared working venues might superficially appear to have a lot in common, the specific details of each differed considerably. Therefore, candidates who considered each text separately were far more successful than those who attempted to combine them.

A good example of the former is:

El coliving propicia acceso a una comunidad ✓ a través de espacios comunes, ✓ y ofrece hospedaje económico. ✓ Los residentes tienen acceso a varias actividades ✓ y avances tecnológicos. ✓ Se desplazan ciertos servicios a zonas comunes ✓...

The start of this answer has scored five marks in just over thirty words.

- (b) Many were able to express the difficulties that young people face in trying to access the property market in their countries. Some of the main reasons were the difficult economic situations of countries, especially in Latin America, and the housing shortage. Many mentioned that young people find it difficult to find a good job and it is therefore common for them to live with their parents well into their adult lives. On a few rare occasions, candidates misunderstood the question, perhaps thinking *vivienda* meant 'life', and wrote about how difficult or easy it was for young people to get on in life.

Quality of Language

The quality of candidates' written Spanish, here and throughout the paper, was generally up to the standard required by this examination. Marks were generally in the Sound, Good or Very Good range. Unless they had been penalised for scoring zero in any of the comprehension questions, strong candidates who could correctly manipulate the source texts into good Spanish to display clear comprehension, were awarded maximum marks in all three quality of language assessments. Less able candidates often had major difficulties with verb formation, and use of the singular or plural verb forms in particular. Their mark often improved considerably in the final question when their writing was more free style.

And finally

A big thank you to centres who have entered candidates for this examination over the years. Assessing their work has consistently been a rewarding experience. It is anticipated that future candidates will find that the changed format of the new specification will offer similar stimulation and challenge.

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/41
Texts

Key messages

The key messages are, as have been stated in previous reports, that candidates must have studied the texts in detail, understood them and be able to demonstrate this with reference to the texts to support their argument. Candidates must also respond to the question directly giving a full answer and use the text to illustrate points made, with a clear and logical conclusion to their essay.

General comments

Candidates demonstrated thorough knowledge and understanding of the texts. Difference in performance was generally based on a precise reading and response to the question, the quality of the argument and judicious use of references. The best essays had usually been carefully planned and examples selected to give as full an answer as possible.

Comments on specific questions

Sección 1

Comments focus on responses to **part (iii)** of each question, which requires reference to the whole text. Candidates dealt with question **parts (i)** and **(ii)** well, for the most part.

Question 1 – Ernesto Sábato: *El túnel*

- (a) In responding to this question, candidates needed to consider to what extent Castel was aware of his behaviour towards María. Some pointed out that the narrative is presented from Castel's point of view, thus not objective. Castel is self-obsessed and does not have insight into other people's responses to him. Few made reference to his dreams, which give the reader a less biased impression of his psychological make-up. Several responses portrayed Castel as trapped in the titular tunnel and as such, locked out of any form of consciousness at all.
- (b) Responses to this question generally focused on the physical blindness of Allende, which represented all the male characters' inability to understand María. Few pointed out that Castel, too, chose to be blind to those aspects of María and her life which he did not understand. The concept of the tunnel is important here in representing Castel's isolation but also echoed in the 'tunnel vision' of Mimí, for example, in her blindness to her own heritage as she extols the superiority of foreign culture. Castel is blind to reality as he creates his own. Some noted that Allende's suicide was as a result of Castel's confession to the murder of María. Would Allende have preferred to be kept in the dark, that is to say, blind to actual events? The concept of blindness was used in many ways.

Question 2 – Gabriel García Márquez: *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba*

- (a) Very many candidates chose to answer this question. The most successful responses gave thorough appraisals of the two characters and showed how their behaviours embodied the situation in the town. The colonel, impoverished but dignified and stoic was in contrast to Sabas, a wealthy yet corrupt and dishonest character. Even their illnesses echoed their situation. The colonel suffered dreadfully due to poverty whereas Sabas' diabetes was due to excess. The colonel had a soul but Sabas had no imagination at all.

- (b) This question also elicited a large number of responses, and gave candidates scope to analyse the text in a number of ways. All essentially agreed that the novel was more complex than it appeared. This was explored in terms of the depth and range of themes or employment of certain literary techniques and styles. Impact was defined as the creation of dramatic tension and the credibility of the characterisation and the political situation.

Question 3 – Anónimo: *Lazarillo de Tormes*

- (a) There always seems to be a strong temptation to narrate the story of Lazarillo rather than focus on the question set. In this case, we see Lazarillo recovering from the blow inflicted on him by his master after he had been found stealing and who then dismisses him. This contrasts with his previous experience – when Lazarillo himself had chosen to move on. The irony in the statement '*tan diligente servidor*' was not generally identified, but the cunning he learned from the 'ciego' was. So what did Lazarillo learn from this episode and how did he continue to adapt to benefit himself with subsequent masters and employers? The better responses suggested that the episode taught Lazarillo the dangers of lying, the need for caution and an awareness of the true nature of the clergy. It seemed as if Lazarillo began to acquire a better moral understanding but the extreme hunger and cruelty he suffered influenced subsequent decisions and choices, for example ignoring rumours concerning his unfaithful wife so as not to jeopardise the comfortable life he had created for himself at the end of the text.
- (b) The most thoughtful responses to this question chose to name the poor – as exemplified in Lazarillo himself, as those most deserving of sympathy and possibly respect. Every other group in society – the clergy, neighbours, nobles (Escudero), were found to be wanting. Some were kind to Lazarillo momentarily but most put themselves first. Many felt that Lazarillo, as representative of his background, was essentially innocent but bound to find a way to survive because of his circumstances. His mother was not feckless, rather desperate to give her son a chance. His stepfather tried to help the family. Society, and those who controlled it, had no sympathy.

Question 4 – Pedro Calderón de la Barca: *El alcalde de Zalamea*

- (a) There were few answers to this question. Candidates knew the text well. **Part (iii)** raises the question of the role of the army. This can be interpreted in several ways. In terms of Calderón's consideration of society and its hierarchies, the army serves the King (who appears late in the play) and it must defend the state, expand its interests and follow the orders of the monarch. Officers of the army are of high status; hence they are billeted in the best homes in the village. The only residents who may complain are those of the nobility. However, in terms of the plot and theme, the army disrupts the harmony of life in the village, initiates a state of crisis and the matter is only resolved by the intervention of the King himself. Harmony is restored, at the expense of the wronged woman and the whole issue of justice is debated.
- (b) As with option (a), this was not chosen by many candidates. Answers focused on close appraisal of the main female characters, showing their strengths and weaknesses. In the main, we see women who have an important role to play within their community and display strong moral understanding and loyalty to both family and community. Some are open to coercion. Calderón's female characters tend to be well-rounded, intelligent and expressive.

Sección 2

Question 5 – Carmen Laforet: *Nada*

- (a) Most answers to this question expressed the view that Andrea was beginning a better life. This was supported with reference to the dreadful time she had in her grandmother's flat. However at the same time, being of an optimistic disposition, Andrea had found a way to survive in a hostile situation and had made friends at the University. She arrived as a naïve, immature girl and learned a lot about life in general during her time there. Her friendship with Gloria was particularly valuable to her. The novel presents a depressing, if realistic view of post-war Spain and although Andrea will benefit from the hospitality of a richer family; she may come across similar challenges in Madrid.
- (b) This question gave rise to a number of approaches. Many concentrated on Andrea's dysfunctional family in the flat, analysing what had happened to change the warm, happy memories of her visits there when she was very young. Others compared Andrea's family to Ena's. Superficially, the latter was ideal, but Ena's mother's experience with Ramón, and indeed Ena's too, show that nothing is

perfect. Some very thorough responses also discussed the role of Andrea's artist friends as a substitute family. Does an individual necessarily find love and understanding in a blood relationship, with all the responsibilities entailed with belonging to a family? Is it possible to be happy with like-minded people, subject to fewer expectations?

Question 6 – Federico García Lorca: *Bodas de sangre*

Virtually all candidates answered on this text, showing good knowledge.

- (a) The most successful responses went beyond comparing the personalities and characters of the two men to analyse what they represent. In the case of the Novio, social order, conservative tradition and security and in Leonardo, rebellion, change and passion. The best answers examined the importance of the given names; one candidate said that 'el Novio cumple el rol universal de novio', whereas Leonardo 'desde la elección de su nombre no encaja dentro de un perfil predeterminado'. Most concluded that the end was fitting as order was restored, some mentioning the help of the supernatural forces of Destiny and Death. Passion is disruptive. It added to the argument to consider the Novia's views and the reasons for her decisions.
- (b) Responses to this question needed to go beyond the immediate reactions of grief to consider the society in which the Novia will have to live. She is clearly in despair and feels responsible for the deaths of both men as evidently she initiated the flight with Leonardo, which led to the physical struggle and knife fight. The Novio was duty bound to avenge the slur on his family's honour. The Novia was a bystander at the dénouement – which represents the role of women generally in that society. Her marriage to Leonardo was thwarted because he was unfit from the point of view of wealth and social standing, with no concern for the Novia's feelings. The betrothal to the Novio was arranged; the scene in which the Novio and his mother go to see the Novia and her father to officially agree the wedding is formal and transactional, with the Novia playing a minor role. The social implications for the Novia are likely to be dire, based on what has been expressed. Social isolation and lack of any purpose or role are most likely to mean that the Novia struggles to believe in any future for herself.

Question 7 – Gabriela Mistral: *Tala: Lagar*

As has been the practice in earlier sessions, a detailed report has not been given on responses to this text. The number of responses is small.

- (a) Candidates must have considerable experience in preparing a detailed commentary on a poem, with awareness of the use of poetic technique and choice of language as well as imagery and the presentation of themes.
- (b) Candidates have much scope in choosing three poems from the list on the syllabus to explore and analyse the question, so no two responses will be the same. Examiners look for judicious choice of poems, a clear understanding of how the poet expresses her sense of being an outsider, analysing the poetic techniques as well as the thematic content.

Question 8 – Isabel Allende: *La casa de los espíritus*

- (a) There were some well-informed responses which examined the way Trueba ruled, both in his political role, within his family and at Tres Marías. He was seen to be autocratic, self-serving and misogynist in all aspects of his life. Candidates varied in their opinions over the degree to which Esteban Trueba was personally responsible or merely representative of egotistical and discriminatory leadership. More nuanced answers pointed to aspects of the regeneration of the community (and the role of Clara). Others emphasised the evidence that women are exploited, there is corruption in buying votes and democracy is undermined. Signs of hope can be seen in the new generation as Alba manages to soften her grandfather's attitudes and he understands how friends (Tránsito Soto) can play a part for good. His kindness to Tránsito many years ago is more powerful than any threats or violence in ensuring Alba's release. So there was some belief that the novel was more positive than the statement suggests.
- (b) All responses to this question agreed with the statement, with most basing their answers on Esteban Trueba. Candidates frequently used the example of Trueba's vengeful treatment of Clara and Blanca over the latter's relationship with Pedro Tercero, which was a source of much sadness to him as Clara never spoke to him again. Similarly, his harsh treatment of Esteban García (and his

grandmother) could be seen as the direct cause of Alba's arrest and torture. As a contrast, positive examples are seen in Trueba helping Blanca and Pedro escape to Canada and Tránsito Soto's compassion in helping to rescue Alba after previously receiving assistance herself from Trueba. Many felt that Alba's lack of bitterness or desire for revenge shown at the end of the novel could be interpreted as a more optimistic message.