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# FOREIGN LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 0530/01

Listening

## General comments

The overall performance of the candidates was good; there were very few really weak candidates.

## Comments on specific questions

### *Section 1*

#### **Exercise 1 Questions 1-8**

Most candidates could cope with all the questions in this exercise. Perhaps the ones that caused more difficulty were **Question 6**, which surprised Examiners as the key word was *libro*, which must be widely known; **Question 7** which required candidates to match a physical description to a picture; and **Question 8** which tested parts of the body.

#### **Exercise 2 Questions 9-14**

Most candidates understood the passage well. **Question 10** perhaps caused the most problems as some candidates found *selva* difficult to identify. Most candidates coped extremely well with the phone number, but if any element caused difficulty it was usually '62', which tended to be confused with '72'.

### *Section 2*

#### **Exercise 1 Questions 15-21**

The majority of candidates scored full or nearly full marks. **Question 16** sometimes caused problems: it is Boris's teachers who have recommended a Spanish course, but this is not what he wants to do. Weaker candidates often thought **Question 20** was True, perhaps because it sounded plausible, but although Boris is interested in the eggs of the birds that he has only seen in photos, he is not interested in photography *per se*.

#### **Exercise 2 Questions 22-26**

This exercise, which required candidates to write short answers in Spanish, proved more challenging. Some Centres appeared not to have touched on the topic *medio ambiente* and even basic words such as *basura* seemed not to be known. **Questions 22, 23** and **24**, however, proved very accessible to the vast majority. In **Question 25**, even when candidates could pick out the key words, *carretera* and *coche*, they were sometimes unable to explain that an animal that went to eat the apple could be killed by a car. Likewise, in **Question 26**, weaker candidates were not able to explain that they should take with them bags in which to put their rubbish/pick up any rubbish they saw/throw no rubbish on the ground – any two of these three options were accepted.

### *Section 3*

#### **Exercise 1 Questions 27-34**

This exercise was understood by most candidates and even the very weakest coped well with **Questions 30** and **34**. No question seemed to present particular difficulties though **Questions 31** and **32** required very close attention to and good understanding of the text.

**Exercise 2 Questions 35-40**

This exercise proved to be a good discriminator. **Question 36** was the most challenging, and only the better candidates were able to say that the feast started in pagan times/before Christian times/a long time ago (one of these alternatives scored the mark). Also only better candidates were able to answer **Question 37** and explain that in the beginning there were two feasts.

Paper 0530/02

Reading and Directed Writing

**General comments**

The level of difficulty of the paper seemed similar to last year and the standard of work seen by Examiners continues to be extremely pleasing. Teachers are clearly familiar with the demands of the paper and are able to prepare candidates thoroughly for this examination.

**Comments on specific questions****Section 1****Exercise 1 Questions 1-5**

This was done well by most of the candidates, who scored 4 or 5 out of 5. The most common errors occurred in **Question 3**, where several candidates opted for **C**, seemingly because they were unfamiliar with the word *equitación*.

**Exercise 2 Questions 6-10**

This was done quite well, with most candidates scoring 4 out of 5. Nearly all the candidates dropped a mark, usually in **Question 8** or **Question 9**.

**Exercise 3 Question 11**

This was done perfectly by most candidates with the vast majority scoring full marks.

**Exercise 4 Question 12**

Many excellent answers, though a number of candidates omitted to mention the new location of their home, and others thought that the number of *habitaciones* referred to the number of inhabitants rather than to the number of rooms. Three marks were awarded for mentioning the new location, the number of rooms and what they liked most about the new house. The other two marks were awarded for appropriacy of language, with special attention being paid to verbs.

**Section 2****Exercise 1 Questions 13-20**

This exercise was done very well by the large majority of candidates: there were very few scores of below 7 out of 10 and many candidates scored full marks. In **Question 13**, candidates were expected to refer to the fact that Elsa Carsolio was Mexican and in **Question 14** a reference to the summit of Everest was required. **Question 20** caused some problems and Examiners did not accept comments such as *fue increíble*, but were looking for something along the lines of *ver el mundo desde allí arriba*.

## Exercise 2 Question 21

This proved quite a straightforward exercise, and most of the middling and better candidates managed to score full marks. Scores below 10 out of 15 were rare. 10 of the 15 marks were for communication and the remaining 5 for accuracy of language.

One communication mark was allocated for each item of relevant information provided by the candidate. The rubric specified 6 tasks (*adónde viajaste; por qué viajaste; cómo viajaste; con quién viajaste; lo que pasó/el problema; cómo terminó todo*). Candidates who did not cover all these elements could not score full marks for communication: a candidate who omitted 1 task could score a maximum of nine marks, a candidate who omitted 2 tasks could score a maximum of 8, and so on. A number of candidates forgot to state the purpose of their trip, or how it all ended, and thereby lost one or two communication marks.

Accuracy ticks were awarded according to the scheme outlined in the report for Paper 4. 20 ticks or more were sufficient to secure the full five marks for communication and it is no exaggeration to say that nearly every candidate achieved this. It was a pity that several candidates got the gender of *problema* wrong, since it was provided in the wording of the question.

## Section 3

This section, aimed at grades A\*-B, proved to be the most demanding on the question paper.

### Exercise 1 Questions 22-27

This exercise required candidates to indicate whether a series of statements were True or False according to the passage and to correct those statements thought to be False. While many candidates coped well with the first part of the task, providing a correcting statement proved more difficult. A number of candidates did not attempt this second part of the task: it was not clear whether they felt it was too challenging or whether they did not realise what was required. No one question presented any particular difficulties.

### Exercise 1 Questions 28-34

Another exercise which discriminated well between candidates at the top of the range of ability. The full range of marks was achieved. In **Question 31**, Examiners accepted a range of answers, including *playas no abiertas/no tomar precauciones/mucho viento/correr riesgos*. However, candidates who did not read the text carefully and gave answers such as *playas abiertas/espacio de sobra/tomar precauciones/poco viento/no correr riesgos* could not score. **Question 34** also caused problems as many candidates misunderstood *atrás quedaron mis estudios de Arquitectura* and thought this meant Rodríguez had taken up the study of architecture.

**Paper 0530/03**

**Speaking**

## General comments

To be read in conjunction with the Teacher's Notes Booklet for Paper 3 June 2004.

### Recording of candidates

The overall quality of the recordings was very good. There were a few instances where the candidate was not as audible as the Examiner: this can be easily rectified by testing the equipment prior to the commencement of the Speaking test.

Centres should clearly label their cassettes with the Centre name and number and the candidate's name and number. Candidates should not identify themselves on tape, but should be identified by the Examiner. Centres should indicate the end of the recording by stating 'end of sample'.

Examiners are reminded that once a test has started the cassette should run without interruption and should not be stopped and re-started during a test.

## Sampling

The correct sample size for moderation was submitted by Centres.

## Administration

The vast majority of Centres forwarded their completed Oral Examination Summary Mark Sheet(s), together with the sample and the Moderator copy of the MS1 Computer-printed Mark Sheet(s), to arrive at CIE by 15 May, as required.

## Preparation

Centres are reminded that materials for the Speaking Test can be opened up to four working days prior to the assessment period. While most Examiners were to be commended for their careful preparation of the role plays, some had not taken the time to familiarise themselves adequately with the situations and either miscued or missed out certain tasks. It is particularly important for new Examiners or Examiners who have not carried out the Speaking Test for some time to familiarise themselves with the procedures and prepare for their own roles. Lack of preparation on the part of the Examiner can cause unnecessary confusion and distress for the candidates.

## Assessment

The assessment of candidates was both consistent and positive in the vast majority of Centres. There was a slight tendency by some Examiners to be overgenerous in their assessment on Scale (b) Linguistic Content for the two conversation sections. Likewise there was a slight tendency to be harsh when awarding marks for Impression.

## Comments on specific questions

### Role Plays

#### **Section A**

Centres are reminded to encourage candidates to attempt all parts of each set task. The set tasks must not be changed. If only one part of a task is completed, only 1 mark can be awarded.

#### *At the grocer's*

These tasks were straightforward and the majority of candidates carried them out successfully. In Tasks 1 and 2, candidates were sometimes unsure about the gender and quantity of the fruit they were buying.

#### *At the hotel*

Candidates coped well with the specified tasks.

#### *At the tourist office*

Candidates communicated the required elements in Tasks 1 to 4, but a number of them had difficulty in obtaining the necessary information in Task 5.

#### **Section B**

The **Section B** role plays were more demanding in that they required the ability to use different time frames and to give explanations and justifications where necessary.

#### *At the museum*

This role play was generally well accomplished. In Task 2, the verb *perder* caused some difficulties. In Tasks 3 and 4, the majority of candidates were able to communicate the information required despite problems with adjectival endings and agreements.

### *At the airport*

Most candidates carried out the specified tasks well. Although there was a tendency to omit some of the individual tasks, in most cases the Examiner was able to elicit the information subsequently. The second part of Task 5 proved to be difficult for weaker candidates.

### *Phoning a friend to change holiday dates*

The vast majority of candidates managed to communicate all the information required although the language used was not always appropriate. Candidates particularly encountered difficulties with the correct use of tense in Tasks 2 and 3. In Task 4, some candidates ran into difficulties with tense and vocabulary.

### **Topic (prepared) Conversation**

Candidates presented a good range of topics. The best performances were from candidates with a real interest in their chosen topic. It is important that candidates are guided in their choice of topic. While discouraging candidates from choosing topics where there is insufficient scope in terms of language and discussion, the Examiner should also advise candidates against presenting topics which are clearly beyond their linguistic ability. In both cases a poor choice of topic can lead to underperformance.

### **General (unprepared) Conversation**

Candidates were given the opportunity to converse on a number of topics of a more general nature. Many candidates clearly enjoyed taking the initiative and were encouraged by Examiners to perform to the best of their ability.

Examiners should clearly indicate where the Topic Conversation ends and the General Conversation section of the test begins. The Examiner should aim to cover at least two or three of the Defined Content Topics in the General Conversation section of the test.

**Paper 0530/04**  
**Continuous Writing**

### **General comments**

The standard achieved by the majority of candidates in this paper was as high as in recent years. Many candidates thoroughly understood the requirements of each question and scored high marks for communication.

Some candidates, however, did not read the rubric carefully and consequently omitted or misunderstood some of the required mark-bearing elements. This was particularly evident in **Question 2** where some candidates gave their own impressions of the school and area instead of those of the visiting students. Candidates should be reminded to read and understand the rubric requirements fully in order to obtain the maximum marks.

The total marks for the paper (out of a maximum of 50) covered the full mark range.

Candidates are expected to produce two pieces of extended writing, communicating as accurately as possible and making use of a variety of idiom, vocabulary, structure and appropriate tense. A system of positive marking is used to assess the written tasks. Each exercise is marked out of 25, of which 5 marks are awarded for relevant communication, 15 for accuracy of language and 5 for general impression.

No credit is given for anything beyond the 140<sup>th</sup> word since the rubric stipulates 110-140 words. The first stage in marking is for Examiners to count up to the 140<sup>th</sup> word and cross out the remainder. Any tasks carried out beyond 140 words do not score marks for communication, nor do they contribute to the mark awarded for accuracy. A number of candidates wrote far too many words and while they gained full marks for accuracy within the 140 word limit, they were often unable to achieve full marks for content due to their verbosity. Likewise, candidates who wrote under the suggested word limit, while fulfilling the requirements for communication, were often unable to gain all the available marks for accuracy. Candidates should be advised to write 140 words or just under in each of the two questions; it would be beneficial to do a preliminary word count early on in each task and keep a running total.

**Marking for accuracy of language in each question**

As in the past, special attention was paid to verbs. Strong candidates varied tenses and knew how to use them appropriately while weak candidates lapsed into the present. With those of middling ability a common defect was the incorrect use of the perfect or the imperfect when only the preterite was appropriate. It was common to omit vital accents in verb endings. All verbs score for accuracy, but only if used correctly and accented, if necessary. Credit was also given to interrogatives (which must be accented); to negatives; to prepositions; to adverbs except for the common *muy*; to conjunctions except for the very common *y* and *pero*; to adjectives correctly positioned and agreeing; to pronouns other than subject pronouns and reflexives; to pronouns correctly joined into a verb e.g. *escribeme*. In all these cases a tick is awarded when a unit is correct. Four ticks are worth one mark up to a maximum of fifteen marks per question. Candidates should be discouraged from writing lists of items such as clothes, food, drinks or places visited without including adjectives and verbs as they give themselves less opportunity to obtain the maximum marks for accuracy within the word limit.

Common errors included the following:

**Question 1**

In **(a)** use of *ser/estar*, *ser* + profession, agreement of adjectives, misuse of perfect for preterite, use of reflexive verbs in the first person plural, use of *gustar*. In **(b)** confusion between *pedir/preguntar*, difficulties with irregular future tenses, use of *gustar*.

**Question 2**

Incorrect use of tense, failure to accent certain verbs e.g. *había*, preterite tense of the verb *decir*, use of *gustar* in the third person plural, agreement of adjectives, the verb *pensar*.

**Marking for general impression in each question**

Up to five marks were awarded for the quality of language used: use of idiom, vocabulary, structures and appropriate tenses. In order to score the full five marks the writing had to display the features mentioned and read fluently like good Spanish.