

SPANISH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0530/01

Listening

General comments

The overall performance of the candidates was good, with many candidates achieving full or very near full marks. There were very few weak candidates. Rubrics were generally understood and followed and teachers had clearly done an excellent job in preparing candidates for this examination.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-8

Most candidates could cope with all the questions in this exercise. For weaker candidates, the questions that caused most difficulty were **Question 3**, which was about directions, and **Question 6**, where *la chica del pelo rubio, largo* was not always understood.

Exercise 2 Questions 9-13

Most candidates understood the passage well. In **Question 9** quite a few candidates tried to give the names of the *barrios*, probably confusing *número* with *nombre*. Pleasingly there was no confusion between 2 and 12. In **Question 10** candidates had no difficulty identifying *iglesia* and *museo*. For **Question 11** even very weak candidates knew *domingo*. **Question 12** was the one that caused greatest difficulty: *monedas* was missed by many candidates. **Question 13** was rarely answered incorrectly – *músico, cantantes*, and *bailar* proved to be familiar vocabulary. Unfortunately, some candidates misread the rubric and indicated only one answer when they were supposed to indicate two.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Question 14

The majority of candidates could answer most of the questions. Nearly everybody understood what 'Josefina' had to say. However 'Alberto' proved a better discriminator. Many candidates chose (d) on the basis of the initial comment – *no hay uniforme* – which is later qualified. Alberto's school does not have a uniform but, nevertheless, the school is very strict about what the students can wear. 'Laura' was well understood by most, but some missed that she goes to a different school from her brother. 'Rodrigo' was also a good discriminator: nearly everybody understood the location of the school and most ticked (l) correctly, but, surprisingly, many candidates did not choose (k) even though he says clearly: *eso del uniforme a mi me parece muy bien*.

Exercise 2 Questions 15-23

This exercise requiring short answers in Spanish was more challenging. In **Question 15** better candidates understood that Juana had played against *adultos*. *Mejores jugadores* was also accepted as the correct answer. Most could cope with **Questions 16-18**. Surprisingly **Question 19** caused some problems: the answer was *invierno*.

In the second part, **Question 20** seemed to throw weaker candidates. The right answer was either *concentrarse mucho* or *prestar mucha atención* since Juana specifically says her parents do not want her to practise every day. For **Question 21** better candidates could explain that Juana's parents see *mis estudios* as *lo principal*. **Question 22** caused few problems. **Question 23** was answered correctly by most candidates who were easily able to describe Juana's leisure activities.

Section 3**Exercise 1 Questions 24-29**

There were some very good scores on this exercise. It was clear, however, that although weaker candidates could pick out words and phrases here and there they had difficulty following the 'story'. As a result, in **Questions 24, 25, 26** and **28** they often chose the distracters. Even fairly weak candidates were able to answer **Questions 27** and **29** correctly.

Exercise 2 Questions 30-35

This was the most difficult exercise and proved a good discriminator. Nearly everybody could answer at least part of **Questions 30** and **31**. In **Question 30** although there were many options – *gente de todas las nacionalidades/de cualquier nivel de educación/de áreas rurales/de zonas urbanas/que trabaja con su comunidad* – many candidates were only able to offer one alternative. **Question 32** required good understanding: the main point candidates needed to convey was *ver a tanta gente joven trabajando junta*. In **Question 33** *planear acciones futuras* proved more accesible to candidates than *discutir los problemas de sus pueblos*. In **Question 34** Examiners were looking for something along the lines of **(a)** *informar sobre problemas de salud* and **(b)** *para tener comida para sus familias*. There was no particular pattern to candidates' responses. Even weaker candidates could answer **Question 35**: *los jóvenes pueden cambiar el mundo* and *ir al sitio de Internet* were both accepted.

SPANISH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0530/02

Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

This year's Paper 2 was well tackled by the large majority of candidates. As is usually the case, **Section 1** was completed confidently and well by most, particularly exercises 2 and 3. **Section 2** was also tackled very competently, with an impressive proportion of candidates managing full marks in one or other of the exercises. As intended, **Section 3** provided greater discrimination, but even so there were many scores of fifteen or more out of twenty for this final section of the paper.

The large majority of the Centres are to be congratulated on doing an excellent job in preparing the candidates so thoroughly for this paper. Nearly all of them tackled the exercises purposefully, really entering into the spirit of the questions and producing some first-rate answers even to the more difficult questions, and an encouraging proportion did themselves justice with a high total mark.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

This was done well by most candidates. There were several mistakes in **Question 2**, with numerous candidates opting for C, perhaps because they had not met the Spanish word *gambas*.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

This was very well done with a high proportion of candidates scoring full marks. There were no common errors.

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

This exercise was particularly well done, with the majority of candidates scoring full marks. The most common error was to write A for **Question 12**, perhaps thinking that 'world news' meant 'sports news'.

Exercise 4 Question 16

Again, this exercise was usually extremely well done. Three of the five marks were awarded for relevant communication, the key ideas being *en bus*, *a las once* and either *piscina* or *nadar*. There were two further marks to be gained for using two verbs in the correct tenses and persons in the phrases involving the key ideas, e.g. *puedes venir en ómnibus*, *vamos a nadar en la piscina*. One mark could be obtained for one correct verb, or if there was some appropriate usage to reward. Occasionally, candidates wrote as if they were the ones who were visiting their friend, instead of the other way round, sometimes losing one mark as a result.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17-24

This was generally very well done with many candidates scoring 9 or 10 marks. At this stage in the paper, where it was clear that candidates had understood and were using appropriate areas of the text for their answers, Examiners overlooked errors in the use of possessive pronouns and adjectives. Surprisingly, **Question 27** caused some problems with a small number of candidates opting for B. In **Question 24**, Examiners were looking for *sobre la vida* and *la importancia de tener amigos*. *La vida* and *tener amigos* on

their own were not enough to score as they distorted the meaning of the text. Teachers should note that the questions follow the same order as the paragraphs, and so it is unlikely that **Question 24**, for example, would be referring back to material in the middle of the text which has already been covered by previous questions.

Exercise 2 Question 25

A good proportion of candidates scored full marks for this directed writing exercise and the subject matter proved accessible to all. Candidates wrote about everyone from Cristiano Ronaldo to *mi madre*. In some cases, candidates, having misread *escribe* for *describe*, wrote a fan letter. Any material about themselves was deemed to be irrelevant, but in spite of this they usually scored most if not all the communication marks.

Ten of the fifteen marks were for relevant communication and were awarded for saying who the admired person was; what s/he did, e.g. *es un futbolista, es una secretaria*; what s/he is like, e.g. *es muy alto y guapo, es simpatico*; why the candidate likes (or admires) him/her, e.g. *es el mejor futbolista del mundo, me ha ayudado mucho*; whether or not the candidate would like to do the same job, e.g. *a mí me gustaría hacer el mismo trabajo, a mí no me gustaría ser futbolista*; why/why not, e.g. *porque a mí me encanta el fútbol, porque yo no soy bueno en los deportes*. Up to four further marks were available for further details in connection with the above, but the full ten marks could only be obtained if the six compulsory tasks listed above were fulfilled.

The remaining five marks were for accuracy of language. Ticks were awarded for correct language units and every four ticks scored a mark. Twenty or more ticks scored the full five marks. The overwhelming majority of candidates scored the full 5 marks here.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 26-31

A good proportion of the candidates did very well on this exercise and a pleasing number were able to achieve scores of eight or more out of ten. By **Section 3** of the paper, Examiners are looking for signs of genuine comprehension and candidates should be warned against lifting indiscriminately and/or lifting large chunks from the passage in the hope that the Examiner will pick out the correct answer from the material provided. **Questions 26** and **28** proved reasonably straightforward. In **Question 27** both *no, fue Roberto mismo/él mismo se la compró* and *el padre de Roberto le montó sobre una moto* were acceptable corrections. For **Question 30** *mantiene buenas relaciones con los Norteamericanos* was deemed to be an insufficient answer to the question. Examiners were looking for something along the lines of *ya tiene clientes en Estados Unidos/un entusiasta de California le compró seis Harley-Davidson*.

Exercise 2 Questions 32-40

This final exercise was, appropriately, the most demanding one in the paper. Even so, a good proportion of candidates were able to score full marks. Teachers should stress the importance of careful reading and instruct candidates to provide suitably concise answers which answer the questions in a way that demonstrates understanding of the passage. The lifting of a whole paragraph cannot score since the candidate has not shown s/he has understood which part of it contained the answer to the question. For instance in answer to **Question 37**, Examiners were looking for something along the lines of *una mujer de carácter fuerte*. Candidates who simply copied the whole sentence – *otra diferencia es que los franceses prefieren a una mujer comprensiva y dulce y no una mujer con carácter fuerte* – were not awarded the mark as it was not clear to Examiners whether they had understood either the question or the passage. Similarly in **Question 40**, *el carácter de la persona* was sufficient to score the mark. However answers which included irrelevant extra material lifted from the text, e.g. *el físico sigue siendo importante, pero luego influye más el carácter de la persona* could not score as the extra material distracted from the answer and left the Examiner unsure as to whether the candidate had understood which factor was **most** important.

SPANISH (Foreign Language)

Paper 0530/03

Speaking

General comments

To be read in conjunction with the Instructions and Mark Scheme for Paper 3 June 2008.

Recorded sample

Nearly all Centres submitted the correct sample size for moderation. Samples should cover the full range of marks awarded at the Centre. The highest and lowest scoring candidates should be included and the remaining candidates in the sample should be spread evenly between these two marks. This allows the Moderator to check accurately the standard of assessment and provide feedback.

The quality of the recordings was generally good. Centres are responsible for ensuring that candidates and Examiners are clearly audible. It is recommended that the recording equipment is tested in situ before the actual test and where possible background noise should be minimised. The candidate should be seated closer to the microphone than the Examiner. Centres should clearly label cassettes with the Centre name and number, and the candidate name and number. Candidates should not identify themselves on tape (they should be introduced by the Examiner) and Centres should indicate the end of the recording by stating 'end of sample'. Examiners are reminded that once a test has started, the recording should run without interruption and should not be stopped and re-started during a test.

Administration

Centres are reminded of the need to include a copy of the completed Working Mark Sheet with the sample for moderation. It is essential to check the addition and transcription of marks in order to avoid errors.

Assessment

Overall the application of the marking criteria in Centres was positive and consistent and in line with the agreed standard. Candidates were assessed fairly by the majority of Centres.

Examiners were sometimes generous in awarding marks for the Role plays. If a task contains 3 elements, full marks cannot be awarded if only 2 of the 3 elements have been completed. Incorrect use of tense does not constitute a minor error.

In the conversation sections, a mark of 7 or above can only be awarded where the candidate has shown that s/he is able to communicate past and future meaning. As far as the Impression mark is concerned, candidates do not have to be of native speaker standard for a mark of 9 or 10 to be awarded. Centres are reminded that the maximum mark for Impression is 10.

Comments on specific questions

Materials for the speaking test should be opened 4 working days before the Centre's assessment starts in order that Examiners have time to prepare the Role play situations. Once opened, the Role plays remain confidential and should be stored securely in the Centre until the end of the Speaking test period (until 30 April for the June session).

The best Examiners adhered closely to their role, not attempting to over-elaborate; and if an element of a task was omitted they prompted the candidate to provide the required information. Candidates cannot be awarded marks for tasks omitted so it is important that Examiners prompt where necessary. Unfortunately, the performance of some candidates was adversely affected by Examiners who were not fully familiar with the requirements of the test and who invented additional tasks or provided wrong cues. In some cases, the

Examiner took away from the candidate the possibility of scoring the mark by including in the response information the candidate was supposed to supply.

Role Plays A

Please note that in all the Role plays, where the greeting forms part of the task a mark is allocated to this element. Some candidates in their haste to commence the Role play, omitted the greeting and lost the mark.

Role Plays 1, 2, 3

These tasks were communicated well by the majority of candidates. Examiners are reminded that where candidates fulfil the tasks in a different order to that shown on the Role play card, they can still be awarded the marks.

Role Plays 4, 5, 6

This Role play was well conducted. Candidates were able to communicate all the information required despite minor errors.

Role Plays 7, 8, 9

Candidates coped well with the specified tasks although some struggled with task 5.

Role Plays B

These Role plays were more demanding, requiring more careful reading of the rubric. Candidates responded well to the more open-ended nature of the tasks and were able to use a variety of tenses to communicate their predicaments.

Role Plays 1, 4, 7

The majority of candidates managed to communicate all the necessary information although some ran into difficulties trying to explain their problems in too much detail or in language beyond their linguistic ability.

Role Plays 2, 5, 8

This situation was well conducted. In tasks 3 and 4 some candidates had difficulties with vocabulary items and adjectival endings. In task 5, candidates were able to communicate the required information despite inaccuracies.

Role Plays 3, 6, 9

Most candidates carried out the specified tasks. In tasks 2 and 3, some candidates attempted to provide too much information leading to linguistic inaccuracies, particularly in the use of tense. Other candidates were unsure of vocabulary items. In task 5, candidates frequently omitted the first element while others struggled with the question.

Topic Conversation

Candidates presented a pleasing variety of topics. As always, the best performances were from candidates with a real interest in the topics they had chosen. A poor choice of topic can lead to under-performance and Examiners should discourage candidates from choosing topics where there is insufficient scope in terms of language and discussion. Candidates should be allowed to choose their own topic and it is therefore not appropriate for all candidates in a Centre to present the same topic.

There was evidence of very good examining where Examiners were familiar with the topics and asked relevant, wide-ranging questions, giving candidates the opportunity to use a range of structures and vocabulary. Topics should be well-prepared, but should not be over-rehearsed or pre-learned and delivered as a monologue. Examiners should allow candidates to speak for a maximum of two minutes before asking specific questions. The level of questioning should be matched to a candidate's linguistic ability but it is important to ask all candidates questions which will elicit the use of past and future tenses and to avoid asking too many closed questions.

Examiners should signal to candidates (and moderators) the point at which the Topic conversation is ended and the the General conversation is about to begin.

General Conversation

Candidates were given the opportunity to discuss a of number of topics and many clearly enjoyed the conversation, encouraged and enabled by Examiners to perform to the best of their ability. Examiners should aim to cover at least two or three of the defined content topics in the General conversation section and with careful questioning should provide candidates with the opportunity to use a range of structures, vocabulary and idiom. Candidates in a Centre should not all be asked the same series of questions and should be asked both expected and unexpected questions. The candidate must be given the opportunity to show what s/he can do and interventions from the Examiner should not dominate the conversation. The General conversation should last for approximately five minutes. Where Examiners do not allow candidates the full time, they do not have sufficient opportunity to show the full range of what they can do and this will disadvantage them.

SPANISH (Foreign Language)

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. The majority of candidates understood well what each question required and scored well for relevant communication. The only exception was in **Question 2** where some candidates thought *asistir* meant 'to help'.

The total marks scored by candidates (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 question 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 140th word since the rubric stipulates 130-140 words. The first stage in marking for Examiners is to count up to the 140th word and cross out the remainder. Any tasks carried out beyond 140 words do not score marks for relevant communication nor do they contribute to the mark awarded for accuracy. In some cases, very strong candidates wrote far too many words and while gaining full marks for accuracy within the 140 word limit, could not score full marks for communication as a result of their verbosity.

Comments on specific questions

Relevant Communication

For **Question 1(a)** there were 5 marks available as follows: (i) *la experiencia que has tenido para este trabajo*, (ii) *qué tipo de persona eres*, (iii) *las fechas en que puedes trabajar*, (iv) *cualquier pregunta sobre el trabajo* and (v) 1 mark for further details relevant to any of (i) to (iv).

For **Question 1(b)** there were 5 marks available as follows: (i) *describe donde vives ahora*, (ii) *una ventaja*, (iii) *un inconveniente*, (iv) *cuál sería para ti el lugar ideal para vivir* and (v) *por qué*.

Candidates attempted **Question 1(a)** and **1(b)** in almost equal proportions. The subject matter of both questions was of interest to candidates and in both cases they were able to talk about themselves and things which were of particular interest to them. Candidates answering **Question (a)** tended to use up fewer words on letter etiquette either at the beginning or the end and tended to include fewer lists of nouns. Some candidates wrote far too much on the first 2 communication points and consequently were not able to complete the final communication point within the word limit. In **Question (b)**, many candidates were able to provide a good description of where they lived, the facilities available and the prevailing conditions. There were some interesting accounts of the advantages and disadvantages of living in the countryside and in a city.

For **Question 2** there were 5 marks available as follows: (i) *describir el espectáculo*, (ii) *lo que te gustó*, (iii) *por qué*, (iv) *lo que no te gustó* and (v) *por qué no*.

In general, **Question 2** was answered well despite some candidates misunderstanding *asistir*. Candidates are reminded of the importance of reading questions carefully: a number of them listed a series of events or described a sport or activity without focusing on a particular event. However, there were many interesting accounts describing real events that the candidates had obviously attended.

Accuracy of Language

Common errors included the following:

In **Question 1(a)** inappropriate use of register, agreement of adjectives, incorrect use of imperatives, use of *gustar* and *encontrar*, confusion between *bien* and *bueno*, the use of prepositions with times of day, failure to accent interrogative words like *qué*, and *cuándo*.

In **Question 1(b)** use of *ser/estar*, gender of *ciudad* and *país*, position and agreement of adjectives, use of *gustar*, the present tense of *preferir*, spelling of common words such as *diferente*, *interesante* and *aburrido*.

In **Question 2** incorrect use of tenses, misuse of perfect tense when preterite required, failure to accent certain verbs, use of *gustar* in preterite tense, failure to accent *mí*.

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. Candidates need to know that past tenses will be required and should be prepared to use them. Failure to distinguish between the uses of the preterite, perfect and imperfect were apparent in a fair number of scripts. It was common to omit vital accents in verb endings. All verbs score for accuracy but only if used correctly and with accents where these are necessary. Credit was also given for interrogatives (which must be accented); to negatives; to prepositions; to adverbs 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 onto a verb.

It appeared that most candidates were not short of time and they had time to look over their work and make additions/alterations. Perhaps candidates should be reminded to consider things carefully before amending what they have written: in numerous cases, candidates 'corrected' something that was correct thereby rendering it incorrect.

General Impression

Up to 5 marks were available for general impression for each question. These were awarded for the quality of the language used: use of idiom, vocabulary, structure and appropriate tenses. In order to score the full 5 marks for impression the writing had to display the features mentioned and read fluently like good Spanish. Many candidates showed a facility in using the language in all tenses with excellent use of vocabulary and idiom.