

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

The paper provided an appropriate challenge across the ability range. Candidates were much better prepared for the exam this year and were much stronger in technique and following the rubrics. At the upper end there were again many excellent papers which were a pleasure to mark. Nevertheless, equally satisfying were the answers from candidates with more modest linguistic skills who made praiseworthy attempts at tackling the questions. All scripts were generally well presented and there appeared to be little evidence of difficulty with time management.

The two texts dealing with ways of tackling street gangs and their effect on young people and the neighbourhood were accessible to most candidates, often enabling them to make a connection to their own experiences or to those of their friends. Comprehension was generally clearly demonstrated. Apart from a number of instances in **Questions 1 and 2**, 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.

Although techniques have improved, we strongly remind candidates to take care in not exceeding the word limit in **Question 5**, as this could hinder the number of marks they could score in **5(b)**. Furthermore, please be aware that the summaries in **5(a)** should be specific to the texts at hand and not over-generalised. Candidates seemed very aware that they are not allowed to copy more than four words directly from the texts, and a number circumvented it by removing an '-s' from plurals, or changing a preposition. In many instances the language still made sense, although occasionally it hindered the quality of language mark.

Overall, candidates had a good communicative level of Spanish. Their written language, although sometimes impaired by incorrect spelling, lack of accents and occasional incorrect register, (an extreme example of this would be a sentence such as: *La vida va hacer difisil pa ellos*), was generally well up to the required standard for this exam. Candidates across the range were to be commended for their positive approach to the tasks in hand.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

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 – a feature which often invalidated answers which were otherwise correct.

- (a) This was generally answered well. A number of candidates thought that the equivalent was *gracias a la orquesta Don Telmo*, having been misled by the prompt phrase starting with *gracias*. Some otherwise correct answers were invalidated by the addition of *de Japón*.
- (b) There was another set of good answers here. Incorrect versions commonly omitted *pretende* at the beginning of the answer.
- (c) As long as candidates were aware that to preface their answers with *que...* would not allow them to match the prompt phrase, most were successful. The alternative meaning of *banda* led a few candidates away from *pandilla* and towards phrases involving *música* or *orquesta*.
- (d) This answer was also identified by the majority of candidates. A few candidates omitted *...que no escogieron*.
- (e) This gave rise to the best set of answers. Incorrect versions were extremely rare.

Question 2

Although this is a demanding exercise, candidates often appeared more comfortable in manipulating language structures than they had been in searching for matching phrases in **Question 1**.

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) Those candidates who recognised that *alegra*, being in the singular, had to be part of a reflexive verb, usually went on to score the mark, with prepositions *de*, *con* or *por* all being accepted. Some attempted to change the cue word *alegra* to *alegre* or *alegran* which, regardless of whether the Spanish is correct or not, is not permissible.
- (b) A good proportion of candidates tackled this question correctly. However, there were a few cases where the candidates wrote *de noche* at the end, not allowing *barrio* to go with *en particular*, and changing the meaning of the sentence in the original text. Some candidates lost the mark when they tried to link *al* with *barrio*, or when they misspelt *atravesar*.
- (c) The majority of candidates were able to manipulate the structure successfully using *suelen*, but some neglected to include the infinitive *usar*.
- (d) More difficulty was encountered here than with any of the other language manipulations. Candidates either omitted the initial *tienen* or, commonly, attempted to use *hay* which, although it works grammatically, does not fit the sense of the original sentence. Some also lost the mark when they forgot to include either *de* before or *a* after *acceder*.
- (e) Most candidates recognised that a subjunctive would be required after *para que* and there were many correct answers. The mark was missed when candidates attempted to use *estén* rather than *sean*.

Question 3

The text about young people seeking refuge in music from gang violence 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 small minority disregarded the reference given to the paragraph where the information for each specific question was to be found. 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) Nearly every candidate was able to supply the age element required by this answer but, of these, a considerable number copied at least five consecutive words from the text in doing so. For example, just writing *entre 12 y 20 años* constitutes 5 consecutive words and candidates need to be very careful when dealing with figures in particular. Most candidates got the third point although, again, many could not avoid copying *de barrios dominados por pandillas*. The mark that differentiated here was *se refugiaron en la música*.
- (b) The mark scheme required some indication of the number of young people whose self-esteem would be lifted, and many were unable to indicate that correctly, with quite a few writing *miles* or *500 mil* or just *jóvenes* without any indication of number. Most candidates scored the mark for *alejarnos de las pandillas*, although some copied literally *caigan en manos de las pandillas*. Many candidates also rephrased the idea of hidden talents correctly, but only the very best candidates were able to show clearly that they understood the difference between *descubrir talentos* and *hacerles descubrir talentos*.
- (c) The maximum score of two marks was not always achieved in this question. Most candidates understood that the neighbourhoods were dangerous and there was the risk of attacks, but many omitted the detail of being attacked at night which was necessary for the mark. Some confusion was apparent amongst less able candidates who could not rephrase the idea of the absence of communication links with gangs, and resorted to copying word for word *se han roto las vías de comunicación con las pandillas*, which could not be credited.
- (d) This four mark question was generally handled well. The point that not so many candidates scored on was the orchestra being an alternative to selling drugs or rehearsing in the hours when the gangs were selling drugs, with a lot of candidates writing *ofrece una alternativa* without mentioning to what. 'Young people being occupied in their free time' was usually successfully mentioned, (provided that *ocupados después de la escuela* was not copied word for word), and a mark was usually scored for either that they received musical instruction free of charge or that the orchestra gave them instruments instead of guns. Moderate success was achieved in noting that the orchestra also offered a more positive outlook for the youngsters' futures.
- (e) The question worked well and challenged candidates adequately. The majority were able to state that countries in *Centroamérica* should fight violence with the help of developed countries and that they should have programs to prevent violence or similar projects to the orchestra, (although *programas para la prevención de la violencia* was copied word for word in several occasions). The final point, too, was often attempted, but at times was lacking an important element such as *locales* or *que ayuden a la población*.

Section 2

Question 4

The second text, about the rehabilitation of former gang members, provided a similar challenge to the first. Candidates performed equally well here.

- (a) This was a relatively accessible question, with candidates being able to express the idea of former gang members becoming their own bosses, provided that they managed to avoid directly copying *jefes de sus propios negocios*. There was some ambiguity to be avoided when noting the other two points. Answers such as *graban hits de artistas conocidos* could mean that ex-gangsters actually are the performers, and awareness of the difference between the masculine *guía* and feminine *guía* was not apparent from *hacen guías turísticas* or *ofrecen / dan guías a los turistas*.

- (b) This question presented far greater challenge. Difficulty was apparent in understanding use of *ola* in this context. Many reproduced *ola restauradora* and *ola de desplazamientos* in answers which showed minimal comprehension and lacked further explanation. Only the best candidates managed to express themselves clearly here and score full marks.
- (c) Most candidates understood the way in which the programme *Esperanza* works and the first two points in this answer were almost always mentioned. There was some, possibly involuntary, direct copying of *la confianza del jefe de la pandilla*, although others substituted *jefe* for *líder* and *pandilla* for *banda*. Candidates found it slightly more challenging to understand that it was the ex-gang leaders who were the ones who came up with the idea of a business they wanted to develop, with many inserting *surgen* into their answers in an incorrect way showing that they had not really understood its meaning. The last point was usually attempted, although if the element of *negocio* was absent it failed to score.
- (d) This question was one of the better answered in this section, where the idea of financing programmes was clear, and those who understood the meaning of *capacitación profesional* were able to state that training schemes were being available. Candidates sometimes struggled to rephrase the idea of a gun amnesty, and inaccurate phrasing occasionally seemed to suggest it was the government willingly handing arms to the gang members.
- (e) This question allowed the majority of candidates to score some marks. Most candidates could express the idea of Pacheco's life being less dangerous, and the fact he no longer runs risks to earn money, although some unclear phrasing often led candidates to blur these two ideas into one, and they could only be credited for one idea. Fewer candidates grasped the full meaning of the phrase *haciendo cosas dentro de la ley también se puede llevar sustento a casa* and there were numerous instances of direct copying.

Question 5

Although there is still room for improvement, it was pleasing to see that candidates are showing increased awareness of how best to approach this final question in the exam.

- (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 paid careful attention to the question which had been asked, and focused their attention on specific details of how gang culture is being tackled in San Salvador and Panamá had little difficulty in noting many of these and scored good marks. Those who scored lower marks generally did so by wasting precious words in a number of ways, including: irrelevant introductions; attempting to summarise everything in the texts; adding their own points of view; copying entire sentences from the texts. Apart from the small minority who exceeded the word limit sufficiently in **5(a)** to render their **5(b)** (personal opinion) ineligible for consideration, candidates either repeated their answers from **Questions 3** and **4**, copied big portions of the original text, or wrote relevant summaries comparing the texts; the latter candidates achieved the highest scores.

An example of how to score 6 marks in fewer than 50 words reads as follows:

Debido a la orquesta Don Telmo, ✓ varios jóvenes de San Salvador, provenientes de zonas dominadas por pandillas, se han refugiado en la música. Aumentando su autoestima ✓ haciéndolos descubrir talentos ✓ y evitando su unión a una pandilla, ✓ al mantenerlos ocupados ✓ les da una visión distinta para su futuro ✓...

- (b) Many candidates scored high marks, particularly those who expressed a new idea and/or gave an opinion, rather than relying on ideas from the source texts. Most addressed the question correctly and candidates who were less able linguistically often offered some very good answers. Some less successful answers did not go much beyond saying that yes there was, or no there was not, crime in their area; better answers gave opinions on the causes of crime in their area, or how the authorities prevented it.

Quality of Language

The quality of the majority of candidates' Spanish, here and throughout the paper, was generally up to the standard required by this examination. Marks were frequently in the Good to Very Good range.

At the top end, there were candidates who not only had a high level of grammatical awareness but the skills and vocabulary to express themselves very well. Unless they had been penalised for scoring zero in any of the comprehension questions, such candidates were awarded maximum marks in all three quality of language assessments.

Other candidates had major difficulties with verb formation, and particularly use of the singular or plural verb forms. These candidates sometimes struggled to perform in **Questions 3 and 4**, but their Quality of Language mark often improved greatly in **Question 5** when their writing was more free-style.

Finally, there was a large number of candidates who wrote as they speak, with varying degrees of success. A lack of accents and misspelling of words particularly *v* for *b*, or vice versa, *y* for *ll*, and *c* for *s*, was widespread.

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- **Language:** when preparing for the exam, make sure to revise the basic agreements, tenses and verb endings.

General comments

The paper provided an appropriate challenge to candidates across the ability range. At the upper end 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. All scripts were generally well presented and there appeared to be little evidence of difficulty with time management.

The two texts dealing with technological and medical innovations were accessible to most candidates, and comprehension was often clearly demonstrated. There appears to be a growing awareness of the specialised techniques required for scoring well in this exam. 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.

Despite good, overall understanding, full marks were on occasion not achieved when additional relevant details were not included in answers. We recommend that candidates pay close attention to the number of marks allocated to each question, in order to gauge the amount of detail to be included accordingly. Very few candidates exceeded the 140 word limit in **Question 5**, thus reducing the number of marks they could score in **5(b)**. Summaries in **5(a)** are improving as the message seems to be getting through that relevant specific details score many more marks than vague generalisations.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

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.

(a) and **(e)** were almost universally answered correctly.

(b) and **(d)** were invalidated when correct answers were prefaced by *todo* and *also* respectively.

(c) was occasionally answered incorrectly by the omission of *están*.

Question 2

This proved to be the customary demanding exercise and maximum or near maximum marks were more often the exception than the rule.

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) This was generally done well, with a variety of constructions and vocabulary being allowed. Most candidates opted for the imperfect subjunctive, although the preterite was equally permissible. Acceptable variations on *después de que Vidal viajara / viajase / viajó* included *después de que el viaje de Vidal terminara / terminase / terminó / acabara / acabase / acabó* and *después de que Vidal hiciera / hiciese / hizo realizara / realizase / realizó su viaje / llegara / llegase / llegó de su viaje*. Further acceptable variations were also possible.
- (b) Less variety was acceptable here. It is important that candidates check to see that their answers would fit back into the text in place of the original phrase. Here, this would have ruled out the use of the preterite or the reflexive *situarse*. Many candidates were successful.
- (c) It appeared that *carecer* was not so well known amongst non-native speakers, and a number of candidates struggled with this manipulation. Unnecessary prepositions were often added.
- (d) There were many correct answers to this, with candidates availing themselves of the number of different variations on a correct answer: *(a / por) la (buena / gran) reputación que tiene / posee nuestra comunidad / de nuestra comunidad*.
- (e) Most candidates recognised that a subjunctive would be required after *posible que*, and native speaker candidates invariably answered correctly. Other candidates at times found difficulty in constructing the subjunctive of *producir*, or offered the singular when only the plural would do.

Question 3

The text about developments in 3D printing 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 small minority disregarded the reference given to the paragraph where the information for each specific question was to be found. Candidates should also always remember that the marks allocated to each question – (2), (3) or (4) – are a reliable guide 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) The first two points – that Vidal's company would enter the market and that all the machines would be designed in Spain – were clearly understood by the vast majority of candidates. To score these marks it was necessary to clarify the market in question or identify the machines, i.e. 3D printers. A number of candidates neglected to do this. The third point – that the company would be the leaders in this product – was sometimes overlooked.
- (b) There were many good answers to this question, as candidates readily identified the superior speed and resolution of the new printers as being pertinent details. A small minority of candidates were attracted to the sentence in the text containing the word *avance*, and mistakenly gave details which related to the old models. The third point concerning reduced costs was generally clearly stated.
- (c) This was another question which was generally answered well. The excellence of Spanish engineers, the good reputation of Spanish scientists and the attractive quality of life in that country were commonly correctly noted. Many candidates scored maximum marks.

- (d) This four mark question proved to be a little more challenging. For the first point it was necessary to stress that the *centros de innovación* encouraged the development of local businesses, and for the second that the new companies that were starting up were based around technology. Candidates sometimes inverted the concept, i.e. creating local business and developing technology companies. The collaboration with universities was mostly identified correctly. The last point, whether by oversight or otherwise, was a popular direct copy of *la innovación en el sector público*. Paraphrasing this idea often proved to be challenging and some candidates lost the idea of *innovación*.
- (e) The maximum of two marks was a little harder to come by here. It is sometimes an indication that comprehension is proving difficult when lifting becomes more prevalent. This was often the case with *series cortas de objetos a (precios)* and *(crecerá) a tasas del 20% (anual)*. The final point concerning the annual growth rate in the market for 3D printing was challenging for many candidates.

Section 2

Question 4

The second text, about the development of a revolutionary new vaccination to aid lung cancer patients, provided a similar challenge to the first. Candidates performed equally well.

- (a) Although this was a fairly straightforward question referring to a relatively accessible section of the text, not every candidate performed as well as they might have done. Details were important, especially the numerical ones, and those who took pains to include them sometimes transgressed the lifting rules. Possibly the most popular lift in the whole exam was *de los últimos 10 años*. We remind candidates that numbers count as words in lifts –direct word for word copying– and that writing *diez* in place of 10 is not considered a paraphrase. The second point also had some word for word copying, with either *el número de personas que* or *vivir dos años tras el...* often being repeated. The final point about the availability of this vaccination for patients was sometimes overlooked.
- (b) This question was answered well. The benefits of the treatment for patients were clearly identified. A few candidates missed the first mark by stating that there were fewer side effects rather than none. The vast majority were able to point out that no hospital stay was necessary. Provided that fewer than five words were borrowed directly from *un costo similar al resto de los tratamientos* when paraphrasing the benefits for the health systems, many candidates went on to score the maximum.
- (c) The first point, that the vaccination encourages the patient's immune system to fight the illness, was successfully noted by many. Comprehension of *tarde más en recaer* was not so apparent, and so maximum scores were not so common for this question.
- (d) This was a challenging four-mark question and only the best candidates achieved full marks. The text contained a number of details about the importance of the vaccination and the key was to tease out which of these amounted to it being revolutionary. The first point, about it breaking moulds beyond those of science was rarely mentioned. Far more success was achieved with the point about the vaccination demonstrating that Latin America is capable of developing innovatory products. Also, if copying more than 4 words from the text was avoided, the fact that this particular product was travelling from the south to the north of the planet was often noted. The fact that Latin America was actually manufacturing the vaccination was often overlooked.
- (e) The final question also posed some challenges. Some answers concerning the fact that science is beginning to bring benefits to Latin American economies did not make it clear who was benefitting from whom. The second point about the change in the way science is being funded was generally well understood. Provided that the lift *del gobierno y de las empresas privadas* could be avoided, the third point about collaboration was often clearly stated.

Question 5

As stated earlier, it was pleasing to note that many candidates now appear to be aware of the techniques required for this part of the examination. The vast majority paid careful attention to the overall number of words allowed for this question. Most summaries gave specific details rather than generalisations, and the better personal responses contained opinions and original ideas.

- (a) Candidates who paid careful attention to the question which had been asked, and focused their attention on the benefits of scientific and technological innovations, had little difficulty in noting a number of these and scored good marks. Those who scored lower marks generally did so by wasting precious words in a number of ways, including: irrelevant introductions; attempting to summarise everything in the texts, (not just the benefits); adding their own points of view; copying entire sentences from the texts.

An example of how to score 5 marks in approximately the first 40 words reads as follows:

Los beneficios son que los pacientes de órganos pueden obtenerlos sin donaciones. ✓ También hay un avance en productividad ✓ y los costes de manufacturación son reducidos. ✓ Además, ayudan a desarrollar nuevas compañías tecnológicas ✓ y también impulsan la innovación en el sector público ✓...

- (b) Good explanations of a choice of technological innovation were often given. Better candidates went on to give their opinion on how this innovation was of benefit to the world. A few thought they had to choose between the innovations described in the two texts, (an acceptable interpretation of the question), although this often gave difficulty in finding anything new to say.

Quality of Language

The quality of the majority of non-native speaking candidates' Spanish, here and throughout the paper, was generally up to the standard required by this examination. Marks were generally in the Sound to Good range. Unless they had been penalised for scoring zero in any of the comprehension questions, native speakers were awarded maximum marks in all three quality of language assessments.

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/41
Texts

Key messages

Examiners seek thorough knowledge of the texts chosen and clear essays focussed on the questions set, with detailed references to support the argument presented. The following key messages are intended to help candidates improve their performance further.

- Candidates should read the rubric carefully, and only answer one option ((a) or (b)) for each text.
- In Section 1, (a) questions, candidates are instructed to answer parts (i) and (ii) very briefly. This means that no more than two or three sentences at the most are required. Answers to (iii) must make up the majority of the response. Candidates are advised to number the answers to each part of the question clearly, i.e. (i), (ii), (iii), and focus on each one separately. This should avoid any repetition.
- Candidates should read the question carefully. Note key words in the title which define the question precisely.
- Candidates are advised to avoid lengthy irrelevant introductory paragraphs with biographical details of the author.
- Candidates must address the question directly, defining terms and approach in the introductory paragraph.
- Answers should support the argument with appropriate, direct references to the text. These do not need to be long quotations. A key incident does not have to be narrated or quoted at length.
- Candidates should re-read the question or devise a plan before beginning to write to avoid going off-topic after the first paragraph.
- Candidates must ensure that names of characters, places, historical context and author are accurate, and that the text is described correctly as '*novela*', '*obra de teatro*' or '*poema*'.
- Candidates are reminded to write legibly. Legible presentation of a candidate's work is essential for the Examiner to be able to find evidence of the candidate meeting the descriptors in the mark scheme.
- Candidates are asked to avoid asterisks, arrows, writing in the margin (especially if at right angles to printed lines) as this is difficult to reconcile with on-line marking.
- It is important for candidates to show that there is an understanding of how to present an argument, with a relevant introduction, development and conclusion. Many candidates were familiar with the PEEL format – Point, Example, Explain, Link (to next section of essay). This was used successfully when repeated throughout the response with frequent links to the text and relevant observations or analysis.
- Candidates are advised to plan essays to show depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding and avoid repetition, and to plan time carefully to avoid submitting unfinished answers.

General comments

The majority of candidates were well-prepared for this Paper, having good understanding of the texts chosen of the requirements of the examination. If candidates follow the advice given above, they should have the necessary skills to achieve their potential.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1 Benito Pérez Galdós: *Misericordia*

- (a) Candidates identified the way Galdós used locations in Madrid to show social divisions, wealth and poverty. The correct topography and references to specific places and buildings gave a sense of reality and immediacy, Madrid was brought alive by the wide range of characters from all walks of

life. Galdós depicted the social and political reality of Madrid, which represented the whole of Spain. Two references in particular were used effectively – Chapter V, describing where Almudena lived and Chapter XXVII, set in the cemetery and on the river bank, a good example of irony.

- (b) Candidates were able to give much information in their responses. The best essays had a clear structure, comparing and contrasting both characters' attitudes to differing situations. Some referred to Chapters III and X, which give detailed descriptions of the two women. Most candidates understood the characters well but many omitted the events at the end of the novel, where Doña Francisca behaved cruelly to Benina.

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

- (a) Answers to (i) only needed to mention the Comendador's fall during the bullfight and in (ii) to summarise the roles of husband and wife, in two or three sentences at most. The most successful responses showed that the outcome of the play was determined by the choices made by the Comendador, not fate.
- (b) Responses to this question needed to show why the presentation of rural life was important, not simply describe scenes. The rural location included local colour, making a visual impact for the audience and reference to natural images. The best answers analysed how this was a harmonious, innocent society disrupted by the impact of the intruders. The moral clash led to the outcome of the play, when harmony within society was restored by the King.

Question 3 Laura Esquivel: *Como agua para chocolate*

Many candidates chose to answer on this text. Both options were popular.

- (a) Parts (i) and (ii) were usually well answered although some narrated the departure of Gertrudis in too much detail and did not focus directly on why she wrote to Tita. In (iii), there tended to be a lack of detail. The key scene when Gertrudis returned to the ranch, encouraged Tita's relationship with Pedro and showed kindness and understanding to her sister was important. This was when Tita also helped Gertrudis save her relationship, explaining why she had given birth to a mixed race child.
- (b) This question attracted many answers. The best essays analysed the quest for personal freedom in a range of characters and also considered the wider issue of political freedom within the context of the Mexican Revolution. Some characters sacrificed freedom at the expense of tradition or moral cowardice. Dr Brown recognised the ridiculous attitude of Mamá Elena and Gertrudis bravely went her own way.

Question 4 Fernando Fernán-Gómez: *Las bicicletas son para el verano*

Many candidates answered on this text

- (a) Candidates answered (i) and (ii) accurately and briefly. In (iii), some answers lost the focus of the question quickly by concentrating only on the family's lack of food and describing the lentils scene. The comparison between María and Basilio and the family was both physical and psychological. María and Basilio looked well fed and healthy and this was because Basilio worked for the Nationalists and had access to food. The family were on the other side politically and suffered as the siege of Madrid on the part of the Nationalists was an act of war on the city, to break those resisting the advance, and the inevitable defeat.
- (b) Candidates argued that the audience was drawn in to the drama by empathising with the characters. The range of ages and types of character was wide enough for most individuals to identify with one or more directly. The domestic setting with an ordinary family with all the challenges involved in daily life which then suffers the effects of a civil war could be said to have a greater impact than by presenting scenes from the war itself. The best answers went on to analyse several aspects of the presentation such as family relationships, growing up, lack of food, personal tragedies and references to the war in the background. Some also mentioned how the author tempered the sadness and tension with humour.

Section 2

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

This was another very popular text. Candidates responded well to the novel but needed to pay close attention to the wording of the question and use references judiciously with analysis, not description.

- (a) The best answers began with a clear introduction, indicating which characters would be discussed and how those individuals contributed to the presentation of specific themes. It was of course acceptable to refer to the colonel and his wife, showing how they interacted with other characters, but the question clearly states that the couple could not be central to the answer. An effective approach was to take a theme, such as corruption, and analyse the roles of Sabas and the doctor as figures with contrasting moral and political attitudes, and their relationship with the colonel. Many candidates chose Agustín as an important character. Although he had died before the novel began, he is present in the minds of his parents but also of his friends, and through his only remaining possession, the cockerel. This led to analysis of the political situation and the resistance movement. There were also positive themes – many saw hope represented by the doctor and those supporting, and believing in, the cockerel.
- (b) This question focused on the colonel's futile search for true values. The best answers began by showing how the colonel lived by an admirable moral code, believing in honesty and integrity and remaining true to his beliefs. He expected others to be the same. His search could be said to be futile as other people did not treat him with respect – there are many examples of this, both showing systemic corruption and betrayal on the part of the state, and personal disrespect from Sabas, for example. There were some examples of good experiences also. Successful responses saw how the colonel's belief that there was a moral centre to society was challenged.

Question 6 Isabel Allende: *Eva Luna*

- (a) This question was the less popular option. Candidates needed to plan their answer carefully to avoid repetition and to ensure the argument progressed through a series of points. The best responses first identified where the first person narrative was used. The illusion of an autobiography was intensified by the colloquial register and sense of immediacy. The reader was drawn in to the narrative by this and empathised easily with Eva through her eventful and often challenging life. The fact that these sections of the novel were presented from Eva's point of view and could be said to be biased as the reality was controlled by Eva herself gave rise to some good analysis. The use of third person narrative gave variety to the narrative and a sense of perspective, so it was valid to comment on this also. Candidates used the text to illustrate the points made but did not narrate.
- (b) This question attracted some good essays analysing how a number of characters in the novel had interesting and valuable experiences which were largely unplanned or unexpected. Most candidates focused on Eva and Rolf, although Mimi and Naranjo were also analysed. As is always the case, it is good practice to define your terms in the introductory paragraph. This should help to keep focus throughout the essay as candidates kept referring back to ensure the argument was progressing logically. The essential points mentioned in most responses were that Eva's life was a mystery in that her path was never predictable. Events and coincidences happened which changed her life irrevocably and most were out of her control. The lessons developed as Eva gradually learned how to survive in a number of challenging situations. These skills were then applied later in life. The interaction with other characters gave variety and in some ways echoed or contrasted with Eva's experiences. The main characters developed and changed throughout the novel. It was also possible to argue that Eva taught others how to adapt and survive through her own life, and in the soap opera she wrote. The sense of mystery continues to the conclusion of the novel as the ending was left open to interpretation.

Question 7 Federico García Lorca: *La casa de Bernarda Alba*

Virtually every candidate answered one of the questions on this text. The play had been studied thoroughly and many candidates responded with confidence and enthusiasm.

- (a) There were some thoughtful answers to this question. Candidates were asked to analyse the roles of la Poncia and la Criada, showing how these characters help the audience to understand the themes of the play. It was more productive to identify which themes to analyse rather than to delve into a character study as this would not leave sufficient time to deal with the core of the question. When considering the theme of morality and '*el que dirán*', it was important to point out that la Poncia was closer to both Bernarda and the daughters than anyone else, she could help the audience understand both and also lived in the village, so could bring this perspective too. La Poncia advised the daughters, particularly Adela, but this was not entirely objective. Her own reputation depended on that of Bernarda's family, so scandal would affect her directly. However, she tempered some idealised views of marriage by describing the reality of it. La Poncia displayed hypocrisy in her attitude to women also in condemning Paca la Roseta but paying for her own son to visit a prostitute. Despite this, she offered the daughters care and consideration which their own mother did not provide. La Criada brought another perspective in that she had an affair with Antonio, Bernarda's late husband. The way la Criada treated the beggar woman showed how she had absorbed Bernarda's views; there was no sense of charity or kindness in her rejection of the poorer woman's plea for help.
- (b) Very many candidates chose to answer this question. The best answers analysed the differing views presented and drew these together to a conclusion. The overall understanding was that marriage was a social tool used to protect the social standing of both families concerned, and gave a role for women. Marriage for love was not part of the equation, it was a matter arranged by the parents. This was depicted in the play by the arranged marriage of Angustias, which was dependent entirely on her fortune. The prospective husband seemed to accept this, but hypocritically could enjoy another relationship alongside this. Any problems here would affect the woman, not the man. This imbalance in the relationship was shown clearly in la Poncia's relationship, although she seemed to put her husband in his place, in the fact that la Criada had an affair with her employer's husband, and the attitude of the villagers to loose women such as Paca la Roseta and la Hija de la Librada. Men were given more sexual freedom. María Josefa offered an idealised view of marriage which was seen as an impossible dream, but also expressed the aspirations of all to be happy. In that society happiness was unlikely. Lives and marriages were defined by rules with individuals trapped and suppressed by them.

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

- (a) This option requires experience in critical analysis and awareness of the various aspects of poetic technique. Candidates were asked to comment on the main theme, which was the poet's sense of loss and unhappiness on her return to Galicia from Madrid, focussing on her journey through life and sense of time and waste. Examiners welcome an individual response provided this is substantiated with reference to the poem.
- (b) This question allowed candidates a degree of flexibility in interpretation of the poems, either as expressing aspects of Rosalía de Castro's life, or presenting a universal message. Those who saw a wider message chose themes such as the traveller, the importance of nature and religion. Provided all arguments are supported by reference to at least three poems, examiners welcome individual responses.

FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 8665/42
Texts

Key messages

Examiners seek thorough knowledge of the texts chosen and clear essays focused on the questions set, with detailed references to support the argument presented. The following key messages are intended to help candidates improve their performance further.

- Candidates should read the rubric carefully, and only answer one option ((a) or (b)) for each text.
- In Section 1, (a) questions, candidates are instructed to answer parts (i) and (ii) very briefly. This means that no more than two or three sentences at the most are required. Answers to (iii) must make up the majority of the response. Candidates are advised to number the answers to each part of the question clearly, i.e. (i), (ii), (iii), and focus on each one separately. This should avoid any repetition.
- Candidates should read the question carefully. Note key words in the title which define the question precisely.
- Candidates are advised to avoid lengthy irrelevant introductory paragraphs with biographical details of the author.
- Candidates must address the question directly, defining terms and approach in the introductory paragraph.
- Answers should support the argument with appropriate, direct references to the text. These do not need to be long quotations. A key incident does not have to be narrated or quoted at length.
- Candidates should re-read the question or devise a plan before beginning to write to avoid going off-topic after the first paragraph.
- Candidates must ensure that names of characters, places, historical context and author are accurate, and that the text is described correctly as '*novela*', '*obra de teatro*' or '*poema*'.
- Candidates are reminded to write legibly. Legible presentation of a candidate's work is essential for the Examiner to be able to find evidence of the candidate meeting the descriptors in the mark scheme.
- Candidates are asked to avoid asterisks, arrows, writing in the margin (especially if at right angles to printed lines) as this is difficult to reconcile with on-line marking.
- It is important for candidates to show that there is an understanding of how to present an argument, with a relevant introduction, development and conclusion. Many candidates were familiar with the PEEL format – Point, Example, Explain, Link (to next section of essay). This was used successfully when repeated throughout the response with frequent links to the text and relevant observations or analysis.
- Candidates are advised to plan essays to show depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding and avoid repetition, and to plan time carefully to avoid submitting unfinished answers.

General comments

The majority of candidates were well-prepared for this Paper, having good understanding of the texts chosen of the requirements of the examination. If candidates heed the advice given above, they should have the necessary skills to achieve their potential.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1 Benito Pérez Galdós: *Misericordia*

- (a) The characters Frasquito Ponte and Obdulia, daughter of Doña Paca were recognised. A brief answer to (ii), indicating that Ponte represented the past, was sufficient. His role in the novel was generally interpreted as a social parasite. The best answers considered how he interacted with

other characters, particularly Doña Paca and Benina, and explained how Galdós used Ponte as a symbol of the decadent society of the time.

- (b) Most decided that the novel was pessimistic and referred to the images of poverty suffered by the lower classes and the hypocrisy of the clergy and middle classes. Some recognised positive messages, presented through Benina. She displayed a different morality, based on unselfishness, charity and indifference to material wealth. The title of the novel also points to an optimistic interpretation when contrasting Benina with many of the other characters. The Church promoted less Christian charity than Benina.

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

- (a) The confusión referred to in (i) relates to the death of the Comendador. Candidates tended to answer (ii) more effectively by showing Casilda's loyalty to her husband, particularly in light of the fact that Inés was her relative. Good responses to (iii) recognised that the scene was close to the end of the play and that Peribáñez showed his loyalty and respect for the King in going to Toledo to confess his actions, trusting in the monarch's wisdom and judgement. In this way the King restored the harmony of society, which had been disrupted by the actions of the Comendador. Those who had betrayed the code of behaviour were punished and Peribáñez and Casilda were rewarded.
- (b) There were some very good responses to this question where candidates recognised how Lope de Vega used all dramatic elements to advance the plot, to show divisions in society and to entertain the audience. It is important to see the text as a play, performed live before an audience, rather than as a text to be read. For example, the use of costume where the Comendador disguised himself as a reaper underlined his loss of honour as he demeaned his position. The visual impact of the play was understood by the best candidates.

Question 3 Laura Esquivel: *Como agua para chocolate*

Many candidates chose to answer on this text. Both options were popular.

- (a) The information needed for (i) and (ii) was generally well known. However a significant number of answers were too long, leaving little time for part (iii). Candidates must give the key points, here the fact that the death of Roberto had plunged Tita into deep depression. It is important to avoid telling the whole story; narrative as such is not rewarded. In (iii), the majority of essays focused on Dr Brown's kindness to Tita at this point in the novel, without considering the wider aspect of how their relationship had developed over many years. His role was more than that of a rival for Pedro.
- (b) This question attracted many answers, but many essays were not clearly focused. In preparing the text, candidates had studied *'la cocina'* as 'cooking'. In this question *'la cocina'* is *'el lugar'*, so required analysis of how the kitchen became the centre of action in the novel. We remind candidates that questions must be read very carefully. One candidate expressed the importance of the kitchen in this way *'es el lugar que hace que las cosas ocurran'*, which was most pertinent. Some reference could be made to food preparation but this was not the key element in the question.

Question 4 Fernando Fernán-Gómez: *Las bicicletas son para el verano*

Many candidates answered on this text.

- (a) In (i), candidates needed to explain that once the Nationalist troops had won the Civil War, those civil marriages and divorces conducted under the Second Republic were annulled. In (ii), María was talking about Basilio: the best answers expressed how he had abused María's affection by refusing to marry her again under the new regime as it would hinder his career. This should then have led in to (iii) – María was an example of an innocent person who was made to suffer. The argument could then be widened to analyse other examples of this, without recounting the whole narrative.
- (b) The best essays here recognised the symbolic importance of both the bicycle and summer. These were analysed, representing freedom (to travel, to escape) and a sense of relaxation, release and enjoyment. Virtually all used the prologue and epilogue to contrast the sense of optimism when Luis wanted a bicycle to go out with friends and the need of a bicycle to help with his job as delivery boy in a time of uncertainty and fear. These references alone were not sufficient for an

essay of high calibre, which included greater analysis of the situation, in particular the nature of *'paz/victoria'* according to Don Luis, and the sense of pessimism *'Sabe Dios cuando habrá otro verano.'*

Sección 2

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

This was another very popular text. Candidates responded well to the novel but needed to pay close attention to the wording of the question, understand the political setting and use references judiciously.

- (a) The best answers began with a clear introduction showing that the candidate had read the question carefully, outlining how the political situation and the prevalence of poverty and hunger constitute **an** important aspect of the novel – not the most important. Candidates then analysed this in detail. The criticism of the corruption endemic in all branches of power – judicial, military, legal and even religious was central to the argument. This, in effect, caused poverty, hunger and a sense of powerlessness. The figure of Sabas was crucial in many good essays as he betrayed his political party, made money at the expense of others and seemed to have no scruples, as seen in his treatment of the Coronel, a supposed friend. His illness, caused by excess, reflected the rotten nature of politics and contrasted with the illness of the coronel and his wife, caused partly by malnutrition. The question did not invite candidates to offer alternative interpretations of a main focus, and those who chose to do this found that there was insufficient time to complete the essay.
- (b) This question focused on the theme of violence, requiring candidates to analyse what violence represented in the novel and how it was used to present specific ideas. This meant that acts of violence had to be integrated into an argument rather than simply described as examples. The most successful essays showed how the townspeople were subject to oppression, a state of curfew and extreme authoritarian control. An illustration of this was the funeral of the musician. The population had little access to the truth as the press was censored. Resistance was dangerous, as seen in the murder of Agustín for distributing '*información clandestina*', but was not extinguished. Violence appears in many guises.

Question 6 Isabel Allende: *Eva Luna*

- (a) This question was the less popular option.

Many essays focused too much on magic realism. The best responses showed how Eva used the world of imagination as an escape or defence mechanism to enable her to survive some very challenging situations throughout her life. Analysis of the first person narrative and powers of expression also served to illustrate how the reader was drawn in to empathise with the main characters. The blurring of fiction and real life as seen in the soap opera was also relevant.

- (b) This question attracted some good essays analysing how individuals were able to make decisions which altered the course of their lives, after living lives which were largely controlled or date influenced by others. Most concentrated on Eva, Huberto, Rolf and Mimi, not necessarily all of them. Successful arguments had to be more than descriptions of how a character suffered difficult situations and survived. The essence of the question was that an individual took control of his or her life and the consequences of this.

Question 7 Federico García Lorca: *La casa de Bernarda Alba*

Virtually every candidate answered one of the questions on this text. The play had been studied thoroughly and many candidates responded with confidence and enthusiasm.

- (a) There was a wide range of approaches to this question with a number of interpretations. Those who saw death as a plot device, stating that the death of the father set everything else in motion tended to lead to narration. More successful and interesting essays saw death as an intrinsic element of Lorca's bleak view of human existence. It was therefore central to the play and linked with other themes. Society controlled behaviour; individuals were desperate to escape; there was no freedom of action – and death was the consequence for those who challenged the status quo and attempted an escape. Death was part of the structure of the play – the father at the beginning, Adela at the end and the illegitimate child in the middle. The process of death moved from natural causes to infanticide to suicide. Analysis of death in terms of symbols, such as the moon, colours, water and pearls was acceptable as part of a wider argument.

- (b) The best answers to this question used the quotation as a starting point, defining who was part of the '*pueblo*' and who was not. Many good references were made to the contribution of Prudencia, Paca la Roseta and hija de la Librada as well as the '*segadores*'. The '*pueblo*' was not simply the village, but society, the arbiter of morality, the judge and jury, a social force. There was an interesting paradox in that Bernarda ruled her daughters with a rod of iron and also accepted the rules imposed by the '*pueblo*'. The daughters saw the outside world as freedom but the rules dictating life in the '*pueblo*' were as restrictive as those in Bernarda's house. One candidate offered the view '*El pueblo es una mentalidad*', which was most perceptive.

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

- (a) This option requires experience in critical analysis and awareness of the various aspects of poetic technique. Candidates were given two aspects to analyse, the traveller and the theme of travel. Examiners welcome an individual response provided this is substantiated with reference to the poem.
- (b) This question allowed candidates a degree of flexibility in interpretation of the theme of love. Rosalía de Castro wrote much about her love for her homeland and this was a valid starting point. However the focus is on how the poet struggled with writing about love and there needed to be a wider analysis of the theme.