

SPANISH

<p>Paper 9719/01 Speaking</p>

Key messages

For candidates:

- Candidates' own interests should play a part in the choice of the subject for the presentation. Clear reference should be made to Hispanic culture or society.
- It is important to structure the presentation to fit into the allowed time, and to express not only facts, but ideas and opinions.
- Focus on the questions asked and be sure to answer what is asked.
- Remember to ask the Examiner questions in both conversation sections

For Centres:

- The test consists of three distinct sections:
 - **Section 1** Initial presentation (maximum 3 1/2 minutes);
 - **Section 2** Topic Conversation (7–8 minutes) on issues arising from the Presentation;
 - **Section 3** General Conversation (8–9 minutes) on themes complete different from those raised in the Topic Conversation.
- Each section should be clearly identified on the recordings, and the prescribed timings observed.
- Candidates should be reminded if necessary to ask the Examiner questions in both conversation sections and be reminded to do so, if necessary. The Examiner's replies to such questions should be concise – it is the candidate and not the Examiner who is being marked.
- Interaction with the Examiner is an important criterion in both conversation sections.

General comments

The performance of candidates was good overall but varied considerably, from the outstanding to the very basic. Some very good candidates were clearly native or near-native speakers, but at the lower range some candidates struggled to reach the required standard.

Times were generally in accordance with those prescribed in the syllabus, but there were some cases of timings being under or over the limits. Centres should remember that no credit can be awarded for performance outside the maximum time allowed for the test; conversely, candidates whose timings were short were unlikely to have had access to the full range of marks.

Presentations must be clearly related to a Spanish-speaking country or context. Where this is not the case, the maximum mark for content is halved. In a few tests, the Presentation was not related to any Spanish-speaking country.

The range of samples followed correct procedure; some centres even supplied recordings of all candidates entered. Samples must include tests at the highest and lowest marks awarded. Please note that the working mark sheets of all candidates, not just those in the sample, must be included with the recordings. Most centres carried out the necessary administration efficiently and correctly. However an increased number of centres this series had to have their marks amended because of arithmetical errors, or through

errors in transcribing marks to the final mark sheet. Centres are reminded of their responsibility to ensure accuracy in recording marks. Please remember that failure to include the required documentation, or lateness in submitting the required materials, inevitably leads to delay in the moderation process and the issuing of results, and can mean that the centre's own marks cannot be confirmed.

Quality of language (range and accuracy) is assessed in all sections. Centres are again reminded to encourage candidates to use as wide a range of language – vocabulary and syntax – as possible.

To access the higher ranges of the mark scheme, candidates needed to show competence in dealing with hypothetical and abstract situations as well as factual or descriptive áreas.

Grammatically, the usual stumbling blocks were noted, included the mishandling of *ser/estar*, poor use of tenses, incorrect gender of some very basic nouns (*una tema, una problema, el ciudad*), unnecessary repetition of *ellos/ellas* in front of third-person plural verbs, plural verbs with singular subjects such as *la gente*, manipulation of *gustar*, and many missed opportunities regarding the use of the subjunctive.

Anglicised Spanish was not uncommon. A few candidates resorted to English to fill a gap when a lexical item could not be recalled in Spanish. Words were sometimes made up on the spot: *problamente, el governmento, problemas, el resultado*.

Quality of pronunciation varied considerably. Incorrect stressing or poor intonation occurred when candidates mentally recited prepared answers or rushed through the Presentation. Many candidates, however, took care to communicate clearly and made real efforts to sound authentic in pronunciation and intonation.

Comments on specific questions

Part 1: Topic Presentation

Guidance on topic areas for the Presentation and discussion may be found in the syllabus. Topics must relate clearly to aspects of Hispanic life or culture and it is important that candidates make this relevance clear.

Presentations should be a formal and coherent introduction to the subject: pronunciation and clarity of delivery are assessed. It is important to show evidence of preparation, organisation and relevant factual knowledge. Presentations ideally provided a personal overview of the issue to lead to the basis of a debate in the topic conversation. Candidates who spoke in a casual or disjointed manner and who made little attempt to engage the Examiner lost some credit here.

A weakness with some topics – apart from a failure to focus on Hispanic themes – was a lack of depth, with candidates giving a recitation of a list of (for example) food, fiestas or football teams, but with little cohesion or evidence of organisation. Other candidates chose well-balanced topics that were full of information, facts and statistics, dealing with issues of the day, including politics, racism, gender equality, sexual harassment in the workplace, etc., and that offered opinions and ideas, providing good scope for further discussion.

Part 2: Topic Conversation

This part of the test should not just be an invitation to the candidate to give a further series of mini presentations, though a few centres were content to allow this. Candidates should actually take part in a discussion, including justifying or refuting a point of view, as well as giving relevant examples or information. The Topic Conversation section provides the opportunity to develop points arising from the presentation. Interaction is a key criterion. Candidates whose responses were confined to pre-learned answers, with little evidence of spontaneity, could not be awarded high marks for responsiveness.

Candidates should ask the Examiner at least two substantial questions. Marks could not be awarded for 'seeking information and opinions' where no questions were asked by the candidate. Some centres awarded high marks for this, even when candidates asked no such questions, perhaps thinking erroneously that, because the Examiner offered his or her opinion without being asked, this would suffice.

Part 3: General Conversation

This must be a separate section from the Topic Conversation and the start of this section should be clearly announced on the recording.

It is important to address issues different from those discussed in in **Part 2**: it is not acceptable to re-visit or continue the Topic Conversation. No marks can be awarded for the General Conversation if this does not take place.

Issues covered should be at an appropriate level. Common areas included current affairs, news items, the arts, sport, education, the environment, the economy, politics and social concerns. Although the conversation could start with some basic, personal or factual questions, candidates must be encouraged to deal with more complex issues and have the opportunity to show they can give and justify opinions on more advanced topics. All conversations should go beyond the descriptive.

The range and style of questioning should invite and allow candidates to use more sophisticated language when relevant, both in register and structure. There were still some centres that did not challenge candidates sufficiently for this level: questions probing no further than, for example, what is the candidate's favourite colour, or what pets do they have, or how old is a brother and sister, did not suffice. It was noticeable that centres' assessment for this part of the test was frequently generous.

As in the Topic Conversation, candidates should ask the Examiner questions, and be prompted to do so, if necessary. This requirement was not always met.

SPANISH

<p>Paper 9719/21 Reading and Writing</p>
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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 level of challenge of this summer's paper was appropriate and the spread of marks awarded reflected the varying levels of ability of candidates. Scripts were generally well presented, and response to the two texts dealing with migration was pleasing with comprehension often clearly demonstrated. All scripts were generally well presented and there was only occasional evidence of difficulty with time management.

There were a number of candidates who chose to offer few or even no answers to **Questions 1 and 2** but then went on to do well in **Questions 3, 4 and 5**. This would seem to indicate that they had received little training in the exam technique for these questions nor done any past-paper practice.

In their answers to the comprehension questions most candidates attempted all questions and appeared to be aware that they should not copy more than four consecutive words of text. It was pleasing to note skilled attempts at paraphrase. On occasions, good candidates did not pick up all the marks available when they answered too generally and omitted relevant details. Candidates should note the marks allocated to each question, as this is a good indication of the number of details being sought.

A number of candidates still exceeded the 140 word limit in **Question 5**, thus reducing the number of marks they could score in **5(b)**. In **5(a)** a number of candidates wrote in general terms about migration and hardly included any examples from the two texts. However, on the whole, these summaries are improving as the message seems to be getting through that relevant specific details taken from the texts score many more marks than vague generalisations.

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) Most candidates identified the correct expression from the first paragraph of the text. Some candidates omitted *la* from the beginning of the transcription.
- (b) Most candidates identified the correct expression, but some answers were invalidated when prefaced by *con...*
- (c) As above, most were correct, but some invalidated when prefaced by *a...*
- (d) Candidates had some difficulty finding this in the text, and some who did find the relevant section began incorrectly with *ahora...* Others thought incorrectly that the equivalent of *tras volver a su pueblo* was *si regresas como yo* instead of *de nuevo en su comunidad*.
- (e) This caused many candidates difficulty. Some did not identify the need to include *apenas...*

Question 2

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

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

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

- (a) Candidates who realised that if they used *umentarse* instead of *umento* the resulting phrase would no longer fit back in the text to be followed by *...del 150%* were usually successful. However, the correct spelling of either the subjunctive or future form of *hay* proved to a challenge for some.
- (b) This was generally done well although some marks were lost when *resulta* was misinterpreted as a noun. A number of candidates changed the phrase to *resulta que todo esto es una fuerte emigración* which, although good Spanish, does not fit back into the original text with the same meaning.
- (c) A surprising number of candidates, many with a Hispanic background, appeared to be unaware that *por* is the preposition which follows *optar*. Many answers either contained the wrong preposition *a* or used no preposition at all.
- (d) This was answered well by many candidates who correctly inserted the infinitive *viajar* after *solían*. A number still unnecessarily retained *por lo general*, although this was not penalised. At times the mark was lost, either when *los* was added, which would change the meaning of the original text, or *que* was omitted. Also, some candidates either missed out *viajar*, or conjugated this as the main verb.
- (e) This was answered well by most candidates who correctly identified the need for *a/* plus the verb in the infinitive.

Question 3

The text about *hondureños* migrating and then emigrating 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.

Marks were sometimes lost here, and also in **Questions 4 and 5**, candidates confused the terms *migración*, *inmigración* and *emigración*.

- (a) This was a challenging question and needed careful attention to details of dates. Most candidates were able to grasp general trends, which was pleasing. A number of candidates muddled the chronology and incorrectly assumed that Hurricane Mitch occurred in 1990. The strongest candidates clearly expressed the scale of migration currently, including the fact that 90,000 Hondurans emigrate each year. Those who overlooked the significance of *hasta ahora* in the question went on unnecessarily to include details of future trends.
- (b) Most candidates were able to grasp some of the causes of the migratory movements, but few were successful in noting all four. The facts of rising unemployment and street crime were identified by most candidates, as was the lack of support for agriculture, but only the strongest candidates could clearly express the link between falling coffee exports and migration. Sometimes the mark could not be awarded as answers which would have otherwise been correct contained five or more words lifted directly from the text e.g. *la falta de ayudas gubernamentales* or *la exportación del café hondureño*.
- (c) Answers to this question required careful reading of the relevant paragraph. Most candidates scored at least one mark by noting either Carlos's desire to escape poverty and to make money quickly and easily, but not so many added that his motive for this was to it send to his family.
- (d) This question was well answered by the majority of candidates who identified the abuse of women and their low salaries, but fewer candidates specified exactly when women suffered discrimination. For this latter point a number appeared uncertain of the meaning of *cuando ya no son económicamente activas* and either lifted it directly from the text or focused incorrectly on a misinterpretation of *objeto*, stating that women were treated like objects in general.
- (e) This question proved to be a good discriminator requiring good use of tenses to answer, with only a minority gaining the full three marks. There were some good answers in terms of ideas of investment and increases in jobs and reducing migration. The strongest candidates were able to avoid lifting from the text by intelligently manipulating the source text, but some less able candidates lifted the ideas of *las inversiones en infraestructuras nacionales*, which could not thus be credited.

Section 2

Question 4

The second text, about emigration from Spain, proved to be more of a challenge.

- (a) This question required precise answers and accurate reading of vocabulary such as *aumento*, *incremento*, *igualar*, *menos de* and *con respecto a*. Those candidates who did not show accurate comprehension of the significance of the percentages given, and offered generic answers regarding the high level of emigration, did not score marks. The best performers correctly identified how the percentages linked to trends and when they referred to. Many candidates showed that they understood the information given about the percentage of those returning and were able to pick up at least one mark.
- (b) Candidates generally did well on this four mark question and scores of at least three were commonly recorded. A number struggled with expressing 'jobs matching her qualifications' and surprisingly few were able to show understanding of *bien remunerado* or express it in their own words. A common lift was *la ciencia en otros países*.
- (c) This was another question that depended on accurate expression of numbers and time frames. Many candidates identified the general trend, but some struggled to express clearly the idea of exactly when, and to what extent, the Spanish population was decreasing to half its size. Only the strongest candidates communicated clearly the contribution immigrants are making to the population size and how the reduction in number leaving is mitigating the problem. These last two points were sometimes wrongly generalised as *la población foránea es estable*.

- (d) This question was one of the better answered in this section with most candidates realising that more detail was needed in their answers than the unspecific *problemas económicos y políticos*. The idea of problems paying pensions was generally expressed well, as indeed was the idea of reduced influence in Europe, provided that lifts such as *pérdida de protagonismo en el mapa europeo* or *representación en las instituciones de la Unión Europea* were avoided.
- (e) The majority of candidates scored some marks here and, provided that they did not confuse *inmigración* and *emigración*, most were able to express the idea of needing more young people to immigrate. The need to reduce high unemployment was well expressed by those able to tease out the meaning of *dejen de registrarse las cifras de paro tan escandalosas*. Less success was achieved with the final point with many candidates unable to pinpoint the answer *incentivar con ayudas a la familia* and giving a generalised answer of increasing the number of children.

Question 5

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. More summaries gave specific details rather than generalisations, and the better personal responses contained opinions and original ideas. In their free-writing, many were able to write more accurately than in **Questions 3 and 4**.

- (a) There were clear differences here in scores between those who had practised this summary question, and those who were not used to the demands of the test. Some candidates had been well-prepared and selected their answers from the texts very precisely, usually achieving greater success in extracting relevant details from Text 1 rather than from Text 2. Many, though, did not answer the question and used up precious words in enumerating the possible solutions to the problems of immigration, rather than the causes and consequences. A small number of candidates wrote in general terms about migration and did not include examples from the two texts.

Highest scores were achieved by those who wrote short summaries of the key ideas in the texts, such as this:

Algunas causas de los movimientos migratorios son la pobreza, ✓ el desempleo, ✓ el crimen callejero, ✓ la falta de programas del gobierno para ayudar la agricultura ✓ y desastres naturales. ✓ La migración trae consecuencias, algunas de ellas son la disminución de salarios para las mujeres ✓ la discriminación ✓...

The start of this answer has scored seven marks in just over forty words.

This contrasts with scores attained by more generalised answers, such as:

En el texto 1 se habla del cruce de fronteras de Honduras a Estados Unidos debido a condiciones de pobreza extrema ✓ en ese país, ya que no poseen ayuda económica por parte de países extranjeros. En el texto 2 se habla de la necesidad de inmigrantes para el aumento de población y mejoras demográficas del país...

This answer uses more words to score considerably fewer marks.

- (b) Many candidates scored high marks, particularly those who brought a new idea to the table, rather than relying on ideas rehashed from the source texts. Most addressed the question correctly and candidates who were less able linguistically often offered some very good answers. Some less relevant answers did not go much beyond mentioning the scale of immigration to their country, or emigration from it. Better answers included mentioning the political or economic situation that led to these changes, or included reference to changing birth rates.

Quality of Language

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

Strong candidates could correctly manipulate the source texts into excellent Spanish to display clear comprehension. Less able candidates often had difficulties with verb formation, and particularly the use of the singular or plural verb forms. The majority of candidates were of a Hispanic background and, despite

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misspellings, (particularly *v* for *b*, or vice versa, *y* for *ll*, and *c* for *s*), omission of accents and an abundance of anglicisms, generally produced answers in a good level of written Spanish.

SPANISH

<p>Paper 9719/22 Reading and Writing</p>
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Key messages

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

General comments

The challenge of this summer's paper was appropriate and the spread of marks awarded reflected the varying levels of ability of candidates. All scripts were generally well presented and response to the two texts dealing with changes to working practices was pleasing, with comprehension often clearly demonstrated. All scripts were generally well presented and there appeared to be little evidence of difficulty with time management.

Most candidates attempted all questions and appeared to be aware that they should not copy more than four consecutive words of text in their answers to the comprehension questions. It was pleasing to note skilled attempts at paraphrase. On occasions candidates answered too generally and omitted relevant detail, therefore not achieving full marks. Candidates should note the marks allocated to each question, as this is a good indication of the number of details being sought.

A few candidates still exceeded the 140 word limit in **Question 5**, thus reducing the number of marks they could score in **5(b)**. Summaries in **5(a)** 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 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), (b) and (e) were almost universally answered correctly.

(c) provided a little more difficulty in locating the correct phrase.

(d) was invalidated when otherwise correct answers were prefaced by *para*.

Question 2

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

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

(a) There was some confusion over where to place *sin que* – *sin que nos importe* / *sin que desarrollen la actividad*. In general candidates managed the subjunctive very competently. A number successfully reversed the order, placing *sin que* in the middle – *pueden desarrollar su actividad sin que nos importe el lugar* – which worked well, provided that *el lugar* / *donde* was added at the end. Sometimes *sin que (nos) importe* was replaced very acceptably by *sin que tenga importancia*.

(b) This was done very well, especially by native speakers. A small number of candidates attempted to change the cue *encarga* to *encargado* which, regardless of whether correct Spanish is produced, is not permitted.

(c) The main mistake was using the subjunctive in the past – *hayan encontrado* / *fuese encontrado* – which, unless it was used as in *para que los usuarios que no hayan encontrado Cromol pueden hacerlo*, did not work. Some candidates who had successfully answered *para que Cromol sea encontrado* missed the mark by neglecting to add *por los usuarios*.

(d) Non-native candidates found some difficulty with this structure, often trying to add *hacia* or an imperfect with *trabajar*. A few candidates did not appreciate the meaning of the phrase in its context and incorrectly offered *sin trabajar* instead of *trabajando*.

(e) As long as *mensualmente* was understood candidates had little difficulty in coming up with *una vez al / por mes*. Those who were not familiar with or who overlooked its meaning offered a number of other constructions using *vez* – *cada vez* / *de vez en cuando*, etc. – which were inappropriate here.

Question 3

The text about using technology to work at distance 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.

(a) The first two points – that nowadays people can work when and where they like – were clearly understood by the vast majority of candidates. Occasionally the second mark was invalidated if it incorporated the five word lift *pueden trabajar con un portátil*. The third point, that workers are measured by their output, was frequently overlooked.

- (b) This was another question which was generally answered well and many candidates scored maximum marks. Although the text was understood, a few candidates did not fully appreciate the question – *¿Cómo ha usado Bernal la tecnología...?* The answers needed to mention *videoconferencia / internet / red / en línea / aplicaciones*, etc. and these references were sometimes left out.
- (c) Candidates had a choice of four from five possible disadvantages of working from distance, although the inconvenience of travelling to see the boss was not mentioned that often. Two very common lifts were *de la comunicación no verbal* and especially *(transmitir) la cultura de la empresa*. The notion of ‘non-verbal communication’ did not appear to be fully understood or, if it was, candidates were often at a loss as to how to rephrase it. The ‘non’ was frequently omitted, giving the idea that the details were lost because employees communicated via internet. For the final point, the idea of ‘after work’ or ‘with colleagues’ was sometimes not mentioned.
- (d) This was a fairly straightforward question to answer, although some candidates focused solely on the spoken words and tried to make two points out of what was essentially one – *huir de costes fijos*. The majority, however, scored the maximum by also adding that *teletrabajo* is an ideal way to establish an international profile quickly.
- (e) Some difficulty was encountered with *la gente de la calle*, with some candidates referring to ‘pedestrians’ or ‘people walking in the street’ rather than the general public. Also the idea that more than one thousand people took part in a competition – rather than a video – was sometimes misunderstood. A common lift proved to be *de 50 000 euros en 2017*. (It should be remembered that numbers count as words when determining whether five or more words have been directly copied).

Section 2

Question 4

The second text, about approaches to tackling absenteeism, provided a similar challenge to the first. Candidates’ performance was marginally better.

- (a) Generalisations such as ‘absenteeism causes companies to lose a lot of money and affects productivity’ were too imprecise to score marks. It was necessary to quote, or give close approximations of, the figures given in the text. A not uncommon lift was *al 31% la pérdida de productividad*.
- (b) A small number started their answers by saying *ha aumentado un 39%* without mentioning the subject. Most were able to identify that the working day in Spain was excessively long. To score the final point about hourly productivity it was necessary to focus on the superlative force of *la más baja*.
- (c) Candidates did very well on this four mark question and many maximum scores were recorded. The four advantages of making changes to working hours – greater involvement, better time management, more job satisfaction and reduced absenteeism – were all readily identified and, if they could be suitably paraphrased, all duly rewarded.
- (d) A very common lift was *la asistencia de los empleados*, and a number of less able candidates took the meaning of *asistencia* to be ‘help’. Many scored the mark for stating that a suitable replacement for the absentee was quickly found. Although many noted that the company raised awareness of how absenteeism impacted upon the rest of the workforce, to score the mark it was necessary to mention the nature of this impact – increased stress, lower morale. For the final mark it was necessary to state the nature of the bonus received by employees with a 95 per cent attendance record – extra time off.

- (e) Only the more able candidates were able to score the two marks available here. A few directly copied *trabajo de 8 a 3*, perhaps unaware that numbers will be counted as words. Some thought that *Sajón* was advocating that a day's work should be reduced from eight hours to three. A very common lift was *la hora de máxima audiencia* and, surprisingly, a number of candidates neglected to say what this hour referred to, i.e. television.

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) High marks were scored by those who studied carefully the question which was asked, concerning *las ventajas y desventajas para el trabajador*. Many mentioned points from both texts that related to the companies, not individuals, such as *es difícil transmitir los valores de la empresa* or *no hay costes fijos* etc.

Candidates are reminded to not waste words in writing introductory sentences, such as *Las empresas crean nuevos métodos laborales para beneficiar a sus trabajadores, pero también traen desventajas*. Although this reads well for quality of language, it scores no marks for content.

It is far better to get straight into the answer as, for example:

Con el teletrabajo puedes trabajar con tu portátil desde cualquier sitio ✓ y a la hora que prefieras, ✓ lo que consigue que seas más productivo. ✓ Sin embargo hay desventajas como no poder compartir ideas con colegas ✓ ni sociabilizarte con ellos después del trabajo. ✓

The start of this answer has scored five marks in approximately forty words.

- (b) The candidates who scored full marks came up with original ideas and opinions. These included thoughts on *brecha salarial*, *mismas oportunidades de ascender para las mujeres*, *incremento de sueldos*, *más oportunidades para los recién graduados*, *mayor motivación*, *leyes sobre jubilación*, *paternidad/maternidad* etc.

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.

SPANISH

<p>Paper 9719/23 Reading and Writing</p>
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Key messages

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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) Most candidates identified the correct expression from the first paragraph of the text. Some candidates omitted *la* from the beginning of the transcription.
- (b) Most candidates identified the correct expression, but some answers were invalidated when prefaced by *con...*
- (c) As above, most were correct, but some invalidated when prefaced by *a...*
- (d) Candidates had some difficulty finding this in the text, and some who did find the relevant section began incorrectly with *ahora...* Others thought incorrectly that the equivalent of *tras volver a su pueblo* was *si regresas como yo* instead of *de nuevo en su comunidad*.
- (e) This caused many candidates difficulty. Some did not identify the need to include *apenas...*

Question 2

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

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

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

- (a) Candidates who realised that if they used *umentarse* instead of *umento* the resulting phrase would no longer fit back in the text to be followed by *...del 150%* were usually successful. However, the correct spelling of either the subjunctive or future form of *hay* proved to a challenge for some.
- (b) This was generally done well although some marks were lost when *resulta* was misinterpreted as a noun. A number of candidates changed the phrase to *resulta que todo esto es una fuerte emigración* which, although good Spanish, does not fit back into the original text with the same meaning.
- (c) A surprising number of candidates, many with a Hispanic background, appeared to be unaware that *por* is the preposition which follows *optar*. Many answers either contained the wrong preposition *a* or used no preposition at all.
- (d) This was answered well by many candidates who correctly inserted the infinitive *viajar* after *solían*. A number still unnecessarily retained *por lo general*, although this was not penalised. At times the mark was lost, either when *los* was added, which would change the meaning of the original text, or *que* was omitted. Also, some candidates either missed out *viajar*, or conjugated this as the main verb.
- (e) This was answered well by most candidates who correctly identified the need for *a/* plus the verb in the infinitive.

Question 3

The text about *hondureños* migrating and then emigrating 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.

Marks were sometimes lost here, and also in **Questions 4 and 5**, candidates confused the terms *migración*, *inmigración* and *emigración*.

- (a) This was a challenging question and needed careful attention to details of dates. Most candidates were able to grasp general trends, which was pleasing. A number of candidates muddled the chronology and incorrectly assumed that Hurricane Mitch occurred in 1990. The strongest candidates clearly expressed the scale of migration currently, including the fact that 90,000 Hondurans emigrate each year. Those who overlooked the significance of *hasta ahora* in the question went on unnecessarily to include details of future trends.
- (b) Most candidates were able to grasp some of the causes of the migratory movements, but few were successful in noting all four. The facts of rising unemployment and street crime were identified by most candidates, as was the lack of support for agriculture, but only the strongest candidates could clearly express the link between falling coffee exports and migration. Sometimes the mark could not be awarded as answers which would have otherwise been correct contained five or more words lifted directly from the text e.g. *la falta de ayudas gubernamentales* or *la exportación del café hondureño*.
- (c) Answers to this question required careful reading of the relevant paragraph. Most candidates scored at least one mark by noting either Carlos's desire to escape poverty and to make money quickly and easily, but not so many added that his motive for this was to it send to his family.
- (d) This question was well answered by the majority of candidates who identified the abuse of women and their low salaries, but fewer candidates specified exactly when women suffered discrimination. For this latter point a number appeared uncertain of the meaning of *cuando ya no son económicamente activas* and either lifted it directly from the text or focused incorrectly on a misinterpretation of *objeto*, stating that women were treated like objects in general.
- (e) This question proved to be a good discriminator requiring good use of tenses to answer, with only a minority gaining the full three marks. There were some good answers in terms of ideas of investment and increases in jobs and reducing migration. The strongest candidates were able to avoid lifting from the text by intelligently manipulating the source text, but some less able candidates lifted the ideas of *las inversiones en infraestructuras nacionales*, which could not thus be credited.

Section 2

Question 4

The second text, about emigration from Spain, proved to be more of a challenge.

- (a) This question required precise answers and accurate reading of vocabulary such as *aumento*, *incremento*, *igualar*, *menos de* and *con respecto a*. Those candidates who did not show accurate comprehension of the significance of the percentages given, and offered generic answers regarding the high level of emigration, did not score marks. The best performers correctly identified how the percentages linked to trends and when they referred to. Many candidates showed that they understood the information given about the percentage of those returning and were able to pick up at least one mark.
- (b) Candidates generally did well on this four mark question and scores of at least three were commonly recorded. A number struggled with expressing 'jobs matching her qualifications' and surprisingly few were able to show understanding of *bien remunerado* or express it in their own words. A common lift was *la ciencia en otros países*.
- (c) This was another question that depended on accurate expression of numbers and time frames. Many candidates identified the general trend, but some struggled to express clearly the idea of exactly when, and to what extent, the Spanish population was decreasing to half its size. Only the strongest candidates communicated clearly the contribution immigrants are making to the population size and how the reduction in number leaving is mitigating the problem. These last two points were sometimes wrongly generalised as *la población foránea es estable*.

- (d) This question was one of the better answered in this section with most candidates realising that more detail was needed in their answers than the unspecific *problemas económicos y políticos*. The idea of problems paying pensions was generally expressed well, as indeed was the idea of reduced influence in Europe, provided that lifts such as *pérdida de protagonismo en el mapa europeo* or *representación en las instituciones de la Unión Europea* were avoided.
- (e) The majority of candidates scored some marks here and, provided that they did not confuse *inmigración* and *emigración*, most were able to express the idea of needing more young people to immigrate. The need to reduce high unemployment was well expressed by those able to tease out the meaning of *dejen de registrarse las cifras de paro tan escandalosas*. Less success was achieved with the final point with many candidates unable to pinpoint the answer *incentivar con ayudas a la familia* and giving a generalised answer of increasing the number of children.

Question 5

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. More summaries gave specific details rather than generalisations, and the better personal responses contained opinions and original ideas. In their free-writing, many were able to write more accurately than in **Questions 3 and 4**.

- (a) There were clear differences here in scores between those who had practised this summary question, and those who were not used to the demands of the test. Some candidates had been well-prepared and selected their answers from the texts very precisely, usually achieving greater success in extracting relevant details from Text 1 rather than from Text 2. Many, though, did not answer the question and used up precious words in enumerating the possible solutions to the problems of immigration, rather than the causes and consequences. A small number of candidates wrote in general terms about migration and did not include examples from the two texts.

Highest scores were achieved by those who wrote short summaries of the key ideas in the texts, such as this:

Algunas causas de los movimientos migratorios son la pobreza, ✓ el desempleo, ✓ el crimen callejero, ✓ la falta de programas del gobierno para ayudar la agricultura ✓ y desastres naturales. ✓ La migración trae consecuencias, algunas de ellas son la disminución de salarios para las mujeres ✓ la discriminación ✓...

The start of this answer has scored seven marks in just over forty words.

This contrasts with scores attained by more generalised answers, such as:

En el texto 1 se habla del cruce de fronteras de Honduras a Estados Unidos debido a condiciones de pobreza extrema ✓ en ese país, ya que no poseen ayuda económica por parte de países extranjeros. En el texto 2 se habla de la necesidad de inmigrantes para el aumento de población y mejoras demográficas del país...

This answer uses more words to score considerably fewer marks.

- (b) Many candidates scored high marks, particularly those who brought a new idea to the table, rather than relying on ideas rehashed from the source texts. Most addressed the question correctly and candidates who were less able linguistically often offered some very good answers. Some less relevant answers did not go much beyond mentioning the scale of immigration to their country, or emigration from it. Better answers included mentioning the political or economic situation that led to these changes, or included reference to changing birth rates.

Quality of Language

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

Strong candidates could correctly manipulate the source texts into excellent Spanish to display clear comprehension. Less able candidates often had difficulties with verb formation, and particularly the use of the singular or plural verb forms. The majority of candidates were of a Hispanic background and, despite

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misspellings, (particularly *v* for *b*, or vice versa, *y* for *ll*, and *c* for *s*), omission of accents and an abundance of anglicisms, generally produced answers in a good level of written Spanish.

SPANISH

<p>Paper 9719/31 Essay</p>
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Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- select the title with which they feel most comfortable
- write a response that is clearly relevant, well illustrated, coherently structured and well informed
- use Spanish which is accurate and of a suitably advanced nature, as well as demonstrate a good use of idiom and appropriate topic-related vocabulary
- use sentence patterns which show some evidence of complexity in a style which is easy to follow.

General comments

The essay titles once again managed to differentiate well amongst the candidates, with a reasonably equitable distribution of questions attempted with some titles proving more popular than others, as is always the case. Most candidates were able to deal with the wide-ranging issues involved from a variety of different intellectual and rational standpoints. As is often the case with this paper, there were widely varying degrees of discursive analysis. Many candidates endeavoured with considerable degrees of success to engage the Examiners fully in their essay and also to convince them of their arguments in an articulate, mature and highly persuasive manner. Such candidates produced essays that were easy to read, exceptionally well structured and very often they were brimming with style and linguistic elegance.

As is to be expected, candidates in the lower range sometimes experienced difficulty in attempting to argue a particular case, both in terms of the language required to support their argument and the ability to marshal evidence in order to develop a particular point. However, in general terms, ideas were debated with enthusiasm, maturity and an appropriate level of intellectual insight. The best essays, and this will come as no surprise, showed more convincing depth and greater levels of analysis. There is a general feeling amongst Examiners that candidates approach this essay paper in a way that suggests that there is a widespread understanding of the mark scheme in so far as the importance of both language and content seems to have been taken on board.

There were still a number of essays that were too general in their interpretation of the specific issues raised by the title and which, accordingly, did not score well for content. Simply writing an essay on the theme of, for example, *La familia* will not attract decent marks when the title on the examination paper itself actually focusses on the attitude modern families should have towards their elderly relatives or on the importance of discipline as an essential element of bringing up children. It was almost as if some candidates had only registered the general topic before starting to write, without bothering to read the actual title set. Candidates who managed to maintain their focus by responding directly to the title as set out on the question paper will have been appropriately rewarded in the content section of the mark scheme

In terms of the quality of written Spanish used by candidates, there was the usual range from poor to exceptional. Many candidates showed a reasonably effective use of complex sentence structures, a wide range of vocabulary appropriate to the topic under discussion and the ability to develop their ideas in Spanish that was unaffected, clear and incisive. Candidates scored good or better marks because they kept the familiar grammatical inaccuracies and inappropriate uses of idiom to an absolute minimum. The importance of structure and, in particular, secure paragraphing was taken into account by many candidates and they were rewarded as a consequence.

In terms of the language errors most commonly made by candidates, there is (as always) very little to report that will come as a surprise to centres. Curiously this session, and this has not been noted before, quite a high number of candidates managed to confuse the word “hay” with the word “ahí” which led to utterances such as “...con respecto al turismo, ahí muchos beneficios pero también ahí muchas desventajas” (sic). Similarly, there were candidates who routinely wrote the word “jente” (sic) instead of “gente” and then went on to use a plural verb for a singular subject. Another common misunderstanding was the use of the gerund instead of a verbal noun. Accordingly, sentences such as “...viajando es mejor que quedando en casa...”(sic) were not uncommon. The most basic differences between “ser” and “estar” continued to cause trouble for a number of candidates in this session. Sentences such as “...la vida cultural es mejorando la vida en la ciudad...”(sic.) were much in evidence on occasions, despite this particular point being made in previous reports. It would be fair to say that the most common difficulties were to be found in the use of tenses and in adjectival agreements. There was also a surprisingly high number of spelling mistakes where individual letters caused trouble for candidates in phrases such as “bale la pena” (sic.), “las acciones del gobierno”(sic.), “...el desarrollo” (sic.) and “es mejor no jeneralizar...”(sic.). There also seemed to be some confusion amongst candidates with “a ser” and “hacer” which resulted in utterances such as “...la vida urbana va hacer más complicada en el futuro...”(sic.). There was also a widespread tendency to omit accents from the vast majority of words where they are required. Unsurprisingly, in some cases the lack of accents affected accuracy and clarity, particularly when it came to tenses (tomo/tomó, mandara/mandará and so on). Once again this session, there was a marked tendency to drop the letter ‘h’ in the perfect tense with utterances such as “...el asunto a sido discutido ...” (sic.) and “...muchos gobiernos an aprendido a respetar las necesidades de sus ciudadanos...” (sic.) which, of course, tended to spoil many otherwise reasonably well written essays.

Examples of good use of the language included:

- The use of a wide range of appropriately topic-related vocabulary and idiom.
- The accurate use of adjectives and adverbs to enrich the variety of language offered in the essay.
- Tenses being kept under control and used appropriately and in the right context.
- The intelligent use of expressions designed specifically to enhance structure (e.g. por otra parte, no obstante, sin embargo, a decir la verdad, al fin y al cabo etc.)
- The sensible use of connectives in order to lengthen sentences and give them more complexity whilst not sacrificing clarity.
- Correct spelling of lexical items regardless of their complexity.
- Being able to use Spanish accents in a consistently fit and proper fashion.
- Accurate punctuation.

Common errors included:

- Confusion between hay, tener and ser.
- Confusion between the letters “s” and “c” with examples such as “internasional”(sic.) and “convensional”(sic.).
- Adjectives of nationality being written with capital letters.
- The use of “porque de” (sic.) to translate “because of”.
- Poor use of the personal a and prepositions in general.
- Incorrect spelling of key words such as “el desarrollo”(sic.), “desafortunamente”(sic.), “el problema”(sic.) and “problamente” (sic.).
- Misunderstanding of the differences between “hay” and “es/tiene”.
- Writing Spanish as it sounds. For example “la jente”(sic.), “alludar”(sic.), “aci”(sic.) and “asta” (sic.).
- Use of gerunds for infinitives in utterances such as “En la familia, hablando a tus padres es importante...”(sic.)

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 La familia

¿Cuál debería ser la actitud de la familia moderna hacia sus miembros ancianos?

This was a rather popular title with candidates adopting an understandably wide range of responses. Good answers were often characterised by a variety of points stating how older family members had looked after them and that they, in turn, should therefore be treated with love and care for this reason above all others. The best answers were inclined to point out the difficulties of keeping up with a hectic life style and having

the patience to cope with physically, and sometimes mentally, weak grandparents who were often critical of the modern ways and manners of their offspring.

Question 2 La vida urbana y la vida rural

“La ciudad moderna puede ofrecer una buena calidad de vida a todos sus habitantes”. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

This was also popular title. The very best answers tended to provide a balanced and thoughtful response with examples of the advantages of city life whilst also pointing out the obvious drawbacks of noise, crowds and traffic congestion. The weakest answers were extremely one-sided and mainly consisted of personal anecdotes or the repetition of a single point such as environmental pollution caused by traffic. The general consensus, nevertheless, appeared to be that the quality of life offered in cities is generally very good indeed.

Question 3 La filosofía y la creencia

“La tolerancia entre diferentes creencias es esencial”. ¿Qué opinas tú?

This was a less popular title on the paper. Most essays, however, were keen to point out not just the need for tolerance towards different religions but also towards other people’s opinions in general, with the proviso that these beliefs were not intended to harm others. The consequences of a lack of such tolerance were well documented by the best essays and some even made reference to historical events and conflicts which proved the point.

Question 4 El turismo

“Es obvio que el turismo trae beneficios a todos”. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

This was the most popular title on the paper. Most essays were generally well documented and appropriately structured. Candidates were anxious to highlight the obvious economic advantages of tourism. The best essays backed up this fundamental point with specific examples and also highlighted the negative aspects of tourism with increased demand on resources, pollution and the potential loss of national cultures and identities. Some essays went on to suggest that every popular tourist destination should levy a ‘tourist tax’ in order to preserve the local environment.

Question 5 La vida cultural y el patrimonio

“El principal objetivo del cine contemporáneo es hacer dinero”. ¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo?

There were comparatively few attempts at this title, perhaps unsurprisingly. The level of enthusiasm for the cinema amongst those who actually attempted the title was, however, most apparent. The best essays argued somewhat convincingly that the more important contemporary film makers, whilst needing to return a profit on investment, also produced films that had a political, social or emotional impact on the cinema-going public.

SPANISH

<p>Paper 9719/32 Essay</p>
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Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- select the title with which they feel most comfortable
- write a response that is clearly relevant, well illustrated, coherently structured and well informed;
- use Spanish which is accurate and of a suitably advanced nature, as well as demonstrate a good use of idiom and appropriate topic-related vocabulary;
- use sentence patterns which show some evidence of complexity in a style which is easy to follow.

General comments

The clear impression during this session was that the essay titles once again managed to differentiate well amongst the candidates, with a reasonably equitable distribution of questions attempted with some titles proving more popular than others, as is always the case. Most candidates were able to deal with the wide-ranging issues involved from a variety of different intellectual and rational standpoints. As is often the case with this paper, there were widely varying degrees of discursive analysis. Many candidates endeavoured with considerable degrees of success to engage the Examiners fully in their essay and also to convince them of their arguments in an articulate, mature and highly persuasive manner. Such candidates produced essays that were easy to read, exceptionally well structured and very often they were brimming with style and linguistic panache. Often, such essays were not just easy to read, they were indeed a pleasure to read.

As is to be expected, candidates in the lower range sometimes experienced difficulty in attempting to argue a particular case, both in terms of the language required to support their argument and the ability to marshal evidence in order to develop a particular point. However, in general terms, ideas were debated with enthusiasm, maturity and an appropriate level of intellectual insight. The best essays, and this will come as no surprise, showed more convincing depth and greater levels of analysis. There is a general feeling amongst Examiners that candidates approach this essay paper in a way that suggests that there is a widespread understanding of the mark scheme in so far as the importance of both language and content seems to have been taken on board.

However, a number of essays that were too general in their interpretation of the specific issues raised by the title and which, accordingly, did not score well for content. Simply writing an essay on the theme of, for example, *La familia* will not attract decent marks when the title on the examination paper itself actually focusses on the attitude modern families should have towards their elderly relatives or on the importance of discipline as an essential element of bringing up children. Candidates who managed to maintain their focus by responding directly to the title as set out on the question paper will have been appropriately rewarded in the content section of the mark scheme. We remind candidates and Centres that the answers must be directly related to the question set out in the paper.

In terms of the quality of written Spanish used by candidates, there was the usual range from poor to exceptional. Many candidates showed a reasonably effective use of complex sentence structures, a wide range of vocabulary appropriate to the topic under discussion and the ability to develop their ideas in Spanish that was unaffected, clear and incisive.

Good candidates were able to make Spanish grammar work with them, not against them and they succeeded both in terms of language and content because their grasp of advanced grammar was secure and they played to their linguistic strengths.

However, there was much evidence of an increasingly poor use of punctuation. There were times when there were no signs whatsoever of punctuation being used in paragraphs that were several lines long. This renders full understanding of what a candidate is attempting to communicate very difficult. If an Examiner cannot follow the line of thought in an essay because the candidate has opted to ignore basic punctuation (full stops, commas, capital letters to begin sentences and so on) marks for content and language will be lower than would otherwise be the case. This is inevitable and unfortunate and yet it is easily avoided. Punctuation must be seen not as merely desirable but as absolutely essential to the process of essay writing.

On the other hand, the number of essays that exceeded the stipulated word limit of 250–400 words is getting lower with each session. Centres would do well to ensure that they continue to pass on the information regarding the word limit to all their candidates in such a way that there can be no doubt or misinterpretation whatsoever of this regulation. Writing in excess of the stated word limit will not result in better marks.

In terms of the language errors most commonly made by candidates, this session, and this has not been noted before, quite a high number of candidates managed to confuse the word “hay” with the word “ahí” which led to utterances such as “...con respecto al turismo, ahí muchos beneficios pero también ahí muchas desventajas” (sic). Similarly, there were candidates who routinely wrote the word “jente” (sic) instead of “gente” and then went on to use a plural verb for a singular subject. Another common misunderstanding was the use of the gerund instead of a verbal noun. Accordingly, sentences such as “...viajando es mejor que quedando en casa...”(sic) were not uncommon. The most basic differences between “ser” and “estar” continued to cause trouble for a number of candidates in this session. Sentences such as “...la vida cultural es mejorando la vida en la ciudad...”(sic.) were much in evidence on occasions, despite this particular point being made in previous reports. It would be fair to say that the most common difficulties were to be found in the use of tenses and in adjectival agreements. There was also a surprisingly high number of spelling mistakes where individual letters caused trouble for candidates in phrases such as “bale la pena” (sic.), “las acciones del gobierno” (sic.), “...el desarrollo” (sic.) and “es mejor no jeneralizar...”(sic.). There also seemed to be some confusion amongst candidates with “a ser” and “hacer” which resulted in utterances such as “...la vida urbana va hacer más complicada en el futuro...” (sic.). There was also a widespread tendency to omit accents from the vast majority of words where they are required. Unsurprisingly, in some cases the lack of accents affected accuracy and clarity, particularly when it came to tenses (tomo/tomé, mandara/mandará and so on). Once again this session, there was a marked tendency to drop the letter ‘h’ in the perfect tense with utterances such as “...el asunto a sido discutido ...” (sic.) and “...muchos gobiernos an aprendido a respetar las necesidades de sus ciudadanos...” (sic.) which, of course, tended to spoil many otherwise reasonably well written essays.

Examples of good use of the language included:

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- Use of gerunds for infinitives in utterances such as “En la familia, hablando a tus padres es importante...” (sic.)

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 La familia

“La disciplina es solo un aspecto de criar a los niños”. ¿Qué opinas tú?

This was a popular title with candidates. The range of responses was impressive, often because candidates were able to draw upon personal experience to illustrate their points. The better essays stated not just the reasons why discipline is important but also highlighted the need for other values to be inculcated in children at a very early age. Some candidates were also keen to point out that too harsh a discipline without rewards could have an adverse effect in the long run.

Question 2 La vida urbana y la vida rural

“La vida urbana no trae nada más que estrés y ansiedad”. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

This was also a popular title with many candidates listing the possible causes of stress in an urban environment and the consequences this can have of the individual’s state of mental health. Many essays also counterbalanced this by showing how city life can provide a range of factors which reduce stress, namely ease of employment, a variety of entertainment and improved transport infrastructure.

Question 3 La filosofía y la creencia

“Cada persona necesita elaborar su propia filosofía de la vida”. ¿Qué opinas tú?

Those candidates who responded to the title managed to produce detailed arguments supported by relevant examples in order to reinforce the points they were attempting to make.

Question 4 El turismo

“El respeto hacia los habitantes debe ser un elemento esencial de cualquier desarrollo turístico”. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

This relatively popular title was dealt with well by most candidates who endeavoured to highlight the fact that tourists often seemed to regard a foreign country (and its culture) as fair game for mockery and destructive negligence. The best essays attempted to suggest possible solutions (tourist tax, more local police in resorts and so on) yet remained realistic in pointing out the inevitability of pandering to the huge sums of money generated year on year by the tourist trade. Most essays went on to suggest that respect needs to go both ways given that the residents in many tourist resorts can often benefit directly from the tourist trade.

Question 5 La vida cultural y el patrimonio

**“La vida cultural de hoy no se concentra suficientemente en el desarrollo intelectual del individuo”.
¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo?**

The few essays that were produced were articulate and intellectually sound and often were critical of the increasing popularity of cultural trends that worship at the altar of modern celebrity. Such essays made much of the interplay between culture and an individual's intellectual development.

SPANISH

<p>Paper 9719/33 Essay</p>
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Key messages

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There were still a number of essays that were too general in their interpretation of the specific issues raised by the title and which, accordingly, did not score well for content. Simply writing an essay on the theme of, for example, *La familia* will not attract decent marks when the title on the examination paper itself actually focusses on the attitude modern families should have towards their elderly relatives or on the importance of discipline as an essential element of bringing up children. It was almost as if some candidates had only registered the general topic before starting to write, without bothering to read the actual title set. Candidates who managed to maintain their focus by responding directly to the title as set out on the question paper will have been appropriately rewarded in the content section of the mark scheme

In terms of the quality of written Spanish used by candidates, there was the usual range from poor to exceptional. Many candidates showed a reasonably effective use of complex sentence structures, a wide range of vocabulary appropriate to the topic under discussion and the ability to develop their ideas in Spanish that was unaffected, clear and incisive. Candidates scored good or better marks because they kept the familiar grammatical inaccuracies and inappropriate uses of idiom to an absolute minimum. The importance of structure and, in particular, secure paragraphing was taken into account by many candidates and they were rewarded as a consequence.

In terms of the language errors most commonly made by candidates, there is (as always) very little to report that will come as a surprise to centres. Curiously this session, and this has not been noted before, quite a high number of candidates managed to confuse the word “hay” with the word “ahí” which led to utterances such as “...con respecto al turismo, ahí muchos beneficios pero también ahí muchas desventajas” (sic). Similarly, there were candidates who routinely wrote the word “jente” (sic) instead of “gente” and then went on to use a plural verb for a singular subject. Another common misunderstanding was the use of the gerund instead of a verbal noun. Accordingly, sentences such as “...viajando es mejor que quedando en casa...”(sic) were not uncommon. The most basic differences between “ser” and “estar” continued to cause trouble for a number of candidates in this session. Sentences such as “...la vida cultural es mejorando la vida en la ciudad...”(sic.) were much in evidence on occasions, despite this particular point being made in previous reports. It would be fair to say that the most common difficulties were to be found in the use of tenses and in adjectival agreements. There was also a surprisingly high number of spelling mistakes where individual letters caused trouble for candidates in phrases such as “bale la pena” (sic.), “las acciones del gobierno”(sic.), “...el desarrollo” (sic.) and “es mejor no jeneralizar...”(sic.). There also seemed to be some confusion amongst candidates with “a ser” and “hacer” which resulted in utterances such as “...la vida urbana va hacer más complicada en el futuro...”(sic.). There was also a widespread tendency to omit accents from the vast majority of words where they are required. Unsurprisingly, in some cases the lack of accents affected accuracy and clarity, particularly when it came to tenses (tomo/tomó, mandara/mandará and so on). Once again this session, there was a marked tendency to drop the letter ‘h’ in the perfect tense with utterances such as “...el asunto a sido discutido ...” (sic.) and “...muchos gobiernos an aprendido a respetar las necesidades de sus ciudadanos...” (sic.) which, of course, tended to spoil many otherwise reasonably well written essays.

Examples of good use of the language included:

- The use of a wide range of appropriately topic-related vocabulary and idiom.
- The accurate use of adjectives and adverbs to enrich the variety of language offered in the essay.
- Tenses being kept under control and used appropriately and in the right context.
- The intelligent use of expressions designed specifically to enhance structure (e.g. por otra parte, no obstante, sin embargo, a decir la verdad, al fin y al cabo etc.)
- The sensible use of connectives in order to lengthen sentences and give them more complexity whilst not sacrificing clarity.
- Correct spelling of lexical items regardless of their complexity.
- Being able to use Spanish accents in a consistently fit and proper fashion.
- Accurate punctuation.

Common errors included:

- Confusion between hay, tener and ser.
- Confusion between the letters “s” and “c” with examples such as “internasional”(sic.) and “convensional”(sic.).
- Adjectives of nationality being written with capital letters.
- The use of “porque de” (sic.) to translate “because of”.
- Poor use of the personal a and prepositions in general.
- Incorrect spelling of key words such as “el desarrollo”(sic.), “desafortunamente”(sic.), “el problema”(sic.) and “problamente” (sic.).
- Misunderstanding of the differences between “hay” and “es/tiene”.
- Writing Spanish as it sounds. For example “la jente”(sic.), “alludar”(sic.), “aci”(sic.) and “asta” (sic.).
- Use of gerunds for infinitives in utterances such as “En la familia, hablando a tus padres es importante...”(sic.)

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 La familia

¿Cuál debería ser la actitud de la familia moderna hacia sus miembros ancianos?

This was a rather popular title with candidates adopting an understandably wide range of responses. Good answers were often characterised by a variety of points stating how older family members had looked after them and that they, in turn, should therefore be treated with love and care for this reason above all others. The best answers were inclined to point out the difficulties of keeping up with a hectic life style and having

the patience to cope with physically, and sometimes mentally, weak grandparents who were often critical of the modern ways and manners of their offspring.

Question 2 La vida urbana y la vida rural

“La ciudad moderna puede ofrecer una buena calidad de vida a todos sus habitantes”. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

This was also popular title. The very best answers tended to provide a balanced and thoughtful response with examples of the advantages of city life whilst also pointing out the obvious drawbacks of noise, crowds and traffic congestion. The weakest answers were extremely one-sided and mainly consisted of personal anecdotes or the repetition of a single point such as environmental pollution caused by traffic. The general consensus, nevertheless, appeared to be that the quality of life offered in cities is generally very good indeed.

Question 3 La filosofía y la creencia

“La tolerancia entre diferentes creencias es esencial”. ¿Qué opinas tú?

This was a less popular title on the paper. Most essays, however, were keen to point out not just the need for tolerance towards different religions but also towards other people’s opinions in general, with the proviso that these beliefs were not intended to harm others. The consequences of a lack of such tolerance were well documented by the best essays and some even made reference to historical events and conflicts which proved the point.

Question 4 El turismo

“Es obvio que el turismo trae beneficios a todos”. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

This was the most popular title on the paper. Most essays were generally well documented and appropriately structured. Candidates were anxious to highlight the obvious economic advantages of tourism. The best essays backed up this fundamental point with specific examples and also highlighted the negative aspects of tourism with increased demand on resources, pollution and the potential loss of national cultures and identities. Some essays went on to suggest that every popular tourist destination should levy a ‘tourist tax’ in order to preserve the local environment.

Question 5 La vida cultural y el patrimonio

“El principal objetivo del cine contemporáneo es hacer dinero”. ¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo?

There were comparatively few attempts at this title, perhaps unsurprisingly. The level of enthusiasm for the cinema amongst those who actually attempted the title was, however, most apparent. The best essays argued somewhat convincingly that the more important contemporary film makers, whilst needing to return a profit on investment, also produced films that had a political, social or emotional impact on the cinema-going public.

SPANISH

<p>Paper 9719/41 Texts</p>
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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.

- Keep focused on the question being answered. Candidates are advised to check back to the Question Paper frequently to ensure that they have not veered away from the question. A useful technique is to make reference to the question in the final sentence of each paragraph, showing how it relates to the answer. The conclusion must refer clearly to the question.
- All questions have key words which are essential to the response. Candidates need to deal with these as a central aspect of their essays. When choosing which question to answer, ensure that the entire question is clearly understood before beginning to write.
- The opening paragraph should relate directly to the question. Candidates may define their terms or state the outline of the argument to be presented. Examiners actively discourage a biography of the author or general introduction to his or her work. This tends to take up a lot of time and words, which then leave candidates with less opportunity to deal with the question in depth.
- If the text studied has an important historical context, (e.g. the *Mexican Revolution*, the *Spanish Civil War*), candidates must have a solid understanding of this so that any references are accurate. Examiners do not expect to see a detailed historical study, but incorrect references detract from the overall standard of the essay.
- Each text should be treated separately, as literary techniques, themes or settings are not necessarily relevant to more than one author. There has been an increasing tendency to relate magical realism, for example, incorrectly, to other texts such as the plays of García Lorca. There has also been confusion over whether texts are based in South America or Spain.

General comments

Candidates were well prepared for the examination and there were very few instances of rubric infringement. The majority of candidates had prepared the texts thoroughly and showed knowledge and understanding in their answers.

Differential in marks awarded was generally based on the quality of the answer, in terms of focused response, use of material from the text to support the argument and a well-argued, well-structured and thoughtful essay. There was still much narration, but the majority was relevant. Candidates need to try to be more analytical in their approach and consider the text as a whole. Examiners welcome individual approaches to the questions set, provided they are justified and explored appropriately according to the question.

We remind Candidates that they must write legibly as examiners can only mark what they can read.

Comments on specific questions

Comments here give an outline of the content and approach which could be expected, although not all of these elements would necessarily be included in a single response. In addition, there are observations from specific examples seen in essays, which are intended to help future candidates.

Section 1

Candidates are reminded that the answers to parts (i) and (ii) of the **Part (a)** questions, prompted by the printed extract, should refer specifically to the extract and should be short, i.e. from one word to two sentences in length. Part (iii) should encompass the whole text and constitute the vast majority of the overall response.

Question 1

Pérez Galdós: *Misericordia*

- (a) Most answers showed understanding of the historical context, referring to a period before the old order was overthrown and families such as Doña Paca's were wealthy and had status. In (ii), Paca's self-centred nature was mentioned and her lack of awareness of material concerns, or Benina's efforts. In (iii), Paca typified the impoverished middle classes still determined to maintain an illusion of status and the importance of appearances. Quotations such as '*Pero a dónde voy con esta facha, sin ropa decente, temiendo tropezarme a cada paso con personas que me conocieron en otra posición...*' were used appropriately and Frasquito Ponte was also analysed as another example of someone in the same predicament. Many referred to Galdós' objective presentation of the situation, allowing readers to perceive faults in the characters through interaction with others, and the importance of the use of dialogue in the novel. It was noted that changes in circumstance were not a result of fate but rather consequent on changes in politics and society as well as personal failings. Many compared Paca and Benina, showing how Paca's sense of entitlement permeated the way she treated Benina, and her lack of true interest in Benina's life. Most essays gave some thought to the end of the novel, where wealth could be said to have a malign influence and the values of Paca and her family contrasted sharply with those of Benina and Almudena.
- (b) This question focused on the nature of happiness. The majority of responses centred on Benina, showing her charity, kindness, selflessness and how she found happiness in helping others and feeling needed. Benina was often compared with Paca and her family, who seemed to believe that it was not possible to be happy without wealth and status. The best answers dealt with the more spiritual aspects with reference to characters such as Almudena and with less obvious sources of happiness such as Ponte's nostalgic reveries. The Christian concept of morality in loving one's neighbour was also considered, particularly in the light of the presence of the Church in the novel.

Question 2

Lope de Vega: *El caballero de Olmedo*

- (a) (i) (ii) Answers to (i) and (ii) were generally correct. Some did not mention Jesus in (ii).
- (iii) Fabia's role (iii) tended to be described rather than analysed. One of the main arguments to consider was whether Fabia was simply a comedy character in the play or whether she practised magic which changed the course of events, and therefore could be seen as a sorceress. The most successful answers analysed her role in the relationship between Alonso and Inés, finding that the lovers were genuinely attracted making her contribution dramatic, increasing the tension and interest for the audience. She also played a thematic role in giving Alonso sensible advice and warnings, possibly emphasising failings in his judgement. There was a degree of ambiguity as the Sombra in Act III said that 'una Fabia' taught him the song foretelling the death of Alonso. The conclusion generally found that Fabia was not a sinister character.
- (b) This was the more popular of the options on this text. The best responses showed understanding of the code of morals of the time, specifically the expectations on knights such as Alonso and Rodrigo. The title of the play highlights Alonso's rank in the 'caballería', and draws the audience's attention to the responsibilities and expectations associated with it. There were analyses of the nature of 'good' and 'bad' within the setting of the play and the moral judgements made by various characters. Most candidates argued that many individuals acted in a way unbecoming their role in society and were punished for it. Some did not make note of the word '*bruta*' in the question; the outcome of the play was certainly violent and all suffered in one way or another. The role of the King was important in determining the punishments of some in order to re-establish social harmony and the rule of law.

Question 3

Laura Esquivel: *Como agua para chocolate*

- (a) (i) Part (i) referred to Pedro and his father, Don Pascual.
- (ii) Tita felt betrayed by Pedro, hence her polite but distant response.
- (iii) There were many good responses to (iii). Nacha was more of a parent to Tita than her own mother, showing her love and respect. Tita was treated more as a servant by the rest of her family and the kitchen became her home, with Nacha. As well as teaching Tita to cook, giving her a role in the household, Nacha passed on her folk knowledge and native heritage. This could be seen as part of the social comment in the novel in that Nacha was less educated but wiser and more knowledgeable than Mamá Elena. Whereas both Nacha and Mamá Elena had suffered emotionally in the past, Nacha was able to nurture and care for others; Mamá Elena took out her resentment on her daughters. Nacha's affection for Tita continued from beyond the grave as she appeared to give advice and support whenever Tita needed it. Mamá Elena's ghost was as malevolent as she was. Tita's relationship with Nacha was key to the development of her own maternal instincts, essential to the upbringing of Roberto (until he was taken from her), and Esperanza. The way Tita was able to care for the children contrasted with the reactions of their own mother, Rosaura, who had been raised by Mamá Elena, not Nacha. Elements of magical realism were also central to both Tita and Nacha.
- (b) The majority of the answers agreed that selfishness did not lead to happiness and concentrated on Tita and the way Mamá Elena's selfish and uncaring attitude caused her suffering. Some candidates showed sympathy for Mamá Elena as she had suffered also, but decided that she did not deserve happiness. There was also analysis of Pedro, Rosaura and Doctor Brown, with differing interpretations of their roles. Gertrudis was often omitted, or censured for abandoning her mother and sisters. Another view was that as a result of the food prepared by Tita, Gertrudis was compelled to leave and follow her own path, becoming a respected military leader in the Revolution and a role model. Tita gave her impetus to do this; a further example of Tita's unselfish, generous attitude was also shown in her influence on Esperanza, to give hope for the women of the future. Did Tita achieve happiness or contentment? Most felt that she did. The break with tradition, the banishing of Mamá Elena's ghost, and the consummation of her relationship with Pedro pointed to this.

Question 4

Rodolfo Usigli: *El gesticulador*

- (a) (i) In (i), Elena expressed her sense of vulnerability as they were new to the area and strangers could be a threat to the family's safety.
- (ii) In (ii), César was more concerned with making a good impression and protecting the reputation of Mexicans.
- (iii) Bolton's role in the play (iii) was crucial in several ways. The best answers showed how Bolton instigated the central deception, therefore driving the momentum of the plot, and creating an important distinction of before and after his arrival – before, César was only a failed university lecturer; after, he had the possibility of a new life and fame. In addition, Bolton's career as an academic was important as it provided a direct comparison with César, and between Mexico and the United States. Bolton had a car, status, and money; higher education was clearly better funded and respected in the US. The possibility of the US financing a new university mirrored involvement by the more powerful neighbour in other areas as well as appealing to the vanity of César. These themes were further developed in the higher scoring essays.
- (b) This question asked candidates to analyse the theme of identity, which is central to the play. Essentially a large number of essays discussed the importance of mistaken/assumed identity and focused on César. The best answers widened the analysis to deal with issues of national identity. It was helpful to consider the meaning of 'identity'. Is it a set, defined condition? César's family had deceived others in their past by pretending to be more wealthy than they were. 'Identity' may be malleable and fragile. Julia was defined by other peoples' opinion of her. How did Mexicans identify

themselves after the Revolution – was the identity of Rubio accepted because the people needed a national figurehead? False identity was central to both the conflict and the solution of the play. The ambiguity evident in the play was also analysed.

Section 2

Question 5

Ramón J. Sender: *Réquiem por un campesino español*

- (a) Candidates were asked to analyse the role of El Monaguillo; the first task was to identify this character and place him correctly in the relevant period of time within the novel. He served Mosén Millán in the present time as an altar boy immediately before the Requiem Mass, reporting back to his master on arrivals for the Mass. In addition, he recited part of the 'romance' about Paco, thus prompting memories for Mosén Millán and linking the two time frames. The Monaguillo served an important function in the structure of the novel, and echoed Paco's own role as assistant to the same master in the past. The Church was a key influence and control in the lives of the villagers; Paco's questioning of Mosén Millán's practise of the faith, his betrayal of Paco and collusion in his execution pointed to failure of care and Christian charity by the Church. The most successful essays analysed these points and used references to the text effectively. The fact that El Monaguillo related both events in the present, and the folk memory of Paco, seemed to highlight Mosén Millán's increasing distance from the people, which could be said to reflect the changing role of the Church and indicate its stance in the coming Civil War.
- (b) This was the more popular option on the text. The consensus was that this is a political novel. The best candidates used their knowledge of the historical background sparingly and accurately, noting the reference to the departure of the King, which places the action pre - Civil War. The tone of the work was interpreted as critical of society and the power structures at the time, with special reference to the role of the Church and the landowners. Paco was seen as an objective witness of the inequalities in society and the lack of interest in those who could have helped. The incident in the caves was important in Paco's understanding of Mosén Millán and of the plight of his neighbours. Paco became a political figure in order to improve the lives of others; the landowners wanted to protect their own interests and the Church colluded with reactionary powers and individuals. The culmination of this was the betrayal of Paco by his priest. The absence of villagers at the Requiem was interpreted as a political act, ignoring the false piety of those guilty for Paco's death, who had arranged the Mass. The novel also showed the use of unjustified and extreme violence foreshadowing the war.

Question 6

Isabel Allende: *Eva Luna*

- (a) Many candidates chose this question. The best answers included analysis of the importance of Melecio/Mimí in the life of Eva, in the main narrative thread of the novel, and also how he/she represented a character in his/her own right, opening up the argument to a study of the broader themes of the text. Thus Eva learned about courage and determination in the face of prejudice and the need for tenacity in following one's own path. Mimí was the person who not only acted as a sister for Eva in looking after her but also bought her a typewriter to encourage her to fulfil her ambition to be a writer. Candidates knew the text well and generally used references to good effect. The better essays set out the argument at the beginning, often noting the different stages in Melecio/Mimí's life and how his/her development interacted with Eva. Many emphasised how Melecio/Mimí's first hand experience of state corruption, arrest and the power of the media all contributed to the wide scope of the novel. This character reflected changes in society as well as being a warm and supportive friend to Eva, providing her with a home and substitute family, responding to Eva's needs at different stages of her life.
- (b) This was also a popular question. Candidates needed to plan the thread of the argument and follow this through to avoid over-emphasis on narration and generalised comments. The question referred to the power balance between men and women so this had to be addressed. The best answers then went on to analyse how the novel takes this theme further, to encompass politics, social comment and issues of personal freedom, for example. Responses which dealt with other aspects of the novel unrelated to this theme were not appropriate. Candidates showed detailed knowledge of the text and seemed to respond positively to the issues raised and the characters portrayed.

Question 7

Federico García Lorca: *La casa de Bernarda Alba*

- (a) The vast majority of candidates chose to write on this text and this was the more popular option. The most common approach was focused on “*callar*”, with studies of Bernarda’s control of her daughters’ lives (and those of other members of the household), often emphasising ‘*¡Silencio!*’ in a range of contexts. This was generally done well, with good use of references. The best answers included an analysis of ‘*bordar*’, which brought in the wider issues of the role of women in society. These also included discussion of expectations dependent on status, including the experiences of the servants. María Josefa was used by Lorca to expand the theme, and some responses showed sensitivity to the use of poetry within the play to emphasise this. The sense of irony was effectively analysed too.
- (b) Many answered this option also. The theme of envy or jealousy was well understood. The best essays encompassed a wide range of examples, from the more obvious one of Martirio to the longing of Magdalena to work outside, La Poncia’s resentment of Bernarda’s hold over her and the Mendiga’s envy of the perks of left-overs enjoyed by the Criada. The overall sense of claustrophobia and the impossibility of escape or change was an important background issue. Most candidates referred to Lorca’s use of symbols and images to convey this and showed sensitivity to the language throughout the play. It was important to ensure that all details were accurate – there were a number of essays where the names of the daughters were muddled up and the sequence of events at the end of the play was incorrect. Candidates are encouraged to check this as such errors detract from the overall essay and often lead to a confused argument.

Question 8

Varios, ed. Gordon Brotherston: *Spanish American Modernista Poets: A critical anthology*

- (a) There was a relatively small number of responses to this question, as is frequently the case with a new text. Candidates who chose the question showed sensitivity to the use of language but needed to explore the themes in greater depth. Examiners are open to widely differing approaches to essays on poetry, providing the candidate understands the literary techniques employed and can substantiate the argument with reference to the poem itself. Essays should include detailed analysis of use of language as well as a broader discussion of the themes and an understanding of the impact of the poem as a whole.
- (b) As with the other option on this text, there were fewer answers on this text overall. Candidates were free to choose any three poems from the whole anthology as the basis of a close study to support their response to the question. Examiners welcome an individual approach and encourage candidates to explore the theme as they wish, provided the argument can be supported with close reference to the required number of poems.

SPANISH

<p>Paper 9719/42 Texts</p>
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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.

- Keep focused on the question being answered. Candidates are advised to check back to the Question Paper frequently to ensure that they have not veered away from the question. A useful technique is to make reference to the question in the final sentence of each paragraph, showing how it relates to the answer. The conclusion must refer clearly to the question.
- All questions have key words which are essential to the response. Candidates need to deal with these as a central aspect of their essays. When choosing which question to answer, ensure that the entire question is clearly understood before beginning to write.
- The opening paragraph should relate directly to the question. Candidates may define their terms or state the outline of the argument to be presented. Writing a biography of the author or general introduction to his or her work is discouraged. This tends to take up a lot of time and words, which then leave candidates with less opportunity to deal with the question in depth.
- If the text studied has an important historical context, (e.g. the Mexican Revolution, the Spanish Civil War), candidates must have a solid understanding of this so that any references are accurate. Examiners do not expect to see a detailed historical study, but incorrect references detract from the overall standard of the essay.
- Each text should be treated separately as literary techniques, themes or settings are not necessarily relevant to more than one author. There has been an increasing tendency to relate magical realism, for example, incorrectly, to other texts such as the plays of García Lorca. There has also been confusion over whether texts are based in South America or Spain.

General comments

Candidates were well prepared for the examination and there were very few instances of rubric infringement. The majority of candidates had prepared the texts thoroughly and showed knowledge and understanding in their answers.

Differential in marks awarded was generally based on the quality of the answer, in terms of focused response, use of material from the text to support the argument and a well-argued, well-structured and thoughtful essay. There was still much narration, but the majority was relevant. Candidates need to try to be more analytical in their approach and consider the text as a whole. Examiners welcome individual approaches to the questions set, provided they are justified and explored appropriately according to the question.

We remind Candidates to write legibly as Examiners can only mark what they can read.

Comments on specific questions

Comments here give an outline of the content and approach which could be expected from candidates at the top of the mark range. It would not be expected that all of these elements would be included in a single response. In addition, specific examples seen in essays, which are intended to help future candidates.

Section 1

Question 1

Benito Pérez Galdós: *Misericordia*

- (a) (i) In (i), most candidates identified Obdulia and Ponte as the speakers.
- (ii) In (ii), there were some over-long responses; it was sufficient to state that one way of surviving for both characters was to remember the past and use their imagination as escapism.
- (iii) Most answers to (iii) concentrated on Benina and her generous nature and compared her to Paca, who was not condemned by Galdós, rather her personal failings gave rise to pity, with the exception of her treatment of Benina at the end of the novel. The general situation of virtually all the characters being poor aroused the readers' sympathy from the start. Many essays presented detailed character analyses with details of the tone of description, the use of dialogue and physical attributes including dress to give a full picture of the individuals.
- (b) This question asked candidates to analyse the physical, spiritual and moral effects of poverty. The majority of answers followed the structure suggested in the question and dealt with each aspect in turn. A useful approach was also to consider which characters were born poor and which became poor, to analyse how this affected their reactions. A number of candidates tended to describe rather than analyse and did not manage to construct an argument. They had considerable knowledge of the text and were loath to leave out long quotations and extended references to incidents or conversations. Careful planning before writing the essay would be helpful. The conclusion tended to be that some individuals coped better than others (Benina, Almudena, Ponte to some extent) whilst Paca, Juliana and Obdulia needed material wealth and had a different value system.

Question 2

Lope de Vega: *El caballero de Olmedo*

- (a) (i)(ii) Both parts (i) and (ii) were generally answered correctly as Alonso; and the fact that Inés was pretending to want to become a nun.
- (iii) Part (iii) asked candidates to analyse the theme of deception. The best answers found a number of different aspects to the theme; self-deception, deliberate subterfuge, plot complications, the actions of Fabia and Tello. Candidates then determined the nature of the deception and its instigators and the effects caused to other individuals and the plot or theme. Some instances were seen as more serious than others, with significant consequences. Fabia and Tello's activities were generally seen as entertainment rather than witchcraft, although the fact that Alonso was drawn into their lies suggested failing in his character. There was an ironic element also in that Inés was wrongly deceived that her father would not accept Alonso as a suitor. Rodrigo's reaction to the Inés's deception of him was prompted by the values of the time, where personal honour and reputation were key factors. Thus some essays succeeded in relating the theme firmly to the social mores and the responsibilities of rank at the time of writing. Most successfully identified the structural role of deception in driving the plot, and its thematic role.
- (b) In this question, candidates were asked to analyse the premise that there were no villains as such in the play, rather all characters were essentially honest, but behaved badly in the circumstances and were punished as a result. No-one, even Rodrigo, seemed inherently evil. Even Fabia was more of a comedy character than a sorceress. Alonso appeared almost perfect, behaving impeccably to all other individuals including Fabia and Tello, and saved Rodrigo's life at some threat to his own. Rodrigo had been accepted as a suitor for Inés, so must have had a sound reputation. He became blinded by jealousy. Tello only helped Fabia reluctantly and was concerned for Alonso's safety. Inés behaved inappropriately in her feigned devotion. The outcome depended on the intervention of the King, as the ultimate judge on Earth. There was some discussion regarding the level of punishment meted out but the conclusion tended to be that it was necessary to restore harmony and order in society, according to the beliefs of the time.

Question 3

Laura Esquivel: *Como agua para chocolate*

- (a) (i)(ii) Parts (i) and (ii) were generally accurate – the news of the death of baby Roberto (Tita’s nephew) and the fact that Mamá Elena’s reaction to this was cold and cruel.
- (iii) Part (iii) indicated that being a mother and behaving like one were not necessarily the same. The majority of candidates focused on the personalities of Mamá Elena and Nacha; Rosaura and Tita, analysing to what extent the typical attributes of care and compassion for children were displayed. Nacha was the role model for Tita, both of whom despite having no biological children had strong maternal instincts. Indeed magic realism was used by Esquivel to underline this when Tita was able to breastfeed Roberto. Many saw the difference between control and nurture, as Mamá Elena treated her children as commodities rather than individuals. Rosaura did not benefit from Nacha’s care and mimicked the attitudes of Mamá Elena. Roberto died because Mamá Elena put concerns over her reputation above his life. Nacha and Tita were so close emotionally that Nacha helped from beyond the grave. Rosaura died miserably and unhappily partly as a result of her mother’s influence on her life whereas Tita’s experience of nurture meant that she wished to change the life of Esperanza for the better and did not harbour grudges, just like Nacha. There was some sympathy for Mamá Elena as she had suffered unhappiness in her youth but this was not seen as justification for the way she treated her daughters or grandson.
- (b) This was a popular option. The majority of answers analysed the phrase in the context of Tita’s life. From the moment of her traumatic birth, in the kitchen, Tita suffered as a result of the actions of others. However at the same time, her life in the kitchen was nurtured by Nacha who taught her how to cope and to cook, thus giving her a purpose and role in the family home. Tita’s relationships with Roberto and Esperanza were both sad and fulfilling; Tita prepared her niece for a positive future. Mamá Elena was widely analysed as the instigator of Tita’s suffering in her refusal to allow the marriage between Tita and Pedro. The result of this decision also affected Rosaura, who accepted the arranged marriage but did not find happiness, or succeed as a mother. Pedro was seen by some candidates as another victim, but by others as contributing to the misery of both Rosaura and Tita. Dr Brown suffered in that his love for Tita was not returned, but he found contentment in his work and seeing others happy. Serving and helping was the core of Nacha’s life and gave her satisfaction. A few responses also mentioned the effects of change in the wider sense of the Mexican Revolution. The violence of the attack on the ranch caused Chenchá and Mamá Elena much physical suffering, but involvement in the revolutionary forces gave Gertrudis an opportunity to develop and achieve. Candidates are advised to plan the argument and select examples to support this, rather than write down everything they know of the novel which may be of relevance to the question.

Question 4

Rodolfo Usigli: *El gesticulador*

- (a) (i)(ii) There was a range of answers for (i) and (ii) – the correct responses were that Julia resented being moved away from her old life and her boyfriend in the city and for (ii), that César had been dismissed from the university and had never been as successful as he had wished either academically or financially.
- (iii) Part (iii) asked candidates to show how the extract related to future events in the play. Some essays simply narrated what happened after the scene quoted, with little analysis. More successful answers identified key issues in the extract and showed how these developed subsequently. Both César and Julia felt unfulfilled and let down, therefore likely to be open to opportunities to change their future. The reference to ‘*paciencia*’ warned Julia that nothing could happen quickly. The arrival of Bolton seemed like a gift from the Gods, suggesting to César that his ambitions may be met. The coincidence of Bolton being an academic, specialising in Mexican history and apparently offering the temptation of money and a new career for César was impossible to ignore. It was a small step for César, in his vulnerable state of mind, to accede to the suggestion that he could be the other César Rubio. His promise to Julia meant that she would accept whatever he did in the hope that she could return to the city. Some essays compared the reaction of Julia to those of Elena and Miguel. This led to the more philosophical analysis of the nature of truth and whether it is right to succeed by deception. Others explored the political aspect in that the people were prepared to

accept Rubio as a leader as they were also damaged by previous events and open to manipulation.

- (b) Some candidates responded to this question by comparing and contrasting the characters of Julia and Elena. This tended towards appreciation of Elena's loyalty to César and her commitment to her family, the typical perfect wife, even though she had doubts about her husband's decision. Julia was generally seen as selfish and immature, impressionable and young. Both women highlighted flaws in César's character as Julia appealed to his pride and Elena showed how obstinate he was. Many queried how weak they were; the fact that men dominated the action of the play did not mean that the women were weak. The best essays went beyond this to consider how these characters represented women in Mexico at the time. Some candidates had good understanding of the context and used this judiciously to support the argument. The cultural and historical setting had a strong influence on the way Usigli presented them, reflecting the lack of opportunity and freedom available for women at the time.

Section 2

Question 5

Ramón J. Sender: *Réquiem por un campesino español*

- (a) This was the more popular option on the text. Most essays showed understanding of Spanish society at the time and took the view that the author was critical of the inequalities evident and of the role of the Church and landowners. Candidates were aware of the social hierarchy and the traditions, superstitions and celebrations of the rural community. Divisions in this community were largely caused by limitations placed on individuals as the villagers did not own the land they worked and had little control over their destiny. Those who lived in the caves were the poorest but they were not cared for by the very institution which would be expected to help. Paco served as witness to the suffering of the cave dwellers and his reaction of surprise and disappointment at the lack of Christian compassion shown by Mosén Millan, the priest, was shared by the reader. Subsequent events only emphasised the likelihood of violent change as Paco's crusade to improve the lives of his neighbours ended in tragedy. The potential saviour was sacrificed by the priest to maintain the status quo and preserve his own interests. The Church allied with the wealthy landowners and was complicit in the violent end of Paco. The whole situation was interpreted as setting the scene for the Civil War.
- (b) Most answers on this question focused on Paco, the messianic figure who was betrayed by his friend, like Jesus. Paco had tried to redeem his people and save them from the dictatorial regime but was sacrificed. His innocent death served as a warning to other potential activists but the villagers stood by his memory in refusing to attend the requiem mass organised by those involved in his death. Forgiveness or redemption was possible for those who recognised and accepted responsibility for their actions. Mosén Millan allied himself to vested interests and betrayed the teaching of his God. Some essays took a more historical stance and presented a fatalistic view of the rural Spanish people who were completely under the control of a dictatorial regime. Any attempt to challenge those in power resulted in violent suppression. Those who were guilty of the death of Paco attempted to atone by means of the requiem. This was seen as futile; they did not repent of their actions and the Church itself was complicit in the crime.

Question 6

Isabel Allende: *Eva Luna*

- (a) This question appealed to a large number of candidates. Most essays presented the thesis that Eva had little experience of a 'normal' stable family life but succeeded in constructing a substitute family around her as she grew up, learning from a variety of people about relationships and responsibilities. Rolf also grew up in an atypical family, suffering abuse and witnessing violent and controlling behaviour on the part of his father. Some candidates questioned whether anyone has a perfect family background; Rolf's uncle's apparently ordinary family of two daughters did not behave as normal cousins towards him. '*La familia es la que creas*' seemed to be the answer for both Eva and Rolf. Melecio/Mimí was an important member of Eva's created family, who knew her from a young age and responded appropriately to Eva recognising her needs and offering the kind of encouragement and guidance which could be expected from a parent or older sibling. The family unit offers safety and security and the ability to develop as well as fulfilling the need of belonging to

a group. It was important to maintain focus on the text and use references to substantiate the argument.

- (b) Candidates were asked to define the '*gran talento*' of Isabel Allende. This gave rise to a range of interpretations. The best responses analysed the literary techniques employed by Allende, such as multiple narrative, magical realism, use of first person narrative and strong characterisation. All these elements were analysed and illustrated from the text. In addition, Allende chose to examine contemporary society and exposed issues such as political corruption, and activism, the dictatorship and prejudice against minority groups. In both aspects of the response the author succeeded in creating empathy with the characters and constructing a lively and varied plot, which caught and attracted the attention of the reader. Some answers were vague, with complimentary comments on Allende's work but little direct justification from the text. All arguments and observations should be supported with evidence.

Question 7

Federico García Lorca: *La casa de Bernarda Alba*

- (a) This question asked candidates to analyse how Lorca used both poetry and realism in the play. Most responses focused on realism and gave many examples of the claustrophobia, tension and control within the setting. It was rare to see a more nuanced discussion. Detailed study of poetry within the play was also limited to a few responses, including a considered examination of María Josefa's contribution. Candidates gave much narrative detail. This would be a good example of the need to plan before writing and to keep referring back to the question to ensure that all elements are addressed adequately. The conclusion should present a balanced assessment on the role of poetry and realism in the play, showing how each was used to highlight or emphasise specific themes, and to contribute to the overall dramatic effect.
- (b) Most candidates chose this option. The role of money was primarily seen in terms of social status and, for the daughters, as a means to allow them to marry. All essays dealt with these issues in some detail and observed how Angustias became the object of envy and resentment as she was the only one to have a dowry and therefore able to marry. Better responses considered whether marriage was in fact a better option for women. The experience of La Poncia and Adelaida could suggest that women moved from one prison to another. The importance of status and family wealth was Bernarda's preoccupation. La Poncia pointed out that Bernarda's family was only seen as of superior rank in that village; elsewhere, she would be considered poor. Bernarda lived by tradition and reputation and would allow nothing to threaten her place in society. Angustias was treated differently because she had inherited money. Marriage was a contract and exchange of money, as a dowry, and was arranged by parents. To marry for love, Adela would have to wait until Angustias died in childbirth, according to La Poncia, when Pepe el Romano would then turn to her. Money was also used as a means of control over the servants. Even though La Poncia and Bernarda had worked together for many years and Bernarda accepted some help the phrase '*Me sirves y te pago*' sums up the true relationship between Bernarda and the servants. La Poncia declared her hatred for Bernarda but she depended on the meagre salary. Money was an element of control or imprisonment as individuals had little opportunity to make decisions about their future. Candidates always respond very well to this text but must be sure to resist the temptation to write all they know about the play rather than keep their answer focused on the question.

Question 8

Varios, ed. Gordon Brotherston: *Spanish American Modernista Poets: A critical anthology*

- (a) Candidates who chose the question showed sensitivity to the use of language but needed to explore the theme in greater depth. Widely differing approaches to essays on poetry are welcomed, providing the candidate understands the literary techniques employed and can substantiate the argument with reference to the poem itself. Essays should include detailed analysis of use of language as well as a broader discussion of the theme and an understanding of the impact of the poem as a whole.
- (b) As with the other option on this text, there were fewer answers on this text overall. Candidates were free to choose any three poems from the whole anthology as the basis of a close study to support their response to the question. Examiners welcome an individual approach and encourage candidates to explore the theme as they wish, provided the argument can be supported with close reference to the required number of poems.

SPANISH

<p>Paper 9719/43 Texts</p>
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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.

- Keep focused on the question being answered. Candidates are advised to check back to the Question Paper frequently to ensure that they have not veered away from the question. A useful technique is to make reference to the question in the final sentence of each paragraph, showing how it relates to the answer. The conclusion must refer clearly to the question.
- All questions have key words which are essential to the response. Candidates need to deal with these as a central aspect of their essays. When choosing which question to answer, ensure that the entire question is clearly understood before beginning to write.
- The opening paragraph should relate directly to the question. Candidates may define their terms or state the outline of the argument to be presented. Examiners actively discourage a biography of the author or general introduction to his or her work. This tends to take up a lot of time and words, which then leave candidates with less opportunity to deal with the question in depth.
- If the text studied has an important historical context, (e.g. the *Mexican Revolution*, the *Spanish Civil War*), candidates must have a solid understanding of this so that any references are accurate. Examiners do not expect to see a detailed historical study, but incorrect references detract from the overall standard of the essay.
- Each text should be treated separately, as literary techniques, themes or settings are not necessarily relevant to more than one author. There has been an increasing tendency to relate magical realism, for example, incorrectly, to other texts such as the plays of García Lorca. There has also been confusion over whether texts are based in South America or Spain.

General comments

Candidates were well prepared for the examination and there were very few instances of rubric infringement. The majority of candidates had prepared the texts thoroughly and showed knowledge and understanding in their answers.

Differential in marks awarded was generally based on the quality of the answer, in terms of focused response, use of material from the text to support the argument and a well-argued, well-structured and thoughtful essay. There was still much narration, but the majority was relevant. Candidates need to try to be more analytical in their approach and consider the text as a whole. Examiners welcome individual approaches to the questions set, provided they are justified and explored appropriately according to the question.

We remind Candidates that they must write legibly as examiners can only mark what they can read.

Comments on specific questions

Comments here give an outline of the content and approach which could be expected, although not all of these elements would necessarily be included in a single response. In addition, there are observations from specific examples seen in essays, which are intended to help future candidates.

Section 1

Candidates are reminded that the answers to parts (i) and (ii) of the **Part (a)** questions, prompted by the printed extract, should refer specifically to the extract and should be short, i.e. from one word to two sentences in length. Part (iii) should encompass the whole text and constitute the vast majority of the overall response.

Question 1

Pérez Galdós: *Misericordia*

- (a) Most answers showed understanding of the historical context, referring to a period before the old order was overthrown and families such as Doña Paca's were wealthy and had status. In (ii), Paca's self-centred nature was mentioned and her lack of awareness of material concerns, or Benina's efforts. In (iii), Paca typified the impoverished middle classes still determined to maintain an illusion of status and the importance of appearances. Quotations such as '*Pero a dónde voy con esta facha, sin ropa decente, temiendo tropezarme a cada paso con personas que me conocieron en otra posición...*' were used appropriately and Frasquito Ponte was also analysed as another example of someone in the same predicament. Many referred to Galdós' objective presentation of the situation, allowing readers to perceive faults in the characters through interaction with others, and the importance of the use of dialogue in the novel. It was noted that changes in circumstance were not a result of fate but rather consequent on changes in politics and society as well as personal failings. Many compared Paca and Benina, showing how Paca's sense of entitlement permeated the way she treated Benina, and her lack of true interest in Benina's life. Most essays gave some thought to the end of the novel, where wealth could be said to have a malign influence and the values of Paca and her family contrasted sharply with those of Benina and Almudena.
- (b) This question focused on the nature of happiness. The majority of responses centred on Benina, showing her charity, kindness, selflessness and how she found happiness in helping others and feeling needed. Benina was often compared with Paca and her family, who seemed to believe that it was not possible to be happy without wealth and status. The best answers dealt with the more spiritual aspects with reference to characters such as Almudena and with less obvious sources of happiness such as Ponte's nostalgic reveries. The Christian concept of morality in loving one's neighbour was also considered, particularly in the light of the presence of the Church in the novel.

Question 2

Lope de Vega: *El caballero de Olmedo*

- (a) (i) (ii) Answers to (i) and (ii) were generally correct. Some did not mention Jesus in (ii).
- (iii) Fabia's role (iii) tended to be described rather than analysed. One of the main arguments to consider was whether Fabia was simply a comedy character in the play or whether she practised magic which changed the course of events, and therefore could be seen as a sorceress. The most successful answers analysed her role in the relationship between Alonso and Inés, finding that the lovers were genuinely attracted making her contribution dramatic, increasing the tension and interest for the audience. She also played a thematic role in giving Alonso sensible advice and warnings, possibly emphasising failings in his judgement. There was a degree of ambiguity as the Sombra in Act III said that 'una Fabia' taught him the song foretelling the death of Alonso. The conclusion generally found that Fabia was not a sinister character.
- (b) This was the more popular of the options on this text. The best responses showed understanding of the code of morals of the time, specifically the expectations on knights such as Alonso and Rodrigo. The title of the play highlights Alonso's rank in the 'caballería', and draws the audience's attention to the responsibilities and expectations associated with it. There were analyses of the nature of 'good' and 'bad' within the setting of the play and the moral judgements made by various characters. Most candidates argued that many individuals acted in a way unbecoming their role in society and were punished for it. Some did not make note of the word '*bruta*' in the question; the outcome of the play was certainly violent and all suffered in one way or another. The role of the King was important in determining the punishments of some in order to re-establish social harmony and the rule of law.

Question 3

Laura Esquivel: *Como agua para chocolate*

- (a) (i) Part (i) referred to Pedro and his father, Don Pascual.
- (ii) Tita felt betrayed by Pedro, hence her polite but distant response.
- (iii) There were many good responses to (iii). Nacha was more of a parent to Tita than her own mother, showing her love and respect. Tita was treated more as a servant by the rest of her family and the kitchen became her home, with Nacha. As well as teaching Tita to cook, giving her a role in the household, Nacha passed on her folk knowledge and native heritage. This could be seen as part of the social comment in the novel in that Nacha was less educated but wiser and more knowledgeable than Mamá Elena. Whereas both Nacha and Mamá Elena had suffered emotionally in the past, Nacha was able to nurture and care for others; Mamá Elena took out her resentment on her daughters. Nacha's affection for Tita continued from beyond the grave as she appeared to give advice and support whenever Tita needed it. Mamá Elena's ghost was as malevolent as she was. Tita's relationship with Nacha was key to the development of her own maternal instincts, essential to the upbringing of Roberto (until he was taken from her), and Esperanza. The way Tita was able to care for the children contrasted with the reactions of their own mother, Rosaura, who had been raised by Mamá Elena, not Nacha. Elements of magical realism were also central to both Tita and Nacha.
- (b) The majority of the answers agreed that selfishness did not lead to happiness and concentrated on Tita and the way Mamá Elena's selfish and uncaring attitude caused her suffering. Some candidates showed sympathy for Mamá Elena as she had suffered also, but decided that she did not deserve happiness. There was also analysis of Pedro, Rosaura and Doctor Brown, with differing interpretations of their roles. Gertrudis was often omitted, or censured for abandoning her mother and sisters. Another view was that as a result of the food prepared by Tita, Gertrudis was compelled to leave and follow her own path, becoming a respected military leader in the Revolution and a role model. Tita gave her impetus to do this; a further example of Tita's unselfish, generous attitude was also shown in her influence on Esperanza, to give hope for the women of the future. Did Tita achieve happiness or contentment? Most felt that she did. The break with tradition, the banishing of Mamá Elena's ghost, and the consummation of her relationship with Pedro pointed to this.

Question 4

Rodolfo Usigli: *El gesticulador*

- (a) (i) In (i), Elena expressed her sense of vulnerability as they were new to the area and strangers could be a threat to the family's safety.
- (ii) In (ii), César was more concerned with making a good impression and protecting the reputation of Mexicans.
- (iii) Bolton's role in the play (iii) was crucial in several ways. The best answers showed how Bolton instigated the central deception, therefore driving the momentum of the plot, and creating an important distinction of before and after his arrival – before, César was only a failed university lecturer; after, he had the possibility of a new life and fame. In addition, Bolton's career as an academic was important as it provided a direct comparison with César, and between Mexico and the United States. Bolton had a car, status, and money; higher education was clearly better funded and respected in the US. The possibility of the US financing a new university mirrored involvement by the more powerful neighbour in other areas as well as appealing to the vanity of César. These themes were further developed in the higher scoring essays.
- (b) This question asked candidates to analyse the theme of identity, which is central to the play. Essentially a large number of essays discussed the importance of mistaken/assumed identity and focused on César. The best answers widened the analysis to deal with issues of national identity. It was helpful to consider the meaning of 'identity'. Is it a set, defined condition? César's family had deceived others in their past by pretending to be more wealthy than they were. 'Identity' may be malleable and fragile. Julia was defined by other peoples' opinion of her. How did Mexicans identify

themselves after the Revolution – was the identity of Rubio accepted because the people needed a national figurehead? False identity was central to both the conflict and the solution of the play. The ambiguity evident in the play was also analysed.

Section 2

Question 5

Ramón J. Sender: *Réquiem por un campesino español*

- (a) Candidates were asked to analyse the role of El Monaguillo; the first task was to identify this character and place him correctly in the relevant period of time within the novel. He served Mosén Millán in the present time as an altar boy immediately before the Requiem Mass, reporting back to his master on arrivals for the Mass. In addition, he recited part of the 'romance' about Paco, thus prompting memories for Mosén Millán and linking the two time frames. The Monaguillo served an important function in the structure of the novel, and echoed Paco's own role as assistant to the same master in the past. The Church was a key influence and control in the lives of the villagers; Paco's questioning of Mosén Millán's practise of the faith, his betrayal of Paco and collusion in his execution pointed to failure of care and Christian charity by the Church. The most successful essays analysed these points and used references to the text effectively. The fact that El Monaguillo related both events in the present, and the folk memory of Paco, seemed to highlight Mosén Millán's increasing distance from the people, which could be said to reflect the changing role of the Church and indicate its stance in the coming Civil War.
- (b) This was the more popular option on the text. The consensus was that this is a political novel. The best candidates used their knowledge of the historical background sparingly and accurately, noting the reference to the departure of the King, which places the action pre - Civil War. The tone of the work was interpreted as critical of society and the power structures at the time, with special reference to the role of the Church and the landowners. Paco was seen as an objective witness of the inequalities in society and the lack of interest in those who could have helped. The incident in the caves was important in Paco's understanding of Mosén Millán and of the plight of his neighbours. Paco became a political figure in order to improve the lives of others; the landowners wanted to protect their own interests and the Church colluded with reactionary powers and individuals. The culmination of this was the betrayal of Paco by his priest. The absence of villagers at the Requiem was interpreted as a political act, ignoring the false piety of those guilty for Paco's death, who had arranged the Mass. The novel also showed the use of unjustified and extreme violence foreshadowing the war.

Question 6

Isabel Allende: *Eva Luna*

- (a) Many candidates chose this question. The best answers included analysis of the importance of Melecio/Mimí in the life of Eva, in the main narrative thread of the novel, and also how he/she represented a character in his/her own right, opening up the argument to a study of the broader themes of the text. Thus Eva learned about courage and determination in the face of prejudice and the need for tenacity in following one's own path. Mimí was the person who not only acted as a sister for Eva in looking after her but also bought her a typewriter to encourage her to fulfil her ambition to be a writer. Candidates knew the text well and generally used references to good effect. The better essays set out the argument at the beginning, often noting the different stages in Melecio/Mimí's life and how his/her development interacted with Eva. Many emphasised how Melecio/Mimí's first hand experience of state corruption, arrest and the power of the media all contributed to the wide scope of the novel. This character reflected changes in society as well as being a warm and supportive friend to Eva, providing her with a home and substitute family, responding to Eva's needs at different stages of her life.
- (b) This was also a popular question. Candidates needed to plan the thread of the argument and follow this through to avoid over-emphasis on narration and generalised comments. The question referred to the power balance between men and women so this had to be addressed. The best answers then went on to analyse how the novel takes this theme further, to encompass politics, social comment and issues of personal freedom, for example. Responses which dealt with other aspects of the novel unrelated to this theme were not appropriate. Candidates showed detailed knowledge of the text and seemed to respond positively to the issues raised and the characters portrayed.

Question 7

Federico García Lorca: *La casa de Bernarda Alba*

- (a) The vast majority of candidates chose to write on this text and this was the more popular option. The most common approach was focused on “*callar*”, with studies of Bernarda’s control of her daughters’ lives (and those of other members of the household), often emphasising ‘*¡Silencio!*’ in a range of contexts. This was generally done well, with good use of references. The best answers included an analysis of ‘*bordar*’, which brought in the wider issues of the role of women in society. These also included discussion of expectations dependent on status, including the experiences of the servants. María Josefa was used by Lorca to expand the theme, and some responses showed sensitivity to the use of poetry within the play to emphasise this. The sense of irony was effectively analysed too.
- (b) Many answered this option also. The theme of envy or jealousy was well understood. The best essays encompassed a wide range of examples, from the more obvious one of Martirio to the longing of Magdalena to work outside, La Poncia’s resentment of Bernarda’s hold over her and the Mendiga’s envy of the perks of left-overs enjoyed by the Criada. The overall sense of claustrophobia and the impossibility of escape or change was an important background issue. Most candidates referred to Lorca’s use of symbols and images to convey this and showed sensitivity to the language throughout the play. It was important to ensure that all details were accurate – there were a number of essays where the names of the daughters were muddled up and the sequence of events at the end of the play was incorrect. Candidates are encouraged to check this as such errors detract from the overall essay and often lead to a confused argument.

Question 8

Varios, ed. Gordon Brotherston: *Spanish American Modernista Poets: A critical anthology*

- (a) There was a relatively small number of responses to this question, as is frequently the case with a new text. Candidates who chose the question showed sensitivity to the use of language but needed to explore the themes in greater depth. Examiners are open to widely differing approaches to essays on poetry, providing the candidate understands the literary techniques employed and can substantiate the argument with reference to the poem itself. Essays should include detailed analysis of use of language as well as a broader discussion of the themes and an understanding of the impact of the poem as a whole.
- (b) As with the other option on this text, there were fewer answers on this text overall. Candidates were free to choose any three poems from the whole anthology as the basis of a close study to support their response to the question. Examiners welcome an individual approach and encourage candidates to explore the theme as they wish, provided the argument can be supported with close reference to the required number of poems.