

# FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

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Paper 8665/21  
Reading and Writing

## Key messages

- **Question 1:** seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question. Candidates should take care not to omit words or include extra words.
- **Question 2:** rewrite the phrases to include the word(s) in brackets. A grammatical manipulation is required, and candidates should ensure that the answer fits 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, revise the basic agreements, tenses and verb endings.

## General comments

The two texts dealing with different aspects of crime were accessible to most candidates, and comprehension was often clearly demonstrated. Most candidates attempted all questions, although there were occasional omissions in **Question 1**. All candidates appeared to be aware that they should not copy more than four consecutive words of text in their answers to the comprehension questions, and there were skilled attempts at paraphrase. Despite good, overall understanding, marks were lost when specific relevant details were not included in answers. Candidates should look at the number of marks allocated to each question, and gauge the amount of detail to be included accordingly. Only a very few candidates exceeded the 140-word limit in **Question 5**, thereby curtailing the number of marks they could score in **Question 5(b)**. There were too many vague generalisations in the summary for **Question 5(a)**, rather than specific details which answered the question.

Overall, the quality of Spanish language displayed by candidates was generally high, although there were frequent errors in spelling, and occasionally inappropriate register.

## Comments on specific questions

### **SECCIÓN PRIMERA**

#### **Question 1**

This question appeared to cause some difficulties, with a number of candidates showing signs of unfamiliarity with what was required. As stated in the key messages above, candidates should seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question and take care not to omit words or include extra words.

A recommended approach is to copy out the paraphrase in the question before writing the answer on the line beneath. As it is important to answer with a phrase from the text which is a precise match to that of the question, this is a good way to check at a glance that an answer contains no extra words or omissions.

**Questions (a) and (e)** were generally answered well.

Instances of additional or omitted words which invalidated otherwise correct answers were most likely to be found in:

(b) – the answer was incorrectly prefaced by *De hecho...*

(c) – the addition of *...por delitos*

(d) – the omission of *se...*

## Question 2

As in previous years, candidates generally found this question the most challenging on the paper. In some instances candidates added extra words to their answers and in others, candidates attempted to change the word(s) provided in brackets on the question paper which is not permitted.

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 is the case. Adopting the recommended technique for **Question 1** of copying out the given phrase on one line, and then writing the manipulated phrase on the line beneath is a good way of ensuring accuracy.

- (a) Many used the subjunctive correctly, but errors often arose from attempts to incorporate *permitir* into answers and some missed the 'personal *a*'. Common mistakes included the omission of *los* or the use of the singular form *lo* for the direct complement.
- (b) This was generally tackled well. A number of candidates who started the answer well with *personas que tengan...*, had problems stating the age restriction correctly or using the correct preposition. Common mistakes were: *menor / menores de, menos que*.
- (c) Difficulties were often noted here in tense correlation, and the most common error was use of the preterite *fuleron* rather than the imperfect *eran castigadas*. The omission of *las* occasionally invalidated answers which were otherwise correct.
- (d) Finding a correct way to incorporate *cuenta* into the answer proved to be the most challenging of these questions. Most candidates appeared not to be aware of the expression *tener / tomar en cuenta*. Otherwise strong candidates often offered feasible alternatives such as *llevaban la cuenta* or *se daban cuenta* but as these would not fit back into the original text the mark could not be awarded.
- (e) Quite a good proportion of candidates answered this question correctly. A common mistake was the omission of *lo*. Others added *será* or *es*.

## Question 3

The text about toughening up the law for pickpockets in Spain was generally well understood and candidates who gave clear, detailed answers in their own words usually achieved high marks. Some candidates lost marks when they copied more than four words directly from the text. A small minority of candidates wrongly thought that just one detail would be sufficient to answer each question, instead of being guided by the marks allocated which indicate how many pieces of information are being sought.

- (a) The majority of candidates mentioned that pickpockets could now go to prison, and referred to the introduction of the register, although they also needed to state that it would record both crimes and punishments. The final point proved to be the most elusive, with some candidates misinterpreting the text to mean that under-14s would be harshly dealt with by the law.
- (b) This was usually well answered although some candidates only included one of the two points required. Most candidates mentioned that pickpockets did not have a fixed home, however, some neglected to qualify this statement and establish that these were *la mayoría* or *muchos*, and not every pickpocket. Many candidates also mentioned the fact that the previous, ineffective punishment had been house arrest.
- (c) Most candidates provided satisfactory answers for at least two of the three points required to answer this question. A majority stated that thefts had been considered a minor offence/that only more serious crimes were recorded. Further success seemed to be fairly evenly split between the

other two points required: each crime was treated separately as the authorities did not take into account the other thefts; police had to set free *algunos carteristas bien famosos*.

- (d) Candidates frequently showed good understanding of the relevant paragraph in the text, but a number did not offer sufficient detail in their answers to score all the marks. A phrase which was commonly copied from the text was *registro de faltas y penas*. Most candidates noted the increased security, but not all mentioned *en el metro*. Similarly, many wrote about the continuous warnings, but not all said that they would be broadcast by *megafonía/altavoces*. The increased signage was also widely stated but there was frequent misunderstanding of the word *conurrencia*, often taken to mean 'high crime areas'.
- (e) This was generally answered well, with many candidates scoring at least two marks. Most mentioned the fact that Spain has the highest number of people in jail, although some did not make the necessary comparison with Europe. *La tasa de encarcelamiento más alta* was frequently copied from the text meaning that the mark couldn't be awarded. The fact that Spain has one of the lowest crime rates was frequently noted, as was the fact that *Correa* favoured alternatives to imprisonment. *Imponer penas alternativas a la cárcel* was another commonly copied phrase which invalidated this latter point. Some candidates tried to avoid this by changing one word in the phrase, proving unsuccessful in answers such as *penas alternativas en la cárcel*, which gave a different meaning.

## SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

### Question 4

The second text, dealing with an upsurge in cases of fraud in Latin American countries, appeared to be well understood, with candidates often scoring slightly higher marks than for the previous question.

- (a) Many candidates scored two marks by stating that the economic crisis led to companies going bankrupt and also that it increased unemployment. To score the third mark it was necessary to stress that the economic crisis, rather than being the direct cause of cases of fraud, was instrumental in bringing such cases out into the open. Not so many candidates were able to make this distinction.
- (b) This was a very accessible question and high marks were often awarded if candidates avoided copying five or more words directly from the text. Almost all mentioned that the typical fraudster worked in finance or sales, although (*en*) *los departamentos de finanzas o ventas* was frequently copied from the text and therefore invalidated the response. Most candidates were able to state that the fraudster was trusted by the company, and more marks were available if the candidate added the typical length of service and ages without copying *entre tres y cinco años* or *entre los 36 y los 45 años*.
- (c) Most candidates were able to say that *no muchos pocos* cases get to court and many were able to score the second mark by stating that companies prefer not to talk about it.
- (d) Many candidates scored at least three marks by mentioning the fact that evidence needed to be gathered in order to dismiss the employee, and by adding that investigations had to be done *con discreción* and that the fraudster had to be interviewed more than once. The fact that investigators had to find the right moment or know when to produce the evidence proved a bit more challenging, but there were many instances of correct answers.
- (e) The choice between taking information and taking money appeared to be well understood, although some candidates lost the mark by saying that this was *más fácil* instead of *menos arriesgado*. This mark was also negated if *menos peligroso robar información que* was copied directly from the text. Full details were needed to score the second mark. Candidates who only vaguely noted that stolen information could be useful in the future, rather than in an *entrevista de trabajo*, did not score.

### Question 5

Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks allocated. Most, but not all, candidates were aware of the need to keep to the limit of 140 words for both parts of the question. Anything in excess of 160 words is disregarded by Examiners, and in extreme cases this can lead to no marks being awarded for **part (b)**.

- (a) This question generally produced low-scoring answers. Candidates who had achieved good or even excellent marks elsewhere on the paper frequently struggled to reach half marks here. Many wasted precious words by including elements from the texts, for example details about the typical fraudster's profile, which were irrelevant to the topic of *cómo se persigue a los criminales*.

As well as paying attention to the question being asked, candidates should also ensure they are familiar with the required technique, which may be very different from the technique which they have been encouraged to use in other forms of summary writing. For this task candidates should note, in the very limited number of words available, details from the texts which answer the question which has been asked. Generalisations, often required by other forms of summary writing, are usually too vague to score. It is the relevant specific details which score the marks. Therefore answers beginning *Los dos textos se enfocan en aspectos distintos de la criminalidad. El primero habla sobre el robo de objetos personales en España mientras el segundo se enfoca en fraudes que pasan aun nivel empresarial...* waste thirty-four words, and score nothing, apart from contributing to the Quality of Language mark. By contrast, an answer which begins *A los carteristas se les penaliza con tiempo en la cárcel y se hacen registros de todos sus delitos. Se endurece la ley cuando organizaciones reclutan a jóvenes menores de 14 años...* scores three marks in fewer words by giving relevant specific details. Candidates should also refrain from offering personal opinions in this part of the question.

- (b) In the two or three sentences available for this last part of the examination the vast majority of candidates wrote good answers. Everybody had something to say about the amount, or occasionally the lack of crime in their country. Better answers included an opinion on why things were this way; fewer marks were awarded for mere lists of different categories of crime.

### Quality of Language

The quality of candidates' written Spanish, here and throughout the paper, was generally well up to the standard required by this examination, with most marks in the Very Good or Good bands.

# FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

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Paper 8665/22  
Reading and Writing

## Key messages

- **Question 1:** seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question. Candidates should take care not to omit words or include extra words.
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- **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, revise the basic agreements, tenses and verb endings.

## General comments

The two texts dealing with demographic changes in Latin America and Spain were accessible to most candidates, and comprehension was often clearly demonstrated. 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. There were skilled attempts at paraphrase. Despite good, overall understanding, marks were lost when specific relevant details were not included in answers. Candidates should look at the number of marks allocated to each question, and gauge the amount of detail to be included accordingly. Only a very few candidates exceeded the 140-word limit in **Question 5**, thereby curtailing the number of marks they could score in **Question 5(b)**. There were too many vague generalisations in the summary for **Question 5(a)**, rather than specific details which answered the question.

## Comments on specific questions

### **SECCIÓN PRIMERA**

#### **Question 1**

As stated in the key messages above, candidates should seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question and take care not to omit words or to include extra words – a feature which often invalidated answers which were otherwise correct.

A recommended approach is to copy out the paraphrase in the question before writing the answer on the line beneath. As it is important to answer with a phrase from the text which is a precise match to that of the question, this is a good way to check at a glance that an answer contains no extra words or omissions.

**Questions (a) and (b)** were generally done well.

Instances of additional or omitted words which invalidated otherwise correct answers were most likely to be found in:

(c) - the answer was incorrectly prefaced by *son...*

(d) - the addition of *...entre*

(e) - the omission of ...*una cifra* or addition of ...*de*.

## Question 2

As in previous years, candidates generally found this question the most challenging on the paper.

In addition to performing the language manipulations required, 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 is the case. Adopting the recommended technique for **Question 1** of copying out the given phrase on one line, and then writing the manipulated phrase on the line beneath is a good way of ensuring accuracy.

- (a) There were a considerable number of ways to perform this manipulation, and many candidates were successful. A common pitfall was to use *pérdida* in such a way that required *visto* to be changed to *vista*. Candidates are not permitted to change the word(s) provided in brackets on the question paper.
- (b) Many candidates appeared to be aware that a subjunctive construction was required after *hace que* and again a number of different permutations were possible. It was important to remember that in order to fit back into the text the answer needed to end with *recursos*.
- (c) This was generally done quite well. The mark was lost if *es...* was used instead of *está...*, or if the subjunctive *encontremos* was offered.
- (d) A number of candidates appeared to be unaware that *cuenta con* is commonly used in Spanish as an alternative to *tiene*. This led to a number of unsuccessful attempts to use *cuenta* as a noun.
- (e) Quite a good proportion of candidates answered this question correctly. A common mistake was not using the infinitive after *suelen*.

## Question 3

The text about emigration and urban population growth provided a fair level of challenge and candidates who gave clear, detailed answers in their own words usually achieved high marks. Some candidates lost marks when they copied more than four words directly from the text. A small minority of candidates wrongly thought that just one detail would be sufficient to answer each question, instead of being guided by the marks allocated, which indicate how many pieces of information are being sought.

- (a) Only a minority of candidates scored the maximum four marks. For the first point it was necessary to state that Latin America had the highest numbers of highly-qualified emigrants. The next two points, that this was a new phenomenon and that approximately one in ten well qualified people now lived abroad, were often clearly stated. The final point, that emigration of well-qualified people had now overtaken that of unqualified people, was sometimes overlooked.
- (b) This was usually very well answered with the majority of candidates scoring full marks for stating that emigration of this kind wasted resources which had been invested in education, and also held back a country's economic growth.
- (c) The details required to answer this question also appeared to have been well understood, and most candidates scored at least two out of the three marks. The point about problems of unemployment and emigration was occasionally invalidated when candidates directly copied the last five words from paragraph three in the text.
- (d) Most candidates scored two of the available four marks. There was some evidence of difficulty in comprehension in part (i) where there were a number of instances of directly copying five or more words of text, especially *la población se mantenga constante* and *personas en edad de trabajar*.

In part (ii) another phrase which was frequently copied was *a la de un país emergente*, and candidates also often had problems in differentiating between developed and less developed countries.

- (e) Differentiation between the effects of the population explosion on developed and less developed countries was again essential to score both marks. Many candidates scored one mark only for

mentioning the three challenges faced – *empleo, recursos, gente mayor* – without noting the type of country in which these were to be found.

## SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

### Question 4

The second text, dealing with demographic change in Spain, appeared to be well understood, with candidates often scoring slightly higher marks than for the previous question.

- (a) This question caused a few difficulties. In addition to stating that the number of births had exceeded half a million, to score a mark it was necessary to add that this was in Spain. Problems were also encountered with attempts to paraphrase *encogerse por debajo*.
- (b) Candidates who had read the question carefully knew that they were expected to look for their answers in the words of *María Carbajosa*. Here it was clearly stated that, in her opinion, there were fewer Spanish women because fewer had been born in the 1980s, and that these tended to put their careers ahead of starting a family. Some candidates based their answer solely on the first sentence of the paragraph and therefore could not score.
- (c) In this question, worth four marks, and in the following one, worth five, most candidates attempted to include a sufficient amount of detail in their answers.

Almost everybody identified the economic crisis as being a factor contributing to the lower birth rate in Spain. Those candidates who went methodically through the paragraph were also successful in identifying the other three factors required by the mark scheme. Most candidates scored half marks or above.

- (d) The paragraph dealing with the contribution that immigrant mothers had made and continue to make to the birth rate in Spain appeared to be well understood, and high marks were often recorded for this question. In part (i), the fact that these mothers had made a significant contribution to increases in the past was commonly noted. A number of candidates did not score the second mark because they directly copied *el 20% de los nacimientos*. (It should be noted that changing *20%* to *veinte por ciento* is still considered as copying from the text).

In part (ii), most candidates correctly stated that the immigrants were now following the social trends of the host country, and also that they lacked assistance and support from other family members who were far away. More candidates did not include the point that this caused them to plan their families very carefully.

- (e) The majority of candidates scored at least one of the two marks available by stating that it was mostly the male immigrant who was likely to lose his job. Less success was achieved in adding that the consequence of this was that the female could therefore not risk giving up her job and starting a family.

### Question 5

Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks allocated. Most, but not all, candidates were aware of the need to keep to the limit of 140 words for both parts of the question. Anything in excess of 160 words is disregarded by Examiners, and in extreme cases this can lead to no marks being awarded for **part (b)**.

- (a) This question often produced low-scoring answers. Candidates who had achieved good or even excellent marks elsewhere on the paper frequently struggled to reach half marks here. The main problem was a tendency to give fairly broad generalisations and omit the key details needed to score the marks. Candidates had more success in extracting key details from the second text than from the first.

For this task the technique required for achieving a good mark is to note, in the very limited number of words available, details from the texts which answer the question which has been asked. Generalisations, often required by other forms of summary writing, are usually too vague to score. It is the relevant specific details which score the marks. Therefore, answers beginning *En el primer*

*texto leímos sobre la emigración de los países de América Latina y cómo afecta los países desarrollados pero también esos con ingresos bajos. Se habla los problemas de empleos y los problemas económicos que América Latina tendrá que sufrir...* use up forty-two words, and score nothing for such broad generalisations, apart from contributing to the Quality of Language mark. By contrast, an answer which begins *En América Latina la emigración altamente cualificada ha sobrepasado a la no cualificada y un 11.3% de esta población vive en el extranjero. Hoy casi el 80% de la población latinoamericana vive en las ciudades...* scores three marks in fewer words by giving relevant specific details.

Candidates should write concise statements of relevant facts in complete sentences – not bullet points, which are usually too short to show the clear meaning. They should also refrain from offering personal opinions in this part of the question.

- (b) In the two or three sentences available for this last part of the examination the vast majority of candidates wrote good answers. Everybody had something to say about the ways in which society is changing in their country. The question provided ample opportunity to include ideas which had not already been suggested by the texts. Better answers included originality and an opinion on why these changes were occurring.

### Quality of Language

The quality of candidates' written Spanish, here and throughout the paper, was generally well up to the standard required by this examination, with most marks in the Sound, Good, or Very Good bands.



# FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

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Paper 8665/41

Texts

## Key messages

- Read the question carefully, noting or underlining all parts of the task and check that the whole question has been answered.
- Show knowledge of the text by making reference to incidents or characters or by giving quotations to support the argument. Simply narrating the story is not sufficient. All references and quotations must be relevant to the specific question being answered.
- Introductory paragraphs which give background information about the author and his or her life and other publications are not needed. Candidates must focus entirely on the question as it is set and mention any pertinent general details as part of the essay.
- Examiners must be able to read answers and therefore candidates are asked to pay close attention to writing legibly.
- In **Questions 1(a), 2(a), 3(a) and 4(a)**, candidates should give a brief answer (often one sentence is sufficient) to parts **(i)** and **(ii)**. The majority of the answer should be in response to part **(iii)**, which requires detailed knowledge of the text beyond the printed extract.
- Candidates must number their essays accurately, e.g. **5(b)** or **6(a)**, so that Examiners can immediately identify which task is being answered.

## General comments

Examiners noted a lower number of examples of rubric infringements and the vast majority of candidates had been well prepared for the examination.

The key messages above point to several issues which recur frequently. Candidates who address these will be in a good position to make the most of their knowledge of the texts and achieve their full potential. Much of the advice given can be summarised as making the best use of the time available in the examination. It is counterproductive to write anything which is not relevant to the question chosen. All aspects of the question must be answered – omitting any of these will reduce the marks available. Candidates may be asked to analyse a specific aspect of a theme, so a pre-prepared general essay will not score highly. In the option **(a)** questions in **Sección Primera**, long answers to parts **(i)** and **(ii)** will leave insufficient time to spend on part **(iii)**, which should be the main focus of the answer.

If a candidate does not number a question correctly, or at all, it can make assessment difficult as the Examiner is left to guess the candidate's intentions. Candidates also need to be aware that if Examiners cannot read the work, it can be almost impossible to assess it. Very tiny handwriting is particularly challenging. Essays should be written in black or dark blue ink.

Most candidates showed detailed knowledge of the texts and had studied the themes and issues. There were some common misunderstandings relating to historical context and literary terms. Candidates are advised to avoid reference to these unless they are sure of the facts and the points being made add substance to the answer. Examiners look for individual responses to the questions, supported by knowledge and understanding of the text.

### Comments on specific questions

#### **Sección Primera**

##### **Question 1** Juan Rulfo: *Pedro Páramo*

- (a) There was a wide range in the quality of answers to this option, including some very good responses. The best essays identified the information required in parts (i) and (ii) briefly and then gave examples of how priests behaved, showing a lack of Christian charity to some parishioners and a tendency to bow to political pressure or financial gain.
- (b) This was the more popular option on this text. Some candidates referred only to one or two individuals, whereas others were able to take a wider view and showed insight into the depiction of the female characters. The answers dealt with social, religious and personal aspects and gave good examples without simply narrating or describing.

##### **Question 2** Calderón de la Barca: *La vida es sueño*

- (a) This question gave rise to some interesting discussion on the importance of the theme of violence in the play. Segismundo's experience in the tower did not include physical violence, but he was brutally treated in being denied free will. Rosaura was prepared to use violence, evidenced by the sword she wore. The people chose to rebel against Basilio in order to change the succession. However, harmony was restored in a largely non-violent way. In order to achieve a good outcome, candidates needed to analyse the role of violence rather than list examples, and to be aware of the contemporary concept of society and the individual.
- (b) The more obvious image of the dream was well documented in responses, but few candidates were able to go beyond this. Answers were generally satisfactory.

##### **Question 3** Jorge Luis Borges: *Ficciones*

- (a) There were relatively few responses to this text. Candidates understood the context and Funes' experiences. Part (iii) of the question asked for an analysis of the meaning of the *Ficción*. Candidates were credited for presenting an individual response, providing the argument was supported with detailed references to the text. Much background information on the author's biography is not necessary and often cannot be rewarded.
- (b) This question gave candidates scope to choose two *Ficciones* and use these to show the brilliance of Borges' imagination. Examiners were open to a wide range of interpretations of this, provided candidates were able to justify the argument with detailed reference to the text.

##### **Question 4** Antonio Buero Vallejo: *El concierto de San Ovidio*

- (a) Candidates were able to answer parts (i) and (ii) confidently. In part (iii), many wrote about the clear divisions in society between rich and poor, and the specific problems affecting those at the very bottom of the ladder who suffered from a disability. Many considered also the role of women in society as seen in the play. Some answers showed study of Buero Vallejo's work as a satire not only on society in France in the pre-revolutionary period, but also on that of Spain under Franco. This was successful when the facts were known and candidates did not confuse the date of the play's publication and the timing of the Civil War.
- (b) There were some thoughtful responses to this question. Candidates identified a number of examples of *engaño y la mentira* and the effect on victims of this behaviour. Some discussed hypocrisy, which was not quite the point of the question. Most analysed the moral viewpoint presented in the play and showed understanding.

#### **Sección Segunda**

##### **Question 5** Carmen Laforet: *Nada*

- (a) This question focused clearly on the importance of the past as well as the present. Most candidates referred to the effects of the Civil War on the fortune of Andrea's family, and some

analysed the psychological legacy for individuals. The best essays also considered the role of memory and nostalgia as well as the more concrete events involving Román and Ena's mother.

- (b) Answers to this question showed some awareness of the effects of literary style, and understanding of the immediacy and empathy aroused in the use of the first person narrative. Essays which scored more highly included detailed analysis of the drawbacks of this device, in, for example, the limited point of view and the possible bias in the recounting of events.

**Question 6** Isabel Allende: *La casa de los espíritus*

- (a) Answers to both options on this question generally showed knowledge of the text, if sometimes they lacked precision. Candidates tended to discuss without sufficient reference to the text, producing rather general responses. There were some very good essays where detail was combined with thoughtful analysis, often going beyond the obvious examples (Trueba and Clara), to include a wider consideration of how Trueba's blindness to the effects of his behaviour and shortcomings was gradually tempered. A number of candidates did not appear to know the ending of the novel.
- (b) This question required much detail in order to attain a satisfactory result. Storytelling was a temptation for some, whilst others were able to select examples of events or situations which can be seen as a comparison to or representation of the themes of the novel. The fact that the *casa de la esquina* was largely Clara's domain gave a good starting point for analysis.

**Question 7** Federico García Lorca: *Bodas de sangre*

- (a) This was the most popular text by far and was chosen by almost all candidates. This option asked candidates to analyse the importance of the lullaby in Act One. Candidates needed to give a very detailed commentary on the poem, both in terms of its poetic language and references to events and individuals in the play, by inference. There was a tendency to give a generalised answer without considering the images in sufficient detail or to consider the effect of the poem in context. Some answers showed awareness of the poetry and made thoughtful observations on how it contributed to the success of the play.
- (b) The first task in answering this question was to define terms – what is meant by *contenido espiritual*? If this was not done, essays sometimes lacked focus as candidates included several references to aspects of the play which may be taken as having some kind of relevance, but with no cohesion to the argument. There is clearly a religious or moral compass guiding the actions of characters, and also a more individual impulse at play. Again, candidates who gave thought to the argument and chose examples judiciously achieved good results.

**Question 8** Pablo Neruda: *Veinte poemas de amor y una canción desesperada*

- (a) This option was chosen by a small number of candidates. Those who had been well prepared in writing a critical commentary, and ensured that they paid close attention to the specific points in the question (the sea and its importance for Neruda), did well. Examiners look for close analysis of poetic language and presentation of the theme, and a personal response to the work.
- (b) There was much scope for candidates to select the three poems on which to focus their answer. The best essays found a way of linking the poems with the themes, either in the way the poet presented the ideas, or through linguistic threads, such as imagery.

# FIRST LANGUAGE SPANISH

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Paper 8665/42

Texts

## Key messages

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- Show knowledge of the text by making reference to incidents or characters or by giving quotations to support the argument. Simply narrating the story is not sufficient. All references and quotations must be relevant to the specific question being answered.
- Introductory paragraphs which give background information about the author and his or her life and other publications are not needed. Candidates must focus entirely on the question as it is set and mention any pertinent general details as part of the essay.
- Examiners must be able to read answers and therefore candidates are asked to pay close attention to writing legibly.
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- Candidates must number their essays accurately, e.g. **5(b)** or **6(a)**, so that Examiners can immediately identify which task is being answered.

## General comments

Examiners noted a lower number of examples of rubric infringements and the vast majority of candidates had been well prepared for the examination.

The key messages above point to several issues which recur frequently. Candidates who address these will be in a good position to make the most of their knowledge of the texts and achieve their full potential. Much of the advice given can be summarised as making the best use of the time available in the examination. It is counterproductive to write anything which is not relevant to the question chosen. All aspects of the question must be answered – omitting any of these will reduce the marks available. Candidates may be asked to analyse a specific aspect of a theme, so a pre-prepared general essay will not score highly. In the option **(a)** questions in **Sección Primera**, long answers to parts **(i)** and **(ii)** will leave insufficient time to spend on part **(iii)**, which should be the main focus of the answer.

If a candidate does not number a question correctly, or at all, it can make assessment difficult as the Examiner is left to guess the candidate's intentions. Candidates also need to be aware that if Examiners cannot read the work, it can be almost impossible to assess it. Very tiny handwriting is particularly challenging. Essays should be written in black or dark blue ink.

Most candidates showed detailed knowledge of the texts and had studied the themes and issues. There were some common misunderstandings relating to historical context and literary terms. Candidates are advised to avoid reference to these unless they are sure of the facts and the points being made add substance to the answer. Examiners look for individual responses to the questions, supported by knowledge and understanding of the text.

### Comments on specific questions

#### **Sección Primera**

##### **Question 1** Juan Rulfo: *Pedro Páramo*

- (a) Parts (i) and (ii) were generally well done, with the questions answered accurately. In part (iii), few candidates were able to explore the themes in any depth; most tended to discuss 'death' in a fairly narrative way.
- (b) There were a number of prepared answers to this question, which were not entirely relevant. Most responses referred to the role of individuals, such as Pedro Páramo, with few references to the setting of the novel.

##### **Question 2** Calderón de la Barca: *La vida es sueño*

- (a) Most answered parts (i) and (ii) correctly although the responses tended to include too much storytelling and were overlong. Part (iii) was often well argued, with understanding of how Segismundo used free will to make moral judgements. The answer obviously went beyond him simply giving up Rosaura to allow her to regain her honour.
- (b) Key to a successful answer here was the candidate's interpretation of '*la moralidad cristiana*'. Some candidates ignored this part of the question altogether, which limited the marks available.

##### **Question 3** Jorge Luis Borges: *Ficciones*

- (a) There were relatively few answers on this text. Those who tackled this option showed understanding and the ability to respond to part (iii) in a straightforward way.
- (b) This question gave candidates scope to choose two *Ficciones* to analyse. *La biblioteca de Babel* was the most popular choice, often paired with *Las ruinas circulares*. The responses were thoughtful with a range of examples linking the two pieces.

##### **Question 4** Antonio Buero Vallejo: *El concierto de San Ovidio*

- (a) Many candidates answered on this text, with option (a) being the most popular. The play was well known and understood in general. The best answers expressed what was implied in parts (i) and (ii), showing the ability to interpret the text. In part (iii), some responses were too limited as analysis of '*la conciencia y el egoísmo*' centred on one character only, usually Valindin. Higher-scoring essays discussed the conflict seen in Adriana in particular, as well as other characters. A number of answers did not address the issue of conflict at all. Examiners saw many examples of the interpretation of the play as a story about Spain in the mid-twentieth century but this was often not incorporated successfully into the rest of the essay.
- (b) The accepted view presented in responses was that violence had triumphed, and this was generally presented as physical violence, prompted by the reference to '*espada*' in the question. The best answers went beyond a list of instances of physical violence to consider why it was used and to analyse psychological violence also. There were some good parallels drawn between this and the political situation in Spain at the time the play was written. These needed to be brief and to the point; some candidates spent too long explaining Buero Vallejo's political views.

#### **Sección Segunda**

##### **Question 5** Carmen Laforet: *Nada*

- (a) This was a popular text. Some very good answers here analysed Ena's role in the development of Andrea, and also considered the friendship from Ena's point of view. There was a high degree of storytelling, however, which detracted from the time available for analysis.
- (b) The best essays here considered the role of description in the novel in a number of aspects. These included the presentation of Barcelona and the family home post-war, as compared to Andrea's memories, and analysed the relevance of this. Specific descriptions were selected to show how they revealed Andrea's state of mind. The fact that the novel is narrated in the first

person was another factor for analysis. Some candidates focused more on the use of language in descriptive passages. All emphasised how effectively the descriptions draw the reader in to the text.

**Question 6** Isabel Allende: *La casa de los espíritus*

- (a) There were many answers on this text. Option (a) required candidates to look at relationships between mothers and daughters, as well as mothers and sons. It was essential to address both parts of the question. Most candidates focused on one or two examples, primarily Clara and her family. The discussion of sons tended to be limited but the best answers found reasons for the difference in treatment and included examples of mothers who only had sons.
- (b) Many essays on this question discussed the physical silences of Clara and the reasons for them. Some took the analysis to a higher level by considering the intangible examples of silence, in political and social aspects of the novel, for example. The silence of those bullied and violated by Trueba became resentment and resulted in vengeance. There were some thoughtful and individual responses.

**Question 7** Federico García: Lorca *Bodas de sangre*

- (a) This text attracted the largest number of answers, but option (a) was the less popular choice. The best answers showed how the staging of the third Act of the play was structured, and how it was experienced by an audience. In many cases, candidates did not give sufficient emphasis to the physical staging, seeing the play only as a text to be read, not visualising it as a piece of live theatre. One key word was given in the question – ‘*distanciamiento*’. This led in to an analysis of the inclusion of the ‘supernatural’ characters and their role in this Act.
- (b) This option was exceedingly popular. Some very good answers related the play to real life in Andalucía in the past and understood how the symbols and supernatural effects all fit together coherently. Candidates selected references which illustrated the social forces affecting Andalucía, or indeed somewhere else, and how individuals responded to it. There was a tendency to list examples and simply say that this could not happen now, taking events at face value rather than studying the universal nature of human experience, presented in a work of literature.

**Question 8** Pablo Neruda: *Veinte poemas de amor y una canción desesperada*

- (a) The question referred to *Poema 1* as ‘*típico*’. In the analysis of the poem, candidates needed to make reference to themes or techniques which are found in other poems in the collection to justify the argument. Those who chose this question generally responded well.
- (b) There were few answers to this question but candidates were able to select poems which illustrated the quotation and used these effectively.