

SPANISH LANGUAGE

<p>Paper 8685/01 Speaking</p>

Key messages

For candidates:

- Candidates' own interests should play a part in the choice of the subject for the presentation and 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 at least two questions in both conversation sections

For Centres:

- The test consists of three distinct sections:
 - Section 1: Presentation (maximum $3\frac{1}{2}$ minutes);
 - Section 2: Topic Conversation (7-8 minutes) on issues arising from the presentation;
 - Section 3: General Conversation (8-9 minutes) on themes completely different from those raised in the Topic Conversation.
- Each section should be clearly announced 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

Overall, candidates performed well in this speaking exam. The performance of candidates covered a large range, from the outstanding to the very basic. Some very good candidates were clearly native speakers, but occasionally the Teacher/examiner allowed the candidate to ride rough-shod over the required timings and on a few occasions the presentation was not related to any Spanish-speaking country.

Most candidates, however, had been well prepared for the examination. They showed interest in their chosen topics and spoke for the required time.

The quality of the recordings was generally of a satisfactory standard with just a few suffering from low volume or intrusive background noise. A few Centres did not announce a candidate's name and number clearly.

The range of samples followed correct procedure with a range from top to bottom, some Centres even supplying recordings of all candidates entered by them.

Overall though, Teacher/examiners entered into the spirit of the test and helped candidates to produce the best possible outcome. However, a few teachers were not able to develop a proper conversation with the candidates or to prompt them to ask the required questions.

Most candidates produced at least one question to the Examiner, but in some cases a second or subsequent question was missing. Teacher/examiners should prompt candidates where necessary to ask questions. A few Centres awarded marks for seeking information even though the candidate asked no questions. Centres

are reminded that marks cannot be awarded where no questions are asked. Questions should arise naturally from the discussion, and should be more complex than a weak “¿y tú?” A few Teacher/examiners spoke for too long in reply to a candidate’s question.

Most Centres adhered to the prescribed timings for each section, though a small minority had a cavalier attitude towards these, to the detriment of candidates’ ability to access the full range of marks.

Some Centres did not make a clear distinction between the Topic and General Conversations, so some candidates had insufficient opportunity to discuss sufficient variety of issues or offer a suitable range of higher-level language.

The General Conversation was the section where there was noticeable variation in standard. Although many candidates rose to the occasion fairly readily, others were less forthcoming or hesitant, especially when dealing with ideas and opinions. Some candidates could have been more encouraged or challenged to reach their potential.

The quality of language varied considerably. In many cases accuracy was very good and candidates showed their willingness and ability to handle an advanced range of structures and vocabulary. On the other hand, some weaker candidates were hampered by faulty syntax and a lack of basic vocabulary.

Pronunciation was generally good or at least acceptable. Problems with some more difficult sounds occasionally impeded communication. Over-reliance on prepared material sometimes led to flat or inaccurate intonation and stressing.

Comments on specific sections

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 candidates should take care to make specific reference to this context. The content mark out of ten was halved if no specific reference to a Spanish-speaking country or context was made.

Presentations should be a formal and coherent introduction to the subject and ideally provide a personal overview of the issue to form the basis of discussion in the topic conversation. Evidence of preparation, organisation and relevant factual knowledge are all taken into account for the content mark. Pronunciation and clarity of delivery are also assessed.

Part 2: Topic Conversation

The Topic Conversation provides the opportunity to develop points arising from the presentation and should not be a further series of mini presentations. Interaction is a key criterion. Candidates are reminded that their responses should expand outside of pre-learned answers, and should be spontaneous, in order to be awarded high marks for responsiveness. Candidates should take part in a discussion, including justifying or refuting a point of view, as well as giving relevant examples or information.

There was a marked difference in candidates’ ability to deal with expected and well-rehearsed and unexpected questions

Candidates should ask the Examiner at least two substantial questions in order to gain marks for ‘seeking information and opinions’.

Part 3: General Conversation

The start of this section should be clearly announced on the recording. Please remember that it is the Teacher/examiner who determines the matters to be covered in this section. Candidates should not be asked what they prefer to talk about: this is not a second Topic Conversation and Teacher/examiners should not return to material already covered.

Subjects covered should allow debate. All conversations should go beyond the descriptive and allow scope for actual discussion of ideas and opinions. The range and style of questioning should also encourage

candidates use sophisticated language, show competence in structures at a suitably advanced level and as a result gain access to the higher range of marks.

As in the Topic Conversation, candidates should ask the Examiner questions to seek information and opinions and be prompted to do so if necessary.

Language

Quality of language is assessed in all sections. Centres are again reminded to encourage candidates to use as wide a range of language as possible, and those conducting the tests should take care that candidates have the opportunity to do so. An appropriate level of vocabulary and structure is required.

To gain access to 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 areas. Accuracy continues to be a problem in some basic structures such as verb endings and tenses, use of *ser/estar*, genders and noun/adjective/verb agreements and numbers.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/21
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- **Question 1:** seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question. Candidates should take care not to omit words or to include extra words.
- **Question 2:** rewrite the phrases to include the word(s) in brackets. A grammatical manipulation will be required, and care should be taken to ensure that the answer would fit back into the original text, retaining the same meaning.
- **Questions 3 and 4:** comprehension of texts. Candidates should attempt to answer in their own words. Direct copying of five or more words from the text will usually invalidate an answer.
- **Question 5(a):** summary of relevant details from both texts in answer to the question set. Introduction, conclusions and vague generalisations are not required. Specific, relevant details attract marks.
- **Question 5(b):** personal response. Candidates should give a point of view and, if possible, offer ideas which have not appeared in the texts.
- **Language:** when preparing for the exam, make sure to revise the basic agreements, tenses and verb endings.

General comments

The examination provided an appropriate level of challenge and discriminated well, with a wide range of marks awarded to candidates from across the ability range. The linguistic competence of the candidates was generally excellent and top marks for quality of language were almost universally awarded. Most candidates appeared to have been well prepared in the techniques required, although lifting, (the direct copying of five or more words from the text), occasionally invalidated a mark for comprehension. A minority of candidates still exceeded the permitted number of words in **Question 5**, which meant that part, or sometimes all, of their personal response could not be assessed.

The presentation of the papers was generally good, although there were still a number of candidates whose handwriting made their answers difficult to read. Where certain details could not be deciphered, a mark could not be given. This sometimes proved to be a problem in **Question 2** in particular, where precise grammar is essential. There was not always a clear distinction between the letters *a* and *o* which was particularly important in **Question 2(b)** where the pronoun *la* was crucial. Very few candidates seemed troubled by the time constraints of the examination. Comprehension of the two texts, dealing with causes of and possible remedies for deforestation, was usually clearly demonstrated.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Most candidates scored at least three marks. A few candidates selected the wrong phrase for their answers, although the commonest reason for not scoring the mark was to add or omit words from the beginning or end of the target phrase.

- (a) This was usually done well. A few answers were invalidated by the omission of *la*...
- (b) A number of otherwise correct answers were ruled out as they were introduced by *esto*...
- (c) More cases of misidentification of the phrase were noticeable here.

- (d) The omission of ...*posible* was the commonest error.
- (e) In some instances answers included *permite...*

Question 2

This is a demanding exercise and despite their very high level of language skills candidates sometimes struggled to make the correct manipulations. Only a minority scored maximum marks.

- (a) This was done well. Most opted for *cuando no son cuidados*, although *cuando no los cuidan* and constructions using *descuidar* were equally acceptable. A few answers were not accepted when ...*de forma adecuada* was added.
- (b) Most answers were good, but quite a few were invalidated by the wrong spelling of *utilice* (with z), or the wrong pronoun (*lo*).
- (c) Again, this was done well. Candidates were not penalised for including the unnecessary *Por regla general...* in their answers, and either infinitive, *ser* or *ir*, was accepted. There were a few instances of candidates who changed the cue word *suele* to *suelen*, which is not permitted.
- (d) Many candidates were unsuccessful in this question because their answers, though grammatically correct, would not fit back in the text. Common errors included the wrong tense (present, *hacen*) or person (*haría*). A few candidates answered incorrectly by changing the cue word from *falta* to *faltarían*.
- (e) This was the least successful of all the manipulations. The vast majority of answers, despite reading as perfect Spanish, would not fit back into the text. It is important for candidates not to do these manipulations in isolation, but always to check that their answer could be pasted into the text in place of the original phrase and retain the same meaning. The majority chose a verb that did not fit back after *estos...* in the text, such as *habría*, or made *reducción* the subject: *la reducción sería notable*.

Question 3

The text on a new approach to replanting land devastated by forest fires in Spain was generally well received, and most candidates were able to demonstrate clear comprehension. Candidates appeared to be well versed in the requirements of this and the following comprehension question, with marks lost for copying more than four words directly from the text appearing to be due to oversight rather than intention. It was encouraging to see how candidates allowed themselves to be guided by the marks allocated – (2), (3) or (4) – and attempted to supply a matching number of pieces of information.

- (a) Only some candidates gave all the details necessary to score maximum marks. Most understood that large expanses of land had been devastated. Not so many added both the facts that the successful replanting was handicapped by lack of investment and traditional methods of planting. A common lift was *el tipo de plantación habitual*.
- (b) The majority of candidates scored at least three marks here for sowing many seeds, planting young seedlings, and the disadvantage of the cost of this technique. Some answers did not give specific details: ...*la tradicional y la importada. Son criticadas porque la tradicional aumenta la posibilidad de incendios y la importada un trae un costo muy alto y una forma incómoda de trabajar* (worth only 1 mark).
- (c) This was generally well answered, with candidates often scoring all three marks. Marks were sometimes dropped when the phrases *especies resistentes al cambio climático* and *se recupere en el menor tiempo posible* were copied directly from the text.
- (d) This question seemed challenging for many candidates and often no more than one mark was awarded, usually for stating that fewer seeds would be needed. It is possible that candidates did not fully appreciate the meaning or relevance of *sembradora* as, although a number mentioned that the work was made easier, they did not mention the machine. As for the third mark, it was necessary to state that the new job opportunities would be found *en las zonas rurales / pobres*.

- (e) This was also a challenging question and a number of candidates scored neither of the two marks available. It was commonly mentioned that the money was being spent on extinguishing fires, which was worth one mark. Only a minority went on to state that Vallejo considered that, if the money was directed towards fire prevention, there would be fewer forest fires and less money required for fighting them.

Section 2

Question 4

Comprehension of this second text, concerning deforestation in Colombia, was very good.

- (a) Nearly every candidate scored at least one mark by noting that large areas of forest had been devastated. Although most candidates also showed that they had understood that this had happened in the Amazon region, not so many went on to mention the significance of this. Comparisons with the deforestation which occurred in the previous decade were not commonly made.
- (b) Many candidates scored high marks on this question. Those who dropped marks did so when they gave insufficient detail, or turned the first points around by stating that the deforestation adversely affected the *ganadería* and *cultivos*, or lifted directly from the text *en la reproducción de especies de fauna* or *limita la producción de agua*.
- (c) A lot of success was achieved here and most candidates scored two, if not all three, of the marks on offer. The majority clearly understood that the lands under threat were those not covered by official protection schemes, and that it was a common error to blame local people for the damage done. To score the third point it was necessary to state that the real culprits were those engaged in the illegal timber trade.
- (d) This was also very well answered. As with the previous question, most candidates scored at least two marks, usually for pointing out that the other criminal acts included illegal mining and the deliberate starting of forest fires. A number of candidates missed out on their third mark when they omitted to add that the purpose of the fires was to hunt tortoises to be sold on the black market.
- (e) The majority of candidates successfully stated that the population should be made aware of the consequences of destroying forests. Not so many mentioned the specific details of how many hectares would be replanted or, more frequently, that the aim was to achieve this by 2020.

Question 5

There was encouraging evidence that candidates are becoming increasingly aware of the techniques required to be successful in this question. Although there were still some exceptions, the importance of adhering to the word count of 140 words for both parts of the question appeared to be understood, but not always observed. (Anything in excess of 160 words is disregarded, and in extreme cases this can lead to no marks being awarded for part (b), the personal response).

- (a) The question on the causes and remedies for deforestation offered candidates all the structure they needed for their summary. Many who picked out relevant specific details from the texts - most of which had already formed part of answers to comprehension questions - which answered the question concisely, achieved high scores. There were fewer unnecessary introductions than previous years and also very few instances of personal opinions being incorrectly offered in this part of the question.

An example of how to score 7 marks in fewer than 50 words is as follows:

Las razones por la deforestación van tanto de la falta de cuidado de los bosques ✓ causando incendios ✓ o la escasez de inversiones ✓ o por el modo tradicional de plantación, ✓ como actividades como la ganadería ✓ la siembra de cultivos ilícitos ✓ la extracción de metales ilícitamente ✓ ...

An illustration of the wrong way to answer is:

La deforestación en Colombia es un gran motivo de preocupación debido al gran impacto que puede llegar a tener si no empezamos un cambio ahora. Colombia ha desarrollado dos programas con el fin de parar este problema debido a que muchos grupos criminales se enfocan en destruir muchas hectáreas con el fin de realizar sus actividades ilícitas...

(These 57 words of generalisations score 0 marks).

- (b) Candidates who had left 40 or so words for this part of the answer were usually able to pick up another 3 to 5 marks, provided that they answered question. Higher marks were achieved by those who introduced some originality in their answers, rather than just repeating ideas that had already been offered by the texts. A few answers could not be marked as the word limit had already been exceeded.

Quality of Language

As stated earlier, the quality of candidates' written Spanish was generally excellent. Candidates were almost always awarded maximum marks in all three quality of language assessments.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

<p>Paper 8685/22 Reading and Writing</p>

Key messages

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General comments

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The presentation of the papers was generally good, and very few candidates seemed troubled by the time constraints of the examination. Comprehension of the two texts, dealing with problems arising from the need to combine employment with education, was usually clearly demonstrated. The first language speakers were able to show understanding of the topic in good Spanish, and most second language speakers, although lacking the same fluency of expression, were also able to demonstrate comprehension commensurate with their ability.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

Good scores were often achieved for this question. A few candidates selected the wrong phrase for their answers, although the commonest reason for not scoring the mark was to add or omit words from the beginning or end of the target phrase.

- (a) Some added *de* at the end. A few thought *presa fácil de las pandillas* was the correct answer.
- (b) *Tiene...* was frequently left out.
Some candidates mixed the answers for (c) and (d).
- (e) This was successfully answered by the majority of candidates.

Question 2

This proved to be the customary demanding exercise and maximum or near maximum marks were more often the exception than the rule. A few candidates changed the cue word and, even though their answers were in correct Spanish, could not be awarded the mark.

- (a) Many candidates identified the use of *al* + infinitive. Some used *después de* or *tras* as equally acceptable alternatives. A few answers, such as *cuando terminen las navidades* or *cuando las navidades hayan terminado*, despite being excellent Spanish, were considered invalid as they no longer contained the cue *terminar*.
- (b) Answers which were unacceptable were commonly written with the auxiliary verb in the present tense: *tiene visto/ha visto...*
- (c) Only the strongest candidates were awarded the mark for this. Quite a few did not use the subjunctive form of *trabajar*. Other answers omitted the subordinate verb altogether: *prohíben que el trabajo infantil*. Some tried to use the verb *proscriben*, thus changing the meaning of the transformation: *prohíben que el trabajo infantil proscriba*. A few answers started the transformation with *que*: *que prohíben que...*, which could not be reinserted into the text.
- (d) The majority of the candidates were able to manipulate this structure successfully. Some answers which changed the order of the answers were not accepted, as they did not fit back into the text: *niños excavando arena utilizando palas (del río)*. Marks were occasionally lost for misspellings such as *excabar*. (This was also the case for *travajar* elsewhere in this exercise).
- (e) Better candidates answered successfully by identifying the verb phrase *dejar de* as having the meaning of 'stop'. Some answers, although grammatically correct, changed the meaning of the original sentence: *siempre dejarán a los niños trabajar/dejarán que los niños vayan a trabajar* ('allow the children to work'). Other answers left out (*nunca/no*): *los niños dejarán de trabajar*.

Question 3

Candidates were often successful in presenting the required information in their own words, often using more complex linguistic structures. Instances of lifting five or more words directly from the text occurred more by oversight than design. Many candidates appeared to be aware of the lifting rule and began their answers in their own words. Lifting was often more prevalent in the second part of their answers.

- (a) This was generally done well, with most candidates referring to all, or at least two, of the three points required: the many hours the children worked, the lack of masks to protect them and how they could only go to School in the afternoon.
- (b) This question was successfully answered. Some candidates did not grasp the idea of not being controlled by gangs, but this was well rephrased by many other candidates as in *no caer en las manos de las pandillas*.
- (c) Most candidates were able to show comprehension of the varying ways in which children earned money in Tegucigalpa. Those who gave sufficient details were rewarded with maximum marks, and most scored at least two for: *reciclan basura y venden comida y cigarrillos*. Less able candidates often lifted *el dinero de las extorsiones* or simply left out this detail.
- (d) Candidates tended to perform well here. They got at least two marks: one for paying for the School material and the other for paying for the transport, although a common lift was *el transporte hasta la escuela*. Not so many were successful in noting that, if children did not work, this would affect the whole family. It was not sufficient to focus only on the children themselves who would not be able to eat.
- (e) Approximately half of the answers successfully explained the vicious circle of not going to School through being poor and being poor through not being able to go to School. Most of the remainder received at least one mark for only noting the first part of the answer. A few candidates incorrectly thought that the vicious circle referred to future generations: *como no se educan de pequeños no tienen trabajo de mayores ni tampoco sus hijos*.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

Comprehension of this second text, concerning the difficulties experienced by a university candidate who needed to work part-time, was equally good.

- (a) Nearly every candidate was able to express the idea that Elena had to work due to lack of family support, but only a few mentioned that she did not feel that she was either a candidate or a worker. Some who did lifted from the text *una vida de estudiante plena*. Better candidates frequently picked up a second mark for noting that it was hard for her in exam time. Less able candidates did not understand the phrase *hacérsele cuesta arriba*, or resorted to lifts from the text which were not credited.
- (b) To score both marks for this question it was necessary to give full details and it was well answered by many. Although it was more than likely that the candidate had understood, answers such as *en Europa es mas común pero en España tan solo un 4 per cent* could not be credited as they do not give a clear answer to the question, (no mention of the idea of work and study at the same time or an explanation of the 4%). A few candidates confused the idea of 4% with the age of the candidates – 20 to 24. Some answers included information from later paragraphs: *hay mucho paro juvenil/exige mayor asistencia a las clases*.
- (c) This was a more demanding question and not so many candidates were able to mention all three elements required. The fact of widespread youth unemployment was often overlooked, although the cultural barriers to working while studying were often successfully noted. There were several answers that either lifted *el mercado laboral ni el sistema educativo*, or did not mention these two areas at all: *ningún lado facilita que se compaginen los dos* (no indication of what those sides were).
- (d) This question allowed the majority of candidates to score some of the four marks available, usually for the ideas of required attendance at university or the number of hours per week that degrees involve. Only a few managed to express the idea of studying part-time and the problems posed by lengthening the study time, which resulted in lack of interest in postgraduate courses.
- (e) Many candidates picked up the mark for noting that her work commitments allowed Elena flexibility to adapt her hours. Insufficient detail often meant that only one, or sometimes neither, of the other two marks were scored. Here it was necessary to distinguish between the majority of university lecturers who made no allowances for Elena's circumstances and the few who were sympathetic.

Question 5

There was encouraging evidence that candidates are becoming increasingly aware of the techniques required to be successful in this question. Although there were still some exceptions, the importance of adhering to the word count of 140 words for both parts of the question appeared to be well understood.

- (a) There were few unnecessary introductions and most candidates appeared to be aware that, to score well, they needed to select specific details from the texts which answered the question concisely. Those candidates who still attempted to write short summaries of the situation mentioned in both texts achieved lower marks than those who considered each text in turn and selected relevant details.

Some candidates mentioned sections of the source texts that were not relevant to the question: *venden productos en la calle, recogen basura* or *el dinero extorsionado por las pandillas*. There was also a tendency among less able candidates to copy verbatim from the texts when extracting key details. Although there is no penalty for this, it should be remembered that any copied material will not be considered in the Quality of Language mark. There were very few instances of personal opinions being incorrectly offered in this part of the question.

Those who paid attention to the question asked, and picked out specific details of the impact that work can have on young people's education – many of which had already formed part of answers to comprehension questions – scored well. No introductions or conclusions are required and the recommended technique is to plunge straight in, this is a good example of how to score 5 marks in fewer than 50 words:

En Honduras los niños trabajan sin ningún tipo de protección. ✓ Es una forma de apoyar económicamente a sus familias ✓ y alejarse de las pandillas callejeras. ✓ La mayoría no puede asistir al colegio, ✓ lo que crea un círculo vicioso que no les permite salir de la pobreza... ✓

An illustration a less successful answer is:

En el Texto 1 “El trabajo infantil en Honduras” se expresa tanto la opinión de Raúl, un niño de doce años que trabaja ocho horas durante las vacaciones y cinco horas antes de ir a clase ✓ después de la temporada festiva, con la de la UNICEF y su postura en el asunto
(1 marks scored in 52 words).

- (b) Candidates who had left 40 or so words for this part of the answer were usually able to score marks. Originality in the answers was rewarded, rather than just repeating ideas that had already been offered by the texts. A few answers could not be marked as the word limit had already been exceeded.

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 awarded ranged from Below Average to Good, with most marks falling in the Sound range.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/23
Reading and Writing

Key messages

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

General comments

The performance of candidates taking this examination was generally good, especially of those who had entered for the 9719 component. The paper provided an appropriate level of challenge, and the spread of marks awarded reflected the differing ability levels. Candidates appeared to have been well coached in the techniques required, and it was pleasing to note a widespread awareness of more complex linguistic structures, with subjunctive constructions featuring prominently. The presentation of the papers was good, most answers were easy to read, and very few candidates seemed troubled by time constraints. Comprehension of the two texts, dealing with different fashions of exercise and keeping fit was generally good.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

This exercise was generally done well, with many candidates scoring all or nearly all marks available. The matching phrase was usually correctly identified and errors usually consisted of adding or omitting words.

- (a) Very few errors were recorded here. Some candidates prefaced their otherwise correct answer with *con...*
- (b) Identifying *no te cuesta tanto* was a little more of a challenge for some. A few candidates began their answers with *llega un punto en que...* which was incorrect.
- (c) The correct phrase was identified by nearly every candidate. The commonest error was to invalidate the answer by adding *...correr*.
- (d) Most candidates were successful in finding the two words required for this answer.

- (e) This was a little more challenging for those who were unfamiliar with *se aprovecha* or *subir al carro*. However, bearing in mind the sequential manner in which the phrases are taken from the text, many were able to link *todo el mundo...* in the cue with *todos...* in the last paragraph.

Question 2

This is one of the more challenging exercises of the examination and it was encouraging to see the number of candidates who at least recognised the structure being tested.

- (a) Most candidates recognised the subjunctive form *quieras* and those who were successful supplied a preceding expression such as *cuando/en cualquier momento que/cuandoquiera que* which would trigger this mood.
- (b) Candidates who were familiar with the expression *acabar de* having the meaning 'have/has just' were generally successful with this manipulation. Other candidates appeared to know *acabar* only as meaning 'end' and were unable answer correctly.
- (c) Vocabulary recognition was also often the root of the problem here. Every candidate was aware of the basic meaning of *volver* but far fewer seemed familiar with *volver a + infinitive* 'to do something again'. Some otherwise correct answers were ruled out through the omission of the reflexive pronoun needed in *ponerme*.
- (d) This proved to be one of the more challenging manipulations. Many answers used the correct subjunctive ending *-as* but was later invalidated by the lack of the correct radical change to give *compitas*. Some candidates avoided this by using the more familiar *puedas* to give *es posible que puedas competir enseguida* which was still considered an acceptable answer.
- (e) The cue *citan* will not work here without the reflexive pronoun *se*. Although there appeared to be awareness of the meaning 'to make an appointment' very few candidates came up with a correct answer.

Question 3

The text on the current fashion for running in Spain was generally well received, and most candidates were able to demonstrate clear comprehension. Candidates appeared to be well versed in the requirements for this question, (and also the following one), with scarcely any marks being lost for copying more than four words directly from the text. It was encouraging to see how candidates allowed themselves to be guided by the marks allocated – (2), (3) or (4) – and attempted to supply a matching number of pieces of information.

A common strategy appeared to be that of identifying parts of the text that would answer questions, and then endeavouring to 'tweak' the word order or make minor adjustments in order to avoid copying directly.

- (a) Many candidates scored at least two of the three marks available by identifying that decreased purchasing power brought about by unemployment meant that a pair of running shoes was far more affordable than a subscription to a gymnasium. To pick up the third mark it was necessary to add that the unemployed had more time available, which was not the same as saying that running was an activity that you could do when you liked.
- (b) This was a more challenging question. Only the better candidates focused on the changes in Fabiola's attitude to running without referring to the physical effects. There was also difficulty in converting second person present tense to third person past. Most candidates succeeded in stating that running was now part of her life, not so many noted that she did not enjoy it as first and very few mentioned that she missed it when she could not do it.
- (c) Greater success was achieved here with many instances of maximum marks being scored. Most were able to state that running helps Gabriel to think more clearly and to come up with solutions to his problems. Provided that language could be manipulated with sufficient clarity, a third mark was scored by noting that running makes an important contribution to feeling good with oneself.
- (d) Many candidates were successful in noting at least two, if not all three, of the psychological benefits of running: *mejora la autoestima/aumenta la felicidad/combate la depresión*.

- (e) This question begins *Según Alberto Fuentes...* As Alberto does not start speaking until the second sentence, the preceding sentence detailing the enormous increase in sales of running shoes is not relevant to the answer. Many candidates treated it as if it was one of the three pieces of information being sought. Marks were scored for noting that running was now commonplace and that competition was fierce – as long as it was made clear that it was competition between businesses selling running gear that was being referred to. Perhaps because of lack of familiarity with *quedar en* few candidates were able to state that executives meet to discuss business while running through a park.

Section 2

Question 4

The second text about doing exercise through dance appeared to be as equally well understood as the first.

- (a) Unless full details were given this account of how exercising through dance originated became a little too vague. It was necessary to state firstly that an aerobics teacher forgot the music for his class and substituted it with songs that he liked. Although this was not typical music for aerobics his improvised class became the most popular at the gym. Marks awarded ranged from zero to maximum according to the level of detail given.
- (b) Nearly every candidate scored a mark for stating that the women were seeking enjoy themselves whilst taking part in a healthy activity. Some linguistic difficulty was experienced in noting that their children had all grown up. A few candidates were misled by *en los 90...* and attempted to relate this to the age of participants.
- (c) The slimming and de-stressing effects of exercising through dance were very successfully identified and maximum marks were commonly awarded.
- (d) Although most candidates could readily identify the areas of the brain which are stimulated by this form of exercise, only the more able candidates possessed the necessary linguistic skills to provide coherent answers. Candidates often struggled when they attempted to avoid the lift *la memoria a largo plazo*. Their more able peers found ways of doing so quite neatly: *su memoria a largo plazo* or *esas memorias a largo plazo*. All the elements of 'improving motor coordination' were required. More candidates were successful in identifying the third area: the one which responds to the emotions.
- (e) Full comprehension was not always apparent in this final question. Most scored at least one mark by saying that you could exercise through dance without the need for a partner. The point about this activity being less boring than other forms of exercise was frequently not very clearly stated. The fact that after a while patients no longer think of this as a prescription was often misunderstood.

Question 5

Most candidates had been well prepared in the techniques needed to answer this question. Very few candidates appeared to be unaware of the need to keep to the limit of 140 words for both parts of the question.

- (a) To achieve a good mark it is essential to note, in the limited number of words available, details from the texts which answer the question which has been asked. In this exercise, candidates are not penalised for copying directly from the texts. It should be remembered, however, that any copied material will not be considered in the Quality of Language mark. Candidates should also avoid offering personal opinions in this part of the question.

Knowledge of the required techniques appeared to be fairly widespread, and many very good scores were recorded. Although some candidates wasted words by writing about the physical benefits of these two forms of exercise, a considerable majority were able to state clearly many of the psychological benefits.

- (b) There were some very pleasing answers to this part of the question, with many making the most of the opportunity to show off their familiarity with more complex linguistic structures. When candidates did not so score well it was often because they attempted to bring in pre-learnt material

on the topics of obesity and junk food which, although not wholly irrelevant, went off at a bit of a tangent and tended to unbalance their answers. A few candidates, perhaps through lack of familiarity with the expression *mantenerse en forma*, focused their attention solely on the two types of exercise discussed in the texts, which restricted their chances of coming up with any original thoughts other than saying that yes, this was popular or no, this was not.

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.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/31
Essay

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

Broadly speaking, there was an extensive range of abilities demonstrated in this paper for this session. There were numerous examples of candidates who were able to demonstrate an ability to produce an articulately constructed essay that was both highly relevant to the title set, convincingly argued and coherent throughout. The levels of linguistic insight on show from many candidates were very good indeed and this made the essays a pleasure to read and to fully appreciate in terms of intellectual conviction and linguistic expertise. It would be fair to say once again that the hard work carried out in preparation for this examination both by teachers and candidates is clear for all to see.

Most candidates wrote essays that were relevant to the title. Nevertheless, there were still a few essays that were too general or too vague. Those candidates who managed to keep their focus by responding directly to the title 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. With 16 marks available for content out of 40, essays need to be clearly relevant to the title set (as the mark scheme suggests) in order to be awarded full marks.

It is worth mentioning again that the word count (250–400 words) really does need to be taken into consideration by both centres and candidates. We remind centres that answers must adhere to the specified word count.

In general terms, the quality of Spanish used by candidates in their essays was very good indeed. The more common language errors (which are unlikely to come as any surprise to centres) included the incorrect use of the verbs *ser* and *estar* and, in particular, an inclination towards the use of *estar* in sentences in the passive voice where the verb *ser* is required. Examples such as “... a la hora de comer, la moderación está recomendada por todos los expertos...”[sic.] and “...los deportes están jugados por muchos jóvenes en este país...”[sic.] were much in evidence. Examiners were surprised to note again this year the insistence from some candidates on using singular verbs with plural subjects and vice-versa. Similarly, a number of candidates managed to convince themselves that common lexical items that ‘sound’ feminine should be assigned the feminine article. Accordingly, there were many examples of “la problema”[sic.] and “la tema”[sic.] so candidates would indeed do well to bear these common words in mind and give them their correct article, especially given that this exact point has been made several times before in previous reports to centres. There were also many examples of the incorrect omission of the definite article when discussing general ideas. Examples included “...es importante considerar salud de los jóvenes...”[sic.] and “...la energía alternativa contribuye a conservación...”[sic.]. There was also a notable tendency with some candidates to use the gerund instead of a verbal noun in examples such as “jugando al fútbol es mejor que viendo la television...”[sic.] and “...la idea de estudiando en un colegio debería ser más importante en nuestra sociedad...”[sic.] However, generally speaking, many candidates were able to write sensibly structured essays and made good use of paragraphs. We recommend Centres to encourage candidates to allow for proofreading time in order to correct typographical errors in the writing.

Examples of good use of the language included:

- the consistent use of appropriate tenses.
- accurate adjectival agreement throughout the essay.
- consistently correct singular/plural subject and singular/plural verb agreements.
- the judicious use of adverbs and adverbial phrases in order to raise the register of the essay.

Further common errors included:

- confusion over the use of the verbs *ser* and *estar*
- continued misunderstanding of the differences between *hay* and *es/tiene*.
- the dropping of the letter 'h' with an auxiliary verb (eg. "la gente a decidido comprar la comida orgánica"[sic.]).
- the use of incorrectly spelt words, especially when they already appear on the examination paper itself (e.g. *el desarrollo*, *la responsibilidad*).

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *La gastronomía*

Los expertos recomiendan que comer de todo en moderación es el mejor consejo. ¿Por qué es un consejo tan difícil de seguir para mucha gente?

This was a very popular title with candidates adopting a wide range of responses. Good answers were characterised by a variety of points stating not just the reasons why people found it difficult to eat in moderation but also highlighting the damage that excessive eating could do to an individual's health. The best answers pointed out the difficulties in adhering to a healthy diet while at the same time stating that it was not impossible. In addition, some candidates explained that poverty and a scarcity of good food in some countries exacerbated the problem.

Question 2 *La igualdad de oportunidades*

“Cada persona debería tener acceso a la enseñanza, sin importar su situación individual”. ¿Hasta qué punto se puede hacer este derecho realidad?

This was a contentious but rarely tackled title. It was, however, generally well answered. The best responses were able to provide a balanced response with examples of present day access to education in various countries and several suggestions as to how problems could be resolved. The weakest answers were somewhat one-sided and mainly consisted of personal anecdotes or vague and simplistic solutions to the problems of open access to education.

Question 3 *Los deportes*

“Damos demasiada importancia al deporte en nuestra sociedad”. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

This was a popular title with many candidates providing examples from their own experience or from that of the world of professional sport to back up their points in a very convincing manner. The best essays pointed out not just the financial benefits of sport but also the health and social implications of taking part. The weakest essays used the title as an excuse to write a biography of their favourite sports personality with scant reference to the title.

Question 4 *El desarrollo social y económico*

¿Cuáles deberían ser las prioridades de un país para mejorar el desarrollo social y económico? Puedes referirte a tu país o a cualquier otro.

This was a question avoided by many candidates but, nevertheless, those who attempted it produced well documented and intelligently structured essays that highlighted that social and economic development were prerequisites for happiness. The best essays backed up this fundamental point with specific examples of how to improve social and economic development in practical and down to earth ways.

Question 5 *La conservación*

“En realidad las fuentes alternativas de energía contribuyen poco a la conservación”. ¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo?

Attempts at this title were generally well illustrated. Many candidates elected to examine the effects of humans on the environment and whether the alternative energy sources currently available to us are really effective. However, the best essays linked the use of alternative energy with the ultimate preservation of the environment, and also considered ways (with concrete examples) in which we could progress at minimal cost to the environment.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/32
Essay

Key messages

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- the use of incorrectly spelt words, especially when they already appear on the examination paper itself (e.g. *el desarrollo, la responsibilidad*).

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *La gastronomía*

"Merece la pena comprar comida orgánica". ¿Qué opinas tú?

This was a very popular title with candidates adopting a wide range of responses. Good answers were characterised by a variety of points stating not just the reasons why people should eat organic food but also highlighting the health advantages of such food. The more articulate responses pointed out the difficulties in obtaining organic food while at the same time stating that it was not impossible to do so. In addition, some candidates explained that poverty and a scarcity of good food in some countries made it difficult to source organic food.

Question 2 *La igualdad de oportunidades*

"Viviremos algún día en un mundo sin desigualdad sexual". ¿Qué opinas tú?

This was a popular title with many candidates listing the achievements so far towards the elimination of sexual inequality. The best responses showed how this progress varied from country to country and how religion and culture influenced people's attitudes. The ambition referred to in the title was embraced by most candidates.

Question 3 *Los deportes*

"El deporte profesional tiene más que ver con el dinero que el deporte". ¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo?

This was a very popular title on the paper, although some candidates produced superficial arguments and restricted themselves to saying that professional footballers had trained hard and therefore deserved high salaries. The best answers were more detailed and thorough, dealing with corruption in sport, how it had become a business and also providing a variety of pertinent examples.

Question 4 *El desarrollo social y económico*

“Incluso en un país desarrollado, siempre existirá la pobreza”. ¿Qué opinas tú?

This title was dealt with intelligently by most candidates who attempted it and it was clear that many had personal experience of poverty in a rich country. Again, the best answers sought solutions yet remained realistic in pointing out the inevitability of poverty for some in any monetary system.

Question 5 *La conservación*

“La conservación de la naturaleza es responsabilidad del individuo y no del gobierno”. ¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo?

Candidates were obviously well informed about the environment and what could be done to improve the situation. However, only the best answers attempted to show a difference between governmental and individual responsibility and how this might work in practice.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/33
Essay

Key messages

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- the use of incorrectly spelt words, especially when they already appear on the examination paper itself (e.g. *el desarrollo, la responsibilidad*).

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *La gastronomía*

“Desafortunadamente la cocina tradicional de cualquier país siempre sufre como consecuencia de la globalización de la comida”. ¿Qué opinas tú?

This was a very popular title with candidates. Most responses stated clearly that there is a need to encourage traditional cuisine and to ensure that it can survive alongside the more globalised trends in eating habits. The popularity of fast food was, for many candidates, self-evident but there was also a clearly stated conviction that traditional food is very much part of every country's cultural heritage.

Question 2 *La igualdad de oportunidades*

“En una sociedad moderna, la falta de respeto hacia los ancianos es inevitable”. ¿Hasta qué punto compartes esta opinión?

This was a less popular title with candidates. Respect for older people was not called into doubt and most responses suggested that it definitely should not be an inevitable aspect of modern society. Some essays went on to suggest that there is much to be learnt from the older generation and that we should foster positive relations between the generations.

Question 3 *Los deportes*

“El deporte es un buen antídoto a la presión de la vida diaria, pero también puede traer sus propios problemas”. ¿Qué piensas tú?

This was a reasonably popular title on the paper with most responses agreeing that sporting activity can indeed be an excellent way of dealing with the stresses and strains of modern day living. Many candidates referred to the potential for serious injury as a consequence of sporting endeavour but most felt that the risk was one worth taking in the sense that the advantages were seen to clearly outweigh the disadvantages.

Question 4 *El desarrollo social y económico*

“A causa de la pobreza, el desarrollo social y económico a nivel mundial es un objetivo inalcanzable”. ¿Qué opinas tú?

This title was not the most popular one on the paper. However, those who attempted it managed, on the whole, to suggest that social and economic development is an achievable aim and one worth fighting for despite the perceived inevitability of poverty in most, if not all, countries.

Question 5 *La conservación*

“La conservación es mucho más importante que el desarrollo industrial”. ¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo?

This was a very popular title with candidates, perhaps unsurprisingly. There was a clearly held belief amongst those who attempted this title that conservation is hugely important to the planet. Equally, it was suggested, industrial development and conservation should work alongside each other with mutual respect, as it were. Economic prosperity depends on industrial development but all countries should regard conservation and industrial development as equally important elements for a prosperous society.