

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

For centres:

- The test consists of three distinct sections: **(i)** Initial presentation (maximum 3½ minutes); **(ii)** Topic Conversation (7 – 8 minutes) on issues arising from the Presentation; **(iii)** General Conversation (8 – 9 minutes) on themes completely different from those raised in the Topic Conversation.
- Each section should be clearly identified on the recordings. It is important that the prescribed timings are observed.
- Candidates should be reminded if necessary to ask the Examiner questions in both conversation sections and be prompted 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 for both conversation sections.

General comments

The performance of candidates covered a wide 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. On a few occasions the general conversation became an extension of the topic conversation. There were still a few presentations that were not related to any Spanish-speaking country.

The quality of the recordings was generally of a high standard with just a few suffering from low volume or intrusive background noise. The range of samples followed correct procedure, with a range from top to bottom. Some centres even supplied recordings of all the candidates entered.

A few teachers did not strive to develop a proper conversation with the candidates or failed to prompt them to ask the required questions. This is particularly galling when an otherwise good candidate loses marks because the teacher fails to prompt the candidate to ask two questions in each section. Overall though, Teachers/examiners entered into the spirit of the test and helped candidates to produce the best possible recordings.

While most centres carried out the necessary administration efficiently, a few centres failed to observe the correct timings for the separate sections as required by the specification.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Part 1: Topic Presentation

Guidance on topic areas for the Presentation and discussion may be found in the syllabus. Topics must relate clearly to aspects of Hispanic life or culture and it is important that candidates make this relevance explicit in their Presentation. The content mark out of ten was halved where there was no specific reference to a Spanish-speaking country or context.

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

Evidence of careful preparation characterised better candidates, who not only offered statistics but could make critical reference to these by backing them up with their own reactions and analysis.

Part 2: Topic Conversation

Most candidates understood questions and responded well in the topic conversation. Many were able to give thoughtful and extended responses and maintain a discussion, though weaker candidates tended to follow an Examiner's lead and rely on a question-and-answer approach. In a few cases candidates were disadvantaged by being allowed – or indeed encouraged – by the Teacher/examiner to treat this section as a continuation of the Presentation, speaking at length but with minimal intervention by, or interaction with, the Examiner,

Most candidates had a sufficient range of vocabulary and structures at their disposal, which were used accurately and idiomatically. Most candidates remembered to ask questions of the Examiners either in the natural course of conversation or, in some cases, after prompting, although a few asked only one question even then.

Part 3: General Conversation

Centres are again reminded that this must be a separate section from the Topic Conversation. The start of this section should be clearly announced on the recording. It is important that different issues from those in the Topic Conversation are discussed. Although there are no prescribed areas for the General Conversation, topics should be at an appropriate level. Common areas included current events or an item in the news, health, education, the arts, sport, the environment, the economy, politics and social concerns. Some centres, however, pitched the register of language and questioning somewhat low, with elementary and mundane questions, such as favourite food and hobbies, with the result that the conversation did not develop to the level required for this examination,

All conversations should go beyond the descriptive. The range and style of questioning should further allow candidates to use more sophisticated language and to show competence in structures at a suitably advanced level. Without this, candidates could not gain access to the higher mark ranges. As in the Topic Conversation, candidates should ask the Examiner questions – and be prompted to do so as necessary – to gain credit for 'seeking information and opinions'. Such questions should arise naturally in the course of the conversation and it is not sufficient for credit for the teacher to state an opinion without actually being asked.

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

All candidates who were able to withstand the challenges of the pandemic and sit this examination should be complimented on their achievements. Preparations for assessment must have presented unprecedented difficulties, very few of which were apparent in the scripts received.

The standard of entry was often good or very good. Linguistic competence was generally excellent and, provided that there were no penalties for lack of comprehension, top marks for quality of language were almost always awarded. Most candidates showed good understanding of the two texts, dealing with some of the undesirable effects of hunting.

Most candidates appeared to have been well coached in the techniques needed. Better candidates produced skillful paraphrasing in their answers to comprehension questions, although lifting, (the direct copying of five or more words from the text), occasionally invalidated a mark. **Question 5** was generally better answered than in previous years, with more candidates focussing on specific details from the texts in their summary; although a few still exceeded the permitted number of words.

Comments on specific questions

Sección 1

Question 1

The exercise worked well, with errors mostly comprising superfluous words at the beginning or ending of the answer. Very few candidates offered an incorrect phrase, although one or two disregarded the rubric and simply explained the phrase in their own words.

- (a) The majority of candidates identified this phrase.
- (b) Again most were successful.
- (c) This was occasionally invalidated by the omission of *tomar...*

- (d) 8685 candidates had a little more difficulty here, either in identifying the phrase or not reproducing it in its entirety.
- (e) This proved to be very accessible and there were very few incorrect answers.

Question 2

Most candidates scored well on this more challenging exercise, which requires answers that fit back in the text whilst retaining exactly the same meaning.

- (a) Errors occurred when candidates used a singular verb, (which would not fit with the text), or overlooked the orthographical change in *ingirieron*.
- (b) This was generally done well. One or two candidates changed the cue from *falta* to *faltan*, which is not permitted. Another mistake was to use *hace* instead of *hacen*.
- (c) Again very few errors were noted, with either *son* or *están considerdas* being acceptable.
- (d) This proved to be the most testing of the manipulations although a number of combinations were possible: *no hace/produce/causa tanto daño como/que no daña tanto como es dañino, pero no tanto como*. Incorrect answers attempted to use *tanto dañino* or a plural verb.
- (e) Nearly every candidate was able to produce an acceptable subjunctive to follow the cue *sería necesario que*.

Question 3

The text, concerning the harmful effects of the lead shot used by hunters, was generally well understood.

- (a) Comprehension of the opening paragraph was good with many candidates scoring maximum marks. When full marks were missed, it was usually because a specific detail was omitted: *perecen 60.000 aves*, with no mention that this happened annually; *el efecto tóxico perdura en el suelo*, without any indication that this would be for a few centuries.
- (b) Again full marks were commonly awarded. The fact that the two types of birds affected by lead shot were mentioned in different parts of the paragraph and were poisoned in different ways occasionally gave rise to some inaccuracy.
- (c) Understanding was good but a number of candidates missed out on one, or sometimes two, marks by copying, more than four words directly from the text. Elements of *patos buceadores que están en peligro de extinción* and *la sostenibilidad de la caza* commonly featured, probably with candidates being unaware that they were transgressing.
- (d) Every candidate scored at least one of the two marks available here, usually for noting the illegal use of lead shot in the wetlands. Good candidates also picked up the second mark for noting that the legislation did not cover the neighbouring zones and rice fields.
- (e) Four marks were on offer for this question and candidates took care to include an appropriate amount of detail in their answers and were duly rewarded. Most responses included a number of hunters' opinions: that the lead in their munitions was less harmful than that in other common lead based materials, that a ban on lead shot would lead to a loss of jobs and that the use of potentially dangerous alternatives would necessitate the purchase of new firearms were often clearly stated.

Sección 2

Question 4

The second text, concerning illegal hunting in Ecuador, appeared to be equally well understood by candidates.

- (a) Most candidates scored marks, but not so many the maximum. Nearly everybody noted that animals were exported illegally. Some omitted to add the detail that illegal hunters also traded

within Ecuador. A few stated that this was a threat to the environment, which was not the same thing as the biodiversity mentioned by the text.

- (b) This paragraph was clearly understood and good scores were recorded. Occasionally a mark was missed when stating that indigenous people were allowed to hunt, and not qualifying this with *solo en su territorio*.
- (c) There were three possible ways of scoring the two marks available here. Surprisingly, only a few candidates noted what seemed to be a fairly obvious consequence of the illegal trading of hunted meat: *hasta tres años de cárcel*. Most focused on the depletion of hunted animals and their predators.
- (d) Provided that full answers were given good marks were awarded here. There appeared to be little difficulty in understanding that jaguar hunters often wanted to boast of their prowess by uploading photos on social media. Candidates usually noted that successful prosecution could only come from catching them in the act of killing. Better answers went on to point out that without such evidence they would only be prosecuted for minor offences.
- (e) This was another four mark question where it was important to answer with as much detail as possible. A few candidates, whilst referring to the teams of wardens in protected areas, neglected to say that these were being strengthened. Apart from this the question was generally answered well.

Question 5

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. It is important to be 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, and in extreme cases can lead to a score of zero for 5(b).

- (a) Better candidates were rewarded with marks of 8, 9 or 10. Those who achieved more moderate marks usually did so because of superfluous introductions and including generalisations which were usually too vague to score.

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, for example:

La caza deja toneladas de plomo en el suelo ✓ intoxicando aves acuáticas ✓ y aves de presa que las comen. ✓ El plomo permanece 300 años en el suelo, prolongando su efecto tóxico. ✓ Además muchos cazadores ignoran restricciones ✓ poniendo en peligro de extinción a especies de pato. ✓ ... In about forty-five words over half the available marks have been scored, leaving ample room to select specific, relevant details from the second text and also for a good three or so sentences in 5(b).

By contrast, the following answer, because of generalisation, uses many more words to score just two marks:

El texto 1 demuestra los problemas en España, que mayormente consisten en la gran cantidad de restos de plomo ✓ que ponen en riesgo la vida animal, haciendo que muchos se vean en peligro de extinción BOD ✓ y disminuyendo la diversidad de especies. Por otro lado, se ve difícil combatir la caza ilegal NBOD ya que muchos se rehúsan a hacer cambios...

- (b) Most candidates were aware that what is required here is one or two details which answer the question, which are, whenever possible, different from anything contained in the texts, and a clear personal opinion. Answers gave positive or negative views on hunting, with many of the latter highlighting the threat to endangered species. Positive views came from candidates who considered that their country had strong conservation measures in place.

Quality of Language

The quality of candidates' written Spanish was excellent. Most candidates were native speakers of the language and, unless any deductions had been made for lack of comprehension, maximum marks were almost universally awarded.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/22
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 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

All candidates who were able to withstand the challenges of the pandemic and sit this examination should be complimented on their achievements. Preparations for assessment must have presented unprecedented difficulties, very few of which were apparent in the scripts received.

The standard of entry was often good or very good. Linguistic competence was generally excellent and, provided that there were no penalties for lack of comprehension, top marks for quality of language were almost always awarded. Most candidates showed good understanding of the two texts, dealing with some of the problems of homelessness.

Candidates appeared to have been well coached in the techniques needed. Better candidates produced skillful paraphrasing in their answers to comprehension questions, although lifting, (the direct copying of five or more words from the text), occasionally invalidated a mark. **Question 5** was generally better answered than in previous years, with more candidates focussing on specific details from the texts in their summary; although a few still exceeded the permitted number of words.

Comments on specific questions

Sección 1

Question 1

The exercise worked well, with errors mostly comprising superfluous words at the beginning or ending of the answer. Very few candidates offered an incorrect phrase, although one or two disregarded the rubric and simply explained the phrase in their own words.

- (a) Most candidates identified this phrase. A number lost the mark by omitting the opening *que...* or incorrectly suggested *que no tienen hogar* as an answer.
- (b) The vast majority were successful here although some just gave *una vida autónoma* as an answer, missing out the verb *desarrollar*.

- (c) Some candidates offered *buscar un curso o un oficio*, which does not have the same meaning.
- (d) The great majority of the candidates found the correct expression in the text, but some incorrectly added *durante un mes*.
- (e) This proved to be very accessible and, other than the occasional omission of *de las administraciones*, there were very few incorrect answers.

Question 2

Most candidates scored well on this more challenging exercise, which requires answers that fit back in the text whilst retaining exactly the same meaning.

- (a) Only a small number of candidates whose first language was not Spanish found difficulty in producing the manipulation *no deja de crecer*.
- (b) A similar pattern was to be noted here with *cuenta con* presenting no problems for native speakers.
- (c) This posed more problems for all. Despite there being a number of permutations available – *después de que hayamos se haya(n) cubierto/sean/estén cubiertas/se cubran sus necesidades básicas* – some candidates came unstuck when they attempted to use *cubran* without *se* or an imperfect form of the subjunctive.
- (d) The main issue here was that of tense, with only the preterite *fui* being acceptable. Some answered with *fue* or *estuve*. It is worth reminding candidates that they should try to reinsert the phrase they construct back in the text to see if it fits. For example, the answer *me han ingresado en un centro de menores* is grammatically correct, but could not be accepted as valid, as the verb was not used in the past.
- (e) Again this presented few problems to native speakers. Some candidates missed the mark when they used *su* or *una* in their answers.

Question 3

The text, about a hostel for young homeless people in Barcelona, was generally well understood.

- (a) Comprehension of the opening paragraph was good with many candidates scoring maximum marks. When full marks were missed, it was usually because a specific detail was omitted: *jóvenes sin techo*, with no mention that they had to be over the age of majority; *sin familia* without mentioning other support nearby. Most candidates were aware of the four word rule, although there was some lifting of *en situación de exclusión social*.
- (b) Candidates who gave full details received their just rewards. It was necessary to state the number of places offered by the hostel and the duration of the stay; also, that inmates were given guidance on how to lead an independent life (the cue *vivir independientemente* from **1(b)** proved to be a useful paraphrase to avoid lifting *para desarrollar una vida autónoma*); finally, that each inmate was given their own room.
- (c) Strong candidates frequently scored maximum marks here. The majority were able to note that the hostel's individual programmes *ayudará al joven a conseguir un empleo* and *le enseñará cómo vivir de una manera saludable*. More difficulty was found in stating *ayudará al joven a insertarse en la sociedad*.
- (d) Understanding of the situation in which *Gabriel* found himself at the age of eighteen was generally good, although a small number of candidates suggested erroneously that he had been thrown out from his home. Most were able to state that he was homeless for a month and that he experienced racial discrimination.
- (e) This question posed greater challenge. Less able candidates commonly picked up the mark for noting the need for *más inversión por parte de las autoridades*. Some candidates were able to add that what was also needed was to *examinar las causas subyacentes* and a *seguimiento de jóvenes*

vulnerables/echados de instituciones, by skillfully manipulating the source text. Weaker candidates often lifted *un seguimiento de los jóvenes vulnerables*.

Sección 2

Question 4

The second text, concerning homelessness in Montevideo, also appeared to be well understood by candidates.

- (a) Most candidates were confident in stating that homeless people did not like the hostels because they could not help with what they really wanted: finding a job. More difficulty was found in expressing that *Diego* was typical in that he preferred to sleep on the streets to going to one of the fifty-eight official hostels. There was some lifting of the phrase *en un escalón de un local*.
- (b) Only better candidates were successful in scoring all three marks here. The main difficulty was to be found in giving details of the law which allows police to *retirar a personas que ocupan espacios públicos de manera permanente*. Greater accuracy was achieved in stating how teams search the streets for homeless people and that they cannot force them to go into the hostels.
- (c) This was a very accessible question and maximum marks were commonly achieved. Candidates readily understood that reasons for the disinclination of homeless people to stay in hostels included a ban on pets being admitted and fears of robbery. A little more difficulty was found in expressing the third reason: *les cuesta integrarse con otros*.
- (d) The four marks on offer here were also very accessible. Few candidates found difficulty in identifying problems associated with hostels for the homeless: *se pelean, llegan borrachos, entran con drogas y hay los que sufren de enfermedades mentales*.
- (e) It was more of a challenge to achieve maximum marks here, and only a few of the better candidates were successful. Many scored one mark for noting that inmates did not understand that the hostel was trying to help them to return normal life. Only a few were able to express successfully that *en los refugios no tratan de institucionalizarlos*.

Question 5

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. It is important to be 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, and in extreme cases can lead to a score of zero for 5(b).

- (a) Better candidates were rewarded with marks of 8, 9 or 10. Those who achieved more moderate marks usually did so because of superfluous introductions and included generalisations which were usually too vague to score.

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, for example:

Los refugios ofrecen techo y un sitio caliente ✓ ayudan con empleos ✓ y dan consejos para una vida saludable. ✓ Dan un control socioeducativo ✓ y ayudan con la reinsertación en la sociedad. ✓ Por otro lado, hay los que rechazan los refugios. ✓ porque... In fewer than forty-five words over half the available marks have been scored, leaving ample room to select further specific, relevant details from the second text and also for a good three or so sentences in 5(b).

Unlike the following answer which offers generalisation rather than detail and uses up a similar number of words which this far, other than contributing to the quality of language mark, has scored nothing.

En todos los países hay personas que no tienen un hogar decente para vivir, y hay algunos centros que ayudan a esas personas sin hogar a que tengan lo que necesitan. Pero eso no significa que todo ahí sea bueno; tienen ventajas y desventajas...

- (b) Most candidates were aware that what is required here is one or two details which answer the question, which are, whenever possible, different from anything contained in the texts, and a clear personal opinion. There were varying views on the gravity of the problem of homelessness, often from candidates who shared the same nationality. At one extreme, yes, but it affected only a small percentage of the population and these were well catered for by hostels, charitable organisations and food banks. On the other hand, it was a problem of increasing magnitude, spurred on by high unemployment and low wages, and evidenced by the number of buildings which were illegally occupied.

Quality of Language

Most candidates were native speakers of the language and, unless any deductions had been made for lack of comprehension, maximum marks were almost universally awarded. Non-native speakers were well up to the level required by this exam and were rewarded with marks in the Sound, Good or Very Good bands.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/23
Reading and Writing

Key messages

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

General comments

All candidates who were able to withstand the challenges of the pandemic and sit this examination should be complimented on their achievements. Preparations for assessment must have presented unprecedented difficulties, which were not apparent in the scripts received.

A wider range of ability was apparent amongst 8685 candidates, a few of whom seemed to be not quite ready yet for this level of examination.

Most candidates showed good understanding of the two texts, dealing with some of the problems of homelessness, and appeared to have been well coached in the techniques needed. Better candidates produced skillful paraphrasing in their answers to comprehension questions, although lifting, (the direct copying of five or more words from the text), occasionally invalidated a mark. **Question 5** was generally better answered than in previous years, with more candidates focussing on specific details from the texts in their summary; although a few still exceeded the permitted number of words.

Comments on specific questions

Sección 1

Question 1

The exercise worked well, with errors mostly comprising superfluous words at the beginning or ending of the answer.

- (a) There were mixed outcomes to this question. Stronger candidates had little difficulty in identifying the phrase. Less able candidates were led astray by *rápidamente* in the cue and incorrectly answered *se oye al pasar a toda velocidad*.
- (b) Again, the ability split was apparent. Less able candidates usually identified the connection between *una regulación* and *una ley* but tended to omit *cuentan con*, mistakenly believing that *el respaldo* alone would equate to *les apoya*.

- (c) Candidates who were familiar with *multar* and *sancionar* had little difficulty in identifying the phrase.
- (d) The great majority of the candidates found the correct expression in the text. Occasionally the initial *algo...* was omitted.
- (e) This proved to be very accessible and, other than the occasional omission of *todos los sentidos...*, there were very few incorrect answers.

Question 2

In this exercise candidates are required to make changes to the original phrase, rewriting it to include the word(s) in brackets. A grammatical manipulation is required, and care should be taken to ensure that the answer would fit back into the original text, retaining the same meaning. Candidates performed well.

- (a) This caused the most difficulty. Only a minority of candidates recognised that the Spanish for 'to be on the point of' is *estar a punto de* and not *estar al punto de*. There was also occasional confusion of *punto* with *punte*.
- (b) The need for the subjunctive mood after *para que* was recognised by many candidates. A minority made the error of using a singular verb *vaya*, which would not fit back into the text with the same meaning.
- (c) The use of the infinitive *ser* after *suelen* appeared to be unfamiliar to some.
- (d) Only a minority of candidates were able to manipulate all the elements to produce *alguien sea atropellado*.
- (e) The main stumbling block here was not using the conditional tense. Answers which used the present or future tenses were not accepted.

Question 3

In **Questions 3** and **4**, most candidates avoided lifting elements unaltered from the text and showed good understanding by rephrasing or manipulating the text in some way, for example, by using a synonym or replacing a noun with a verb. In stronger responses candidates located the relevant reference in the passage and gave precise answers to the questions.

The text, on the topic of pedestrians and cyclists in Sevilla, provided an appropriate level of challenge.

- (a) A full explanation of the dynamics of this incident proved to be challenging for some. A minority of candidates successfully noted all the elements: that the cyclist was travelling very quickly; the pedestrian only looked to the right, from where the cars would come; he did not look left, which was the direction from which the cyclist was approaching.
- (b) Candidates showed good comprehension of pedestrians' complaints about cyclists: that they show no respect for pedestrianised zones and are often a law unto themselves in the streets. Possibly because of the similarity of *acera* and *acerca* there were one or two misinterpretations of the rule that allows cyclists access to pavements of a certain width. Additionally, the five words *de más de cinco metros* were sometimes directly lifted. Good candidates were successful in explaining that the law permitted cyclist to travel in the opposite direction along one way streets.
- (c) This was often answered well, with candidates giving full details of *Ramón's* thoughts about cyclists and their behaviour.
- (d) Candidates who had found some difficulty with *acera* in 3(b) often repeated their error here. There was also some occasional lifting of *de cinco metros de ancho*. Better candidates were able to state *Gavilanes's* second grievance: *los automovilistas le enojan si ignoran un semáforo en rojo*.
- (e) This was another question which was answered well. The legislation proposed by *Gavilanes*, that cyclists should be banned from using mobiles and earphones because of the need to remain fully alert whilst cycling and the risks posed to pedestrians, was clearly understood.

Sección 2

Question 4

The second text, dealing with the dangers of cycling in Mexico City, provided a similar challenge to that of the first.

- (a) Most candidates got off to a promising start. With the exception of the occasional missing specific detail, the increase in cycling at the expense of public transport and the inherent dangers of this trend were all clearly noted.
- (b) Again comprehension was not an issue. Candidates are advised to give as many details as possible which are relevant to answering the question which has been asked. The purpose of the demonstration was invariably clearly stated; certain details about how and where it took place were occasionally omitted.
- (c) Concepts rather than plain factual details were tested by this question. Better candidates rose to the challenge and answered successfully by stating *porque los ciclistas se sienten desnudos en el tráfico* and *son frágiles* or *no tienen más carrocería que sus cuerpos*.
- (d) This was another question which again required a lot of specific details in response and most candidates scored at least two of the four marks. It was necessary to state fully the consequences of motorists leaving insufficient space for cyclists: *les obligan a usar la vía del Metrobús así provocando accidentes*. The two points about problems of visibility were also needed: *cuando llueve, los ciclistas no ven obstáculos* and *los conductores no ven las luces de bicicletas* or *no se ven fácilmente las luces de bicicletas*.
- (e) Many candidates correctly noted that the protest was dedicated to fellow cyclists who had been involved in accidents and knocked off their bikes and that during the protest their were five or more altercations with motorists. More difficulty was found in stating why the protesters were shouting *¡Veme! ¡Aquí estoy!*, namely, *su objetivo era que los automovilistas los vieran*.

Question 5

Candidates had been well prepared in the techniques needed to answer this question. Apart from the occasional exception, the importance of adhering to the word count for both parts of the question appeared to be well understood.

- (a) It is essential to note, in the limited number of words available, details from the texts which answer the question which has been asked. Most candidates performed very well, giving precise details of the problems associated with riding a bicycle:

Por un lado, los peatones piensan que los ciclistas no respetan las zonas peatonales ✓ ni a los peatones, y dejan su bici en cualquier sitio ✓. Hay algunos que usan el móvil en bici, lo que perjudicia a transeúntes ✓. Por otro lado, algunos han muerto en accidentes viales ✓ porque los conductores no les dejan espacio ✓ para pasar y no les respetan...

- (b) Candidates were aware that what is required here is one or two details which answer the question which are, whenever possible, different from anything contained in the texts, and a clear personal opinion. Additionally, this is an opportunity to display familiarity with more complex linguistic structures.

There were many strong personal responses. Opinions varied as to whether there was little or growing interest in cycling. Many highlighted the lack of cycle lanes, the dangers of cycling in cities and that cars were more comfortable and the preferred mode of transport. Others stressed the recreational practice of cycling in glorious scenery and also the growing popularity of electric bicycles.

Quality of Language

8685 candidates' marks were mostly in the Sound but occasionally in the Below Average bands. Agreements between verb and subject, adjective and noun were often inconsistent.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

<p>Paper 8685/31 Essay</p>
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Key messages

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

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

General comments

There was a very good level of ability on display in the essays for this session with very few essays struggling to make valid points or drawing convincing conclusions. A good number of essays were presented in such a way as to keep the reader's interest, were well structured and were able to express thoughts and ideas in response to the title selected which resulted in the awarding of very good marks both for language and content. It is clear once again that preparation for this paper carried out in centres is of a high standard and sets many candidates up to access the upper categories of the mark scheme with a degree of confidence and, indeed, flair.

It remains the case that those essays where candidates focus clearly and emphatically on the actual title set on the paper and where candidates think clearly about the issues raised by the title are, and always will be, the essays that are more inclined to attract marks at the higher end of the mark scheme. Essays that rely heavily on vague generalisations that are some distance away from the specifics of the title set tend to perform less successfully, in particular with regard to the marks for content. Thankfully, very few such essays were on show for this session.

There were hardly any problems relating to the word count (250 – 400 words) and equally few examples of essays that gave the impression that they had been pre-learned. It has been stated many times in previous reports but it is still vital for candidates to understand that for an essay to be awarded a 'very good' mark for content, it needs to be 'detailed, clearly relevant and well-illustrated' as well as being 'coherently argued and structured'. Centres have fully embraced the notion that if candidates have a full understanding of the mark scheme, they are far more likely to produce better essays.

In terms of the quality of the language used by candidates, most essays showed evidence of the use of complex sentence patterns and there was a good range of advanced grammatical structures on display. Topic-based vocabulary related to the topic under discussion was also used wisely. Such essays are very likely to attract marks in the language categories ranging from 'good' to 'very good' provided the grasp of grammar is at least sound. Often this session it was better than sound and accordingly high marks for language were awarded.

There were few very widespread errors with the Spanish language to report, However, it is always worth mentioning a few just so that candidates can be made aware of the most common pitfalls. The impression given appears to be that many of these errors could be avoided if candidates checked what has actually been written. Leaving a few minutes to carry out such checks is very good practice indeed.

As has happened many times in previous sessions, some candidates still insist on using singular verbs with plural subjects and vice-versa. Examples such as 'todo el mundo necesitan comer' (sic), 'mucha gente presumen...' (sic) and 'muchas personas piensa que'(sic) were not unusual. This is a serious error and therefore candidates need to be aware of it in order to avoid it in future sessions. The need for adjectival

agreement in Spanish also caused some degree of confusion with a small number of candidates with examples such as 'la raza humano' and 'la tecnología avanzado'. Certain items of vocabulary, largely basic in nature, managed to catch some candidates out with common culprits such as 'el ejersisio', 'la decición' and 'el desarrollo' being at the top of the list. On occasions, some lexical items appeared to be made up on the spot, presumably because time was at a premium under examination conditions. Examples such as 'la tecnología va a replacar los humanos'(sic) and 'un luncheon sano es mejor para la salud'(sic.) give a flavour of this practice.

Some candidates struggled to use the verb *gustar* correctly in sentences such as 'los alumnos le gustan divertirse en clase'(sic) and 'la familia no gustará el conflicto'(sic). This particular construction is quite a complicated one and so candidates would be well advised to grapple with it until full understanding is achieved. However, the majority of essays were well written and dealt successfully with the titles selected.

Examples of good use of the language included:

- accents being used accurately throughout the essay
- the use of an appropriate range of tenses and moods
- a clear understanding of the differences between the verbs *ser* and *estar*
- good use of topic-based vocabulary
- the use of impersonal expressions and idiomatic language in order to enhance the register of the writing.

Common errors included:

- the lack of adjectival agreement
- inconsistent use of punctuation
- the continued lack of accents seriously affecting comprehension, particularly when it came to tenses (tomara/tomará, tomo/tomó, esta/está and so on).
- confusion over the use of the verbs *ser* and *estar*.
- the dropping of the letter 'h' with an auxiliary verb (e.g. 'los padres an tenido problemas con el comportamiento de sus hijos' (sic)).
- the lack of understanding of the use of the verb *gustar*.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *La barrera generacional*

Los jóvenes siempre tienen valores morales muy diferentes de los de sus padres. ¿Hasta qué punto está usted de acuerdo?

This was a reasonably popular title with candidates and many were happy to make reference to personal experiences to back up their arguments. There was agreement that the differences between generations in terms of moral values are somewhat inevitable but that many such values (e.g. integrity, honesty, mutual respect) tend to transcend the generation gap. The influence that parents can have on the promotion of moral decency was emphasised by candidates as was the willingness of the younger generations to listen to such counsel.

Question 2 *La salud*

No hace falta gastar mucho dinero para vivir de una forma saludable. ¿Qué opina usted?

This was also quite a popular title and was generally well dealt with by candidates. Some candidates felt that a healthy lifestyle can only be maintained with sufficiently large amounts of money. The cost of food deemed to be healthy in supermarkets was mentioned in this regard. Others expressed the view that with sufficient desire, enthusiasm and will power a healthy standard of living was well within everybody's grasp and need not cost huge sums of money.

Question 3 *La enseñanza*

Un buen profesor informa a sus alumnos, no los inspira. ¿Está usted de acuerdo?

This title provided a small number of responses all of which agreed categorically that teachers should inspire their candidates and not simply inform them of facts and figures. Many also suggested that teachers should encourage candidates to develop their own minds and their own independence of thought. Many felt that any good teacher would automatically encourage the development of life-long learning amongst candidates.

Question 4 *Las nuevas tecnologías*

La inteligencia artificial representa una amenaza para la raza humana. ¿Qué opina usted?

This title proved to be the most popular with candidates. There was a degree of understanding of the fear of the power of artificial intelligence but the general view appeared to suggest that we need not be too fearful of such technology given that humans create it and therefore set the parameters for its use. It also has the ability to improve working conditions and, indeed, can enhance daily routines for many people. Such innovative technology, it was felt, should be embraced and not feared.

Question 5 *La conservación*

El uso de plásticos debe ser controlado más estrictamente. ¿Hasta qué punto está usted de acuerdo?

This was also a slightly less popular title with candidates. There was, as one might expect, a clear consensus that there should indeed be much stricter control of the use of plastics in our everyday lives. Mention was also made of the importance of recycling the plastics we currently use as well as increasing the availability of biodegradable plastic products. Educating the public was also considered to be vital in this regard. Initiatives such as charging for plastic carrier bags in supermarkets were welcomed in terms of our collective attempt to reduce our dependence on such products.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/32
Essay

Key messages

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- 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

There was a very good level of ability on display in the essays for this session with very few essays struggling to make valid points or drawing convincing conclusions. A good number of essays were presented in such a way as to keep the reader's interest, were well structured and were able to express thoughts and ideas in response to the title selected which resulted in the awarding of very good marks both for language and content. It is clear once again that preparation for this paper carried out in centres is of a high standard and sets many candidates up to access the upper categories of the mark scheme with a degree of confidence and, indeed, flair.

It remains the case that those essays where candidates focus clearly and emphatically on the actual title set on the paper and where candidates think clearly about the issues raised by the title are, and always will be, the essays that are more inclined to attract marks at the higher end of the mark scheme. Essays that rely heavily on vague generalisations that are some distance away from the specifics of the title set tend to perform less successfully, in particular with regard to the marks for content. Thankfully, very few such essays were on show for this session.

There were hardly any problems relating to the word count (250 – 400 words) and equally few examples of essays that gave the impression that they had been pre-learned. It has been stated many times in previous reports but it is still vital for candidates to understand that for an essay to be awarded a 'very good' mark for content, it needs to be 'detailed, clearly relevant and well-illustrated' as well as being 'coherently argued and structured'. Centres have fully embraced the notion that if candidates have a full understanding of the mark scheme, they are far more likely to produce better essays.

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There were, nevertheless, a number of widespread errors with the Spanish language to report. It is always worth mentioning a few just so that candidates can be made aware of the most common pitfalls. The impression given appears to be that many of these errors could be avoided if candidates checked what has actually been written. Leaving a few minutes to carry out such checks is very good practice indeed.

As has happened many times in previous sessions, some candidates still insist on using singular verbs with plural subjects and vice-versa. Examples such as 'todo el mundo necesitan comer' (sic), 'mucha gente presumen...' (sic) and 'muchas personas piensa que' (sic) were not unusual. This is a serious error and therefore candidates need to be aware of it in order to avoid it in future sessions. The need for adjectival

agreement in Spanish also caused some degree of confusion with a small number of candidates with examples such as 'la raza humano' and 'la tecnología avanzado'. Certain items of vocabulary, largely basic in nature, managed to catch some candidates out with common culprits such as 'el ejersisio', 'la decición' and 'el desarrollo' being at the top of the list. On occasions, some lexical items appeared to be made up on the spot, presumably because time was at a premium under examination conditions. Examples such as 'la tecnología va a replacar los humanos'(sic) and 'un luncheon sano es mejor para la salud'(sic.) give a flavour of this practice.

Some candidates struggled to use the verb *gustar* correctly in sentences such as 'los alumnos le gustan divertirse en clase' (sic) and 'la familia no gustará el conflicto' (sic). This particular construction is quite a complicated one and so candidates would be well advised to grapple with it until full understanding is achieved. However, the majority of essays were well written and dealt successfully with the titles selected.

Examples of good use of the language included:

- accurate accentuation throughout the essay
- the use of a good range of tenses and moods.
- topic-based vocabulary used appropriately.
- the use of impersonal expressions and idiomatic language in order to enhance the register of the writing.
- the accurate application of the grammar rules that apply to the use of the verb *gustar*.

Common errors included:

- the lack of adjectival agreement.
- a consistently poor use of punctuation and occasionally hardly any punctuation at all.
- the lack of accents seriously affecting comprehension.
- confusion over the use of the verbs *ser* and *estar*.
- the verb *gustar* handled inaccurately.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *La barrera generacional*

La falta de comunicación entre padres e hijos es la causa principal de la barrera generacional. ¿Qué opina usted?

This was quite a popular title with candidates. Most agreed that a lack of communication is indeed the main cause of conflict between the generations. Many candidates also referred to the use of digital technology and the way in which it can cause a degree of strain in terms of young people and their parents. Some suggested that parents would do well to engage more with their children about the use of social media, mobile phones and computers in general in order to understand their offspring more sympathetically.

Question 2 *La salud*

Para muchos la salud mental no tiene tanta importancia como la salud física. ¿Qué opina usted?

This was also quite a popular title and was generally well dealt with by candidates. The importance of mental health was clearly accepted by candidates and many felt that not enough is made of the crucial role of mental health in each individual's day to day routine. Most people, it was felt, tend to take it for granted and concentrate exclusively on their physical health. Many essays suggested that this needs to change.

Question 3 *La enseñanza*

Estudiar una lengua moderna enriquece la vida del individuo. ¿Hasta qué punto está usted de acuerdo?

This title also provided a variety of interesting and well-reasoned responses. Many accepted the importance of learning a foreign language and agreed that language learning has an enriching quality. Some suggested that there should be more languages available to study in secondary schools and many also went on point out that learning a language can enhance our understanding of different cultures.

Question 4 *Las nuevas tecnologías*

Con todas las nuevas tecnologías que tenemos hoy, todavía no vivimos en un mundo perfecto. ¿Qué opina usted?

This title proved to be fairly popular with candidates. Most argued that technology does indeed improve the quality of our day to day lives and that we ought to embrace its possibilities without fear. Many candidates found the notion of a perfect world somewhat difficult to define but felt instead that we should still be aiming for constant improvement of the human condition. There were very few negative feelings expressed towards the ever-changing world of new technology.

Question 5 *La conservación*

Deberíamos preocuparnos menos por el medio ambiente porque el planeta está en buena salud. ¿Hasta qué punto está usted de acuerdo?

This was also a popular title with candidates. Perhaps unsurprisingly, many felt that we should indeed be concerned about the health of our planet and that we should take nothing for granted in the face of climate change. Many clearly expressed the view that the planet is not in good health at all and that action is needed now to improve the environmental situation. Time, it would appear, is running out as far as many candidates were concerned.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/33
Essay

Key messages

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- confusion over the use of the verbs *ser* and *estar*.
- The verb *gustar* handled inaccurately.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *La barrera generacional*

Es cierto que hay diferencias entre las generaciones, pero son de poca importancia ¿Qué opina usted?

This was quite a popular title with many candidates arguing that generational differences are often hugely important to the lives of the people involved. There was a general acceptance of the inevitability of the generation gap and the issues that arise as a consequence of it. Some argued that the key to harmony is communication between the different generations in order that some degree of mutual understanding can be achieved. Most essays dismissed the idea that such differences can be played down at all times.

Question 2 *La salud*

Nos hacen falta más impuestos sobre el azúcar, por ejemplo, para reducir el consumo de productos menos saludables. ¿Hasta qué punto está usted de acuerdo?

This was a reasonably popular title. There was a clear understanding of the harm that excessive consumption of sugar can cause and indeed many felt that a tax on sugar would be no bad thing in terms of public health. Fast food and its appeal, especially to the younger generations, was also raised as an issue in many essays. Most essays accepted the need to improve people's diet generally but many also felt that the responsibility for a healthy diet lies more with each and every individual rather than with the state.

Question 3 *La enseñanza*

Sin duda un alumno aprende más en clase si se divierte. ¿Hasta qué punto está usted de acuerdo?

There was clear agreement with the statement in this popular title. Mention was also made of the importance of candidate motivation being enhanced by an element of enjoyment in the classroom. A note of caution was

sounded in that too much enjoyment could also lead to a degree of distraction but the general feeling was that learning can only be promoted if the process is enjoyable.

Question 4 *Las nuevas tecnologías*

El uso creciente de robots en el mundo del trabajo debería ser motivo de preocupación para todos. ¿Qué opina usted?

This was a reasonably popular title amongst candidates. The notion that the use of robots should give us cause for concern was largely dismissed. Any problems resulting from the use of robots could, it was felt, be overcome by careful planning and openness on the part of employers. The use of robots could also reduce stress levels amongst workers and could dramatically reduce the rate of defective end products. The unanimous view was that we should be celebrating the use of robots as well adapting our employment practices accordingly.

Question 5 *La conservación*

Los beneficios de la conservación medioambiental están muy claros para todos. ¿Está usted de acuerdo?

This was a popular title amongst candidates. The essays produced were passionately argued and made it clear that whilst some people clearly understand the benefits of conservation, many others do not fully appreciate its importance as yet. It was suggested that much work is still needed globally to promote environmental concerns in order that the planet can respond to the threats from pollution and the overuse of natural resources.