

**CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL**

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE  
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE**

**JANUARY 2004**

**SPANISH**

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## **SPANISH**

### **GENERAL PROFICIENCY JANUARY 2004**

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

The performance of candidates in the January Examination has improved in general and in Paper 2 in particular. All sections of this paper, but especially Sections II and III showed a better performance compared to previous years.

Students need to be exposed to a wide range of contexts which will familiarize them with the use of the language, as well as to produce the language to carry out different linguistic functions.

Teachers are encouraged to have their Candidates watch television programmes in Spanish, visit Spanish websites, speak with native speakers, read newspapers, magazines and a variety of materials which will help to build their communicative competence in Spanish.

#### **DETAILED COMMENTS**

##### **PAPER 01 - MULTIPLE CHOICE**

This paper is divided into two parts:

Part A - Listening Comprehension

Part B - Reading Comprehension

Sections 1, 2, and 3 are common to both proficiencies, while Section 4 has a common passage with separate questions for each proficiency. The four sections comprise 30 items.

The performance in this section was very pleasing as some candidates' results were outstanding, the majority performed satisfactorily and the performance of a few was weak. The most common problems were encountered with the following areas:

*An asterisk (\*) indicates wrong form, spelling or structure.*

- prepositions after verbs
- the subjunctive
- **ser** and **estar**
- preterite and imperfect
- problems with verb forms

There is indication that students need to work on verb forms, particularly verbs with different types of orthographic changes.

## PAPER 2 - FREE RESPONSE

### SECTION 1

#### Directed Situations (Writing)

This section required candidates to write information based on a situation which is given. There are 10 situations.

- 1. Your doctor is unable to see you but has asked you to send him a note, telling what is wrong with you. Write the brief note.**

This question was well answered by most candidates. Many knew and used **me duele, tengo dolor de...** Errors were noted when candidates needed to use **me duelen**. Also, some candidates used **duele** as a noun instead of **dolor**. In rare instances, some candidates misread the question and wrote the note from the doctor.

- 2. While your parents are out, you learn that something has happened on the other street and you rush to investigate. Write the note, which you leave for your parents explaining your absence.**

This question was fairly well answered. Most candidates stated where they had gone. The most frequent grammatical error was **fue** for **fui**, but the preposition **a** was omitted after **ir**.

- 3. You need to tell your father about the arrangement for picking you up from school. Write the text message you send to him on his cell phone.**

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The majority of the candidates produced a fairly good response to this item. Some difficulty was experienced with the appropriate word for “to pick-up”. Also some responses did not indicate clearly that it was an arrangement for pick-up from school.

**4. Your doctor wants you to remember a specific instruction to care for your broken leg. What instruction does your doctor write?**

Fair responses. Many candidates used **pie** instead of **pierna**. Commands were well done by most candidates.

**5. Your neighbour invites you over to see something she has bought. Write the note you leave for your parents explaining the reason you are at your neighbour’s house.**

This question was fairly well done. There were errors noted in sentences requiring the subjunctive “Mary wants me to see” - \* **María quiere me ver** was written by most students.

**6. You are unable to meet with your classmates to work on a science project at school. Write the e-mail message you send them apologizing for not being able to meet with them.**

This question was well answered by the majority of the candidates.

**7. A sign at the airport advises arriving passengers of a problem on the main road into town. Write what the sign advises them to do.**

This question proved to be the most problematic for the candidates. Most wrote messages that suggested that the passengers were at the main road where the problem was and not at the airport. Relevant vocabulary also presented problems for the candidates.

**8. Due to shortages, each customer at the supermarket will be allowed to purchase only a certain amount of a particular item. What does the sign say?**

Many candidates demonstrated a lack of complete comprehension of the question and gave general responses about not buying many things, instead of “a certain amount of a particular item”.

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**9. You went to the mall to shop, and found it was unexpectedly closed. Write the notice you saw, which informed customers of the date.**

Fair only. Most candidates did not demonstrate knowledge of the passive - **se abrirá** and a number of errors were noted for the future tense. Many candidates did not give a re-opening date but a general time in the future – for example, next week.

**10. Your friend who lives abroad offers to buy an article of clothing for you, but he or she has forgotten the details. Write the e-mail you send him or her of what you had written originally.**

Fairly well done. Many candidates, however mentioned several items of clothing rather than one.

## SECTION II

### Letter/Dialogue/Composition

Candidates are provided with outlines which they use as a guide to write a letter/dialogue/composition.

It was heartening to see many candidates choosing the Dialogue on this occasion. The following errors were noted:

- \* **Como estas?** - written without accents in both letter and dialogue and in addition \* **¿y tu?** - without the accent.

The date in the letter was accompanied by long addresses. There appears to be a need for teachers to be standardized on what exactly is required here. Some candidates are still using words for the numbers themselves.

- \* **el país** was often used for **el campo** - in both letter and composition
- \* **mi abuela cumpleaños fiesta** - a very common error.
- \* **una fiesta por mi tío**
- \* **mi tios casa** - sometimes with, sometimes without apostrophe and **tío** without the accent

- \* **era muy alegría**        }       for “was very happy”
- \* **están muy alegría**     }
- \* **comencé** - for it began

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There were many instances of the omission of **para** - for example **\*fui a la ciudad**  
**comparar**

Additional errors included

- omisión of accent on **cómo**; **vacaciones**
- **estaba** or **estaban** instead of **eran**
- **su** instead of **sus** for example, **\*como estaba su vacaciones**
- invariably, **\*vacadiones** was spelt incorrectly
- **\*enojado** - for enjoyed

### SECTION III

#### Reading Comprehension

Candidates are required to read a passage in Spanish and write their answers in English to questions which are given in English.

#### Questions 1 - 4

Most candidates understood the information required to answer these questions and responded appropriately.

#### Question 5

In answering this question, many candidates mistakenly thought that the words **orgullosa** and **contenta**, referred to the uncle rather than to Rodolfo and therefore did not give the expected response.

#### Question 6

Very few candidates recognized that it was a motorcycle that Carlos had repaired for Ernesto. The others did not make the distinction between **la moto** and **el motor**.

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### Question 7

Most candidates understood that Carlos had made a mistake, but some did not express their answers very clearly, which made it difficult to determine exactly what was meant.

### SECTION IV

#### Expanded Paragraph

Candidates are required to connect the cues provided in a logical way, to produce a paragraph of 80 - 100 words.

Most candidates handled the section well. They seemed to have understood most of the cues and were able to use them appropriately.

Some common mistakes were as follows:

- Some candidates used **pasado** as a verb instead of an adjective.
- **aventurero** was written as **\*adventurero**
- Some candidates used the cue **muchacho aventurero** for **\*mucha aventura**.
- **premio** was misinterpreted by a number of candidates to mean **\*primero** or **primo**.
- Several candidates wrote **\*la hotel**.
- **\*Haber** was used for **tener**.
- **\*Gastar** used for **pasar**.
- **\*Su vacaciones** instead of **sus vacaciones**
- **Enojar** used to mean to enjoy (**\*Han enojado...**)
- Errors in agreement, for example, **\*mi familia decidieron/decicimose**
- **Ir de vacaciones** was expressed in a variety of incorrect ways.

### PAPER 3 - ORAL EXAMINATION

This paper is divided into three sections.

1. Reading aloud
2. Responses to situations
3. Guided conversation

Fluency, instruction, use of appropriate vocabulary and grammatical accuracy are the areas of language usage tested.

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## SECTION I

### Reading Aloud

The Reports of Oral Examiners indicate that in general, there has been an improvement in this area of the paper. In reading passages aloud, a number of candidates' performance was outstanding, as they demonstrated their knowledge and ability through accurate pronunciation and phrasing of words. Discrete sounds were well pronounced. For the most part, other candidates read fairly well, with only a few being considered to have performed below average.

Some problems that were encountered included the following:

1. Anglicised pronunciation of **isla**
2. Placing of stresses on the wrong syllable in:
  - **imperio**\* for **imperio**
  - **andina**\* for **andina**
  - **cultivo** \* for **cultivo**
  - **indígenas** \* for **indígenas**
3. "h" aspirated in - **hispanas, habas, hermano**
4. Diphthongs not correctly pronounced - **aire, paisaje**
5. Confusion of **ñ** and n.

## SECTION II

### Responses to Situations

The performance in this section ranged from excellent to slightly below average. Excellent candidates exhibited commendable mastery of the language with grammar and oral skills being outstanding. Satisfactory candidates demonstrated occasional grammatical errors such as, agreement of adjectives, for example; **el próximo semana**\*, **la blusa bonito**\* and some instances of hesitation.

Weaker candidates displayed problems with vocabulary, particularly with situation B(1) and (2); C 3(b); and D (4). A number of candidates lacked knowledge of the command form and were unable to produce alternative ways of expressing this. Others had difficulty with subject and verb agreements. Generally speaking, however, candidates seemed to have been fairly well prepared for this section.

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### SECTION III

#### **Guided Conversation**

Some candidates displayed a high degree of comprehension and spontaneity in their responses. These candidates must be commended for excellent oral skills and for often expanding their responses by providing additional information and speaking with clarity and fluency.

Less outstanding candidates were not as fluent or spontaneous and their responses were very brief or curt. Complete sentences were sometimes not used and the use of idioms or more elaborate expressions were lacking.

A number of candidates seemed inadequately prepared and lacked appropriate vocabulary. A few candidates had problems responding to questions on Public Facilities. A small number of candidates answered too many responses with simply **sí** or **no** or had difficulty using object pronouns appropriately and past tenses accurately.