

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION
MAY/JUNE 2008**

**SPANISH
(TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO)**

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CARIBBEAN ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

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UNIT 1

PAPER 01

Listening Comprehension

This paper required candidates to respond to a series of questions based on five short selections and one extended interview. These questions were set in English and candidates were required to respond in English. The topics were set in line with the Modules of the syllabus, as well as with candidates' experiences in this age range. Although some questions in the Listening Component of the exam were well handled, there are still challenging areas that need urgent addressing.

Section A

Selection 1

This section dealt with the benefits of coffee consumption. Generally, candidates did not perform creditably on this selection. Several candidates fell within the zero to three category of a possible twelve marks. Very few candidates were able to accurately express the number of more than one hundred thousand as the amount of persons interviewed in the study of coffee consumption and its effects on the body.

Part (b) was well done whereas Part (c) proved to be challenging. With respect to Part (d), many candidates were not able to state the effect of coffee on the cardiovascular system. Many were satisfied by stating that coffee increased blood flow to the brain while the greater majority did not hear the more important point of stimulation of the central nervous system.

In Part (e), many candidates failed to identify that drinking at least five cups of coffee reduced the risk of contracting Parkinson's disease. However, attempts to answer the item saw candidates relying on common sense or what they may have heard from individuals in wider society as opposed to what they heard in the selection.

Selection 2

Candidates performed better on this selection which focused on the cerebral nature of chess and the unfortunate fight/altercation that broke out at one of the championships amongst a couple of players.

In Part (a), many candidates thought chess was considered a cerebral sport because it required clinical analysis, or, they gave a literal translation of "cabeza fria" as a cold head. Candidates also did not always include information about the ability to analyse the opponent's move. Parts (b) and (c) tended to be well answered though at Part (b) many candidates did not seem to understand the word "*celos*". In Part (d), many candidates equated "dance" with "party" when expressing the special event that was put on for the participants.

In the majority of responses for Part (e), many candidates failed to include the reason for the fight, or, there was a mix up in expression that Pablo's girlfriend was Juan's girlfriend.

Selection 3

This selection was done quite satisfactorily with many candidates gaining on average between three and five marks of a possible eight. This selection examined harmful elements that could affect the health of the mother and even her new born. In Part (a), "mercury" was the more popular response and sometimes "dirt" was given as one of the harmful elements mentioned. The vocabulary "*plomo*" seemed unfamiliar to many candidates and so responses very varied.

Part (b) was best answered by candidates and the majority of marks were scored on this part. Part (c) proved to be the most challenging. Pesticides, insecticides and household sprays were some of the most popular answers given as chemicals in which harmful elements could be found. The vocabulary "*disolvente*" was also frequently translated as solvent.

Selection 4

Candidates performed satisfactorily on this selection. The mean score was _____ out of a possible eight.

Selection 5

This selection proved the most challenging for candidates. A significant number of them scored between zero and three marks of a possible eight. In Part (a), the most frequent translation of "*primates*" was primeapes. In Part (b), candidates generally did not include that the monkeys needed to be saved from extinction.

In Part (c), candidates made desperate attempts to answer the question. However, many irrelevant and illogical responses indicated guesswork. For instance "primeapes are demons" was an example for what has happened in some regions. Part (d) saw answers which suggested that the candidates did not understand the question. An example given for the best way to provide protection for the monkeys was to "hunt the people that hunt the animals".

In the last item in this section, many candidates thought that monkeys were protectors of the world.

Selection 6

This interview with Miss Liliana Prado, a social worker in Spain, addressed the drug situation in that country.

Generally, this question was well attempted though there were a few generalisations provided in some of the answers based on existing knowledge on drugs and their effects on humans.

Part (a) was generally well done.

Part (b) seemed a little challenging. Generally, candidates selected the correct age. However, some failed to identify the level of education the persons had achieved.

In Part (c), many candidates recognised the number of women using drugs had declined but they did not reflect the 10 per cent mentioned in the selection. Some candidates were clueless and offered off beat answers such as: "women in Spain relax and also go to New York in order to gain respect" and "women do less drugs than men".

In Part (d) generally, correct responses were provided but some candidates did not highlight the multiple component.

In Part (e), a wide cross section of reasons was supplied to explain how persons are affected by taking more than one drug such as:

- experiment with their mental state
- a state of molestation
- sexual hormones are affected
- they don't think straight and act crazily

Part (f) "*Rebujito*" proved difficult to define for many candidates. Many guesses were offered here such as:

- the state one reaches when mixing drugs
- loss of three or more body functions
- various problems affecting many patients
- a mixture of cocaine and rum

Part (g) was the least challenging to answer.

In Part (h), many candidates were able to identify at least three segments in this answer which allowed them to score at least three of the possible four marks.

Part (i) was well managed.

In Part (j), the majority of the candidates were able to give the idea of the seizure of cocaine by the authorities in one form or another. However, the figure given in the selection was misrepresented by many who used sixty-five kilos in lieu of the correct figure seventy-five kilos of cocaine that was seized.

In Part (k), a significant number of candidates gave the response that the seizure was the largest drug bust instead of the second largest.

It is to be noted for both Units 1 and Unit 2 that candidates who chose to use the individual listening do not know how to manage their time properly. There were cases of candidates who did not even attempt the last selection, most likely because they ran out of time. This will happen if candidates spend too much time rewinding for the other selections. They need to be able to manage their time to enable them to have sufficient time for all selections.

PAPER 02

Reading and Writing

Candidates' performance on this paper was good. Many candidates showed a good level of skill in the area of comprehension and many showed good control of the language.

SECTION A

READING COMPREHENSION

In this section, candidates were presented with two passages, both in Spanish and were required to respond to questions based on the material. For passage 1, candidates were asked to respond to the material in English to questions asked in English and for passage 2, candidates were asked to respond in Spanish, in their own words.

Passage 1: *Los padres trabajadores chilenos.*

This was a compulsory question which tested the candidates' ability to understand a passage in contemporary Spanish based on a topic of interest. Parts (a) - (e) in this passage required candidates to respond in English to questions asked in English. Parts (f) - (j) required candidates to provide synonyms taken from the passage to the items presented.

Overall the passage was well understood with the majority of candidates scoring at least twelve of the twenty-four marks possible. The topic and vocabulary of this passage were familiar to candidates and as such the questions were comfortably handled.

While the responses to Part (a) were generally good, some candidates spoke of the benefits to parents rather than the benefits to fathers as explained in the passage. There were many instances of candidates attempting to respond by translating the sentences word-for-word, rather than attempting to make sense of the material and writing coherent responses. The translation of certain phrases was quite haphazard as in the case of *descanso del trabajo* which many translated as "work rest".

Part (b) was fairly well handled by many candidates. Some candidates, however, gave generalized answers without referring to the information presented in the passage. There were some cases of incomplete answers where candidates were able to talk about combining the interest and needs of the family but omitting the "job obligations" from their answers. In some cases where candidates did mention this, there was again literal translation of the term. Candidates wrote "laboral compromises" instead of job obligations. There was some level of confusion for Parts (c) and (d). Some candidates gave the response for Part (d) as their response for Part (c). Candidates may be reminded that careful analysis of each question is required to determine the appropriate responses.

Part (e) was handled quite well by most candidates, although some candidates again used some level of general knowledge to respond to questions rather than using the information in the passage. Some candidates continued to answer the question by translating the sentences from the passage word for word. This led to unclear responses and candidates may be advised to ensure that their responses make sense to the reader. Literal translations of sentences may not always give clear understanding of what the writer wants to say.

The synonyms section of the questions was problematic for candidates. There were instances of candidates giving the wrong spelling for the synonyms. A prime example of this was in Part (g) which required candidates to give the response *es preciso*. Many candidates wrote *es precioso* or *es precio*. Candidates should be reminded to be very careful with the spelling of the words.

Passage 2: *Los edificios también se enferman*

This question was well done. It is to be noted that there was an excellent attempt by candidates to respond to questions in their own words. Only a few candidates were seen "lifting" answers directly from the passage. The effort of putting answers in one's own effort clearly reflected in the scores as penalties for copying was not a common occurrence. Overall, candidates followed the instructions given although there was an instance of a candidate responding in English to the questions asked in Spanish.

Part (a) was generally well done. Most candidates were able to show that the '*síndrome*' referred to the building and not the persons in the building. However there were still some candidates who said that it referred to the fact that people got sick in the building. Most candidates were able to state the causes of this phenomenon.

Part (b) posed some problems for some candidates. Many did not mention benefits but rather spoke of characteristics only.

Part (c)(i) did not elicit the expected response in many cases. Candidates focused on the condition that prevailed that caused the buildings to be constructed as they were, rather than giving the reason that they have a lot of windows and good lighting. Most were able to get the correct response for Part (c)(ii).

Part (d)(i) seemed to pose the most challenges in terms of putting ideas in their own words. Many examples were seen of simply lifting material from the passage. For Part (d)(ii), responses were inadequate in that candidates were hesitant to express their views.

Some phrases and items of vocabulary were not understood by the candidates and they ended up giving responses that conveyed the opposite of what was required. For example, in paragraph four some candidates said that the use of artificial light was recommended.

SECTION B

ESSAY

In this section candidates were required to write an essay in Spanish of 250-300 words on *one* of five topics. This section tested the candidates' ability to express themselves in Spanish in an analytical and logical manner related to the theme "**La Sociedad y Los Asuntos Sociales**" as outlined in Module 2 of the syllabus.

Examiners were looking for essays with –

- An introduction outlining the position taken by the candidate on the topic chosen
- Three to five paragraphs focusing on the various angles of the topic
- A brief conclusion summarizing the main points of the views expressed.

The candidates' performance was judged by the way in which they were able to show organization and coverage of the topic, relevance and include facts, ideas and opinions. The correctness of expression was also a factor to be considered.

Question 3

“La religion causa más divisiones que motivos de unidad en la sociedad. ¿Cuál es tu opinion”.

This question was the second most popular with candidates and was handled well. Many candidates were able to show the benefits of religion for individuals and the society as a whole, as well as the tensions and disunity it can create. However, some candidates were unable to support their point of view and did not seem to understand the meaning of "**motivos de unidad**".

Question 4

“La combinación del poder y el racismo es muy peligrosa. ¿Qué opinas?”

Not many candidates attempted this question. Their essays were not, generally, well discussed, lacking facts and a developed argument. Candidates did not seem clear on what was power and in some cases racism. For those who attempted this question it was a task to show how the combination of power and racism is or can be dangerous. There were, nonetheless, a few candidates who handled the question well.

Question 5

“Se dice que, ‘La única manera de lograr la paz mundial es por la guerra.’ ¿Estás de acuerdo?”

This question was the least popular. Some candidates stated ways in which peace can be achieved without resorting to war. Candidates who chose this topic performed relatively well, outlining the present volatile political environment worldwide. Some also made reference to past wars and their inability to create peace. They were also able to offer other possible solutions for world peace.

Question 6

“La delincuencia juvenil está relacionada directamente con la creciente libertad de los adolescentes. ¿Qué opinas?”

This was by far the most popular among candidates, who generally performed well they stated how the family, the media, and even the government have failed in their duty to protect young people who are still in need of guidance. A few also noted that each person has the capacity to analyze situations and determine whether or not they should carry out delinquent acts. Candidates had problems with defining juvenile delinquency and growing freedom and were unable to link the two.

Question 7

“La educación debe ser gratis, universal, y libre de influencias políticas y religiosas. ¿Cuál es tu opinión?”

Very few candidates attempted question 7. The majority of those who attempted this essay offered a fairly well-balanced discussion of the topics, showing a good understanding of what was being asked. However, the areas that needed to be discussed in this question proved a bit much for some of the candidates to cover in the required word limit.

Overall, the standard of writing was good for candidates at this level, as many displayed a flair for the language and were able to communicate their ideas. While many candidates wrote fairly good essays, their use of the language showed evidence of weakness in grammar and vocabulary.

Several errors in structure, grammar and vocabulary include:

- *hay es las programmas*
- *pueden ser influencia*
- *porque de (instead of ‘a causa de’)*
- *es acuerdo por la hija a salir*
- *cuando algo malo ocurrir jentes olvides...*
- *ellas tenga no respect*
- *más (instead of ‘mucho’)*
- *la hora se revolver a casa*
- *un otro causa*
- *cada persona derechos*
- *hay existe*
- *hay no uno religion, así, hay no pude unidad en sociedad.*
- *tienen sufren las consecuencias*
- *no hay nadie demostrar ellos*
- *poder es relatado*
- *uno otro*
- *envolver/involver- used to mean involve*

Some candidates did not use accents well. This was particularly evident with words such as '*religión, más, jóvenes*'.

Many also failed to use the 'personal "a"'.

Where words were not known, candidates sometimes created their own, for example:

To prevent – *preventer*
Some – *somo*

A few candidates failed to use the infinitive after prepositions as with '*consecuencias de bebiendo*'.

There were also errors of agreement, use of the passive and the subjunctive.

Every effort should be made to encourage the candidates to read widely and definitely to master the grammatical structures many of which are learnt in the first year of instruction. At this level, candidates must also be guided on how to approach and treat different types of essays.

PAPER 03

Literary Analysis and Themes

Section A – Literacy Analysis

Candidates were required to answer questions from 1 (one) of 4 extracts, for which the prescribed texts were "*Felices Dias, Tío Sergio*", 3 short stories from the collection "*17 Narradoras Latinoamericanas*", "*Cronica de una muerte anunciada*" and "*La familia de Pascual Duarte*".

Candidates' performance on this section of the exam out of a possible 16 marks;

9 per cent of candidates scored between 13 - 16
29 per cent of candidates scored between 09 - 12
42 per cent of candidates scored between 05 - 08
20 per cent of candidates scored between 00 – 04

Overall, candidate performance was considered moderate to satisfactory

Questions 2 (17 narradoras latinoamericanas) and 3 (Crónica de una Muerte Anunciada) were the most popular choices and in both, the majority of candidates scored an average of 30 – 50 per cent

Question 1: Felices Días Tío Sergio

Question 1 was selected by 9 per cent of the candidates.

In Part (a), most candidates did not indicate that the narrator participated in the story. As a result, most of them did not score 4 marks on this question.

Part (b) of this question was generally well answered. The majority of candidates were able to clearly outline the difference between the personalities of the narrator and her mother with sufficient support from the passage. Examiners were looking for the use of descriptors such as *amistosa, extrovertida, sociable* for the narrator's mother and *anti social* or *reservada* for the narrator.

In Part (c), candidates did not score high marks on this question. Marks were only awarded for an affirmative answer, which meant that those who negated the appropriateness of the title were unable to score any marks for this question.

Part (d) of this question was not well handled. Candidates were unable to adequately explain how the dialogue functioned in the extract. Many limited their responses to stating that it helped them to understand the narrator and the events of the story. Examiners were looking for **more specific** answers that showed that there was negative criticism from the narrator's relatives whilst her friends complimented/gave her positive criticism.

Question 2: 17 narradoras latinoamericanas

This question was selected by 37 per cent of candidates.

Part (a) of this question was fairly well handled even though there was some element of story-telling and reference to the entire story as opposed to relating the **plot of the extract**.

In Part (b), candidates missed the connection between Analia's falling in love with her cousin because of the letters. Most were not able to see beyond the literal meaning and stated that she kept his letters in a box.

Part (c) of this question was well done. Candidates were able to fully explain the importance of the narrative point of view in the extract, (**third person**) and gave a lot of details on the relationship between Analia and her cousin. Very few stated that the narrator was **omniscient**.

In Part (d) although examiners were expecting candidates to describe Analia as imaginative, because she was able to create an image of her cousin and fall in love with him, candidates were very creative and gave a wide variety of descriptors. Candidates gave answers such as kind, naïve, strong with support from the passage. A few candidates gave support that was from the rest of the novel, but could not be awarded as they were expected to use examples from the excerpt.

Question 3: Crónica de una Muerte Anunciada

This question was selected by 36 per cent of candidates.

In Part (a), candidates gave a wide variety of responses for this question. Some of them described Angela's mother as selfless, determined and dedicated to her family. Very few candidates said that she was an **educated woman** because she was a teacher before she got married.

In Part (b), the majority of candidates correctly focused on the role of tradition in the excerpt, mentioning among other things that tradition helped the Vicario family to maintain appearances in public. Most candidates cited the example that the Vicarios gave the impression that they were in mourning while in public. Some candidates were also able to explain that because of tradition there was a code of conduct. Other examples were that the boys were trained to be men... "*los hermanos fueron criados para ser hombres*" and the sisters were trained in the traditions of housekeeping. Some candidates were unable to score full marks because they did not state what the role of tradition was but merely gave examples of the traditions that the family kept.

In Part (c), the responses to this question were satisfactory. Most candidates did not explore the element of hypocrisy seen in the Vicario family who rigidly upheld the traditions of mourning in public but lessened it when at home. Some students spoke in very general terms of the hypocrisy of the Vicario family without specifically stating why they could be considered as such.

In Part (d), most candidates were able to identify the theme of the passage as **tradition** while a few mentioned **inequality** between men and women. There was not enough explicit distinction between men

and women and very few were able to relate it to the theme. Some mentioned irrelevant details about the role of women in society but did not link it to any theme.

Question 4: *La Familia de Pascual Duarte*

This question was selected by 18 per cent of candidates.

In Part (a)(i), although examiners were looking for the simile “*agachado sobre una carretera lisa y larga como un día sin pan...*” a few candidates identified the literary technique as flashback. Quite a few were unable to give a literary technique that was used in the passage.

In Part (a)(ii), few candidates were able to give a full explanation of the simile. Candidates were expected to link the long road to the monotony of Pascual’s life in jail, or to the fact that he felt his life was going nowhere.

Part (b) of this question was generally well answered. The majority of candidates were able to identify the theme as ‘*el destino*’ and use examples from the passage such as “*el destino se complace...*”, “*...en destinarnos...*” and “*se les ordena marchar por el camino de las flores...*”

In Part (c), candidates identified Pascual’s attempt to show that he was not bad by nature but failed to use specific examples to show that the circumstances of his life justified his behavior. Candidates were expected to use examples of his poverty and his unstable family life as his motives for being bad.

In Part (d), candidates had problems distinguishing between author and narrator and as a result, most answers focused on Pascual’s intentions as narrator. No one was able to score full marks on this question. Candidates were expected to make mention of

- Pascual’s desire to apologise and explain the circumstances of his life that led him to commit his crimes
- The fact that the author wanted the reader to note the difference between free will and destiny.

Recommendations

1. Candidates should use the amount of marks awarded for each question to gauge the length of their responses. Many candidates tend to write one example for a question worth 4 marks. They should be advised to give at least two or three examples to support answers.
2. Teachers need to place greater emphasis on identifying the themes of set texts. Many candidates had problems with questions that asked for a theme.
3. Candidates **must limit their examples to the extract**. Examples given from the rest of the novel to support an answer to a question based on an excerpt are not considered. Many candidates lose marks because of this.
4. When writing the plot of an excerpt, the information must be limited to what happens in the excerpt. Candidates get carried away with the story line of the entire novel and leave out more relevant facts from the excerpt itself. While it shows that they are knowledgeable of the set text, it suggests that they may not have understood what happened in the excerpt to give a summary of it.
5. Some candidates still confuse narrative perspective with summary of the story. A few gave an explanation of the novel and what was their perspective of the events of the story. It is important to revisit this aspect of literary analysis so that candidates understand that narrative perspective deals with the type of narrator used in the novel/passage.

6. There should be some sort of differentiation between mood and characterization of a person. Candidates sometimes confuse the two. A person who feels happy because of particular circumstances is not necessarily a happy person by nature.

Section B - Themes

Candidates were required to answer questions on two Themes; “La Juventud”, for which the prescribed texts were “*Felices Días, Tío Sergio*”, and 3 short stories from the collection “*17 Narradoras Latinoamericanas*”; as well as the theme of “El Individuo y la Sociedad”, with prescribed texts “*Cronica de una muerte anunciada*” and “*La familia de Pascual Duarte*”.

Candidates’ performance on this section of the exam of a possible 32 marks:

5.3 per cent of candidates scored between 25 - 32 marks
 43 per cent of candidates scored between 17 - 24 marks
 49.7 per cent of candidates scored between 09 - 16 marks
 2 per cent of candidates scored between 00 - 08 marks

Overall candidate performance was considered moderate to satisfactory.

Question #5 was chosen by 21.5 per cent of candidates
 Question #6 was chosen by 1.9 per cent of candidates
 Question #7 was chosen by 44.6 per cent of candidates
 Question #8 was chosen by 32 per cent of candidates

76.6 per cent of candidates chose the theme, **El Individuo y la Sociedad**.

COMMENTS

Question 5

(According to psychologists, youth is the most important phase in the life of an individual. Do you agree?)

The great majority of candidates used “Diecisiete Narradoras Latinoamericanas” to answer this question. “*Felices Dias, Tío Sergio*” is not a popular text of choice among candidates from Trinidad and Tobago. Many candidates did not address the question of “most important” and tended to comment instead on youth as “an important phase”. Some discussed only one story although all three stories could have been used

Question 6

(The mysteries of life and death unfold in the experiences of youth. Comment.)

This question seemed to hold no interest for candidates. Very few attempted the question with relatively little success.

Question 7

(The individual is a victim of himself; he should not blame society for his actions. Do you agree?)

This was the most popular question. Candidates who did this question were easily the most successful. However, some essays lacked balance. There was a tendency to relate the story.

Question 8

(Those who do not conform to the norms of society can never truly belong to it. Comment.)

Many candidates failed to establish the link between “those who do not conform” and the fact that “they do not belong”.

GENERAL COMMENTS

There continued to be a blatant disregard for the 350 - 400 word limit especially among potentially good candidates. Essays were often padded with long quotations. Candidates wrote quotations and retained only key words and phrases thereby creating very disjointed quotations that had lost their effectiveness.

A few candidates continued to use texts that were not on the syllabus. In one isolated case, candidates used a copy of the “Despertad magazine”.

A few candidates made no mention of any text in the essay.

UNIT 02**PAPER 01****Listening Comprehension**

This paper required candidates to respond to a series of questions based on five short selections and one extended interview. These questions were set in English and candidates were required to respond in English. The topics were set in line with the Modules of the syllabus, as well as with candidates’ experiences in this age range. Although some questions in the Listening Component of the exam were well handled, there are still challenging areas that need urgent addressing.

Section ASelection 1

This selection dealt with a series of explosions on board a train.

Candidates did quite well on this item with most of them scoring at least six marks of a possible of twelve.

In Part (a) most heard some part of the date and were awarded marks to suit.

Part (b) was generally well answered.

In Part (c), the response *Guadalajara* was more popular than that of *Alcala*. Interestingly though, there was one candidate who thought that the origin of the trains was from the moon!

In Part (d) many candidates did not indicate knapsacks but rather book bags.

In Part (e) the three key words were not always found in candidates' responses. “Train station” was the most popular response. Madrid was often cited incorrectly as the place where the explosion occurred. Hardly anyone heard or at least understood the word *Atocha*.

In Part (f) responses for this item were generally well done.

Selection 2

This selection looked at The United States of America's generous donation of aircraft to Colombia in order to assist with search and rescue operations as well as to provide medical support.

This selection proved more challenging for candidates.

In Part (a), candidates were generally able to identify the two countries.

In Part (b), candidates responded well to this item.

In Part (c), no responses indicated that the equipment was going to be used for searching though many did hear the rescue and medical support.

In Part (d), candidates did not respond to this part.

In Part (e) the public was generally incorrectly stated as those who will benefit.

In Part (f), most candidates did not mention the country of origin.

Selection 3

This selection examined the problem of lack of electricity that affects a quarter of the world's population. Response was generally satisfactory.

In Part (a), the number 1.6 million was very difficult for candidates to process and so, there were many variations ranging from 1,600 to 1,600 000 000.

In Part (b), candidates were generally able to give the quarter fraction correctly.

Part (c) was generally well answered.

In Part (d), few candidates gave the correct response here. Far too many indicated that the other resource used by 2,400 million people was "wood" and some even expressed "animal excrements".

In Part (e), many candidates identified United Nations correctly though a few put the United States.

In Part (f), many erroneous responses surfaced for the cause of death of women and children each year such as: diseases; starvation; malaria.

In Part (g), many candidates failed to state the number correctly.

Selection 4

This selection dealt with the contraction of the Mexican economy.

Response was satisfactory.

In Part (a), once again, the numbers, posed problematic for candidates to analyse. Many chose to answer this question in words and cited "very severe" as an acceptable answer to the severity of the contraction. Those who did in fact state a number did so incorrectly and mentioned figures such as 16 per cent, 3 per cent and 1.6 per cent.

Part (b) was generally well answered.

In Part (c), responses to this item were poorly done. The mentioning of the USA was often the only point.

Part (d) was easily the best response.

In Part (e), many understood the concept of the firing of employees. However, a greater number of candidates thought that the number was only a hundred.

Selection 5

This selection focused on the financial situation, especially the inflation rate, in China.

Generally, candidates did somewhat better on this selection and scores fell between the five to eight category of a possible eight marks

In Part (a), most candidates identified inflation but not the highest level.

Part (b) was generally well answered.

In Part (c) although generally well answered, a few candidates gave varying responses such as: “some years”; “eleven years” and “since November”.

In Part (d), “freezing” was often not mentioned. “Fixed” was more common. However, most responses had “control” or “lower prices on some goods”.

In Part (e), candidates tended to score at least one mark here. The mentioning of rice was more common than that of vegetables.

Selection 6

This interview with Carlos Suarez of the University of South Carolina looked at the use of the Internet among Hispanics.

Generally, candidates did not do as well as was anticipated.

Although candidates made a fair attempt to answer the questions, too many were content to rely on pre existing knowledge and so, ended with distorted answers.

Part (a) (i) was generally well answered.

Part (a) (ii) of this item proved to be challenging for candidates. Many were able to identify 60 per cent and 35 per cent. However, the comparison was lost. A variation to the response was “45 per cent of them are uneducated and cannot speak English”.

In Part (b) appropriate responses were duly awarded for this question which was generally answered correctly.

In Part (c) (i) there were variations in the age ranges. Some had 14 - 20; 18 - 44 and many more only provided one age such as 18 or 44.

In Part (c) (ii) many candidates tended to give a range here as opposed to the required 20 per cent. Not many candidates got this correct.

In Part (d), many candidates gave their own reasons as opposed to what was provided in the passage.

Part (e) of this item was particularly difficult for candidates to answer. Many offered explanations of Hispanics' attraction to the Internet that they would not have heard on their compact disc such as:

- They associate themselves with groups in society;
- They are fascinated by it.

Part (f) was generally very well answered. However, quite a few candidates tended to list as part of the activities carried out over the Internet as learning to drive instead of renewing one's driver's license; chatting with friends online; servicing banks and purchasing electronics and electronic items.

Part (g) was undoubtedly the poorest scoring item in the interview. Many answers were distorted when candidates were asked the reason for the increase of Hispanic Internet users. Such answers included:

- many have friends over the Internet thus the Internet provides communication;
- specific sites were recommended by friends;
- they chat with others easily.

In Part (h), most candidates were able to score on this question. Responses were generally satisfactory.

PAPER 02

Reading and Writing

Section A - Reading Comprehension

In this section of Paper 02, candidates were presented with two passages, both in Spanish and were required to respond to questions based on the material. For passage 1, candidates were asked to respond to the material in English to questions asked in English and for passage 2, candidates were asked to respond in Spanish, in their own words.

Passage 1: *La influencia china en America Latina*

This was a compulsory question which tested the candidates' ability to understand a passage in contemporary Spanish based on a topic of interest. Parts (a) - (f) in this passage required candidates to respond in English to questions asked in English. Parts (g) – (k) required candidates to provide synonyms taken from the passage to the items presented.

Part (a) was generally well done although some candidates did not understand the meaning of the word '*fundada*' and interpreted it to be 'funded'. Therefore many said that the city of Mexicali was funded by the Chinese.

Part (b) was very well done. Most candidates were able to give at least two pieces of information on the Chinese community in Peru.

Parts (c), (d) and (e) were very well done.

Part (f) was generally well done except that many candidates mentioned that Mexico had suffered economically but did not mention that they had also learnt from the Chinese new ways of improving their economy.

Parts (g) to (k) were very well done.

Passage 2: *El turismo en Costa Rica.*

This was a compulsory question testing the candidates' ability to understand the passage in the target language and to respond in Spanish to questions asked in Spanish. Overall this paper was quite well done. Just under 40 per cent of candidates scored in the 20-24 range and 75 per cent scored in the 15-24 range. Less than 15 per cent of candidates scored less than 12 marks out of the total possible 24.

It is to be noted that there was an excellent attempt by candidates to respond to questions in their own words. Only a few candidates were seen "lifting" answers directly from the passage. The effort of putting answers in one's own effort clearly reflected in the scores as penalties for copying was not a common occurrence. Overall, candidates followed the instructions given, although there was an instance of a candidate responding in English to the questions asked in Spanish.

There was almost universal success in the responses to Part (a). A few candidates however failed to heed the marks awarded and gave fewer details than was required. Candidates may be advised that the total marks is generally a good guide in terms of the number of points that are needed for a particular answer. In the case of Part (a), some candidates gave only three points when there were four marks being awarded. Very few candidates included the response *es dinámico*.

Part (b) was not a challenge to candidates as the majority of them were able to identify at least four of the activities listed in the passage. Part (c) was also well handled by most candidates, even though some of them omitted the fact that tourists can take advantage of the different ecosystems *en el mismo país* for Part (i).

Part (d)(i) was fairly well handled by candidates. There were some, however who misinterpreted some of the material presented. This was especially true for the phrase *están planeado construir otro especialmente dirigido al turismo de playa y de naturaleza*. Many candidates misunderstood this to mean that the new beaches were going to be built for tourists, rather than there being a plan to build another airport. There seemed to be some level of confusion for Part (d)(ii). While many candidates were able to give very coherent responses to the question, others failed to note that it was a question that deals with tourism in their own country. These candidates gave responses based on tourism in Costa Rica and what the government is doing there. Candidates are again reminded to read the question carefully to determine the required answer.

Section B - Essay

In this section candidates were required to write an essay in Spanish of 250-300 words on *one* of five topics. This section tested candidates' ability to express themselves in Spanish in a balanced, coherent and analytical manner on a topic related to the theme of Module 2 – "**La Industria, el Comercio y Los Asuntos Económicos**" as outlined in the syllabus. Examiners were looking for essays which focused on the topic with the expectation that there would be a more mature and concise approach in the way the issues would be presented.

Candidates' performance was again judged by the **relevance** of the **content** to the specific topic, the **organization** and **coverage** of the facts, **ideas and opinions** including a **range of vocabulary and idioms** used as well **accuracy** of **grammatical structures** used.

Generally, candidates performed fairly well in this section, with most scoring between 9 and 24 points. Essays were for the most part well organized and discussed, with appropriate vocabulary and correct structures used.

Question 3

“La clonación humana plantea graves problemas éticos. ¿Cuál es tu opinion”.

Some candidates did not perform well as they spent too much time detailing the negative consequences (deformities, early death...) of cloning in its experimental stage. While some salient points were made, a direct link was, at times, not made with the essay topic . Many issues put forward were not about ethical issues but more about the advantages of cloning. There were, however, some excellent essays on this topic.

Question 4

“La red ha fortalecido la comunicación y la soledad al mismo tiempo. ¿Qué opinas?”

Overall, candidates wrote about the benefits of using the internet. In many cases **soledad** was misinterpreted or misunderstood. Candidates spent more time to show how extensively the internet has strengthened communication. Not enough effort was expended on linking the two aspects. Again, the candidates who were spot-on did a good job.

Question 5

“Los adelantos tecnológicos aportan más a la destrucción de la sociedad que a su desarrollo. ¿Estás de acuerdo?”

This was the most popular choice among candidates. Some responses to the question were somewhat limited as those candidates focused more on the usefulness of the internet and/or the telephone, although responses were expected to encompass or include other types of technology and their role in the development and/or destruction of the society. Very few mentioned how destructive advanced technology can be on the society as a whole. Those who mentioned their damaging effects focused more on their social effects. Candidates were at times unable to make the link with the destruction of society. There were a few excellent essays that were a joy to read because of the expression and fluency of the language and the flow of ideas.

Question 6

Los científicos tienen que prestar más atención a las curas para las enfermedades graves como el cáncer y el SIDA. ¿Qué opinas?

Although there were few responses on this topic, those who attempted this essay were able to discuss the effects of cancer and AIDS on individuals and families and state why it is important for scientists to search for cures. Some were able to show the work being done by scientists in other areas as well as the attention being given to research for cures for AIDS and cancer. Candidates pointed out the urgency needed because of the effect on the society as a whole. Unfortunately, candidates did not always argue their points well.

Question 7

“El uso de alimentos modificados es clave para acabar con el hambre mundial. ¿Cuál es tu opinión?”

Many candidates who attempted this question performed fairly well. Some quite ably identified the present problem of world hunger and said what modified foods are and were able to discuss the topic well. They gave good examples of how modified foods can or may not eliminate world hunger. Some were however, unable to adequately say why modified foods could be the key to eliminating world hunger. To their merit, some candidates were quite engaging in their discussion, showing their knowledge on the topic as well as the research done.

Use of grammar continues to be a challenge for some candidates who use English words and word-for-word constructions in their writing. Some of their errors include:

- *habré no fatta de comida*
- *a hoy* (today)
- *ahora día*
- *somos* (some) *las actividades es no productive*
- *cada día situación*
- *tienen hacer un clónico pero de un Dolly*
- *tienen causado*
- *pero/sino*
- *en los años venir*
- *según a*
- *llamas un poco* (to name a few)
- *La sistema*
- *la technologic*
- 'ser' with the gerund
- *por/para*
- *providan una grande distracción*
- *los celulares son mucho más mal*
- *los muertes*
- *disprotectado*
- *sin los* *los países tercer mundial*
- *juvenil, juventud, jóvenes / tecnología,tecnológico* (often used interchangeably)

Candidates need to pay greater attention to reading the question and understanding the main point of focus. It is evident that some failed to do so which was reflected in a misinterpretation of the question and the repetition of one point throughout the essay.

More research needs to be carried out on some of the topics.

Candidates need to be cautioned to practice writing essays on several topics but to, nonetheless, remain focused on the actual question being asked in the examination, as there have been candidates who used relevant information but were unable to integrate it into specific essays.

Generally, candidates performed at a high standard. Every topic provided a variety of answers with some very mature thought and analysis. The candidates displayed great dexterity as they manipulated idiomatic expressions with appropriate vocabulary and correct grammatical structures. Some essays could well be made available to future candidates as examples of good writing skills.

PAPER 03

LITERARY ANALYSIS AND THEMES

SECTION A

LITERARY ANALYSIS

This section required candidates to answer one question out of a possible four. Passages were taken from the texts: La lluvia amarilla, El llano en llamas, El coronel no tiene quien le escriba and, Chombo. Candidates were required to read a literary extract and comment on character, plot, setting and simple literary techniques.

Candidates' performance on this section of the exam;

7 per cent of candidates scored between 13-16

36 per cent of candidates scored between 09-12

46 per cent of candidates scored between 05-08

10 per cent of candidates scored between 00-04

Overall, candidate performance was considered moderate to satisfactory

Question 1: *El Llano en Llamas*

Question 1 was selected by 38.5 per cent of the candidates.

In Part (a) candidates correctly identified the repeated words in the passage choosing either '*caer*', '*llover*', '*caminar*' or '*no hay*'. Answers lacked detail of the function of the repetition in the passage. Candidates were expected to mention that the repetition placed emphasis on the lack of rain or the futility of the land for '*caer*', '*llover*' or '*no hay*'. For the use of '*caminar*' candidates could have mentioned that it shows the lack of progress even though they were walking for hours.

In Part (b) there were few detailed responses and hardly any candidates focused on the idea of plain in the story representing desolation and desperation. Many mentioned the fact that it meant opportunity but this was insufficient as the plain was really useless to the people.

Part (c) while examiners were looking for the negative aspects of the lack of rain, the majority of candidates concentrated on the positive effects of rain, stating that it meant hope or life to the arid plain and opportunity for betterment for the people.

Part (d) most candidates correctly identified the theme of the passage as the hostility of nature against man but fell short of a proper link to the theme of the majority of the stories in the collection. This part of the responses was very vague with candidates mentioning rural life as the theme or just speaking in generalized terms about poverty. Also there were hardly any specific titles of other stories in the collection that had the same theme. There were a few who stated that the theme was rural life or poverty and were not rewarded because the excerpt itself focused on the harshness of nature.

Question 2: *La Lluvia Amarilla*

In Part (a) very few candidates scored any marks on this question. Generally, candidates had problems making distinctions between the protagonist and his memory. Examiners were looking for answers such as the fact that the protagonist no longer felt that his present life was real, his memories were real to him, or, that he could no longer face himself so he turned to his memories, which have become very important to him.

In Part (b) the similes in the excerpt were identified quite easily but the explanations were lacking. The two similes were “*como la luz del sol cuando se abre la ventana...*”/“*Como el viento de Francia cuando se aparece de repente...*” Very few candidates were able to give correct explanations of these similes. Examiners expected answers such as the fact that his memories were covered, in the dark for a long time and suddenly it is unexpectedly illuminated by something and everything comes back to him like the light illuminates a room that has been dark for a long time and brings everything to light. For the second simile candidates were expected to mention that his memories come back to him lack a strong wind that drags everything away. All of his memories accumulated from his past are brought into view by a sudden blow. Candidates who opted for the second simile were able to give better explanations of its use.

In Part (c) candidates had no difficulty identifying the words associated with death in the passage. There was a wide variety of answers such as ‘*hojas muertas*’, ‘*exhumación*’, ‘*fantasmal*’, ‘*el fin*’, ‘*adios*’, ‘*viaje sin retorno*’. Candidates fell short in the analysis of the use of these words and were unable to properly link them to death.

In Part (d) the explanation of the link between theme and tone tended to be flawed. Most candidates were able to identify the theme as solitude but were unable to give the tone which was pessimism/abandon/hopelessness. Very few were able to see the link between the protagonist’s solitude and the fact that he is in an ambience of abandon and melancholy.

Question 3 – *El Coronel No Tiene Quién le Escriba*

Part (a) while most candidates were able to give the key elements of the plot, some resorted to storytelling and omitted the key issues. Some candidates also regurgitated long quotes from the passage. Candidates must remember that when asked for the plot, they are not to give a synopsis of the novel and that they must use their own words.

Part (b) candidates acknowledged that the colonel and his wife were poor and made many sacrifices for the rooster. However, few candidates noted that the colonel was an idealist and that they were suffering because of his dreams. Very few highlighted that the quote showed the difference in the personality of the colonel and his wife.

Part (c) this question was well handled by most candidates. They gave very good descriptions of the colonel’s wife with support from the passage. Some of the acceptable answers were practical, realistic, pessimist, caring, authoritative and someone with a sense of humour. Some candidates used examples from the novel and were not awarded marks for doing so as the question specifically asked for examples from the passage.

In Part (d) few candidates linked the mail to the political injustices as the theme of the novel. The majority of responses dealt with the false hope in which the colonel lives due to the fact that he has been waiting for the mail for a very long time. Others mentioned that the mail was a sign of hope because it represented a better life for the colonel and his wife.

Question 4: *Chombo*

This question was selected by 1 per cent of candidates. It seemed that the candidates who chose this question did not study the set text as they were unable to make references to the rest of the text where necessary. The questions were poorly done and all who attempted it scored below average.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Candidates should use the amount of marks awarded for each question to gauge the length of their responses. Many candidates tend to write one example for a question worth 4 marks. They should be advised to give at least two examples to support answers.
2. Teachers need to place greater emphasis on identifying the themes of set texts. Many candidates had problems with questions that asked for a theme.
3. Candidates **must remember** to limit their examples to the extract. Examples given from the rest of the novel to support an answer to a question based on an excerpt are not regarded. Many candidates lose marks because of this.
4. When writing the plot of an excerpt, the information must be limited to what happens in the excerpt. Candidates get carried away with the story line of the entire novel and leave out more relevant facts from the excerpt itself. While it shows that they are knowledgeable of the set text, it suggests that they may not have understood what happened in the excerpt to give a summary of it.
5. Some candidates still confuse narrative perspective with summary of the story. A few gave an explanation of the novel and what was their perspective of the events of the story. It is important to revisit this aspect of literary analysis so that candidates understand that narrative perspective deals with the type of narrator used in the novel/passage.
6. There should be some sort of differentiation between mood and characterization of a person. Candidates sometimes confuse the two. A person who feels happy because of particular circumstances is not necessarily a happy person by nature.

SECTION B

Themes

Candidates were required to answer questions on two themes; “*Conflictos políticos y sociales en Hispanoamerica*”, for which the prescribed texts were “*El coronel no tiene quien le escriba*” and “*Chombo*”; as well as the theme of “*La vida rural*”, with prescribed texts “*La lluvia amarilla*” and “*El llano en llamas*”.

Candidates’ performance on this section of the exam was considered satisfactory.

5.2 per cent of candidates scored between 25 - 32
 45.8 per cent of candidates scored between 17 - 24
 45.2 per cent of candidates scored between 09 - 16
 3.8 per cent of candidates scored between 00 - 08

Question 5 was chosen by 10.4 per cent of candidates
 Question 6 was chosen by 36.3 per cent of candidates
 Question 7 was chosen by 30.2 per cent of candidates
 Question 8 was chosen by 23.1 per cent of candidates

Question 5

(The exotic image of the country hides the individual’s fight for survival. Do you agree?) Some candidates failed to identify the exotic image of the country and focused on the fight for survival. Those who took the

time to identify and define “exotic” produced much better essays. A few candidates used “*El coronel no tiene quien le escriba*” to answer the question and as a result failed to identify the relevant issues.

Question 6

(Man finds it hard to survive in the country because of Nature’s hostility towards him. Discuss.) Most candidates were able to make the connection between the hostile forces of nature and the hardships in life.

Question 7

(Only a limited group receives the benefits for those who fought for the masses. Comment.) 48.4 per cent of answers fell in the 17 - 32 bracket. Many candidates failed to identify the “limited group” and “those who fought for the masses”. Many limited their responses to Don Sabas and the Colonel. No one used “*Chombo*” to answer this question.

Question 8

(Socio-political conflicts reveal the most animalistic instincts of human beings. Discuss.) Most candidates addressed the “socio-political conflicts” but failed to address “the animalistic instincts”. A few candidates misinterpreted the word “animalistic” and thus, saw its meaning in a favourable light.

COMMENT

“*El coronel no tiene quien le escriba*” was the only text used in answering Question 7 and Question 8. To all appearances, “*Chombo*” is not a being used in Trinidad & Tobago.

PAPER 04

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

UNITS 1 AND 2

GENERAL COMMENTS

Some of the tapes were recorded too low and a few CDs were blank which made moderation difficult or impossible. There was some interaction between examiners and candidates; however, the latter should be encouraged to ask more questions. Some topics were interesting and detailed, while others need more research and organization of details. Most examiners provided positive reinforcement.

Examiners should remember to:

- ❖ introduce each candidate before each presentation;
- ❖ rewind tapes;
- ❖ not to use ½ marks;
- ❖ divide the total score in the three modules;
- ❖ to submit recordings of acceptable standard using standard-sized cassettes and not micro-cassettes;
- ❖ to speak loudly and clearly and encourage candidates to do the same;
- ❖ to ensure that the examination is free of background noise;
- ❖ submit only five samples and label them in the same order on the tapes and moderation sheets;
- ❖ try to adhere to stipulated time of examination;
- ❖ not to interrupt candidates during their presentations and let them do most of the talking;
- ❖ that written SBAs and visual aids are no longer part of the current syllabus.

Prepared Topic

Most candidates were prepared and made good presentations in a coherent and logical manner. It was evident that some research was done on some topics; however, some candidates need to do more research in order to make their topics more detailed and interesting. A few had difficulty with stress and pronunciation of certain words.

Topic Conversation

Many candidates handled this section fairly well while others who may have learnt their topics by rote were unable to respond appropriately to questions related to their topics. Many had difficulty because of limited vocabulary and expression.

General Conversation

Many candidates performed well in this section as they felt more at ease and related better to topics related to everyday life. However, some were hindered by limited vocabulary and expression. Only a few candidates asked questions of the examiner. It must be noted that the pronunciation and stress of expressed by most candidates suggest that there is a need for more contact/interaction with native speakers.

Some Common Grammatical Errors:

- *Ser/estar*
- *Ser* with the gerund – *soy estudiando*,
- prepositions with the gerund – *en haciendo*
- Subject/verb agreement – *la gente creen, las personas puedo*
- Article/noun agreement – *un gran cantidad, las países*
- Noun/adjective agreement – *muchas casos, otro gente*
- *Bien/bueno*
- *Haber/tener*
- Omission of *a/de* – *educar las personas, termino estudiar*
- Omission of *que* – *tengo estudiar*
- *Ambos/tanto...como...*

Pronunciation, Intonation and Stress:

Some candidates had difficulty with certain words:
fauna, teléfono, propósito, ganancias,