

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION
MAY/JUNE 2010**

SPANISH

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Candidate performance improved on both units of this year's examination. In Unit 1, this improvement in performance was seen on all the papers and modules. In Unit 2, improvement was seen on all the papers and modules with the exception of Paper 02.

DETAILED COMMENTS

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. The selections were in Spanish, but questions and responses were in English. The topics were set in line with the modules of the syllabus, as well as with the candidates' experiences in their age range. Overall performance was satisfactory.

Section A – Short Selections

Selection 1

This selection compared a large market in Madrid, Spain, with a small market in Guatemala. Candidates were supposed to (a) identify the two locations, (b) mention three articles sold at each market and (c) indicate days and time of their operations. Performance was generally excellent.

For Part (a), most candidates were able to identify the two locations. For Part (b), many candidates wrote games instead of toys, indicating misunderstanding of the word *juguete*. Other common incorrect responses included 'slippers', instead of 'shoes', 'dresses' instead of 'clothing', 'sporting goods and medicines' instead of 'medicinal herbs'.

For Part (c), a significant number of candidates wrote that the market was open for 'two hours' or 'from 2 p.m.' instead of 'until 2 p.m.' Also, several wrote that the Chichicastenango market was open from 'Thursday to Sunday' or 'Saturdays and Wednesdays'.

Selection 2

This selection dealt with the significance of a girl attaining the age of 15 in Mexico. Candidates had to respond to questions on (a) the significance of turning 15, (b) how this is celebrated and who celebrates, (c) what was specific to celebrations in small towns and (d) how celebrations in small towns are different from those in big towns. Performance was generally good.

The majority of candidates correctly answered Part (a). For Part (b) (i), many of the responses stated that there was a dance/celebration at the church. Many answers also mentioned only one activity: either the church mass or the dance instead of both of these activities. For Part (b) (ii), almost all candidates answered correctly.

With respect to Part (c), several candidates duplicated responses given for Part (b) (i). Other common incorrect responses included 'the party was at the verandah', 'they walked behind the church', and 'they drove to the party'. Candidates did not realize that emphasis should have been placed on the manner in which the girl got to the party.

For Part (d), many candidates hazarded educated guesses. Stereotypes of countryside activities were mentioned. For example, candidates wrote ‘more family and friends were able to come to celebrate’, ‘country persons do not celebrate as much as city folk’, ‘persons in the city do not have church celebrations’, ‘persons in the city go to the cinema’, ‘in the city the party is a further distance than in the small towns’, ‘they have courts in small towns’ the latter a misinterpretation of the phrase *un corto viaje*.

Selection 3

This selection was on the Ministry of the Environment in Peru putting in place a penal code for persons who harm the environment. Candidates were supposed to tick four correct sentences which related to the selection from among six that were given. Some candidates did not tick four responses as required. By ticking five or six responses they lost marks. Others wrote ‘T’ or ‘F’ instead of ticking. This is a clear indication that the instructions were not properly read and followed. However, performance was still good.

Selection 4

This selection focused on the reaction of the non-governmental organization, Greenpeace, towards the policy of the Spanish government on projects affecting the environment.

Generally, candidates were very vague in their responses to the questions asked on this selection.

For Part (a), many correct responses were given. However, common incorrect answers included ‘it was a good year for the environment’, ‘it was a polluted year’, and ‘it was the year of the environment’.

With respect to Part (b), in many cases candidates wrote the answer for Part (c) instead. Quite a few candidates read the words ‘positive aspect’ in the question and tweaked their responses to reflect positive environmental activities. For example, they wrote ‘various projects that aid the environment were held’, when they should have responded that ‘environmentally harmful urban projects were stopped’.

For Part (c), very few candidates responded correctly. Many seemed not to understand *cierre* so they did not fully understand that there was no plan to close nuclear plants. It was obvious that candidates did not understand this part of the extract properly so their responses were very generalized for example, ‘loss of nutrients in the environment’. In addition, *potencia* was interpreted as ‘potency’ rather than ‘power’ in many cases.

Part (d) also was not very well done by candidates whose responses included ‘change political climate’ and ‘must use political force’.

Selection 5

This selection looked at volcanic activity in the Andes region. Candidates were required to (a) state the location of a specific volcano, (b) indicate how many earthquakes were registered and how they were described, (c) give two other details of volcanic activity, and (d) outline the pattern of activity since 1999. Performance was generally in the ‘satisfactory’ range.

For Part (a), while there were a number of candidates who gave the correct response, many only gained half the marks by giving ‘The centre of Ecuador’ as the response. Of note was the inability of many candidates to correctly spell ‘Ecuador’.

With respect to Part (b), a few candidates responded correctly that there were nine earthquakes, while most said there were 24. However, few candidates used the correct adjectives ‘long’ and ‘light/mild’ to describe the earthquakes. *Leve* was not generally understood.

For Part (c), the majority of candidates were able to provide two details, but a surprising number of them referred to ‘acid/acidity’ regarding volcanic activity.

For Part (d), a significant number of candidates mentioned that volcanic activity was calm, but few mentioned the alternating pattern of high volcanic activity followed by periods of calm. A small number of candidates misinterpreted ‘patterns’ and referred to ‘paths’.

Section B – Extended Interview

Selection 6

The sixth selection was an interview with Dr Romero Rodríguez, Uruguayan historian and expert on slavery in the Latin American and Caribbean context. Performance was, in the main, satisfactory.

Part 1

For Part (a), many candidates correctly responded that the doctor spent his life defending the rights of blacks in Uruguay. However, several said he was defending a black ‘town’ or ‘village’. This indicates their mistranslation of the word *pueblo*. Others, however, did not mention Uruguay. In addition, many candidates overcompensated by including information that was not required.

Part (b) required candidates to explain why Dr Rodríguez says that there is a need to get to know the history of his people. This question was not well done. Most candidates lifted parts of the dialogue that had little relevance to the question. Many also referred to ‘American medicine/medical’ which had no relevance to the question. Additionally, several misinterpreted the doctor’s reference to (Latin) America to mean (North) America.

For Part (c), candidates had to respond to a question that asked what it is that many young people of African descent do not realize about their roots. This was, by far, the part where candidates performed the worst. Only a small number responded that the African continent was the place where humanity originated. The term *género humano* caused many candidates to write about the continent being the source of ‘the general hand’, ‘Roman genes’ ‘Roman Empire/Civilization’, ‘hand gender’, ‘Germans’, ‘human gender’, and ‘Roman hand’. Candidates must be reminded that their answers must make sense and be related to the context of the selection.

For Part (d), most candidates only provided one of the two correct responses to the question on who defined people of African descent as ‘Blacks’. The word ‘colonizers’ was given in most cases as ‘colonists’. Other candidates simply wrote the Spanish word *colonizadores*, gaining no marks for this response. Only a limited number wrote ‘slave masters’ as the other correct response.

Part 2

Part (e) asked candidates to indicate what Dr Rodríguez says about political division in Africa. This part was well done for the most part, although some candidates wrote ‘colonism’ instead of ‘colonialism’.

Part (f) asked of Dr Rodríguez’ suggestions as the alternative ways of classifying the origins of African descendants. While elements of the correct response were generally provided, sentence structure left much to be desired; for example, ‘they must be classified based on linguistic and ethnical’. A large number of candidates used ‘linguists’ and ‘ethics’ as the two classifications instead of ‘linguistic and ethnic groups’.

Most candidates responded correctly to Part (g) on the links made between slavery and racism and racism and poverty, and to Part (h) on three areas where evidence of African influence in culture is noticeable.

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. For Passage 2, the questions were in Spanish and candidates were to respond in Spanish.

Passage 1 – *El secreto de la felicidad*

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

Overall, performance on this question can be deemed as fair as 52 per cent of candidates scored at least 15 out of the maximum 24 marks.

Some candidates were able to give the correct response for Part (a). However, a sizeable percentage was not familiar with the word *dueño* and as a result was unable to correctly answer the question. Many candidates misinterpreted the information and stated that Jean Pierre is part of an exclusive club because he was a rich rock star.

On the other hand, Part (b) was well done by most candidates. A fair number were able to score the full five marks allotted for describing how Jean Pierre is different from rich businessmen, royalty and rock stars. However, because there was misinterpretation of Jean Pierre’s status, many candidates omitted the fact that he was poor, thereby not earning the full marks. There was a high level of mistranslation of the word *plata*. Some candidates used it to mean silver, and to a far lesser extent, it was also translated as ‘plate’.

Part (c) was also fairly well handled by many candidates. However, there was some confusion with the issue of Jean Pierre’s family making do with what they have. Some candidates talked about Jean Pierre’s family selling their cow and buying kerosene without mentioning how this

relates to their happiness. There were also many candidates who did not know the meaning of the word *jabón*, translating it to mean ‘ham’.

There was almost universal success in candidates’ responses to Part (d). Most candidates were able to state that Vanuatu has repeatedly been recognized as the happiest country in the world. Some candidates, however, who simply stated that Vanuatu is a happy country were not awarded full marks.

For Part (e) (i), most candidates were able to identify that the key to happiness was money. However, there was some confusion in the answering of Part (e) (ii). It was evident from the responses that candidates did not know the meaning of ironical. As a result, the responses were very clumsily stated. Very few candidates linked happiness to the fact that people in Vanuatu did not have money so they did not worry about it. Only a few candidates were able to give coherent responses to this question.

The responses for Part (f) indicated that most candidates were able to understand the information in the passage. Some candidates, however, had problems with the expression *ausencia general de materialismo*. Some candidates simply wrote the exact words from the passage, that is, the Spanish version, while some wrote that ‘general materialism’ was important. Many candidates failed to observe that this question had two parts and failed to say how the elements they listed were reflected in the John family. This resulted in only two of the four marks being allotted.

Parts (g)–(k), the synonyms section, proved somewhat problematic for candidates. The average mark scored for this section was three out of the total of five. Candidates need to be reminded to use the context of the word when searching for the synonyms.

Passage 2 – Tala amenaza a tribu aislada

The questions posed on this passage presented challenges to many candidates. The major problem was that candidates disregarded the instruction to respond in their own words. A significant number of candidates took their answers directly from the passage, and as a result they lost considerable marks. Also, too many responses were weak in terms of expression and grammar, specifically in the use of tenses, subject-verb agreement and vocabulary usage.

This passage seemed more problematic for candidates than Passage 1.

For Part (a), the correct answer was given by most candidates. Unfortunately it was lifted directly from the passage, with no attempt made by candidates to put it in their own words.

The responses of candidates for Part (b) seemed to be general miscomprehension of the material. Many candidates attempted to deal with this by simply copying the second paragraph as their answer. Many candidates even copied the third paragraph as part of their response.

Again, significant lifting of material was seen in the responses for Part (c). Very few candidates attempted to put the information in their own words. However, for Part (d), while some candidates were able to identify that a tribe may become extinct, many failed to include what the consequences would be for Paraguay, as stated in the passage.

Part (e) (i) was generally well answered, with most candidates indicating that members of the tribe would have to seek jobs with the company. Again, many candidates simply repeated verbatim what was in the passage.

For Part (e) (ii), only a few candidates were able to say why it was necessary for the members of the tribe to seek jobs with the company.

Part (f) (i) required that candidates provide their opinions in a coherent manner. Because of the challenge of comprehension of the question itself, a fair number of candidates simply copied information from the passage. Some candidates attempted to answer by simply writing points, some of which were irrelevant to the topic of deforestation in one's country. Quite a few candidates insisted in their responses that their countries were not affected by deforestation. However, they did not offer any explanation. While these responses were considered, full marks could not be allotted because no level of detail was provided.

Comments

The final question for Passage 2 is usually an opinion question. Too many candidates simply use the information from the passage, some even copying entire sentences. In most cases, the question requires that candidates write about issues that are not already mentioned in the passage. Some candidates are not expressing their opinions adequately. While examiners are not looking for extensive answers, many times those that are given are too superficial. One way in which teachers could guide their students in answering this question is by telling them to make a point and support the point with some level of detail.

Section B – Essays

In this section candidates are required to write an essay, in Spanish, of 250–300 words, on one of five topics. The section tests candidates' ability to express themselves in Spanish in an analytical and logical manner related to the theme as outlined in Module 2 of the syllabus. Students are evaluated on content and presentation (organization and coverage of the topic, relevance and inclusion of facts, ideas and opinions) and correctness of expression (range of vocabulary and idioms as well as accuracy of grammatical structures). Performance was satisfactory.

Question 3

Los problemas del VIH y el SIDA no terminarán porque la gente nunca va a cambiar sus actitudes. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

This was the second most popular choice among candidates. Responses drew reference to the fact that because of people's sexual promiscuity, the disease will not be eradicated. The lack of education of the public, the poor use of protection and even exposure to some television shows were reasons advanced to explain why people contracted AIDS. A change in attitudes, however, was not widely explored.

Question 4

Los gobiernos tienen la responsabilidad de proveer casas para sus ciudadanos. Discute.

Seven per cent of the candidates attempted this question. Valid points were put forward in favour of both sides of the argument although many could not justify whether or not the government

should make housing free of charge or available for purchase. The question was understood by those who attempted it but there was a lack of structure, vocabulary, organization and coverage.

Question 5

Los programas de televisión norteamericanos han afectado negativamente a los jóvenes caribeños. Comenta.

This was the most popular question, attempted by 72 per cent of the candidates. Candidates discussed the negative impact of North American television programmes on the youths of the Caribbean but also pointed out many positive programmes that were educational. Many responses focused on violence and pornography on television and the negative effects on the youths who acted out the behaviour in real life. Apart from a lack of basic grammatical structures, spelling was also a common error. Many words were invented and literal translations of idiomatic expressions used at will. Candidates could not render the object pronoun 'them' as well as recognize the difference between the adjective and noun form for the words 'Caribbean' and 'North America/North American'.

Other common errors made by candidates were:

- *No escuchan los* / they do not listen to them *han afectado los* / have affected them
- *Algunos no ha* / some do not have *con no informacion* / with no information
- *A gordo* / too fat *yo sere discutir* / I will be discussing
- *En la Caribena* / In the Caribbean *la vida en Norteamericano* / Life in North America
- *Es no* / it is not *tienen no* / do not have

Question 6

El narcotráfico es una de las maneras más rápidas de asegurar el desarrollo de un país. Discute.

This question was not very popular and accounted for seven per cent of the responses. Some candidates misunderstood the question and merely discussed the negative effects of drug trafficking without linking it to assuring the development of the country. The word *asegurar* seemed to have confused many candidates.

Question 7

Si los padres educan bien a sus niños en casa se verá un mejoramiento en las relaciones raciales. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

This was the least popular of the essay questions and was selected by three per cent of the candidates. Most of them understood the question but some limited their discussion to the fact that children who were of mixed race were able to better understand about different races and therefore this led to an improvement in race relations. Others expressed the view that agencies in society, for example, the school, church and the government should play their part. As with all other questions, candidates were unable to score in the higher range under grammar and expression.

Paper 03 – Literary Analysis and Themes

Section A – Literary Analysis

In this section, candidates were required to answer questions from one of four extracts, for which the prescribed texts were *Felices Días*, *Tío Sergio*, three short stories from the collection *17 Narradoras Latinoamericanas*, *Crónica de una muerte anunciada* and *La familia de Pascual Duarte*. Candidates were required to comment on character, plot, setting and simple literary techniques. Performance was generally less than satisfactory.

Question 2, on *17 Narradoras Latinoamericanas*, and Question 3, on *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*, were the most popular choices. Fifty-eight per cent of candidates responded to Question 2 while a further eighteen per cent answered Question 3.

Question 1

Felices Días, Tío Sergio

This question was selected by ten per cent of the candidates.

In relating the plot of the excerpt, Part (a), candidates did not pick up the element of surprise, but generally recognized that dancing is never done in the family. The contrast between the title of the music and the melody was not identified. Many candidates thought that the ‘Mama’ referred to was the narrator’s mother. There was little focus on details.

Most candidates scored at least two of the four marks on Part (b) because they simply characterized Tío Sergio as a happy person. Few candidates indicated that his mother was occupied with her chores when he started dancing with her.

Performance on Part (c) (i) was generally good. Candidates mentioned the absence of dancing and the narrator’s surprise. In Part (c) (ii), which was also well done, most candidates recognized the difference between the song and the family.

In explaining the effect that the specific scene in the second paragraph had on the narrator, Part (d), candidates mainly stated surprise, but not necessarily *maravillada/encantada*. The jealousy felt by the narrator was identified by few candidates. As a result, most scored only half of the marks. Some candidates also wrote *alegre/contenta* instead of *encantada*.

Question 2

17 Narradoras Latinoamericanas

This question was selected by 59 per cent of candidates.

Part (a) was fairly well handled even though there was some reference to the entire story as opposed to relating the *plot of the extract*. Some candidates thought the letters came from the Uncle. Most scored full marks on this question.

For Part (b), many candidates recognized that the narrative point of view in the excerpt was that of third person narrator. However, there appeared to be some confusion over terms. Some candidates wrote that it was the third person limited, on the grounds that nothing is seen of Luis. *Omnipresente* appeared several times.

Few candidates scored the maximum four marks on Part (c). Most candidates got the idea of freedom from boredom at the convent. Candidates generally did not realize that Analía was able to use her imagination to experience new things. Many wrote that the letters were a sign of hope, happiness or love.

With respect to Part (d), the term *narradora* misled some candidates, yet they were still able to score marks by considering either protagonist or narrator. One candidate rightfully explained that the narrator could not be characterized because she was simply narrating the story. Many candidates described Analía as profound, intelligent, wise, mature and not superficial. If candidates tried to deal with the narrator, they were able to say that she was third person, omniscient and objective.

Question 3

Crónica de una Muerte Anunciada

This question was selected by 18 per cent of candidates.

For Part (a), most candidates did not understand that *honor* is a private matter, and simply said that people did not want to get involved. There was generally poor performance on this part with many candidates earning just two marks out of the maximum four.

Part (b) was also not well answered. A lot of irrelevant information was provided. General information from the text was provided leading to the award of no mark. Candidates did not capture that the cause of anxiety was the crime. A few candidates recognized guilt and remorse, but did not say that people's lives had changed.

For Part (c), very few candidates indicated *narrador testigo* as the narrative point of view, although some wrote *narrador investigador*. Candidates stated either first or third person narrator but not both. Many wrongfully stated that the narrator was omniscient. Few candidates indicated that the narrator participates in the story.

In responding to Part (d), the most popular example given by candidates was *esclarecer misterios*. In addition, explanations were not well done, or the explanation was given, but not the phrase to which it seemed to refer.

Students need to be taught about the *narrator* of this story, because sometimes it is a first person and sometimes a third person. Teachers need to review what is meant by ‘point of view’.

Question 4

La Familia de Pascual Duarte

This question was selected by 13 per cent of candidates.

Most candidates were unable to relate the plot of the excerpt, Part (a). Their relating of the plot was poorly done, suggesting a lack of comprehension on their part. The main response was that Pascual was going to kill someone (either his wife or himself).

Part (b) was also poorly done. Candidates did not understand the word *presagio*.

Candidates who attempted this excerpt scored most of their marks on Part (c). Most of them knew it was a first person narrator, and that it was Pascual’s point of view.

For Part (d), candidates did not understand *ambiente* and some talked about the physical setting. However, many candidates did not know the difference between (physical) setting and ambience/atmosphere.

Comments

- Teachers need to revisit and give more practice in outlining the plot.
- Candidates need to focus on the main events of a passage, and leave analysis for later.
- Candidates need to be taught to differentiate between characterization and emotion (*Felices Días, Tío Sergio*).
- Candidates need to explain their points better or use appropriate citations.
- Students need to recognize the usefulness of the dictionary they are allowed to carry into the exam.
- No English is allowed for Section A.
- The language candidates used in their answers was generally poor.

Section B – Themes

Candidates were required to write one essay, of 350–400 words, in English, based on one of two themes: (i) *La juventud*, for which the prescribed texts were *Felices Días, Tío Sergio*, and three short stories from the collection *17 Narradoras Latinoamericanas*, and (ii) *El individuo y la sociedad*, with prescribed texts *Crónica de una Muerte Anunciada* and *La familia de Pascual Duarte*. Candidates' performance on this section was satisfactory.

Question 5

‘Adults and adolescents live in two separate worlds. It is impossible to bring them together.’ Discuss.

Some candidates failed to distinguish the ‘two separate worlds’ (physical, emotional, experiential) mentioned in the question in their responses. Some did not attempt the second part

of the question. Candidates who used *17 Narradoras Latinoamericanas* in their response had difficulty as only *Cartas de amor traicionado* was truly applicable to the question. In *Felices Días, Tío Sergio* we do see a situation in which these two worlds overlap for a time. Overall, performance was satisfactory.

Question 6

‘One is most idealistic during youth.’ Do you agree?

Many candidates misinterpreted or failed to identify the meaning of the term ‘idealistic’ (seeing or hoping for the best in a person or situation; opposite of cynical, realistic), and so could not have written an excellent response. Candidates who attempted this option did not perform as well as those who attempted Question 5.

Question 7

‘It is society which limits the freedom of the individual.’ Do you agree?

This was the most popular question and there were several commendable scripts. Some candidates' responses reflected practice of essays dealing with ‘marginalization’ and ‘destiny’ which were tested in prior examinations and were not evaluated in this year's examination. Some essays would have remained more focused if the candidates had briefly defined their understanding of society and freedom. In many cases, little reference was made to the individual's choices. This was the best answered of the essay questions.

Question 8

‘One crime leads to another.’ Discuss.

Some candidates merely provided a list of crimes committed by Pascual Duarte without establishing how or why each crime was provoked and how one crime/murder led to another. Performance was satisfactory.

Comments

- In far too many cases, candidates did not adhere to the word limit (350–400 words).
- Some candidates made poor question choices and answered a question that was not the best one for the book they had prepared.
- Some candidates wrote general essays without drawing reference to any of the prescribed texts.
- Some scripts revealed that candidates studied the English translation of the texts, as citations, names of characters and the titles were written in English.
- A number of scripts showed that candidates were familiar with the text at the level of comprehension but were unable to deal analytically with the issues.

- Some candidates merely agreed or disagreed with the question and made no attempt to produce a counter-argument.
- A few candidates wrote on texts that were NOT on the prescribed list, for example, *La casa de Bernarda Alba*. They were penalized.
- A few candidates used texts from Unit 2 to respond to questions on Unit 1, for example, *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba*. They were penalized.
- Some scripts were padded with very lengthy citations thereby limiting analysis.
- Some essays were mere summaries of the texts with limited relevance to the questions asked.
- In a few cases, candidates used the same text to respond to both sections of the exam. They were penalized.

UNIT 2

Paper 01 – Listening Comprehension

This paper required candidates to respond to a series of questions based on five short selections and one extended interview. The selections were in Spanish, but questions and responses were in English. The topics were set in line with the modules of the syllabus as well as with the candidates' experiences in their age range. Overall, performance was satisfactory.

Section A – Short Selections

Selection 1

This selection focused on a study on poverty that was carried out by the National Institute of Statistics in Costa Rica. Candidates were supposed to (a) identify the body responsible for the study, (b) indicate the focus of the study and which group was studied (c) state where the study was carried out, (d) describe the situation under which the subjects lived, (e) state the number of university students in the particular country and (f) mention how individuals feel about living in such conditions. Performance was generally satisfactory.

Part (a) was generally well done, but there were some candidates who wrote Institute of National Statistics instead of National Institute of Statistics. Others wrote International Institute of Statistics.

For Part (b) (i), many candidates gave long definitions of poverty or the circumstances under which poor people live. Very few gave the word 'poverty' as their response. The correct answer for Part (b) (ii) was given by most candidates. However, it must be noted that some responded only to Part (b) (i) and not to Part b (ii).

Most candidates answered Part (c) correctly, identifying Costa Rica as the place where the study was carried out. Candidates generally answered Part (d) correctly, but some variations included 'poverty', 'poor people' and other definitions of poverty.

For Part (e), many candidates responded correctly, but there was a surprising number of candidates who interpreted *mil* as million. Other common responses included '22', '156000' and '150000'.

Many candidates gave only partial responses for Part (f) on how individuals feel about living in such conditions. Many wrote about the sacrifices that are made, but only few mentioned that being poor was not necessarily an obstacle.

Selection 2

This selection looked at different aspects of soap operas. Overall performance was satisfactory.

Part (a) enquired of the length of time that soap operas existed. Correct responses were common, but other popular, though incorrect, responses included 'mid-centuries', 'middle ages', 'medieval times' and 'thousands of centuries'.

Many candidates gave long-winded responses to the question on who generally watch the soap operas, Part (b). Various responses included 'housewives', 'men and women in love', and 'women all over the world'.

For Part (c), while many candidates understood that the plot was usually about a young girl who suffered, several of them assumed that she suffered until she found wealth, instead of love.

Many candidates did not know that the shows originated in Cuba, Part (d). Common answers included 'America', 'Europe' and 'Couva'.

Part (e), on the popularity of the genre, posed a challenge for several candidates. They were able to mention the correct countries but their responses did not necessarily answer the question. Many candidates failed to include the 'Middle East' in their response.

Selection 3

This selection looked at how the financial crisis affected the price of crude oil in two Latin American countries. Performance was relatively good.

For Part (a), for which candidates simply had to state that the financial crisis affected the price of crude, most responses were correct. Almost all candidates correctly identified Venezuela and Mexico as the Latin American countries which produced the most oil, as the answer to Part (b).

For Part (c), most candidates were not able to provide a correct response to the question of what these countries do on a yearly basis. Many candidates wrote that the governments had to '*proportionate*' the income.

Many candidates were unable to correctly respond to Part (d) on what would happen in the two countries if the price of oil falls too low. Many candidates wrote that the governments would have to sell more gas.

Selection 4

This selection looked at blogging and its benefits, including as a means of increasing one's income. Candidates seemed to have difficulty with this selection. Performance was less than satisfactory.

Part (a), which asked for one question that some people may sometimes consider, was generally well answered by candidates.

For Part (b), while many candidates said that blogging was lucrative, they failed to say why. Some said that people can make money in 'complete time' (as a translation for '*hace ingresos a tiempo completo*').

Part (c) required candidates to indicate what one must be able to do to be successful at blogging. Only a small fraction of candidates gave completely correct responses, for instance, being able to write quality blogs. Many wrote that one should be able to write well or one should have access to the web.

Candidates understood that increased income could be a benefit of blogging for Part (d) but most did not understand 'visibility' as another benefit. Common responses included 'civility/civilization/sensibility would be increased'.

Selection 5

This selection focused on how the decline in demand for ethanol and sugar has affected sugar cane cultivation in Brazil. Candidates were supposed to tick four correct sentences which related to the selection from among seven that were given. Some candidates did not tick four responses as required. By ticking five or six responses, they lost marks. However, performance was still good.

Section B – Extended Interview

Selection 6

The sixth selection was an interview on cloning with Dr Sánchez. Performance was relatively good.

Part 1

Part (a), which required candidates to state the special announcement made by Dr Sánchez' company, was well responded to by candidates. There were some, however, who lost a mark for not mentioning that it was a 'human embryo' used.

There were many correct responses for Part (b), on what is a clone. Nevertheless, an alarming number of candidates combined the answers for Part (b) and Part (c), so that in responding to Part (c), they either repeated the answer or wrote something that was completely irrelevant.

Most candidates provided favourable responses to the primary purpose for cloning humans, Part (d). For Part (e), many candidates were unable to name three parts of the body from which the

cells for cloning can be extracted. Most candidates interpreted *piel* as leg or foot. Other incorrect responses included ‘pancreatic conducts’ and ‘head follicles’.

Part (f), on the concern voiced by the interviewer, was generally well answered.

Part 2

Candidates had no difficulty with either Part (g) or Part (h) and responses to both were generally excellent.

However, for Part (i), several candidates wrote that Dr Wilmot is against ‘cloning’ as opposed to ‘human cloning’. Many did not mention that he was responsible for cloning Dolly, the sheep. Many candidates could not produce a suitable response for Part (j) which asked for two reasons politicians are opposed to cloning; however, they responded well to the final question, Part (k).

Recommendations to Teachers

Teachers need to remind students of the following:

- Their answers do not necessarily have to be full sentences but they should make logical sense.
- They should listen for general sense of the audio clip and not zoom in on specific words.
- They should not give responses based solely on what they know about a particular topic, but instead focus on what is said about that topic in the audio clip and answer accordingly.
- Where cognates are used, they must be careful with their interpretation of these words. They should use the general context of the clip as a guide to meaning, as using random, loose translations do not necessarily make logical sense.
- The marks allocated for each question should be used as a rough guide to the ideas included in their responses.

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. For Passage 2, the questions were in Spanish and candidates were required to respond in Spanish.

Passage 1 – *El nuevo orden*

This was a compulsory question which tested candidates’ ability to understand a passage in contemporary Spanish based on a topic of interest. Questions (a)–(e) required candidates to respond in English to questions asked in English. Questions (f)–(j) required candidates to provide synonyms taken from the passage for the items presented. Candidate performance was relatively good.

Part (a) was fairly well answered by most candidates. Most were able to recognize that the United States’ relationship with the rest of the world had suffered. Many candidates, however,

were unfamiliar with the word *mando* and added that ‘the (US) capacity and ability’ have suffered. This incomplete answer was not accepted.

Part (b) was poorly answered. From the types of responses that were given, it was evident that candidates did not understand the vocabulary presented. To deal with the lack of comprehension, many candidates attempted a literal translation of the paragraph. The result was responses that were quite incomprehensible to the reader. Many other responses attempted to justify that capitalism had indeed succeeded in the United States because of steps that the government had taken.

Part (c) looked at changes the United States need to make to restore confidence in its economic system. This question was well done by most candidates. Responses generally showed comprehension of the matter. However, many candidates did not give all the details required for the answer, generally omitting that change in the relation to the rest of the world has taken place. Unfortunately, this meant that while there was comprehension, only three out of the four marks could be allotted.

Part (d), on the positives of the capitalist system, was also well handled by many candidates. Nevertheless, there was a general miscomprehension of the word *competencia*. Many candidates translated this as ‘competence’.

For both Parts (e) (i) and (e) (ii), most candidates were able to provide the correct answers. There was a bit of confusion by some of them over the word *demás*. Some candidates translated this to mean ‘developing’, ‘third world’, or ‘less fortunate’. Some candidates argued that the strategy that was to be adopted would ‘not ignore the needs of the people’, rather than ‘not ignore other countries’.

Parts (f)–(j), on identifying the synonyms, were fairly well answered. Many candidates were able to identify at least four out of the five synonyms. The item that proved most difficult was *desafío*. The incorrect responses given were *será*, *cambio*, and *ha habido*.

Passage 2 – Comercio Electrónico

This was a compulsory question testing candidates’ ability to understand the passage in the target language and to respond in Spanish to questions asked in Spanish. Overall, candidate performance on this paper can also be deemed as relatively good.

This year, there was once again the issue of lifting answers directly from the passage. Many candidates disregarded the instruction of answering in their **own words**. There were even cases where candidates copied the entire passage as their answers. These attempts were penalized and in the case of wholesale copying of the entire passage, penalties were even harsher. Candidates are to be again reminded that it is viewed as an offence to use the author’s words as their own and responses that are not in their own words will receive the maximum penalty.

While examiners rewarded the efforts of those who followed the clearly stated instruction of answering in their own words, there were too many instances where the answers were quite unclear, with instances of Anglicism and often poor choice of synonyms. Grammar was also quite problematic in some instances. It is to be noted that while candidates are not penalized for language, if the responses impede understanding of the answers, marks cannot be allotted.

While many candidates understood the requirements of Part (a), there was a high level of lifting of the answer from the passage. As a result, these responses were penalized. There was

miscomprehension by some, and these candidates attempted to answer the question by making general statements, that is, they spoke about what they know rather than what was in the passage.

There was evident confusion related to Part (b) as very few candidates were able to score the maximum four marks. Far too many candidates took their answers directly from the passage. However, they failed to provide all the information required.

Again, for Part (c), there was widespread copying of answers. In addition, there were many attempts to use background knowledge to answer the question rather than what was stated in the passage.

While there were many creditable attempts by candidates to answer Part (d) in their own words and to great success, there was also a high level of lifting done by others. Candidates generally understood the paragraph which provided the response to this question.

The majority of candidates were able to correctly answer Part (e). However, there was still significant lifting. For Part (f), while many candidates were able to understand what was being asked, many opted to answer by once again copying from the passage.

Parts (g) (i) and (g) (ii) required that candidates give their personal opinions on the matter presented. There were some commendable attempts to answer and many of these were rewarded with full marks. However, some candidates seemed confused by the topic and gave responses that were general to the benefits and disadvantages of the Internet rather than of e-commerce. There were also instances where candidates copied sections of the passage as their answer. These responses were once again penalized.

Section B – Essays

In this section, candidates were required to write an essay, in Spanish, of 250–300 words, on one of five topics. The section tested the candidates' ability to express themselves in Spanish in an analytical and logical manner related to the theme as outlined in Module 2 of the syllabus. Students were evaluated on content and presentation (organization and coverage of the topic, relevance and inclusion of facts, ideas and opinions) and correctness of expression (range of vocabulary and idioms as well as accuracy of grammatical structures). Performance was satisfactory.

Question 3

El hombre pronto no dependerá de la naturaleza para proveer su comida. ¿Qué opinas?

This question was satisfactorily done. Most of the responses addressed genetically modified foods and their advantages and disadvantages. Many other responses pointed out that one does not need to depend on crops planted to provide food. It was easier to go to a fast food outlet. Yet some candidates were able to make the link between the development of cities which led to less land space to plant crops. The development of technology was advanced as an avenue to generate food in a laboratory and this information was linked to answer the question.

Question 4

La medicina alternativa es tan eficaz como la medicina científica. ¿Cuál es tu posición?

This was the least popular of the essays. Responses showed limited knowledge about both types of medicine. There was not much evidence of research by some who attempted this topic.

Question 5

La computarización no causa el desempleo sino crea nuevos empleos. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

This question was the second most popular and was generally interpreted correctly. Many candidates, however, showed wide knowledge about computerization but were unable to establish how it may or may not cause the loss of jobs or even create new jobs. Candidates also discussed the advantages and disadvantages of computers. The lack of appropriate vocabulary, linguistic competence and writing skill limited the number of marks that was awarded.

Question 6

La presencia de la violencia y la pornografía en el Internet representa la libertad de expresión. ¿Cuál es tu opinión?

This question was not only the most popular but also the most misunderstood. Many candidates wrote about the uses of the Internet with its advantages and disadvantages. The question was treated in light of how pornography leads to the exploitation of young children or how violence affected young people. Few candidates were able to incorporate the idea of freedom of expression into their responses or showed how pornography and violence on the Internet could represent freedom of expression. A well-argued essay presented the social responsibility needed in spite of having freedom of expression. The lack of appropriate vocabulary hindered candidates' ability to express their ideas clearly. There was also evidence of 'lifting' of sentences taken from the comprehension passage (Passage 2) which candidates used as their own.

Question 7

Debido a los adelantos médicos, el mundo sufre mucho menos. ¿Qué opinas?

This question was not very popular among candidates. Some candidates were able to express their ideas well but many more wrote about the advantages of modern medicine without stating how people may suffer less as a result, or, show whether in spite of modern advances people continue to suffer. Statistically, however, the candidates who attempted this question generally gained more marks than those who attempted any other question.

Comments

Overall, candidates failed to show the linguistic competence required and expected at this level. Several essays were too short and many candidates were unable to develop their ideas and express their opinions in the required number of words. In many cases, there was an absence of relevant vocabulary, and, as a result, there were many instances of Anglicism, Spanglish and a pure fabrication of words. **Students need to be taught how to interpret questions.** Many essays were replete with weak structure and an absence of good grammar. It is noted that many of the

grammatical errors were the same as those recognized in previous years. Common errors in grammar were as follows:

- Incorrect spelling
- The passive
- Wrong placement of/omission of accents
- The subjunctive
- Agreement/: adjective/noun, subject/verb
- The participle
- *Por/para*
- *Ser/Estar*
- The object pronoun especially in rendering ‘them’
- The perfect tense

Generally, the response to this question by both Unit 1 and Unit 2 candidates indicates that a greater effort must be made to teach basic grammar rules/structures. Many candidates showed disregard for word order and sentence structure. Essays lacked organization and candidates appeared hard pressed to fulfil the requirements of the word limit. Candidates often contradicted themselves and their poor handwriting made it even more difficult to understand what they tried to express. Language competence must be made a priority at this level.

Paper 03 – Literary Analysis and Themes

Section A – Literary Analysis

In this section, candidates were required to answer questions from one of four extracts, for which the prescribed texts were *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba*, *Chombo*, *El llano en llamas* and *La lluvia amarilla*. Candidates were required to comment on character, plot, setting and simple literary techniques. Overall candidate performance was satisfactory.

Question 1

El coronel no tiene quien le escriba

Question 1 was selected by 57 per cent of the candidates.

For Part (a), candidates’ responses tended to over-analyze the allusion to the weather, mentioning literary techniques such as pathetic fallacy and the change in the colonel’s mood. Such responses were not rewarded. Most candidates did not recognize that the colonel did not need to open the window to know what month it was.

Part (b) was generally well answered. However, there were a few responses that used descriptors not supported by the passage. The wife was described as *práctica* and *realista*, even though these traits are not seen in this passage. Some candidates misinterpreted characterization and simply mentioned how the couple was portrayed with regard to their relationship and physical attributes, for example, *viejo*, and economic status, *pobres*.

Part (c) was also well answered, with candidates giving a variety of responses showing the importance of the fighting cock. Some of the weaker responses merely stated that the cock is important without specifying in what ways.

For Part (d), few candidates were able to identify the type of language used in the dialogue, for instance, *corto, franco, directo, jugueteo, indiferente*. However, the majority were able to explain what the dialogue showed about the characters.

Question 2

Chombo

This question was the least popular and was selected by just fifteen candidates (three per cent).

The few candidates who attempted this question generally did it well, making it the best answered of the four questions in this section.

Question 3

El Llano en Llamas

This question was selected by 26 per cent of candidates.

Part (a) was well done. Though few candidates mentioned that the peasants/poor people were given the land, they showed understanding of the plot.

Candidates accurately stated, for Part (b), that the tone of the passage was one of despair on the part of the peasants, but few understood the indifference on the part of the *Delegado*. Some candidates mentioned disbelief on the part of the peasants. Generally, candidates were able to explain what the tone showed and why the peasants were angry.

For Part (c), most candidates recognized the narrator as first person but few stated that he was also the protagonist. Candidates supported their answer with quotes from the passage but gave little information regarding the usefulness of the first person narrator. Such information should have included that they are part of the action, have limited viewpoint, are partial, or even subjective.

Though most candidates recognized that nature is man's enemy, they fell short in explaining how. Many referred to other stories stating that the experience was similar but failed to show specifics.

Question 4

La lluvia amarilla

This question was selected by 14 per cent of candidates.

In responding to Part (a), very few candidates stated that the atmosphere of the first paragraph was mysterious. Most defined it as sad, sombre. Support from the passage was generally accurate.

Part (b) was not well done. Most candidates spoke of a contrast between the past and present and not on the fact that the man does not appear to be alone in Paragraph 1, whereas in Paragraph 2 the dog and the protagonist are alone. Candidates did not seem to understand that the noises/shadows suggested that he was not alone.

Many responses to Part (c) were too abrupt and not specific enough about detail.

Candidates performed well on Part (d). Most stated that it was similar to the tone of the rest of the novel.

Section B – Themes

Candidates were required to write one essay, of 350–400 words, in English, based on one of two themes: (i) *Conflictos políticos y sociales en Hispanoamérica*, for which the prescribed texts were *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba* and *Chombo*, and (ii) *La vida rural*, with prescribed texts *La lluvia amarilla* and *El llano en llamas*. Candidates' performance on this section was generally satisfactory.

Question 5

‘Those holding economic and political power are not responsible for discrimination in society’. Discuss.

Most candidates who used *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba* did not use relevant examples of those holding ‘economic’ and ‘political’ power to show that they are indeed responsible for discrimination. Some candidates did not even highlight discrimination. As a counter-argument, the colonel may be contributing somewhat to his own problem by his attempts to keep up appearances, and to some extent by his refusal to accept the seriousness of his situation. This question was not a popular choice for those who had studied *Chombo*.

Question 6

‘Justice and equality are illusions.’ Discuss.

Some commendable responses were received from candidates who used *Chombo*. Candidates who responded to this question using this text generally wrote very good essays. Candidates who chose *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba* did not all show a good understanding of ‘illusions’. Some discussed either ‘justice’ or ‘equality’ when they should have made reference to both terms.

Question 7

‘Those who live in rural areas must resort to violence in order to survive.’ Discuss.

La lluvia amarilla was not the more appropriate choice for this question. Candidates struggled to make even one salient point by linking any instance of violence to survival. While *El llano en llamas* was ideal for this question, candidates did not always choose the most suitable short stories to respond to this question. Candidates highlighted incidents of violence without establishing the necessary link to survival. It would seem that though the text contains 17 short stories, candidates are not being exposed to many of them.

Question 8

‘Nature is often portrayed as man's enemy.’ Discuss.

Candidates responded best to this question. However, there were those who misunderstood the meaning of ‘nature’ as it related to the theme. Those who chose to discuss *El llano en llamas* needed to use at least three stories so as to generate a substantial response to the question.

Recommendations

- Students must respect the word limit of 350–400 words.
- Students should not use citations that are too long.
- Essays must make reference to a prescribed text. No marks are awarded for general essays.
- Students who use *El llano en llamas* need not list in the introduction the short stories that they intend to discuss, since inevitably these will appear within the body of the essay.
- Titles of texts/stories and characters must be written in Spanish.

UNITS 1 AND 2

Paper 04 – Internal Assessment

This paper required candidates to (i) make an oral presentation on their topic of choice within the framework of the three modules, and (ii) engage in conversation with the examiner on the topic as well as on current issues.

Recordings

The tendency was to use CDs instead of cassettes. This was an advantage as the CDs were less cumbersome. However, it would help if all samples were placed on one CD or as the case may be, one or two cassettes. Teachers should familiarize themselves with the proper operation of the CD player so as to minimize distortions and interference. Teachers are reminded to check the quality of the recordings before submitting them as some of the recordings were either too low or had nothing recorded which made moderation difficult or impossible.

Prepared Topic

Almost all the topics chosen were related to the relevant unit. For the most part, the topic presentations were well researched and presented. However, too often there was a marked disconnect between the quality of the presentation and the quality of the topic and general conversation. Hence, consideration should be given to the pervasive use of the Internet for research and how it affects the weighting of the topic presentation. While the presentations were generally good, there were still some infelicities that needed the attention of the teacher such as the pronunciation of the 'h', the open 'i', the 'g', as examples.

Topic Conversation

Candidates who had done the necessary research on their topic of choice were able to achieve high scores. Most examiners were conversational in their tone and encouraging; some were interrogative. Some examiners adhered to the time allotted while others allowed the candidate to continue talking and then had little time for the general conversation.

General Conversation

Examiners need to ensure that the interview covers more than just the topic discussion by widening the scope of their questioning. In several cases, very few questions were asked because time had run out. Candidates need to ask more questions of the examiner.

Examiners should remember to do the following:

- Introduce each candidate before each presentation.
- Avoid the use of half marks.
- Divide the score in the three modules as stipulated.
- Fill out ALL the necessary information on the moderation sheet.
- Ensure that the interview is free of background noise.
- Submit ONLY five samples and label them in the same order on the CDs/tapes and Moderation sheets.
- Try to adhere to the stipulated time of the assessment.
- Let the candidates do most of the talking.