

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION®**

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SPANISH

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Candidates' performance on the 2013 Unit 1 examination improved over that of 2012.

There was improvement in performance on all the written papers. However, there was a slight decline in candidates' performance on the School-Based Assessment, the oral paper.

The examination papers were comparable in content and difficulty with those of previous years. All major areas of the syllabus were covered by the three written papers and a relatively high degree of reliability was displayed in all of them.

There was a slight decline in performance on Unit 2 when compared with 2012. There was a decline in performance on the written papers, with the exception of Paper 03, where candidates' performance was sustained. The decline was particularly noticeable on Paper 02. On this Paper, a lack of paraphrasing in Section A (Reading Comprehension) and difficulty in the application of knowledge to essay topics, coupled with a lack of mastery of basic grammatical structures adversely affected candidates' performance.

UNIT 1

Paper 01 – Listening Comprehension

DETAILED COMMENTS

This paper assessed candidates' ability to respond in English to stimuli in Spanish, and covered topics from all three modules of the syllabus. Candidates were presented with five short selections and one extended interview in Spanish and were required to respond in short-answer format to questions based on the material.

The majority of candidates performed slightly better in Section A than Section B. While it is evident that the listening component may be challenging at this level, there was a general weakness in English expression. Many answers seemed to lack logic and coherence and many had poor spelling. Only four per cent of candidates did not complete the entire paper. A few candidates relied on previous knowledge to respond to the questions instead of paying attention to specific details given in the selections. In addition, it was noted that although a few candidates showed understanding of the content of the recording, their responses did not address the specific questions, which invariably led to unnecessary loss of marks.

Section A – Short Selections

The results were generally satisfactory. Seventy per cent of candidates scored above the pass mark. However, a range of spelling errors and weaknesses in expression posed challenges to examiners to determine the accuracy of responses.

Selection 1

Performance on this selection, which highlighted poverty in Mexico, was generally satisfactory. Sixty nine per cent of candidates scored above the pass mark.

Many candidates answered Part (a) correctly. However, many lost marks for defining poverty, when they stated that ‘Poverty is defined by the daily lives of many Mexicans’, instead of *The daily life of Mexicans is defined by poverty*. In addition, many candidates defined poverty but not according to the selection, thus relying on previous knowledge.

Many candidates were able to correctly give the findings of the poverty index for Part (b). Many had a reversal of dates, by assuming that poverty was worse in 2011 than 2010, whilst some failed to make a comparison between the two years.

Most candidates got Part (c), on the trend evident with regard to poverty, correct. The word ‘recuperation’ was mentioned in many responses.

In Part (d), the majority of candidates failed to recognize that Nuria is a woman. In addition, many failed to score full marks for this question due to poor interpretation of the pronunciation of the acronym ‘FAO’. Many interpreted ‘FAO’ for ‘FAU, FUA, FAOW, FOWL, FAWE. Many candidates incorrectly stated that Nuria is the ‘Prime Minister, President, mayor of Mexico, representation of the poor, a poor man of Mexico’.

The majority of candidates failed to respond correctly to Part (e) (i), which asked for Nuria’s description of poverty in Mexico. Many failed to understand the word *circumstantial*, stating that it was constant, substantial, inconsistent.

Many candidates failed to show that there was a decrease in poverty in 2009 for Part (e) (ii). Candidates interpreted the verb *baja* as the adjective, thus stating that poverty was low instead of stating that it had decreased. In addition, quite a few stated that a revolution took place during that year, as they heard *la evolución en el tiempo*.

The majority of candidates answered Part (f) correctly, getting full marks in responding to what is making poverty worse.

Selection 2

Performance on this selection was very good. Seventy-seven per cent of candidates scored more than the pass mark.

In response to Part (a), the majority of candidates was correct with their responses. However, there were several variations of the spelling of the word *Phillipines*.

Many candidates scored full marks in Part (b). However, many scored two out of three marks for mentioning the ministry/minister (*su ministro*) instead of the government. Many also stated that *vitamin A complements were distributed*.

Almost all candidates answered Part (c) correctly, with just a few stating 2009 instead of the beginning of 1990 as the period when the promotion began.

For Part (d) (i), almost all candidates had the correct response of ‘90%’.

Quite a few candidates failed to identify an age group for Part (d) (ii) (age 6 instead of 6 and under). Many stated ‘16 and under’ instead of *6 and under*.

Many candidates failed to score full marks for Part (e) because they only indicated that the area (poor) and not that children also were affected by illness. This seemed to result from a misinterpretation of the word *sector*.

For Part (f), quite a few candidates scored full marks. However, many omitted that the vaccines saved lives. ‘Health care’ was widely mentioned, but many failed to stress that ‘*vaccines were easily available*’.

Selection 3

Forty four per cent of the candidates scored at least four marks out of eight. Performance on this selection was the least outstanding.

For Part (a), many candidates were able to correctly identify the animal with the exception of a few, who gave responses such as ‘sea cow’, ‘whale’, ‘sea reptile’, ‘reptilian alligator’, ‘crocodile’, ‘manatee’, ‘jaguar’, and ‘tortuga’ instead of *sea turtle*.

The majority of candidates correctly responded to Part (b) on the significance of the animal mentioned in the selection. However, a few stated that the turtles were extinct and also mentioned this happened on the coast of Nicaragua, which is the answer for Part (c).

For Part (c), many candidates did not recognize the word for *nest*, stating that the turtle formed ‘groups’, ‘units’ and ‘communities’. Nicaragua was grossly misspelt so many times that at times the candidates did not earn any mark for their version of Nicaragua. Many candidates also stated that the turtles communicate with other reptiles (*comunicado que esos reptiles*). The Pacific Coast of Nicaragua was omitted by many candidates.

Part (d) was not well done. Many candidates omitted the *military presence* and there was a tendency to state that the number of turtles was reduced instead of the fact that the destruction of turtle nests was reduced. Quite a few candidates stated that they were destroyed by garbage. Other incorrect responses were: ‘the animal is replacing the turtle on the beach’, ‘the turtles were attacking the army’, ‘the turtles were attacking the army’s ships in the ocean’ and ‘the army claims that the reptile is killing the army members’.

Selection 4

Eighty three per cent of candidates scored at least four out of eight marks. Candidates performed best on this selection.

Recuperation in Part (a) was misspelt by many candidates. Many of them also stated ‘fever’ (*fibra*) instead of *fibre*. However, many candidates were able to score full marks for this question on the type of technology developed by the Yucatan farm.

The majority of candidates answered Part (b) well. Quite a few candidates stated *foreign national markets, medical centres, American markets*, whilst others gave redundant responses such as ‘foreign and international markets’, instead of *national and international markets* to indicate where cellulose is used.

Almost all candidates answered Part (c) correctly on how Mexico gets its cellulose. A few misinterpreted *la tala* as the type of tree that is used to make paper.

Part (d) was mostly well done. A few candidates failed to mention that recycling of paper promotes conservation through *less consumption* but stated ‘consumption’ instead.

Selection 5

Seventy two per cent of the candidates scored four or more out of eight marks.

Part (a) was well answered. A few candidates failed to include the aspect of *minimal impact* in their definition of ecotourism and instead stated ‘impact’. The word *ambiente* was translated for ‘ambience’.

For Part (b), the vast majority of candidates failed to mention that ecotourism provides income, thus failing to secure full marks for this question.

The majority of candidates correctly named the country for Part (c). However, it was noted that several candidates wrote ‘Costa Rico’.

The majority of candidates could not state two reasons for Costa Rica being mentioned, Part (d). Most mentioned that Costa Rica receives thousands of visitors each year but failed to mention that it has the highest level of success/it is the country where ecotourism began.

For Part (e) several candidates stated *mari poppins*, ‘space’, ‘flowers’, *mariposas, marsupials*, instead of *butterflies*, in response to what the country had more in abundance than Africa.

Section B – Extended Interview

Selection 6

The sixth selection was an interview with Carmen Point, nutrition specialist, on the subject of obesity in children. Seventy two per cent of candidates were able to score 12 marks and above.

Part 1

For Part (a), the vast majority of candidates was able to identify the type of diet that Carmen recommends. It was noted that many stated ‘variable’ instead of *varied*.

Part (b) was very well done. Most candidates knew how many meals were recommended for children each day.

Part (c), how obesity develops in young children, proved to be problematic for the majority of candidates. Candidates seemed unable to fulfil the higher order skills of synthesizing all the information and responding in a logical manner. Some examples of responses are: ‘genetic imbalance’, ‘genetic energy’, ‘genetic energy more than ingested energy’. Most candidates correctly responded that *excess energy turns into fat*. In many cases the answer for Part (d) was incorporated in this section.

Many candidates responded correctly for Part (d) on how children could avoid obesity. A few mentioned the answer in Part (c) and complete answers were not given.

Part 2

Few candidates were able to answer Part (e) fully. The majority could not name two factors that are taken into consideration when obesity is being diagnosed.

Part (f) was satisfactorily answered. Many candidates stated ‘sugars’ instead of *sugary drinks*, ‘pastries’, ‘bread and fish’, ‘Italian food’, ‘food with a lot of carbohydrates’, ‘saturated in bread’ instead of *saturated fats*. All in all, candidates knew the types of food to be avoided to eliminate obesity in children.

Part (g) was well done. Some stated ‘ecological development’ instead of *psychological development*, and listed some common ailments associated with obesity.

Part (h), how adults can ensure that children eat healthily, was fairly well done. Some candidates did not specify that parents need to *educate by example* and instead stated that they ‘should give an example’ thus making their responses vague.

Recommendations for Teachers

- Provide students with more listening practice with *timed exercises*, allowing them to use their own equipment rather than teacher-controlled equipment.
- Give students vocabulary recognition exercises and word association exercises as part of listening comprehension training.
- Have students practise listening for gist to improve overall comprehension skills rather than simply listing information.
- Where possible, try exercises that focus on students refining the structure of their responses, rather than just providing a correct response.

- Try short transcription exercises with students on topics from all three modules from very early in the CAPE programme.
- Teachers should discourage students from writing out a transcript of what was heard as an exam technique. It encourages poor time management and is not reflective of real world listening.

Recommendations for Candidates

- Do as much independent listening as possible using online and other audio resources to hone listening skills (music, podcasts, music videos/videos, documentaries widely available). Make listening to the language part of your daily existence.
- Remember that responses must be clearly expressed and make logical sense in English.
- Read questions carefully before listening to the audio.
- Consider the mark scheme in providing responses.
- Proofread responses to ensure logic and coherence.
- Write concise/precise responses to avoid ambiguity.

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, using their own words.

Passage 1 – *El deporte y la salud*

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

Overall, performance on this question was satisfactory. From the responses given, it was evident that candidates had a good knowledge of this topic.

Part (a) required candidates to state four ways in which physical exercise affects humans. The responses were, in most instances, complete with full marks being awarded. A number of candidates did not readily understand the word *mejora*, hence they failed to state specifically how exercise *improved* aspects of people's lives. They simply listed how it affects human beings, so they did not receive any score. Many candidates confused *autonomía* with the English word *anatomy*. However, the wide range of responses allowed many candidates to score full marks on this question.

Part (b) asked candidates to state why participation in sports was encouraged by a Spanish nutrition society. Generally, this question posed no problems. The most popular response was the

importance of sports in the prevention of sicknesses, such as diabetes, hypertension and obesity. Candidates were not awarded any marks if they did not list the diseases mentioned. A few candidates also identified the role sports played in one's physical, psychic and social development. Predominantly, candidates used *psychological* as the translation for *psíquico*, which was accepted. As in the previous question, the variety of options offered as a correct response allowed candidates to be awarded full marks.

Part (c) (i) required candidates to state the outcome of a sedentary lifestyle. Most candidates answered the question correctly. Candidates were not awarded marks if they did not state specifically the percentage of deaths that were caused by the sedentary lifestyle in developed countries. A number of candidates confused 'developed' with 'developing' so they were not awarded the mark. A small number interpreted *muerte* as 'women'. Others were too vague in their responses and were not awarded any mark.

Part (c) (ii) required candidates to identify three other factors that affected a person's health. Most candidates handled this question well. Those candidates who gave 'lifestyle' as a factor were not awarded a mark.

Part (d) asked candidates to state how sports positively affect cardiac health. Most candidates identified the response in the passage, but attempted to translate the section, which resulted in clumsy responses. This showed that they did not fully grasp the meaning of the content presented in that section. A few candidates did not give sufficient response for the number of marks allocated for the question. They are reminded to be guided by the mark scheme for each question.

For Part (e), candidates were required to say why people feel good after exercising. Many candidates did not readily identify the correct answer and so wrote very padded responses hoping to capture the answer. A number of them actually missed the correct response completely. Many candidates presented very literal (and often inaccurate) translations and the meaning was lost in the complexity of the sentence structure. Focus should have been put on *sentirse bien* as a guide to the answer. Candidates are reminded that they should not present translations of the passage, but rather seek out the relevant information required to answer the question and give an answer that is logical and coherent.

Parts (f)–(j) required candidates to provide synonyms taken from the passage for given words. These parts of the question were not well handled. Most candidates only identified two or three of the five synonyms. The most problematic were *impulsa*, *contribuye*, and *enriquece*. Many candidates used words such as '*expulsa*' and '*latido*' for *impulsa*, and '*le da*' for *contribuye* and 'produce' for *enriquece*.

Passage 2 – *Dispositivos solares y el consumo de energía*

Candidates were required to respond in their own words to questions in Spanish based on a passage in Spanish.

The questions on the passage posed challenges to many candidates. A significant problem was that far too many of the responses were lifted directly from the passage. Candidates are reminded to read instructions carefully as there is a penalty for disregarding this guideline.

Part (a) required candidates to identify Mexico as one of the countries in the world with the highest levels of solar radiation. Many candidates scored two out of a possible three marks because they simply stated that Mexico had high levels of solar radiation.

Part (b) asked candidates to identify the advantages of solar energy found in paragraph 2. The responses for this question were too often copied from the passage. Many candidates could not identify the main reason.

Part (c) required candidates to say why solar energy could not totally replace the traditional means of generating electricity. Many candidates did not include *night* and *cloudy day* as factors that inhibit full exploitation of sunlight and were not awarded full marks. Some others did not state that sunlight had to be *exploited* to produce solar energy.

In Part (d) candidates were asked to describe four characteristics of solar energy. Not many candidates could identify the response as they confused it with the response for Part (e). Candidates used the word ‘Internet’ as a synonym for *red* and it was not accepted.

Part (e) asked why the solar technology was so attractive. Most candidates confused the response for Part (d) for this answer.

Part (f) asked candidates to identify a consequence of the growing number of electronic devices. Candidates answered correctly for the most part but did not include the concept of an increased usage of energy and lost half the mark.

Part (f) (ii) asked candidates to express an opinion on how best to handle increased energy consumption in their country. A number of candidates lifted elements of their response from the passage, ignoring the fact that it was an opinion answer. Many also did not give responses related to the topic ‘energy’, and several others did not respond with sufficient content. Candidates should note that the last question of this section presents an opportunity for them to be creative and detailed, as well as to present personal insights on the topic.

Section B – Essays

Candidates were required to write an essay in Spanish of 250–300 words, on one of five topics. This section assessed 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. Candidates were assessed on content and presentation (organization and coverage of 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).

Candidates showed great interest in the topics of this unit. The level of competence ranged from poor to excellent with the majority of candidates falling within the satisfactory to good category. Unfortunately, candidates were still unable to master basic grammatical structures such as agreement, spelling, articles, accentuation, conjugation of verbs and proper word order.

Question Popularity

Question	Popularity
Cada sociedad debe proteger a los niños porque son el futuro del país. ¿Cuál es tu opinión?	21.8%
Fumar es más dañino para los no fumadores que los fumadores. ¿Estás de acuerdo?	2.6%
Los hombres y las mujeres nunca serán iguales. ¿Qué opinas?	17.9%
Los niños callejeros tienen el derecho de una educación básica para mejorar el modo de vivir. ¿Cuál es tu opinión?	10.9%
Los medios de comunicación tienen un impacto negativo sobre los jóvenes de la sociedad hoy en día. ¿Qué piensas de esta declaración?	46.8%

A small percentage of candidates (0.4%) provided no response for either of the questions.

Question Performance Breakdown

Range	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5	Question 6	Question 7
24	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
20–23	0.4 %	5.8%	11.2 %	6.6 %	10.9 %
16–19	1.7 %	23.5 %	28.2 %	22.6 %	27.7 %
12–15	32.6 %	23.5 %	29 %	26.6 %	32.4 %
9–11	31.3 %	23.5 %	20.1 %	33.3 %	17.7 %
5–8	11.3 %	23.5 %	8.06 %	8 %	10.2 %
1–4	2.6%	0 %	3.2 %	2.6 %	1.1 %

Question 3

Cada sociedad debe proteger a los niños porque son el futuro del país. ¿Cuál es tu opinión?

This question required candidates to discuss how society should protect children, as they represent the future of the country. Candidates were expected to look at aspects such as abuse and poverty and how education and health can be used to secure and ensure that young people can live to see a future and live to make a positive impact on society.

Most candidates scored in the satisfactory to good range which shows that they were generally able to handle the question in a satisfactory manner.

Excellent answers stressed the need for education as the hope for survival and a source of improving the quality of life for the country. Candidates were able to link what society puts in place and how this would be able to secure the future. Excellent responses described the role that the church, the home, the family, the government, the community and the individual play in the development of a child.

Some common errors in expression that were produced by the candidates included:

- *No tienen una mano amiga*
- *Desruptir* — to disrupt
- *Providar* — to provide
- *Esto lidera to muchos problemas* — this leads to many problems.

Question 4

Fumar es más dañino para los no fumadores que los fumadores. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

This was the least popular of all the questions. Responses ranged from satisfactory to very good. The question required candidates to show the dangers involved for both the smoker and the non-smoker and then determine whether or not smoking is more perilous to a non-smoker. Candidates were required to present specific facts as to how smoking affects a person.

Excellent answers showed that research was done and gave a general synopsis of effects of smoking on the smoker, and then went on to the trickling effects on a non-smoker.

Some common errors in expression that were produced by the candidates included:

- *La fumo*
- *La fuma*

Question 5

Los hombres y las mujeres nunca serán iguales. ¿Qué opinas?

This question required candidates to show both sides of the argument and then to take a stand and discuss ways in which men and women are equal or not equal. Candidates scored in the range of satisfactory to very good.

Excellent responses showed that candidates were able to show the equality as well as the inequality between men and women. Candidates were expected to write about issues in the home, on the job, in society, in the church, in politics and in sports. Candidates had to give specific examples and show facts.

Most candidates were able to list most of these but some did not develop many points. Education was one of the main issues that arose in the essays.

Some common errors in expression that were produced by candidates included:

- *Esta en el derecho dirección*
- *Esto liderá a muchos problems.*
- *Tienen lazo*
- *Las mujeres no trabaja gusta los hombres*

Question 6

Los niños callejeros tienen el derecho de una educación básica para mejorar el modo de vivir. ¿Cuál es tu opinión?

This question required candidates to show and look at education as a basic human right of the child as a means out of poverty. Candidates should have been able to answer the questions: Why are there street children? Who should provide the education for these street children? Responses should have looked at the importance of education in children's improvement. How would education help exactly?

Responses ranged between satisfactory and very good. Many responses suggested that education would help these children to get jobs. A few candidates spoke of other rights of the child, such as a home, love, food and basic necessities.

Some common errors in expression that were produced by candidates included:

- *Un mejor oportunidades*
- *La sociedad no buen otra vez*
- *Hay una reducción y menos crime*

Question 7

Los medios de comunicación tienen un impacto negativo sobre los jóvenes de la sociedad hoy en día. ¿Qué piensas de esta declaración?

This was by far the most popular question attempted. Candidates showed comprehension of the topic.

The performance of the majority of candidates ranged from satisfactory to very good.

This question required candidates to show both the negative and positive aspects of means of communication. Negative aspects such as the breakdown of family life, health issues such as obesity and diabetes, lack of interpersonal skills, promiscuity, decline of schoolwork, degradation of moral values should have been highlighted. Some positive impacts would be academic progress, exposure to other cultures and availability of information.

Some candidates chose to argue that some of the positive aspects were also negative aspects, for instance, availability of information which could be construed as both good and bad. Many

candidates spoke about just one medium, for instance, the television or the Internet. Some spoke about *medios* in general and did not specify. Many spoke about the advantages and disadvantages without delving into the impacts.

Some common errors in expression that were produced by candidates included:

- *Los contentos*
- *Nosotros somos a en stage cuando son influencia muy fácil*
- *Si información negativas son advertismo*
- *Hacer decisiones*
- *Las ideologías que...*

Paper 03 – Literary Analysis and Themes

Section A – Literary Analysis

In Section A, candidates were required to respond to one of four possible extracts taken from the prescribed texts on the syllabus. Each question comprised four parts (a,b,c,d). These questions focused on a literary analysis of given passages and asked candidates to relate the plot, comment on the narrative point of view, analyse characters from the extract, and identify literary techniques found in the given passage. Required responses in this section were *limited to the given extract* and not the entire text. All answers were required in Spanish.

Question Popularity

Question	Popularity
1. La familia de Pascual Duarte	11 %
2. Crónica de una muerte anunciada	22%
3. Felices Días, Tío Sergio	11 %
4. 17 narradoras latinoamericanas	56 %

Candidates generally did not demonstrate a clear knowledge and understanding of the texts studied, particularly of *La familia de Pascual Duarte*. Facts included were often not pertinent to the given extract, but rather, were related to the entire text and as such were considered unnecessary and not awarded any additional marks.

Question Performance Breakdown

Range	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4
16	0%	0%	3%	1%
14–15	3%	1%	8%	6%
12–13	7%	1%	4%	16%
9–11	26%	21%	21%	29%
7–8	10%	13%	10%	25%
4–6	26%	35%	35%	16%
1–3	24%	23%	19%	7%
0	4%	6%	0%	0%

Question 1: *La familia de Pascual Duarte*

Performance on this question was disappointing. Very few candidates attempted this question. In Part (a), candidates often gave an overview of the text rather than of the extract. However, some candidates focused mainly on Pascual's memory of his brother's Mario's death causing him sadness at Pascualillo's birth. Where the focus shifted fully to the extract, candidates mainly highlighted that there was a celebration of the birth and did not give much attention to the fact that the birth was overshadowed by a sense of foreboding on Pascual's part. Furthermore, they seemed not to have recognized that there was a conscious shift in Pascual's emotions; from his joy at the beginning of the extract to his tears of sadness towards the end of it as he watched his son. There were also too many examples of candidates 'lifting' chunks of the extract and writing them back to relate the plot.

In response to Part (b), most candidates identified the narrative point of view as first-person narrator. However, many candidates failed to give adequate support from the extract, in terms of their quotations or finding the appropriate example in the extract. Many candidates were unable to identify the subjectivity of this type of narration. Candidates often wrote identification as *narrador primera* or as *punto de vista primero*.

In Part (c), most candidates had great difficulty commenting on *el presentimiento* and did not perform well. They were able to identify the quotation that showed foreshadowing, but were unable to explain it adequately.

In Part (d), most candidates successfully characterized Pascual as *pesimista*, but then failed to identify the appropriate quotation to support the characterization.

Question 2: *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*

Performance on this question was disappointing. In Part (a), there was often reference to events that occurred in the book, before and after the extract, which did not allow them to benefit from the full number of marks to be awarded for this section. Almost all candidates clearly recognized that Angela's mother had beaten her and that her brothers pressured her to give the name of her partner.

Even though some candidates ‘lifted’ from the extract, the majority of them successfully earned the full number of marks for this section, by clearly identifying several facts to relate the plot. There were also examples of candidates who wrote brief (2/3 line) summaries, rather than give the facts that created the plot.

In Part (b), many candidates identified the third person as the narrative point of view, but incorrectly added that it was omniscient. They failed to see that it was limited and that this narrator was relating what others had told him. This resulted in those candidates missing the point that the narrator did not penetrate the motives and emotions of the characters. Not many of them mentioned that the narrator was *investigador*. Rather, some of them wrote that the narrative point of view was both first and third person. A few thought that Angela was being interviewed by Gabriel Garcia Márquez, himself.

Generally, there was insufficient support for the narrative point of view chosen; they simple wrote *él* or *ella*.

In Part (c), most candidates were able to identify that the rhetorical figure was a simile. However, they failed to clearly explain its use.

Some wrote that the pinned butterfly was being compared to Angela, who felt trapped into naming Santiago; rather than that Santiago’s fate was sealed by Angela’s naming of him as the one who ‘dishonoured’ her.

In Part (d), several candidates characterized Angela from the entire novel and not from the extract given. They therefore wrote that she was ‘*mentiroso*’, ‘*injusto*’, ‘*deshonesta*’, ‘*cruel*’ and generally launched a moral attack on Angela. Some candidates correctly characterized her as *fuerte*, *sumisa*, *obediente*.

Question 3: Felices Días, Tío Sergio

This question was popular but the performance was disappointing.

In Part (a), candidates recognized that a storm was coming and that there were several natural signs of its nearness, which they could identify. Generally, this section was well done; with candidates clearly stating the facts. However, a few candidates felt that the family was in the process of making preparations for the storm; this is **not** evidenced in the extract.

In Part (b), again, where candidates correctly identified the first person narrative point of view, they often failed to provide the appropriate quotation from the extract to support their choice.

In Part (c), performance was generally good. Candidates cited the appropriate examples, after correctly identifying the three senses used in the extract. The majority identified *el oído* and quoted *...todos los animales están callados...* as well as *el olfato* and quoted *... y huele a lluvia...* Even if they did not use the correct word, they were able to clearly explain what they meant.

In Part (d), there was misinterpretation of *ambiente* as the physical setting instead of the mood, candidates quoted ‘...no hay mucha luz...’ and so on, rather than seeing it as *ominoso* or recognising the *calma perturbadora*.

Question 4: 17 narradoras latinoamericanas

This question was, by far, the most popular question and performance was generally good.

In Part (a), rather than stating the facts, a few candidates ‘lifted’ heavily from the extract. The majority, however, clearly stated the sequence of events.

Some candidates wrote that the family was going to live in the house or that it was theirs, stating it as fact, rather than expectation.

In Part (b), a few candidates mistook narrative point of view for characterization. Many candidates gave the definition, but not supporting the definition of the point of view with the appropriate quotation cost them marks. Some of them were able to identify the subjectivity of the first-person narrative point of view, or that it is limited.

In Part (c), most candidates were able to show that the conditional was used because it represented the future or to show the girl’s wishes, hopes or desires and were able to clearly identify a quotation to support that fact. However, this question proved to be the most challenging one. No one recognized that the use of the conditional tense creates doubt in the mind of the reader and prepares the reader for the realization that the dream did not come to pass.

In Part (d), several candidates characterized the girl as ‘*cariñosa*’, because she wanted her family to be happy; instead of *animada* or *incrédula*. In the latter part of the extract, she could be described as *desilusionada* or *confundida*. Many of them recognized that she was *optimista* or *esperanzada*.

Recommendations for Teachers and Students

- Encourage students to make good use of their dictionaries and to use words with which they are familiar.
- Review literary devices (simile, metaphor) early in Term 1. Students should be taught to understand term such as *trama*, *ambiente* and *punto de vista narrativa*.
- Teachers should remind students not to use English. No English is allowed in Section A; candidates should **not** write any words in English as no marks will be awarded.
- Students should not use the citations to give the sequence of events in the plot. Citations should be used to support answers, not just lifted and written as answers themselves.
- When outlining the plot of the extract, students should use their own words, and facts should be sequenced logically.
- Students should be familiar with vocabulary related to literary analysis such as *relata*, *demuestra*, and *explica*.
- Students should try to keep the length of the response commensurate with the number of marks awarded for the question.

- Grammar needs to be reviewed, for example, subject/verb agreement and spelling.
- For practice with students, teachers are advised to use short extracts from the texts for familiarization of plot, narrative technique, setting and characterization.

Section B – Themes

Candidates were required to write an essay, of 350–400 words, in English, on one of the questions relating to the theme *El individuo y la sociedad* or *La juventud*. They were also required to use one of the prescribed texts for the theme selected and discuss issues relevant to the question. Candidates were awarded marks for Knowledge and Understanding (16 marks), Application of Knowledge (9 marks) and Organization of Information (7 marks).

Overall, candidate performance in this section was satisfactory.

Question 5

“A man’s fate is determined by his socialization. He has no control over what he does.” Discuss.

This was the most popular question and was attempted by 61.4 per cent of the candidates. Responses were generally satisfactory with some candidates scoring in the good to excellent range. Candidates were required to discuss to what extent socialization influences an individual’s destiny, showing whether the individual has or does not have control over his/her actions. Even if the term *socialization* was not defined, candidates’ responses ought to show understanding of its significance.

Many candidates misinterpreted the term *socialization*, believing it to be social interaction. Moreover, in some cases, using the text, *La familia de Pascual Duarte*, some candidates discussed themes of marginalization and nature and nurture, which were elements of past paper questions. Others focused on *machismo* and *marianismo* in this question as well. Some candidates did not analyse in depth that Pascual also made his own decisions, thereby giving balance to their essay and showing that they knew their text intimately. They also neglected to show the cause and effect between the way in which one is socialized and the decisions that one makes or is forced to make. Candidates who used *Crónica de una muerte anunciada* seemed better able to apply this text to the question and analyse their information in relation to the question.

Question 6

“One good turn deserves another. Should the contrary also be possible?” Discuss.

Approximately ten per cent of the candidates attempted this question, the majority of them scoring in the very weak to satisfactory range. Candidates were required to show that the same way in which good deeds are rewarded so too bad deeds may earn other bad deeds. Candidates could have approached the latter part of the question in different ways. They could have shown that one bad deed may have resulted in another bad deed but this is not advisable as it could end in destruction and perpetuate the cycle of evil and misfortune. Also, candidates could have said

that in order to restore balance, evil was necessary to cancel evil and therefore eventually leading to good.

Most candidates showed that bad actions lead to bad consequences. However, they failed to capture the scope of the question and could not justify why the two bad incidents occurred. The aspect of one action deserving another was not explored in its entirety.

Candidates who responded to the question using examples from *La familia de Pascual Duarte* were able to show that one bad action lead to another bad action but found difficulty justifying why one bad action deserved another. Most candidates who used *Crónica de una muerte anunciada* were able to write better responses to answer this question. For example, they showed that Angela lost her virginity before marriage (one bad action according to the moral code) which resulted in the brothers' killing of Santiago Nasar (another bad action according to the penal code). This happened to regain the family's honour (thereby showing why one bad deserves another bad action).

Question 7

“Youth is a period of experiment and frolic.” Comment on this statement.

This was the second most popular question chosen and was attempted by 18.4 per cent of the candidates. The majority of responses earned marks in the satisfactory to excellent range. Candidates were required to demonstrate a clear understanding of the terms *experiment* and *frolic*. Moreover, they were expected to justify the extent of the veracity of this statement citing appropriate examples from the chosen text.

Firstly, the majority of candidates who used the three short stories from *17 narradoras latinoamericanas* disregarded the question and attempted to answer it by using a predetermined response from a past paper. However, some candidates were able to cite the young man's self-discovery in *El primer beso* and the little girl's initial glee while experiencing the new house in *La casa nueva* as evidence of experiment and frolic respectively.

On the other hand, most candidates who used *Felices dias Tío Sergio* generally were able to write better responses showing that the experience of the main characters was one of experiment and/or frolic. These candidates answered the question well using sound examples such as the children's exchange of sex books and listening to music that was prohibited in the home as evidence of experiment. Moreover, as evidence of frolic in the novel, students cited the children's participation in childhood games and the reading of comics.

Question 8

“Youth, though under adult supervision, ultimately make the decision on what to do.” Comment on this statement.

Approximately ten per cent of the candidates attempted this question, the majority of them scoring the satisfactory to excellent range. Candidates were required to show that children make

their own decisions and challenge adult authority despite being under imposed restrictions. Some candidates wrote their responses neglecting to make reference to adult supervision. Additionally, candidates who used the short stories from *17 narradoras latinoamericanas* made reference to the main characters and cited examples outside of their period of youth. For example, they erroneously stated that Analía made her own decision to avoid her son being sent to a new school in the city despite the fact that she was already an adult when she did so. Moreover, they stated that the young lady, in *La casa nueva* decided not to trust anyone and be cynical because her father had disappointed her as a child. However, when she stated this she was already an adult.

Most candidates who used *Felices días Tío Sergio* dealt with this question well. They were able to identify examples where the children in the novel made their own decisions despite being under the supervision of adults. For example, candidates made reference to the children's decision to call out to Margara, something forbidden by the adults, despite being under Mama Sara's supervision.

Candidates' Strengths

- Some candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of the text studied and commendable analytical skills. They were able to identify the issues in the text relevant to the question posed and discuss them using solid supporting details, all within the word limit.
- Good or excellent essays included a brief introduction with a well-constructed thesis, three to five well-supported points with a counterargument, and a brief conclusion.
- Some candidates made appropriate use of quotations. Quotations generally supported the points made and were well integrated into the essay.

Candidates' Weaknesses

- Some essays were mere summaries of the text instead of analyses.
- Some essays exceeded the word limit of 350–400 words.
- Some essays were padded with long quotations as well as rambling historical and philosophical perspectives.
- Some responses were riddled with factual inaccuracies related to the text.
- Some candidates misinterpreted key words/phrases in the questions and therefore did not address the relevant issues, for example, *socialization and fate* in Question 5, *experiment and frolic* in Question 7.

Suggestions and Recommendations for Teachers

Teachers should:

- Ensure that they identify and discuss the issues related to the theme within the chosen text. Historical and philosophical perspectives, though necessary for class discussion, do not need to appear in the written examination.
- Refrain from primarily instructing students based on past essays as students seek to regurgitate information, regardless of the question set.

- Advise students to take their time to read and select questions carefully according to the prescribed text studied for the theme.
- Advise students to stay within the word limit as examiners *do not* read beyond the stipulated word limit.
- Help students to cultivate practices of proper essay writing — Introduction/Body/Conclusion.
- Advise students that an excellent response should include
 - (i) a brief introduction with a clear thesis statement relating to the text
 - (ii) four to five solid points, supported by concise, appropriate, brief and complete quotes, and an informed personal opinion, each in a new paragraph, one of which should be a counterpoint to show balance in the response
 - (iii) a brief conclusion.

Irregularities

- Writing general instead of thematic essays.
- Using the same text in Sections A and B.
- Extremely short responses.
- Lengthy quotations and limited informed personal opinion.
- Using the wrong text for a stated theme, for example, Felices *días*, *Tío Sergio* to answer a question on *El individuo y la sociedad*.
- Created quotes – ‘*El amor es aprendido*’. Candidates are encouraged not to read the English version of texts as this hampers their ability to quote accurately in Spanish.

Paper 04 – School-Based Assessment (SBA)

The SBA was generally well done. For the most part, students chose topics that were related to the unit. Most of the topics chosen were appropriate for creative development by the students. There were some excellent presentations that epitomized the use of the target language accurately, fluently and spontaneously.

Presentations submitted were relevant to the unit and were well prepared in general. Students’ responses to both topic and general conversation questions were mostly fluent and well-constructed. Many students presented their topic on social areas such as divorce, crime and violence, drugs, unemployment and abortion. More popular topics for this year, 2013, were: *El Crimen y La Violencia*, *El narcotráfico*, *Los callejeros* and *La música*.

However, in some instances, the presentations lacked statistical data and/or information from credible sources such as newspapers and magazine articles. There were also some instances where the nature of the topic chosen was expository and did not lend itself to much creative development by students. For example a presentation which detailed the different types of music, the instruments used and the genre to which the music belongs, limits students’ ability to express opinions on the topic.

There were also some presentations that were not based on a Hispanic country and this is of paramount importance. Belize, for example, is officially an English-speaking country.

This year more students, about 24 per cent, scored over 40 out of a possible 48, and the majority, about 40 per cent, were between 29 and 40. Still too many, however, received a mark below 24, and too few, between 46 and 48.

It is commendable that the majority of teachers ensured that the exam adhered to the suggested format and the stipulated time. Marking done by teachers was acceptable with only a few discrepancies arising between the marks of the examiners and the moderators.

However, it is important that teachers use the rubric provided. There were still many instances of teachers being overly lenient and many teachers who exceeded the fifteen-minute stipulated time.

On the other hand, there were instances where the exam was too short and lasted for 10 minutes or less which was inadequate for a valid assessment of students' performance.

Some students needed greater guidance in the preparation of their interview; be it in the choice of topic, choice of country, length of presentation or conversational exchanges with the teacher.

There were instances where students sounded rehearsed and not as if they were giving a presentation or having a conversation.

There were centres where students had problems with the discrete sounds of the language. There were several cases where silent H's were pronounced, G's were pronounced as an English G, and there were confusing vowel sounds.

Some students had difficulties with:

- Subject/verb agreement
- Subject/adjective agreement
- Inappropriate use of time frames
- Difficulty constructing very basic structures.

Most teachers took the time to ensure that the quality of the tape/cassette being submitted was satisfactory (and that the SBAs submitted were recorded on a CD or cassette which was audible and easily read).

In other cases, teachers submitted CDs or cassettes on which a part of, or an entire interview was missing.

Much of the audio material submitted had some amount of interference. In some centres it was so greatly affected it was difficult to hear the student.

Some questions were too simple for this level, more applicable to the CSEC format and at other times, teachers were overly deliberate in speech.

There were a few cases where teachers did not allow students enough opportunity to provide an answer before repeating the question or offering a suggestion.

There were instances where teachers appeared to be insensitive to a students' personal situation which was obvious to moderators. There were instances where the teachers could be heard laughing at the students' responses which was unacceptable and inappropriate. There were also instances where the questions asked by the teachers were too personal.

However, in the majority of cases, teachers were professional, patient and provided positive reinforcement.

By and large the marking was acceptable in quality as teachers *generally* adhered to the marking criteria. In only a few instances was there a significant variance between the marking and the moderation.

Similarly, moderation forms were included and in a few instances only, were the 1-3 and/or 1-5 forms missing.

Recommendations

Teachers should ensure that

- their students engage in conversation on both the prepared topic and the general topics covered in the syllabus, for *at least* five minutes *respectively*. As the rubrics show, these two components have far greater weighting than the topic presentation
- students speak to a 'thesis' and not just a 'topic'; thus giving impetus to the better development of a conversation rather than an interminable regurgitation of facts and statistics
- there is enough class discussion on topics in the syllabus so students can become used to expressing their opinions in the foreign language using the appropriate vocabulary and structure
- enough attention is paid to the articulation of the discrete sounds to promote pronunciation, intonation and fluency
- in the flow and excitement of the conversation sight is not lost of subject-verb agreement, correct usage of articles and tenses.
- the students engage them in conversation and do not simply reverse a process of interrogation
- all samples are contained on one CD, with details of the programme used for recording
- every effort be made to render the recording environment as hermetic as possible — free of distracting noises
- that the recorder is neither too close to, or too far away from, both the examiner and the student
- recorded samples are checked for quality before submission to CXC
- a move be made to utilize the various technological facilities economically available for recording the interviews on video, thus greatly reducing efforts at moderation.

UNIT 2

Paper 01 – Listening Comprehension

The results were better in Unit 2 than Unit 1 of the 2013 examination. The majority of candidates performed better in Section A than Section B. There was some weakness in expression which in many cases reflected a lack of thought more so in Section B than Section A. Many candidates' responses seemed to lack logic and coherence and many had poor spelling. Seven candidates (1.5 per cent) did not complete the entire paper.

This paper assessed candidates' ability to respond in English to stimuli in Spanish, and covered topics from all three modules of the syllabus. Candidates were presented with five short selections and one extended interview in Spanish and were required to respond to questions based on the material in short-answer format.

Section A – Short Selections

The results were generally satisfactory. The majority of candidates completed the entire section. However, some responses indicated that candidates needed to take greater care in reading instructions carefully and responding to questions instead of using literal translation.

A range of spelling errors, poor handwriting and weaknesses in expression often posed challenges to examiners in determining the accuracy of responses. Additionally, vocabulary recognition was a major shortcoming of several candidates. Many of them did not understand the following words: *guerrillas*, *somnolientas*, *viceministro*, *adquirir artículos*, *pago en efectivo*, *dirrección de correo electrónico*.

Selection 1

The performance on this selection was satisfactory. Sixty three per cent of candidates scored six and above.

For Part (a), many candidates failed to provide the correct meaning for *guerillero* and *Ejército de Liberación Nacional*. There were many variations such as 'exercise of national liberation', 'national freedom group' and 'international army'.

Part (b) was fairly well done. A few candidates did not specify that the girls were sisters and sometimes wrote vague or erroneous responses such as 'children' or 'women'. Some also did not specify that the girls were kidnapped.

Part (c) was well done. A few candidates did not identify the correct numbers and mixed up the ages for the girls.

Performance was satisfactory for Part (d). Many candidates were able to identify that the girls were playing in the garden. However, many of them did not give the detail that two men captured/kidnapped them. For those candidates who did not know the meaning of *raptar*, translations included: raped, killed, attacked, trapped, disappeared, shot.

Part (e) was not well answered. The words *hambrientas* and *somnolientas* were problematic for the majority of candidates. Many candidates responded that when the girls were taken to hospital they were malnourished, in critical condition, unconscious and bleeding, injured, dehydrated, in a horrible state, one covered and one was naked, smelly and shocked. Many candidates gave a list of adjectives, hoping that at least one would have been right.

Selection 2

Performance on this selection was good. Eighty-three per cent of candidates scored six and above.

For Part (a), the majority of candidates provided the correct response. However, a few stated ‘lucrative’ for Part (i), instead of *educational crisis*, because they misinterpreted *la crisis educativa*. Many candidates gave the correct response of *students and government* for Part (ii).

Part (b) was undoubtedly well done as candidates were able to pinpoint that ‘Chile’ was the country where the crisis took place.

Most candidates understood that five months was the length of time of the crisis in Part (c).

Many candidates did not handle Part (d). Many did not respond and those who responded were in most cases incorrect. They did not know what occurred at the end of the crisis period.

Part (e) was fairly well done. However, the word *gratuita* was misunderstood by many. As such, many candidates left out the important detail that *the students’* main demand was to initiate a reform to guarantee *free education*.

Part (f) was fairly well done. Many candidates lost marks for stating the answer in the past tense and not specifying that they will lose the academic year.

Selection 3

Performance on the selection was satisfactory. Sixty two per cent of candidates scored four and above.

For Part (a), the majority of candidates did not state that Tomás Suarez was the Vice/Deputy Minister of Tourism. Many stated that he was ‘the Minister of Tourism’, ‘the tourism photographer’, and ‘the future of European tourism’.

For Part (b), the majority of candidates failed to score full marks due to the improper use of prepositions. Many stated that tourism increased *by* 3 million and not *to* 3 million. Many also stated that the increase was three thousand and three million.

Part (c) was fairly well done. However, many candidates misunderstood *mayor emisor*, and stated that France has the majority of tourists per year.

Many candidates misunderstood Part (d), stating that ‘water was used to make hydroelectricity’ and that ‘tourism was sustainable development’, instead of stating that *sustainable development was the balanced consumption of resources (water and electricity)*.

Selection 4

This section was well done. Eighty five per cent scored 4 and above.

Part (a) was well done. However, many candidates failed to score full marks due to *adquirir artículos*. Many stated that one can read articles online and access articles. Many wrote vague responses such as ‘online transactions’ for ‘bank transactions’. The word ‘plane’ was grossly misspelt.

Performance on Part (b) was excellent. Most candidates realized the advantage of doing activities, identified in (a), online.

Part (c) was fairly well done. However, lack of knowledge of *dirrección* and *correo electrónico*, was obvious, as many candidates responded: ‘working in an electronic store’, ‘electronic direction’, ‘electronic story’, ‘knowledgeable in electronics and ‘personal mailing address’, among others. Also, many of the responses were for Part (d) and not Part (c).

Although Part (d) was also fairly well done, *en efectivo* proved to be difficult for candidates. Many of them stated ‘to pay effectively’ and ‘effective payment’. Many candidates combined the ‘bank transfer’ with the ‘credit card’, for example, ‘use a credit card to effectively transfer money to the bank’, thus they were awarded only one mark.

Selection 5

Eighty nine per cent of candidates scored four and above. This was the best performing question. Once again, some candidates did not follow the instructions and ticked more than four responses and were penalized as such. ‘A’ was a common wrong answer.

Section B – Extended Interview

Selection 6

The sixth selection was an interview with Dr Margarita Cooper about the transplants of animal tissue in humans. Performance was satisfactory. Sixty six per cent scored 12 and above. However, knowledge of technical/biological vocabulary was problematic for many candidates.

Part 1

For Part (a), the vast majority of candidates did not know the word *cerdo* opting to respond ‘modified animal’. A few had modified cattle, lamb, limbs and plants. Some candidates did not understand that the modification was done to the pig and not the process. Many candidates who

did not know the word *tejido* left out that the animal tissue was modified. Due to these inaccuracies, many candidates did not obtain maximum marks for this question.

Part (b) was not well done. Many candidates took for granted that the xenotransplants would begin in two years' time. Many of them did not understand *clinical trials* and responded clinical essays, and that the xenotransplants would take place in clinics.

Most candidates performed well on Part (c). However, again, a few were unable to identify the word *tejido*, which cost them one mark.

For Part (d), candidates generally knew how xenotransplants would help human beings. However, many candidates lost a mark due to the fact that they stated that the waiting list for organs existed in the UK or omitted that xenotransplants would help all around the world.

Part 2

Part (e), on one major concern about xenotransplants, was well done. However, quite a few candidates failed to state *human body* and instead stated 'human organ' or 'human organization'. A few failed to mention that the tissue was strange or foreign.

Part (f) posed a lot of problems for candidates. Many of them were unable to explain effectively what exactly was Dr Cooper's concern. Many mixed up the details stating that the gene was created to protect the immune system. Some stated that equipment was created. The scientific terminology proved to be difficult for many of them.

Part (g) was very well done. However, a few candidates failed to specify that the diabetics were type one.

Performance on Part (h) was satisfactory. Many candidates did not specify *1 in 500 diabetic type 1 patients* and stated '1500' or '500 diabetic patients' instead.

Recommendations for Teachers

- Provide students with more listening practice with timed exercises.
- Give students vocabulary recognition exercises and word association exercises related directly to topics from each module in the syllabus as part of Listening Comprehension training.
- Have students practise listening for gist to improve overall comprehension skills rather than simply listing information.
- Inform students to be mindful of the marks allocated for each question.
- Ensure that students provide details instead of general, vague responses in practice exercises and that they provide full, coherent explanations, especially for the interview.

Recommendations for Candidates

- Remember that responses must make logical sense.
- Read questions before listening to the audio recording.
- Consider the mark scheme when providing responses.
- Proofread responses to ensure logic and coherence.
- Write concise/precise responses to avoid ambiguity.

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, using their own words.

Passage 1 – *Los edulcorantes versus el azúcar*

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

Overall, performance on this question was good. However, use of English expressions in many cases was poor. Candidates are reminded that their expression in English must be coherent and logical.

Part (a) required candidates to state why people are opting for sugar substitutes. The responses were, in most instances, complete with full marks being awarded.

Part (b) asked candidates to state two advantages and disadvantages of saccharin use. While most candidates were able to state both, many did not say that saccharin is 400 times *sweeter* than sugar. Several said that it was 50 times sweeter than sugar. Several candidates did not understand the words *gusto* and *metálico*, therefore giving answers like 'metallic liking'. Many others interpreted *metálico* very literally and said that the saccharin contained metals. In the case of the *contraindications* of saccharin use, quite a few candidates wrote about the 'contradictions' of its use.

Part (c) was well done. The main problem was that some candidates wrote that it was 'addictive' rather than having no *additives*.

Part (d) asked candidates about the relationship between natural sweeteners and heat. This question posed a bit of a challenge. Many candidates could not distinguish between artificial sweeteners and natural sweeteners. Many answers referred to the effect of heat on artificial sweeteners with bare reference to the effect of heat on natural sweeteners.

Part (e) presented a wide range of possible answers, allowing the majority of candidates to score full marks. Yet many candidates' English expression was confusing.

Parts (f)–(j) required candidates to provide synonyms taken from the passage for given words. This part of the question was well handled. Most candidates identified four of the five synonyms. The most problematic was Part (j), with many candidates incorrectly selecting *exhorta* or *inclina* instead of *percibe*.

Passage 2 – *El gas de pizarra es “más contaminante que el carbón”.*

Candidates were required to respond, in their own words, to questions in Spanish based on a passage in Spanish.

The questions on the passage posed challenges to many candidates. Many seemed unfamiliar with the topic. A significant problem was that far too many of the responses were lifted directly from the passage. Candidates are reminded to read instructions carefully as there is a penalty for disregarding this guideline. The responses to Parts (d), (e) and (f) were somewhat similar and some candidates were unable to distinguish information solicited.

In Part (a), most candidates earned only one out of two marks. They failed to state that shale gas has *more negative effects* than carbon in terms of climate change.

Part (b) was generally well answered but there was quite a bit of lifting. Many of those who answered in their own words did not state that methane escaped *from the mines*.

Part (c) was poorly done. Candidates seemed to have difficulty answering in their own words. Many who lifted from the passage presented responses that were poorly structured and confusing. Many reworded *por lo menos* as *por lo bajo*.

In Part (d), there was again a lot of lifting, with only a few candidates attempting to change one word (*perjudical*). Those candidates who did answer in their own words did so quite well.

Many answers to Part (e) were also lifted.

In Part (f), many candidates incorrectly said that the methane escaping from the wells is *three times* higher than conventional wells.

Part (g) required candidates to state their opinion on the importance of finding clean combustibles. Most candidates scored two or three marks and were able to use the content of the passage to shape their responses.

Section B – Essays

Candidates were required to write an essay in Spanish of 250–300 words, on one of five topics. This section assessed 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. Candidates were

assessed on content and presentation (organization and coverage of 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).

It is noteworthy that most candidates were able to answer the questions. There were only three scripts where there was no response. The level of competence ranged from poor to excellent with the majority of candidates falling within the satisfactory to good category. It was noticed that the level of vocabulary and idiomatic expressions used were better this year. However, candidates were still unable to master basic grammatical structures such as agreement, spelling, articles, accentuation, conjugation of verbs and proper word order.

Question Popularity

Question	Popularity
3. La cirugía cosmética conlleva más inconvenientes que beneficios. ¿Qué opinas?	5.7 %
4. Los médicos no tienen el derecho de acabar con una vida. ¿Qué piensas?	13.4 %
5. La seguridad tiene que ser prioritaria para los alimentos transgénicos. ¿Estás de acuerdo?	13.6 %
6. Las redes sociales promueven valores negativos entre los jóvenes. ¿Cuál es tu opinión?	61.6 %
7. La informatización hace redundante el trabajo del ser humano. ¿Qué opinas?	5.7 %

A small percentage of candidates (0.2%) provided no response for either of the questions.

Question Performance Breakdown

Range	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5	Question 6	Question 7
24	4.2 %	0 %	3.3%	0%	0%
20–23	16.7 %	4.4 %	16.7 %	11.1 %	12 %
16–19	29.2 %	22 %	30 %	15.9 %	24%
12–15	25 %	29.4 %	30 %	28.1 %	16 %
9–11	4.2 %	19.1 %	10 %	24.4 %	16 %
5–8	8.3 %	19.1 %	8.3 %	17.4 %	20 %
1–4	8.3 %	5.9 %	1.7 %	3%	8 %
0	0 %	0 %	0 %	0.04 %	4 %

Question 3

La cirugía cosmética conlleva más inconvenientes que beneficios. ¿Qué opinas?

This was the least popular question attempted. Most candidates scored between the good and very good range. This question required candidates to discuss the disadvantages and benefits of plastic surgery.

Few candidates misinterpreted *La cirugía cosmética* and wrote an essay on *la clonación*. However, for the most part candidates performed well on this question.

Excellent responses would include the emotional, psychological, physical and financial effects. However, candidates could have indicated that it was a personal decision and despite the disadvantages, there are some positives, such as plastic surgery, which could also help with people's self-esteem and confidence as well as it could be beneficial with injuries or physical reconstruction.

Question 4

Los médicos no tienen el derecho de acabar con una vida. ¿Qué piensas?

Most candidates scored within the range of satisfactory to good.

This question required candidates to show an understanding of the pros and cons of euthanasia. Excellent responses discussed both sides of the issue and these candidates were able to show that even though there are negative aspects to a doctor taking the life of a patient into his hands — such as man playing God, the role of the family, the right of the patient, and religion — there are also instances where the patient's suffering should be taken into account, as well as the financial cost of keeping a patient on life support.

Some common errors in spelling and expression that were produced by candidates included:

- *Scientíficos*
- *Díos*
- *Tomar la vida*

Question 5

La seguridad tiene que ser prioritaria para los alimentos transgénicos. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

Candidates scored in the range of satisfactory to good.

Candidates needed to have very specific information on GM Foods. This question required candidates to show a clear understanding that security is the main issue here. Candidates needed to discuss what has been put in place to ensure that these products are secure with the help of product labels or reverse testing. However, candidates would demonstrate a good understanding of the topic by describing some of the other priorities such as providing an abundance of food for the poorer people in the world.

Quite a few candidates misinterpreted the question and spoke about the advantages and disadvantages of GM Foods without relating it to security. If candidates thought critically, they would have been able to use this and apply it to the question.

Some common errors in expression that were produced by candidates included:

- *Están seguros* instead of *son seguros*
- *A la mano obra larga*

Question 6

Las redes sociales promueven valores negativos entre los jóvenes. ¿Cuál es tu opinión?

This was by far the most popular question attempted. It required candidates to focus on the social networks and to identify some of them and show how they promote negative values. Negative values such as bullying, sexting, laziness, deterioration in use of language and family and human relations, lack of creativity and motivation to excel and various health issues like obesity needed to be highlighted.

The best essays showed both points of view, highlighting that social networks would improve interaction and positive relationships which could help against cyber bullying, allow young people to learn about new cultures and help with schoolwork. However, a number of candidates were too general and spoke generally about the Internet when they needed to focus on social networks. Additionally, some candidates spoke about the negative and positive effects of social networks but they did not relate it to the values.

Most candidates scored in the range of satisfactory to good.

Some common errors in expression that were produced by candidates included:

- *Los jóvenes son muy pronto en a muy technological mundo*
- *Photo*
- *Websites*
- *Zonas tiempos*

Question 7

La informatización hace redundante el trabajo del ser humano. ¿Qué opinas?

This proved to be the most difficult question for candidates as well as the second least popular. Most candidates scored in the range of satisfactory to good.

This question required candidates to show an understanding of the word *la informatización*, any kind of information technology that is used by man and how it impacts on different aspects of modern life. Candidates needed to use specific examples to show how much computerization has made man's work redundant.

Several candidates did not understand the question and their interpretation of the word *informatización* proved to be problematic.

Excellent responses would take a definite stance and show specific examples. Man's work has become much less as a result of this computerization and this has even replaced some people, but we cannot say that man will become totally obsolete since we are needed for specific roles, and, as a matter of fact, in some cases jobs have been created because of computerization.

Paper 03 – Literary Analysis and Themes

Section A – Literary Analysis

In Section A, candidates were required to respond to one of four possible extracts taken from the prescribed texts on the syllabus. Each question comprised four parts, (a)–(d). These questions focused on literary analysis of given passages and asked candidates to relate the plot, analyse characters from the extract, comment on narrative technique, and identify literary devices and themes found in the given passage, with one question asking candidates to relate aspects of the extract to the rest of the prescribed text. Candidates were required to answer all questions in Spanish.

Question Popularity

Question	Popularity
1. La lluvia amarilla	7 %
2. El llano en llamas	22 %
3. Chombo	5 %
4. El coronel no tiene quien le escriba	66 %

Question Performance Breakdown

Range	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4
16	0%	1%	0%	0%
14–15	3%	0%	4%	8%
12–13	3%	6%	9%	11%
9–11	7%	23%	30%	26%
7–8	23%	25%	22%	13%
4–6	48%	22%	22%	23%
1–3	13%	20%	4%	15%
0	3%	3%	9%	4%

Question 1: *La Lluvia Amarilla*

This question was not popular. In Part (a), most candidates correctly stated what could be learned from the first two statements. They recognized that the narrator was remembering when he was a child, living in the town and who were the persons who left the town first.

In Part (b), several candidates characterized the narrator as *triste* and noted that he was nostalgic, but missed the point that the narrator expected or anticipated his own death. They were even able to explain why he was sad, but still missed the aspect of death.

In Part (c), most candidates recognized that Ainielle's inhabitants had left it, but failed to mention that it was a village in the countryside in the Pyrenees. A popular response was that the town was abandoned, but the responses did not include at least four valid points about the town.

In Part (d), candidates correctly noted the pessimism or sadness, as the town had been abandoned; but the explanation was inadequate. Very few candidates commented that the tone suggested or hinted at the death of the narrator.

Question 2: *El Llano En Llamas*

In Part (a), almost all candidates clearly identified the narrative point of view as *primera persona* and many of them were able to highlight the subjectivity of this point of view. As support, many of them utilized the quotation *mi hermano y yo...* or *...allí fue donde supimos...* Candidates generally offered better explanations this year, but some of these explanations erroneously included the words 'limited' and omniscient'.

In Part (b), the tone of sadness was the most popular response, and a few candidates identified the tone as 'frightful'. However, the linking of the cow in the river with the loss of money or even of a secure future for Tacha was not often made. They were often unable to justify the tone of sadness adequately.

In Part (c), most candidates identified the force of the river. However, the supporting level of analysis that was required was not forthcoming. For example, they failed to link the river rushing through the streets of the town with it sweeping away the current livelihood of folks like *tía* Jacinta (the chickens) as well as the futures of people like Tacha (the cow). Several of them erroneously thought that the superlative was used with reference to the size of the tamarind tree.

Part (d) was not well done. Although the theme of *the destructive force of Nature* was often identified, connecting the theme to the other stories in the text was not properly done by most candidates. Many simply wrote the theme as *naturaleza* and were therefore unable to benefit fully from all the marks for the question.

Question 3: *Chombo*

Although very few candidates attempted this question, those who did performed fairly well.

For Part (a), candidates correctly (but separately) identified the couple's roles as working and caring for the children respectively.

In Part (b), the character of Nenén was well outlined and most candidates explained how hard she worked alongside Tidam to care for her children and make the best possible life for them.

In Part (c), candidates were able to identify the narrative point of view as third person, but commenting on it and giving a suitable quotation to support their position proved to be too challenging for several candidates.

In Part (d), the majority of candidates correctly identified the meals as West Indian and that there was a wide variety of that food, but not many were able to connect that to the idea of the preservation of their West Indian culture in a foreign country.

Question 4: *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba.*

This question was by far the most popular and was fairly well done.

In Part (a), many candidates performed very well in this section. They captured the most important points. However, many of them referred to events before and after the extract, which were irrelevant. Also, some of the information was inaccurate; since some candidates thought that the letter had come from Agustín or they confused the letter the colonel was expecting with this letter that contained political information.

In Part (b), most candidates were able to correctly identify the third person narration and were also able to explain and support this narrative point of view. However, using 'el' and 'ella' alone, does not provide enough support for this point of view. Some candidates demonstrated a level of indecision, as they initially identified the third person narration, then later in the response referred to the narration as first person.

In Part (c), most candidates were able to identify the rhetorical figure as the simile. However, there were several misspellings of the word. Too many candidates wrote that there was a comparison being made, but could not fully explain the comparison. Some candidates inadvertently wrote that the comparison was being made by the colonel, rather than by his wife. They also offered several erroneous responses to explain to what the comparison referred. Some felt that the colonel's wife was so old her brain was like a stick. Others wrote that she was resilient, like a stick. Several candidates seemed unable to show that the pain of colonel's wife was linked to their poverty-stricken state.

Part (d) was done reasonably well. However, the quality of the responses was not as good as in previous years. Most candidates were able to identify the characteristic traits of the wife. The most popular responses were *ingeniosa*, *creativa*, *trabajadora*, *realista* and *religiosa*. The support for these characteristics was accurate and quite valid.

Recommendations

- A review of literary devices and literary terms at the beginning of Unit 2 would be very beneficial.
- *No English* is allowed in Section A. Candidates are therefore advised to respond in Spanish *only*.
- Candidates should avoid using the citations to give the sequence of events. Citations should be used to support answers, not just lifted and written back as answers in themselves.
- Candidates should try to keep the length of the response commensurate with the number of marks awarded for the question. Some candidates wrote an entire page to respond to one part of a question and yet there was very little information for which marks could be awarded.
- Candidates need to be reminded that in Unit 2, their references must be made to the entire text, unlike in Unit 1 where the focus is on the extract.
- Candidates also need to be reminded not to use the same text to answer both sections of the paper.

Section B – Themes

Candidates were required to write an essay, of 350–400 words, in English, on one of the questions relating to the theme *La vida rural* or *Conflictos políticos y sociales en Hispanoamérica*. They were also required to use one of the prescribed texts for the theme selected and discuss issues relevant to the question. Candidates were awarded marks for Knowledge and Understanding (16 marks), Application of Knowledge (9 marks) and Organization of Information (7 marks).

Overall, candidate performance on this section was considered satisfactory to good.

Question 5

“Life in the countryside is far from ideal.” Discuss.

This was the most popular question; it was attempted by 55 per cent of the candidates. Performance on this question was generally good. Candidates were required to explore elements of rural life that either make it difficult or on the contrary, pleasant for the inhabitants. The majority of candidates used *El llano en llamas* to answer this question. Most of them were able to respond appropriately to the question not solely by giving examples but by making definitive statements that showed the impact of rural life on the inhabitants. For example, in *Es que somos muy pobres*, the flood waters destroyed the rye harvest and la Serpentina, therefore compromising the family’s income and Tacha’s future. In *La lluvia amarilla*, the solitude and abandonment that pervaded Ainielle contributed significantly to the mental degradation of the protagonist, proving that rural life was not ideal. A few candidates merely identified problems faced in rural areas but did not link them to the question asked. Candidates who used *La lluvia amarilla* answered creditably.

Question 6

“In rural areas, man is his own worst enemy.” Discuss.

This was the least popular question. It was attempted by 10 per cent of the candidates, the majority of whom scored in the good to excellent range. Candidates were required to discuss to what extent human or other factors (for example, nature) have challenged man’s existence. Most candidates were able to explain that not only does man contribute to his own demise, but that nature also plays a major role. Candidates who used *El llano en llamas* did not always make the most appropriate choice of short stories, thus rendering their arguments less convincing.

Question 7

“Hard work and dedication never pay off.” Discuss.

This was the second most popular question. It was attempted by 25 per cent of the candidates, of whom 69 per cent scored in the minimal to satisfactory range. Candidates were required to discuss the consequences faced for being diligent and committed, and determine whether these have been beneficial or detrimental to the characters in the text studied. The majority of candidates used *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba* to answer this question, however, their responses were limited, in most cases identifying only the government’s failure to recognize and reward the colonel for his years of service to his country. Although *Chombo* was not the more popular text, candidates who used it wrote very good responses. They were able to show that although the West Indian migrants made a significant contribution to the construction of the Panama Canal, they were denied equal payment and recognition and suffered discrimination.

Question 8

“It is impossible to hold on to one’s values in the face of victimization.” Discuss.

Ten per cent of the candidates attempted this question, 56 per cent of whom scored above the satisfactory range. In this question, candidates were required to discuss instances of injustice and adversity (whether personal or communal) and the characters’ decision to either uphold their values or compromise them. However, in many cases, candidates discussed instances of victimization with no link to values or how they were compromised. Other candidates showed how characters compromised their values but neglected the victimization aspect of the question. Some candidates misconstrued the meaning of values and others failed to identify what these values were.

Candidates’ Strengths

- Some candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of the text studied and commendable analytical skills. They were able to identify the issues in the text relevant to the question posed and discuss them using solid supporting details.
- Good or excellent essays included a brief introduction with a well-constructed thesis, three to five well-supported points with a counterargument, and a brief conclusion.

- Some candidates made appropriate use of quotations. Quotations generally supported the points made and were well integrated into the essay.

Candidates' Weaknesses

- Some essays were mere summaries of the text instead of analysis.
- Some essays exceeded the word limit of 350–400 words.
- Some essays were padded with long, incomplete or irrelevant quotations as well as historical and philosophical perspectives.
- Some responses were riddled with inaccuracies in content, structure, expression, spelling or grammar.
- Some candidates wrote a general essay instead of a thematic essay.
- Some candidates used the same text in Sections A and B.
- Some candidates did not write any response in Section B.

Suggestions and Recommendations for Teachers

Teachers should:

- Ensure that they identify and discuss the issues related to the theme within the chosen text. Historical and philosophical perspectives, though necessary for class discussion, do not need to appear in the written examination.
- *Refrain from primarily training students based on past essays as students seek to regurgitate information, regardless of the question set.*
- Advise students to be more analytical in their responses instead of being narrative. Students are rewarded for an informed, personal response to the question.
- Reinforce the appropriate use of quotations.
- Advise students to read and select questions carefully, and identify key words within the question.
- Advise students to stay within the word limit as examiners do not read beyond the stipulated word limit.
- Cultivate practices of proper essay writing — Introduction/Body/Conclusion.
- Advise students that an excellent response should include
 - (i) a brief introduction with a clear thesis statement
 - (ii) four or five solid points, supported by concise, appropriate, brief and complete quotes, and an informed personal opinion, each in a new paragraph, one of which should be a counterpoint to provide balance in the response
 - (iii) a brief conclusion.

Paper 04 – School-Based Assessment

There was, for the most part, commendable evidence of preparation and guidance from the teachers. Topics covered were generally relevant to the unit although there were a few based on Unit 1.

The overall quality of students' performance in Unit 2 was satisfactory. The majority of responses—50 per cent of the students' scores—were in the range of 32–39 out of 48. The presentation scores on average fell in the category of very good.

Students also did well on comprehension in the topic conversation and general conversation. The main challenges for the students were use of vocabulary, accuracy of grammar and expression and pronunciation.

At this unit level, pronunciation was average. Students continued to struggle with discrete sounds, and stressed on the wrong parts of some words. Many students did not use a wide range of structures and vocabulary.

Sometimes, the grammar was not up to the level required. Students had difficulty constructing even basic sentences. In some instances, articles and verbs were left out of the sentences, conjunctions were used incorrectly and there were difficulties with subject/verb/adjective agreement. Some of the sentences were greatly disjointed, affecting meaning.

On the other hand, there were some very good students who had a good grasp of the essential structures of the language and were able to express themselves accurately and engage in interesting conversations.

It is commendable that the majority of teachers ensured that the exam adhered to the suggested format and stipulated time, the marking was generally acceptable. However, some assessments averaged 10 minutes or less and some teachers appeared to have difficulty formulating questions.

Teachers must be mindful that they need to prepare themselves for the *conversation* with the students and ensure that they have enough information to prolong the conversation so that it lasts for at least 5 minutes in each section.

Furthermore, it cannot be overly emphasized that the *interview* is to be conducted as a *conversation*.

Recommendations for Teachers

- Teachers should give priority to the student expressing his or her point of view.
- Teachers should familiarize themselves with the stipulations and recommendations of the syllabus and should be quite clear on the parameters of the marking scheme.
- Teachers should always seek to be objective in their marking.
- Teachers should make their sample submissions on a single CD and indicate the programme used for recording.
- Teachers should make a concerted effort to reduce extraneous noises and double-check the quality of the recordings.
- Teachers should be vigilant as to the security and accuracy of the moderation sheets before submission.