

**C A R I B B E A N      E X A M I N A T I O N S      C O U N C I L**

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

**MAY/JUNE 2014**

**SPANISH  
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

**Copyright © 2014 Caribbean Examinations Council  
St Michael, Barbados  
All rights reserved.**

## GENERAL COMMENTS

The examination demanded that candidates recognize the functions they were required to perform, using vocabulary and structures expected of candidates who have undergone five years of study.

Many of the difficulties encountered by the candidates were based on the misinterpretation of situations presented and failure to focus on all the elements required to be awarded full marks. Significant marks were lost as many responses qualified as partially appropriate or completely inappropriate.

Some responses were far too long and candidates lost many marks because of the high number of errors in these long responses.

Spelling errors continue to be a concern, especially as candidates are penalized for incorrect spelling, including the omission of accents. The issue of accents needs to be considered carefully.

The formation of the tenses required continues to be a serious challenge for candidates.

### Paper 02 – Free Response

#### Section I – Directed Situations

In this section, candidates were presented with ten situations for which they were required to provide written responses in Spanish. Candidates were assessed on the appropriateness of their responses and the quality of language used. Inappropriate responses were awarded no mark, even if the quality of language was perfect.

The questions were in keeping with the demands of the syllabus, and were well within candidates' ability. The questions demanded vocabulary and structures of an everyday nature that were well within the candidates' grasp, and consequently, many candidates made a good attempt at responding to them.

#### Candidates' Performance

Generally, performance of candidates was satisfactory. There were a few poor performances. Poor performance resulted from candidates' lack of focus on the elements required by the question, incorrect grammar, lack of vocabulary, as well as inappropriate tense for the situation presented and omission of accents.

#### Candidates' Strengths

Some candidates answered concisely and fulfilled the requirements of the question. These candidates provided generally correct responses albeit with few grammatical flaws. It was evident from these responses that the candidates generally recognized the functions required by each question.

#### Situation (a)

You have to stay back late after school this afternoon. Write the text message that you send to your mother explaining this. (Function: Explaining)

Suggested response: *Tengo que quedarme en la escuela porque hay un partido de fútbol.*

- Many candidates did not interpret this question correctly and therefore did not provide all of the required information. They answered without making a specific reference to their late arrival home. Instead they only stated the reason i.e. the activity they had to do after school.
- Many did not know the vocabulary for 'to arrive' using *llevar* instead of *llegar*.
- Many did not know the vocabulary for 'to stay' using *hospedarse/alojarse*. Many of those who knew '*quedar*' spelt it as 'kedar' and 'cedar'.
- 'To arrive late' was frequently rendered as '*ser/estar tarde*'.

- Many candidates could not express time (AM/PM) correctly, writing ‘*a las tres en la tarde*’ instead of ‘*de la tarde*’.
- The written accent was often missing on *mamá*.
- The following words were spelt incorrectly - *clase (classe) /deberes (debres) / escuela (escula) / colegio (colejio) (coleigo)* and *práctica (pratica)*
- The expression *después (de)* was also used incorrectly - ‘*tengo clases despues escuela*’ / ‘*voy a club de musica despues de.*’

#### Situation (b)

Your uncle is coming to visit and sends an e-mail to your father informing him of two details of his arrival. Write the e-mail your uncle sent. (Function: Giving information)

Suggested response: *Llegaré el lunes a las cinco de la tarde.*

Most candidates performed well on this question. However, a few misinterpreted the requirements of the question. Instead of giving information for details relevant to the uncle's impending arrival, they gave information focusing on what he planned to do after his arrival. In some cases, reasons for his visit were given.

- Many candidates used the wrong tenses. The present, preterite and conditional tenses were used instead of the future tense. Where attempts were made to use the future tense the following errors were noted – ‘*sere llegando*’, ‘*soy venir*’, ‘*sera viniendo*’
- The incorrect preposition ‘*en*’ was used instead of ‘*a*’ - for example, a number of candidates wrote ‘*llegaré en el aeropuerto*’ instead of ‘*llegaré al aeropuerto*’
- Telling the time / date or day were common areas of concern. E.g. ‘*Llego en lunes a son las ocho en la tarde/Voy en diciembre 24/A la cuarto y media.*’
- The vocabulary for flight was frequently rendered as *vuela / vuelta / viaje/vuelvo*
- The verbs ‘*llevar*’ and ‘*salir*’ were used instead of ‘*llegar.*’
- The verb ‘*venir*’ was incorrectly formed in the continuous - *yo es viniendo*
- The word ‘*aeropuerto*’ was often misspelt – *aroporta*
- There was also the incorrect placing of adjectives before the nouns as well as lack of agreement when referring to items of clothing. For example, ‘*azul pantalones*’

#### Situation (c)

Your mother is visiting Canada and promises to do something for you while there. Write the e-mail she sends to you. (Function: Promising)

Suggested response: *Prometo comprarte los libros que pediste.*

This question was handled well by most candidates. Some candidates misinterpreted the question and made a request for something instead of a promise. Others responded that the mother was unable to fulfill the promise. Common grammatical/lexical errors were:

- The pluralization of *ropa (ropas)*
- The verb ‘*prometer*’ was a challenge for many. They rendered ‘I promise’ as ‘*promesa*’, ‘*promeso*’, ‘*promitido*’, ‘*promiso*’, ‘*prometa.*’ In addition some candidates used *prometo* followed by the present tense instead of the infinitive. E.g ‘*Prometo voy.*’ Some candidates used a preposition after *prometo*. E.g ‘*Prometo a ir.*’
- Many items of vocabulary/clothing were misspelt- *zapados /zapatoes / centro commercial / vestida / fotografias /photos/fotographias/ celular /telephono/mobil*
- Lack of agreement was noted. For example, ‘*los fotos*’
- Expression ‘to take photos’ was often incorrect - ‘*tener fotos de los monumentos*’
- Candidates used the formal register for mother to child communication.

- Incorrect use of subject pronoun after preposition - 'para tu' / 'por tu'
- Incorrect use of indirect object pronoun – 'voy a comprar tu' instead of 'te'
- Other errors included incorrect noun/adjective placement/agreement with descriptions. Adjectives of color were also problematic - 'un vestido de azul'
- Spelling of *comprar* as *comparar* and the inability to form the future tense correctly was a notable error.

#### Situation (d)

You have an activity after school but forgot something important at home. Write the message you send to your mother requesting her assistance. (Function: Requesting assistance with something)

Suggested response: *Mamá, puedes traerme mi guitarra.*

This question posed a challenge for several candidates. Many candidates misinterpreted the need for a request and instead gave a statement about what they left at home without asking for it to be brought to them.

- Position of object pronouns was a common issue - 'traer mi el libro /ayuda me' Many candidates used *salir* instead of *dejar* / *tomar* instead of *llevar/traer*
- The spelling of *traer* also was a problem; it was rendered as 'trayer, trajer'.
- *Tocar* was used to mean 'to take'
- *Poder* was spelt or used incorrectly - 'peudes' and 'puedes' used with a conjugated verb, e.g. 'Puedes consigues mi texto.' 'Puedo' was often used for the 2<sup>nd</sup> person. In fact, *Puedo traer mi guitarra* was often given as the response, and clearly, this communicated something very different from what was required, and was considered an inappropriate response. (This is an example of a response that is grammatically sound, but inappropriate.)
- Incorrect use of *olvidar(se)* was noted - 'me olvido' in the present / 'se me olvide' (without accent)
- Incorrect structures involving the need for 'de' - 'matemática el libro/libro texto/español libro'
- Incorrect vocabulary – 'libra/libre' (for *libro*) / 'mirar por' or 'buscar por' (instead of *buscar*)
- *Ser vs Estar* - 'mi libro que es en mi cama'
- Incorrect use of pronouns after prepositions noted - 'para yo/con tu'
- *Por vs para* – 'por mi texto'.
- Spelling/vocabulary errors noted – 'assistir/assistencia' used instead of 'ayudar/ayuda'
- 'Porfavor' was spelt as one word – other versions were 'por favor', 'por favour', 'pro favor'
- Other spelling errors were *querio* for *quiero*, *ayudar*, *ayundar* for *ayudar*) *neesito* for *necesito* and omission of accent on *mí* in the expression 'para mí.'

#### Situation (e)

Your cousin won a scholarship to a prestigious university. Write the message you send congratulating him/her and asking for details. (Function: Congratulating and Asking for details)

Suggested response: *Felicitaciones primo, ¿por cuántos años es la beca?*

This situation was poorly handled by many candidates. Although they were required to offer congratulations and ask for details, the second function was often not performed. Candidates simply congratulated or/asked how the cousin is feeling.

Vocabulary/grammatical errors noted were:

- A wide range of inappropriate versions of *felicitaciones/congratulaciones/enhorabuena/felicidades*. On many occasions this was rendered in English.

- ‘Buena suerte’/‘Que alegría’/‘Soy feliz’ were used incorrectly to express congratulations.
- The vocabulary for scholarship/university was not widely known – ‘gana/premio’ used for ‘beca’ and ‘universario’ used for ‘universidad.’
- Incorrect spelling noted – *primo* rendered as *primero*, *escuela* as *escula/escuella*, *cuando* as *caundo*
- *Ser* vs. *Estar* - ‘donde es la universidad?’
- Incorrect use of the formal register in the context given, e.g. ‘dígame’ used instead of ‘dime’.
- Many candidates left out the accents on interrogative words since this response required a question and also many were uncertain when to use *cómo/qué* and *cuál*.
- The verb ‘asistir’ was poorly spelt and the preposition ‘a’ was frequently omitted.

#### Situation (f)

Your friend has something that you need to complete a project. Write the e-mail you send to him/her, explaining your situation. (Function: Explaining)

Suggested response: *Necesito tu texto para mi proyecto.*

Candidates were required to express their need of an item and give a reason.

- Some candidates misinterpreted the question and provided an excuse for not completing the project — ‘No puedo hacer el proyecto. Estoy enfermo.’
- Spelling errors included – *necessito/ nesicito/nescicito* for *necesito*, *boligrapho* for *bolígrafo*, *projecta / projeto/proyecto* for *proyecto*
- Other notable errors included inappropriate vocabulary; e.g. *volver* was used instead of ‘devolver’
- ‘*asignatura*’ (often misspelt and used) for ‘*proyecto*’. The word ‘*tarea*’ was also popular among candidates for ‘*proyecto*’.
- Candidates used ‘*prestar*’ instead of ‘*pedir prestado*’ – ‘*Puedo prestarme tu libro*’.
- Candidates mixed up the use of ‘*pedir*’ and ‘*preguntar*’
- There was the omission of *para* when introducing the reason for requiring the item - *Necesito las fotos terminar el proyecto*
- Incorrect spelling of *completar* - (*completir*), *mañana* - (*manana / rnanaña*)
- Many candidates did not know the vocabulary for to finish and used *finir/fin/finito/finitar/finitir mi trabajo*
- There was also the inappropriate use of the possessive adjectives ‘*su/sus*’ instead of the familiar forms required in the context given.

#### Situation (g)

Your sister has been spending too much time chatting on the Internet instead of studying. Write the message you send to her warning her of the consequences of her actions. (Function: Warning and Consequence)

Suggested response: *Si no estudias no vas a tener éxito en los exámenes/Si pasas tanto tiempo en Internet vas a salir mal en tus exámenes.*

While candidates were required to provide a warning and consequence, many wrote partial responses with either a warning or a consequence.

Grammatical/vocabulary errors noted were:

- Poor formation of the future for regular and irregular verbs: *haceras / teneras*, and accents missing with the future tense of regular verbs.
- *Continuar/seguir* was followed by the infinitive
- Incorrect spelling of *examen* (*exames / examens / examinaciones/examine/examinacion*) *prueba* (*puerba*), *chatear* (*chatiar*), *calificaciones* (*calificacciones*)
- *Trabajar* vs *funcionar* - ‘*mi computadora no es trabajando*’

- Commands were poorly formed - ‘*tu estudio / estudias mas*’
- *Más* was often missing the written accent
- *Querer que* was not followed by the subjunctive — ‘*quiero que pasas tu examen*’.
- Some candidates used the subjunctive after *Si* – ‘*Si no estudies...*’
- Incorrect use of ‘*grados*’ instead of ‘*notas*’ was often observed.
- Lack of agreement noted: e.g. ‘*mal notas*’
- The verb *Ir* was usually not followed by ‘*a*’ — ‘*va decir mamá*’
- Many candidates did not know the idiomatic structure for to be successful
- ‘*No tendras éxito*’ rendered as ‘*no seras exito*’.
- *Exito* was rendered as *successo*.
- ‘*Si no*’ was often spelt as one word ‘*sino*’.

#### Situation (h)

Your teacher has asked the class to write their suggestion for a venue for this year’s graduation ball. Write your suggestion with an appropriate reason. (Function: Suggesting with a reason)

Suggested response: *¿Por qué no tenemos la fiesta en Sandals? es muy elegante.*

Candidates were required to recommend a location for the ball giving a reason. Many misinterpreted this question, making general suggestions about graduation/ball without mentioning a venue. It seemed that the word venue was not understood by candidates. Others suggested a venue without providing a reason. Some candidates simply described the venue.

- Most candidates did not know the vocabulary for ball - (*pelota*) / (*bola*) / (*ballon*) / (*bul*) / (*ball*) were offered in the responses.
- Incorrect spelling and poor expression were observed as common errors; examples include *graduacion* for *graduación*; *graduacion baile* for *baile de graduación*
- The vocabulary for auditorium posed a challenge for the candidates who chose to offer it as the venue. Many simply used the English while others reused the word ‘venue’.
- Candidates used ‘*de*’ with the name of the hotel (‘*Hotel de Hilton*’)
- Another erroneous expression was *comunidad de centro*
- Candidates experienced difficulty expressing the subjunctive after *sugerir* and *recomendar*; e.g. ‘*Sugiero que comienza*’
- Incorrect spelling of *sugiero* - (*sujiero* / *sugero* / *sugeiro* / *seguero*)
- Incorrect noun-adjective agreement - *el restaurante, porque es bonita*
- Many candidates used inappropriate adjectives to describe places — *simpático* / *interesante* / *amable* / *emocionante*.
- It was evident that the majority of candidates did not know the Spanish word for ‘spacious’, and therefore used *espacio* for *espacioso*
- Incorrect spelling of *restaurante* - (*restarante* / *resturante*), incorrect definite article - ‘*la hotel*’,
- Use of *por/pero* instead of *porque* were common errors.
- Incorrect use of *gustar* continued to prove challenging for many candidates, as seen in the examples ‘*Todos los alumnos le gusta, todo el mundo le gustalo*’
- Use of *estar* instead of *ser* and the incorrect use of the conditional tense were also noted.

#### Situation (i)

Your friend’s father has just died. Write the condolence note that you send with an offer of assistance. (Function: Offering condolence and help)

Suggested response: *Mi más profundo pésame, ¿puedo ayudar?*

This was one of the most challenging questions for many candidates. They were not able to offer condolences. Quite a few only provided condolences without offering to help thus the question was not fully answered in many cases.

- Candidates did not know the vocabulary for condolences: some reused the English expression - Condolences. *Lo siento* was a common response. However, many candidates used *Lo siento* or *los siento por...* Candidates who used the construction - *Siento que tu papá...* failed to use the subjunctive form of the verb.
- Incorrect spelling of *pésame* (*pasame / mi mas profundo pescame*) was frequently noted.
- Candidates did not know the vocabulary for 'the death' or 'to die', and *morir* was poorly conjugated; e.g. '*tu papa murrie*' and *asistir* was used instead of *ayudar*.
- *Papá* was missing the written accent, *dólares* was used instead of *dinero*.
- Incorrect use of the formal register when offering assistance to a friend was noted.

### Situation (j)

A storm is approaching your country and your parents are overseas. Write the message that your mother sends instructing you of something you should not do during the storm. (Function: Instructing)

Suggested response: *No debes salir.*

This situation required the candidates to give negative instructions. Many misinterpreted and gave positive instructions instead. They offered responses like:

- '*compra enlatadas y cierra las ventanas*' for which no marks were awarded.
- Formation of negative commands/instructions seemed problematic for most candidates; to perform that function they used the present tense, ('*No sales la casa / no habla / no va a la playa*') or the infinitive (*No salir, no abrir, no usar electrónicos.*)
- Candidates also used very literal translations for 'do not do' for example. *No hace* followed by the infinitive.
- Many candidates used *salir* without the preposition *de*. E.g '*no salga la casa.*'
- Many candidates lacked the vocabulary for hurricane and used the following to express it - *hurican / hurraican / storma / storme / stormo/tormento / mal tiempo/terremoto/tempesta*). They also lacked vocabulary for the verb to leave, and offered expressions like '*No exito la casa*'.

### **Recommendations**

Too many candidates used the infinitive without attempting to conjugate or conjugated them with incorrect verb endings.

Too many marks were lost because candidates neglected to put accents where they were required for the accurate meaning of the words needed. The following words needed to have accents: *más/tú/mí/cómo/mamá/papá/está/qué*, because without the accent there is a change in meaning. Candidates must learn the value of the accents that can change the meanings of the words especially with respect to the tenses of verbs.

The several errors detailed in the report should serve to alert teachers on the areas which need special attention as candidates are prepared for the examination.

### **Section II (Question 2/Question 3) – Letter/Composition**

This question was marked out of 30. Candidates were required to write a letter or a composition, using 130-150 words based on an outline given in English. They were assessed on their coherence, clarity of expression, accuracy and use of relevant idiom and vocabulary.

## Letter

You represented your country in the Caribbean games and you won a gold medal in your event. Write a letter to your best friend who is overseas, giving him/her the good news.

You must include

- i. details about the competition (where and when it was held)
- ii. the event in which you participated and how you were selected
- iii. how you felt and reacted when you won your event
- iv. your plans to enter future competitions.

## **General Comments**

Candidates' performance this year ranged from very limited performance to excellence. They were required to write a continuous prose using vocabulary and structures well within the scope of the syllabus. The provision of cues allowed the candidates to approach both the letter and the composition logically and confidently. As a result, most candidates were able to produce a response, despite grammatical and lexical difficulties. The word limit continues to pose an issue for a few candidates who exceed the limit or conversely, are unable to reach it. However, most candidates were able to respond within the required length. Some responses were submitted in English and others presented English mingled with Spanish. However, it was noted that there was not the widespread use of English as in previous years.

## **Candidates' Strengths**

### **Letter**

Candidates were able to use well learnt opening and closing lines with great flair, showing good use of the subjunctive. Most candidates wrote correctly, the date, greeting and farewell. Even the weaker candidates had knowledge of the format of the letter. Candidates generally adhered to the rubric with the better candidates using relevant vocabulary and idioms. Examples of good idioms and vocabulary:

vamos al grano  
estar en shock  
pegar un grito  
te echo de menos  
Juegos Caribeños  
fui seleccionado  
aprovecharse de  
el goleador  
brincar  
dar un suspiro de alivio  
loco de alegría  
boquiabierto  
que Dios derrame sus bendiciones

## **Candidates' Weaknesses with Examples of Errors**

- Too many candidates wrote about competitions which were not related to games – singing, eating and Mathematics competitions, for example
- Vocabulary related to sports was lacking:
  - “*Juegos Caribe*” for “*Juegos Caribeños*”
  - “*Medal*” for “*medalla*”
  - “*prizo/precio*” for “*premio*”
  - “*selecté/chose*” for the word *selected*
  - “*contesta*” for “*competición*”
  - “*placé primero*” for “*salí or llegué primero*”

- “Querido” was misspelt at times:  
*Quierdo*
- Inappropriate use of the gerund:  
*Mi evento fue corriendo/ nadando*
- A few candidates wrote the date incorrectly:  
*El doce de abril de dos mil catorce instead of 12 de abril de 2014*
  
- Some verbs were rendered incorrectly in the preterite tense:  
*Tener, obtener, pagar, querer*
- The structure of the passive voice was very often unknown:  
*“Seleccióné” for “fui seleccionado”*
- A few candidates did not maintain the register, changing from *tú* to *usted*.
- Some candidates substituted ‘b’ for ‘v’, ‘s’ for ‘z’, and dropped the ‘h’ at the beginning of a word.
- There was incorrect use of “ser/estar” and “por/para”
- There were several instances when candidates could not produce the requisite vocabulary for the different events and these were given in English. For example, 100 metres.
- The name of the event was also given in English, in some cases written in inverted commas.
- Some letters did not adhere to the required length.

### Composition

Just before final exams you and your friends decided to spend the weekend camping. Write a composition about that weekend. Be sure to include

- i. where you choose to go and why
- ii. preparations you and your friends made
- iii. some of the activities in which you participated
- iv. how you and your friends plan to keep in touch in the future.

### Candidates’ Strengths

#### **Composition**

The composition was the more popular choice for candidates this year. Those who attempted the question were generally at ease with what was required. Cues were followed, tenses were manipulated with proficiency and the relevant vocabulary was used. Candidates have shown an increased command of the use of the future tense. Some candidates were more creative in their use of vocabulary and idioms, showing greater coherence and clarity of expression. Many candidates have grasped the use of the preterite even with irregular verbs. The first person plural of the preterite tense was very often rendered correctly. Some candidates were even able to include the perfect and pluperfect tenses.

The use of the present subjunctive and the occasional imperfect subjunctive was also observed:

sería más feliz si estuvieras conmigo  
ojalá que continúes gozando de buena salud  
a él le hubiera dado un ataque cardíaco si tuviéramos que dormir en el bosque

A few candidates made good use of idioms such as:

sin más ni más  
llevarse un chasco  
dar pavor  
en un dos por tres  
andar de boca en boca

Some candidates were able to offer a richness of vocabulary:

leña, fogata, jugar damas, malvadiscos, alpiñismo  
el protector solar  
el repelente de mosquito  
refrigerios  
restar  
aborrecer

There was a strong knowledge of places of interest and recreational activities:

la playa  
jugar  
contar historias  
nadar

### **Candidates' weaknesses with Examples of Errors**

- Vocabulary Deficiency:  
    *"campo" for "campamento"*  
    *"tento" for "tienda"*  
    *"beberes" for "bebidas"*
- Clumsy expressions such as:  
    *Mi y mi amigo*  
    *Tener divertido*
- Omission and misuse of prepositions  
    *Buscar por*  
    *Mucho de*  
    *Jugar fútbol*
- Wrong use of tense  
    *Todos los días cocinamos*
- Incorrect spelling for the first person plural of a stem changing verb:  
    *Nosotros jugamos*
- Incorrect form of the preterite tense:  
    *Escoger – escojimos*  
    *Decir – decieron*  
    *Llegar – llegé*
- Poor gender and number agreement:  
    *Una machete*  
    *Los competiciones*  
    *El montaña*  
    *Mi amigos*
- The incorrect use of "ser" and "estar" in expressing feelings and time and venue for events:  
    *Yo gané y fui contento*  
    *La competición estaba en Barbados*
- Incorrect use of object pronouns and reflexive pronouns:  
    *Lavome en el río*  
    *Mi mamá dime*
- Inappropriate use or omission of accents:  
    *Fué*  
    *Competicion*  
    *Estabamos*
- Misuse of words with different meanings;  
    *Emocionado/ emocionante*  
    *Así/ tan*  
    *Muy/mucho*

*Aquí/Allí*

*Sorpresa/ sorprendida*

- Spelling errors:  
*He – e*  
*Hicimos – isimo*  
*Estaba – estava*
- Misuse of “gustar”  
*Nosotros ha gustado*
- “Antes de” and “después de” were used interchangeably
- Subject and verb agreement’  
*Mis padres compró*
- A few very short essays were limited to one line or sentence per point.
- Incorrect use of the gerund: *Las actividades son jugando, caminando, comiendo.*

### **Recommendations**

The recommendations from previous years remain.

- Teachers must expose students to an even wider vocabulary and idiomatic expressions through the use of technology and teaching aides. Current topics (e.g. World Cup) should be used as resource material for exposing students to vocabulary and grammar structures, to stimulate interest as well as to encourage reading.
- Teachers are again urged to give students practice in the basics of letter and essay writing.
- Students need to be taught to expand on their points when writing.
- Teachers need to emphasize the importance of correct punctuation, paragraphs and correct spelling.
- More time needs to be spent on differentiating the use of “por” and “para”, “ser” and “estar” and the preterite and imperfect tenses.
- Other tenses ought not to be ignored- perfect, pluperfect, conditional.
- Verbs with similar meanings but used in different context should be emphasized – *pedir/preguntar, Tomar/llevar, ser/estar.*
- Teachers are encouraged to live the language as often as they can through their reading, travelling, social interactions, professional development etc.

### **Section III (Question 4/Question 5) – Contextual Announcement/Contextual Dialogue**

This section required candidates to choose (i) either to write a contextual announcement or (ii) to complete a contextual dialogue. Cues were given in English for both options and candidates were to use between 80 and 100 words to complete their responses.

The contextual announcement and the contextual dialogue were in keeping with the information outlined in the syllabus and therefore within the scope of candidates’ ability. However, most candidates opted to answer the contextual dialogue.

#### **Contextual Announcement**

The National Dance Company will be conducting auditions for an Independence Day concert. Write the announcement to be placed in the local newspaper.

Responses to ALL of the cues listed below MUST be included in the announcement.

- i. Purpose of the announcement
- ii. Age requirement
- iii. Experience necessary
- iv. Place, date and time of auditions
- v. Contact details

## Candidates' Performance

### Candidates' Strengths

Most candidates observed the rubric of the question and attempted to address all of the cues.

There was a satisfactory manifestation of sound grammatical competence and good vocabulary by the majority of the candidates. Examples of good usage of language included:

*Habr  audiciones de baile  
Vengan a participar en este evento especial  
Para que participen en el concierto*

### Candidates' Weaknesses

Many candidates who attempted this question did not show a solid command of grammar and knowledge of relevant vocabulary. Examples of errors included:

Errors in Grammar:

- Use of 'ser' or 'estar' with age instead of 'tener' ('debe ser 10 a os'; 'cuando estuve 16 a os')
- Incorrect use of 'ser' and 'estar' (*todo es invitado*) and 'ser' and 'haber' (*Ser  una actividad el d a de independencia*)
- Use of 'en' after time (*a las seis en la tarde*) as well as with date/days (*en el s bado*)
- Incorrect use of definite/indefinite articles (*la concierto del a o, las gente*)
- Inaccurate use of adjectives (*personas interesante*)
- Use of 'por' and 'para' for duration of time (*para dos a os*) also (*por m s informaci n*)
- Apocopation of *bueno/grande/primer/uno*
- Poor/lack of use of *saber* to express the ability to do something ('*Puedes bailar*' instead of '*Sabas bailar*'; '*Sabe como/que bailar*'; '*Queremos personas que conocen bailar*'

Errors in vocabulary:

- '*a son las cinco*' (*la actividad comienza a son las cinco*)
- '*tiempo*' for '*hora*' (*el tiempo del concierto es*)
- '*sies*' for '*seis*'; '*quinze*' for '*quince*'
- '*porque de*' for '*a causa de*'

Some candidates did not specify that the announcement was for auditions for a specific event and that experience was necessary and therefore their responses were limited. Furthermore, they seemed to have some knowledge of vocabulary but were challenged by incorrect spelling. Evidence of this was seen in the following:

- *bialar* for *bailar*
- *atenci n* for *atenci n*
- *esperencia* for *experiencia*
- *auditiones* for *audiciones*

Other examples of weakness in language proficiency included:

- *m s que dieciséis a os*
- *para mucho informaci n*
- *Ser  un concierto a la parque/ a la escuela/ al centro commercial*

### Contextual Dialogue

Ricky, a popular young singer, is being interviewed on television.

Responses to ALL of the cues listed below MUST be included in the dialogue.

- i. Greetings
- ii. How he was introduced to music
- iii. How he became a professional
- iv. How fame has affected his lifestyle
- v. Advice he gives to young singers.

### Candidates' Performance

#### Candidates' Strengths

Most candidates observed the rubric and attempted to address all of the cues. Even though there appeared to be challenges in interpretation and comprehension for some candidates, many were able to respond adequately to the demands of the question. Examples of good usage of language included:

*Me siento muy bien y bendecido/Me siento como un rey  
El apoyo de la gente me da ánimo para seguir triunfando  
Fui introducido a la música cuando cumplí siete años  
A veces fue difícil, la vida no es todo sol  
Todo es posible. Mantén tu cara en alto/ Nunca te des por vencido/ Nunca bota a tus sueños/ Es aconsejable que ellos trabajen duro y siempre crean en sus sueños*

#### Candidates' Weaknesses

Most candidates attempted this question but there was difficulty with some of responses that were provided to the questions. Although few candidates wrote either an inappropriate response or simply repeated parts of the question, most of them made a reasonable attempt at all of the cues in the dialogue. All candidates who attempted the dialogue were able to write an expression of greeting but some wrote 'Bienvenido' instead of 'No hay problema'/'No hay de que' or 'De nada'. Also, there was a misinterpretation of the interrogatives '¿Cuándo?' and '¿Cómo?' in cues four and five respectively and most of those responses were limited in content. However, the last cue was handled well by most candidates where they used the subjunctive to give advice; as is exemplified in candidates' strengths above.

Errors specific to grammar included:

- Use of 'tener' instead of 'haber' to form the perfect tense (*Tengo ganado dos premios*)
- Poor use of subject and verb agreement
- Poor use of negative words *ningún, ninguna (no experiencia necesita)*
- *Hora* instead of *tiempo (No paso mucha hora con mi familia)*
- Poor formation of Preterite tense especially with irregular or stem-changing verbs ('*Yo empecé a cantar ...../El introdució me.../Yo fui.../Yo tuve/tuvó....*)

A lack of vocabulary was not as critical this time, as candidates used words and expressions such as 'don', 'hinchas', 'es imprescindible', although some misunderstood 'premios' and 'musical'. However, the spelling of basic numbers (*seis, veinte, diecich,*) and other simple words, was a cause for concern.

### Recommendations

Teachers should continue to provide the necessary exposure to these two question types and give students constant practice in developing the contextual announcement and dialogue.

Students should be exposed to basic vocabulary and expressions related to different types of announcements/advertisements. Some examples of pertinent phrases are: *hay/habrá, se presenta, anuncio, atención, favor de, para más información.*

Students should be engaged in grammar exercises where they are assisted in recognizing their errors as well as that of their peers, and attempt to make the necessary corrections. Special attention must be given to the areas of weakness outlined in this report as well as in those of previous reports so that the repeated errors may be noted and addressed. (Examples: the personal 'a', *ser* and *estar, por* and *para, conocer* and *saber, subject/verb agreement, noun/adjective agreement).*

#### **Section IV (Question 6) – Reading Comprehension**

This question tests candidates' ability to read a passage in Spanish and then demonstrate comprehension skills by responding in English to questions posed in English and based on the passage they have read.

In at least three of the questions, candidates were asked to give explanations which demanded more than just giving answers that could be easily highlighted in the passage. These questions challenged the candidates' ability to use their first language of English to show their understanding of printed Spanish.

#### Candidates' Performance

Candidates showed that they need to continue working at not only acquiring vocabulary skills in order to achieve full comprehension of the passage, but on constantly revising their acquired vocabulary. In addition, while the use of English is not the focus of this question, and comprehension is, poor expression in English may prevent the candidate from achieving the maximum marks available,(as was the case in the June 2014 examination) especially in those instances when the candidates were asked to explain the actions/reactions of characters in the passage.

#### Candidates' Strengths

Generally, candidates were able to score at least one mark on most of the questions where more than one mark was awarded. Those candidates who scored full marks for the Reading Comprehension, in most cases expressed themselves very clearly in their sentence construction and choice of vocabulary in English. The majority of candidates are to be complimented for adhering to the instructions.

#### Candidates' Weaknesses

As at least three of the questions called for the candidates to 'explain', it must be noted that there was a general inability to do that. In too many cases the misspelling of key words needed to answer the questions tended to make it somewhat difficult to decipher answers. Candidates tended to write in exactly the way that they speak. There was, in some cases, poor sentence construction.

Some candidates either did not letter their responses, or doubled the lettering, e.g. two responses with the letter 'h'.

There were those candidates who tried to get around their inadequate vocabulary by directing the Examiner to the line in the passage where the answer may be found, e.g. The author's father always has to buy (lines 4-5).

#### Comments on Individual Questions

Question (a)

How does the writer describe Sherma?

Suggested response : *Sherma was honest and incompetent/honest and absent-minded.*

Incorrect response : Sherma was incomplete and destructive/She was a disaster.

Some candidates took '*incompetente*' to mean incomplete, and '*distráida*' to mean destructive or distractive. Some even used the title as their answer.

Question (b)

What does the author's mother always have to do after Sherma is finished ironing?

Suggested response: *She has to ensure that the iron is turned off/unplugged.*

Incorrect response: She has to re-iron the clothes.

Those who did not understand '*asegurarse*' and '*apagada*' took their cue from Sherma being described as incompetent and so had the mother making sure that the ironing was done properly or doing it over.

Question (c)

What does the author's father often have to buy?

Suggested response: *He often buys socks and shirts.*

Incorrect response: He buys shirts and ties/ clothes for Sherma/calcium tablets.

The incorrect responses here highlighted a lack of retention of vocabulary.

Question (d)

Why does the author's father have to make these purchases?

Suggested response: *Sherma either burns them or destroys them with bleach.*

Incorrect response: The iron was damaged and destroyed the colour.

Perhaps candidates did not link '*quemar*' and '*plancha*'. They knew something was damaged, but not 'what' and 'how'.

Question (e)

What does the family frequently have to change in the house?

Suggested response: *They frequently have to change the locks.*

Incorrect response: They changed the hole in the door/ the curtains.

Some candidates did not know '*las cerraduras*'. They thought it meant curtains, articles of furniture. Some even thought that this word meant 'keys'.

Question (f)

Explain the reason for these frequent changes.

Suggested response: *Because Sherma often lost the keys to the front door.*

Incorrect response: Because Sherma broke the key in the principal's door.

Candidates who answered (e) incorrectly did not get this answer either. ‘*La puerta principal*’ was believed to be the principal’s door.

Question (g)

What was Sherma asked to do last week instead of coming to work?

Suggested response: *She was asked to go and look for the keys.*

Incorrect response: She was asked to go outside/ She was told not to come back.

‘*Fuera*’ suggested ‘outside’ to some candidates. Some candidates also thought that given Sherma’s record she was fired.

Question (h)

What did Sherma demand afterwards?

Suggested response: *Sherma demanded that the author’s father pay her for that day.*

Incorrect response: Sherma demanded to be fired. / Sherma demanded a raise.

The majority of candidates answered this question well.

Question (i)

Explain the father’s reaction to Sherma’s demand.

Suggested response: *He was astonished that she wanted to be paid for a day that she did not work.*

Incorrect response: He was surprised at her demand.

This was where many candidates lost out on full marks. They did not explain his reaction.

Question (j)

Explain why Sherma is still employed with the family.

Suggested response: *In spite of her incompetence, Sherma is honest and honest people are hard to find.*

Incorrect response: Sherma sings with her honesty. / The weight of her flaws can count on her honesty.

Most candidates understood that Sherma was honest. What they failed to do was to explain her honesty in spite of her incompetence and the fact that it is so difficult to find honest people.

### **Further Comments and Recommendations**

To candidates:

Candidates are to be commended for heeding many of our previous recommendations regarding identifying your answers, although there were some candidates who did not.

The following points should be borne in mind for improving performance:

- The allocation of marks points to the possible number of elements required in the answer.
- Avoid including Spanish in your answers for Section IV
- Please skip a line between written responses. It tends to make your work more legible.

- Read widely to develop an active appreciation for sentence construction, widen your knowledge base and stimulate your imagination to the extent that all three of these elements will come together for you

To teachers:

- The teaching of vocabulary remains critical for Spanish
- The Reading Comprehension is as important as the other questions. Candidates should be trained to answer questions as completely as possible, and to use correct spelling and sentence construction. The following websites have been selected to assist you in these areas.  
[www.weeklyreader.com/article/top-tips-teaching-reading-comprehension](http://www.weeklyreader.com/article/top-tips-teaching-reading-comprehension)  
[www.teachervision.com](http://www.teachervision.com)  
[www.brighthouseeducation.com/spanish...plans..reading-spanish-passages](http://www.brighthouseeducation.com/spanish...plans..reading-spanish-passages)  
[www.readingrockets.org/article/3479](http://www.readingrockets.org/article/3479)  
[www.colorincolorado.org/educators/teaching/vocab](http://www.colorincolorado.org/educators/teaching/vocab)  
[education.cu-portland.edu/blog/curriculum-instruction](http://education.cu-portland.edu/blog/curriculum-instruction)  
[funforspanishteachers.blogspot.com](http://funforspanishteachers.blogspot.com)  
[www.spanishprograms.com](http://www.spanishprograms.com)

### **Paper 03 – Oral Examination**

The oral examination tested the ability of candidates to: (1) produce appropriate responses in Spanish to a number of situations testing specific functions, (2) read aloud a short passage in Spanish and (3) carry on a conversation in the target language by responding to questions based on four out of six topics set out in the syllabus, namely, Daily Routine, School and Career, Sports and Recreation and Travel.

#### **Section 1 – Responses to Situations/Instructions**

This section required the candidates to produce appropriate responses in Spanish to situations/instructions described in English in keeping with the function specific to the situation.

Performance on this section demonstrated a range of abilities among the candidates. Some candidates performed very well in this section producing responses which were not only appropriate but which were expressed correctly, exhibiting sound grammatical structures, a wide range of vocabulary and ample use of idioms. These candidates delivered their responses with spontaneity, self-confidence and a high degree of fluency, providing very intuitive and interesting answers.

Some examples of the more successful idiomatic expressions produced by students are:

Function: Expressing disappointment

- *¡ Qué barbaridad!*
- *¡ Dios mío!*
- *¡ Ay no!*
- *¡ Ay Caramba!*
- *¡ Qué lástima!*

Function: Expressing good wishes

- *Que te mejores pronto*

Function: Expressing surprise

*¡ Qué sorpresa!*

Many candidates also performed weakly in this section as they showed very little command of grammar and vocabulary to handle the examination competently. Some candidates attempted to produce a response which

could be rewarded for appropriateness but the language was severely flawed with grammatical inaccuracies and poor vocabulary. Many candidates seemed puzzled by the questions and struggled to put their ideas together in Spanish, which often led to a number of Anglicisms.

Many candidates did not provide a response and requested to skip some of the situations. In some cases where an attempt was made, the response was too distorted to be awarded marks. Also, many candidates do not read the situations carefully and as a result give inappropriate responses.

For example, a situation may require the candidate to ask a question eg. E2(b). Many candidates made statements instead of asking questions.

Idiomatic expressions containing errors were:

Saying you forgot something

- *Se me olvidé la/el ...*
- *Me olvidé mi ...*

Function; Declining an invitation

- *Soy enfermo*
- *Tengo a estudiar*
- *Soy ocupado*
- *Mi papá muerto*

Function: Giving a command

- *Va a la cama*
- *Va a la dormir*
- *Tiene cuidado en camino*
- *No salir antes de las seis*
- *Levas con tú*
- *No miro la televisión*

Function: Apologising

- *Siento que levanto tan tarde*
- *Lo siento, mi amiga estaba accidente*
- *Yo daría una nueva de par*

Function: Enquiring about someone

- *¿ Qué tu problema?*
- *¿ Qué hay de nueva?*
- *¿ Dónde estuves?*

Function: expressing good wishes

- *Ten un buen viaje*
- *Todo vaya bien* instead of *todo saldrá bien*

Function: Relating an event

- *David no lavos los platos*

Function: Making suggestions

- *Sugero que vamos al cine*
- *Recomendó que vamos a la playa*

Idiomatic expressions used in the wrong context:

Function: expressing disappointment

- *¡Qué asco!*

Examples of responses which highlight weaknesses in language (grammar and vocabulary) include:

1. Inability to use imperatives. Examples:

- *No ir al cine*
- *no mirar la tele*
- *Comprarme la comida*
- *llamas tu profesora*

2. The use of the verb 'ser' to show location and temporary condition. Examples:

- *¿Dónde es la iglesia? E 5 (a)*
- *No soy en la clase*
- *El autobús fui tarde C3(b)*
- *El banco es cerca de la escuela. E 5 (b)*

3. Incorrect use of *¿Adónde?* Example : *¿Adónde está la iglesia?*

4. Incorrect subject-verb agreement. Example : '*El autobus fui tarde*' or '*yo compras comida*'

5. Incorrect noun-adjective agreement. Example; '*los zapatos blanco*'

6. Use of the conjugated verb after '*poder*'. Example: '*puede me ayuda*'

7. Incorrect position of the object pronoun. Example; '*puede me ayudar*'

8. Incorrect conjugation of the irregular verbs in the future tense. Example : '*hacerán*'

9. Use of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular person of the verb '*ir*' for the familiar affirmative command. Example: '*va a tu cama*' or '*vas al mercado*'

10. Incorrect use of '*gustar*'. Example:

- *Me gusto los zapatos*
- *Me gusta las manzanas*
- *Te gusto*

11. Not applying the double negative rule. Example; '*recibo nada*'

12. Misuse of subjunctive. Example: '*sugiero que vamos a la playa*'

13. Incorrect use of '*por*' and '*para*'. Example: '*gracias para la invitación*'

14. The use of '*muy*' for '*mucho*'. Example: '*hay muy tráfico*'

## OTHER EXAMPLES:

Common misuse of sound vocabulary and general improper use of infinitives include the following:

- *¿Dónde es la tienda de Juan?/ mi mamá no es en la casa ( misuse of ser and estar)*
- *Excúsame .( disculpe/con permiso)*
- *No puedo buscar mis papeles (encontrar)*
- *Refundar ( devolver/reembolsar)*
- *Si mamá, yo comprende (comprendo)*
- *Usted son un maestro excelente ( es)*
- *Presento ( regalo)*
- *Explanación ( explicación)*
- *¿por qué estás arriba? ( despierto)*
- *El zapato es malo ( de mala calidad)*
- *¿por qué no hay en tu cama? (estás)*
- *Yo promesa (prometo)*
- *Tu recibido un buen regalo (recibiste)*

It should also be noted that some candidates responded to the situations by using reported speech instead of direct speech as required.

## Recommendations

Candidates appear not to be fully aware of the functions they need to know in order to respond to the situations presented. Teachers are encouraged to develop exercises to adequately afford students the opportunity to practise these functions orally. Practice in responding to situations orally must begin in the early stages in the teaching/learning process.

## Section II - Reading Passages

This section assessed candidates' ability to read a passage in Spanish (125-130 words) demonstrating correct pronunciation of discrete sounds, good intonation and fluency. Candidates exhibited a wide range of competencies in this section from very good to very weak. Excellent readers exhibited a solid knowledge of the Spanish sound system, were well acquainted with the rules of stress and accentuation and read with admirable fluency.

Weaker candidates continue to be challenged by the reading component of the oral examination. It is indeed a cause for concern that after being exposed to the language for several years many candidates exhibit ignorance of the fundamentals of the Spanish sound system. Pronunciation was faulty and anglicized in many cases. It was clear that many candidates did not know understand the content of the passages, thus producing very disjointed reading.

The following are some of the problems which candidates presented:

- The majority of candidates stumbled on words containing one or more of the following letter combinations:
  - *que: enfoque, riqueza*
  - *qui: equivoque*
  - *gue: sigue*
  - *z: utilizarlos, confianza, adelgazar, eficaz*
  - *h: hacer, ha*
  - *ge: gente, agente, escogen*
  - *je: viaje*
  - *au: aunque, autoestima, aumento*
  - *ch: chamacas*

- *ae; aeropuerto*
  - *ll: ballenas*
  - *ee: preesco;ar*
  - *jue: juega*
  - *ie: nadie*
  - *j: relajarse, manejable*
- Words such as: *música, virtual, cerebral, resisten* which resembled their English equivalents were pronounced with the English accent and intonation. Unfamiliar words like *indudablemente, agobiante* posed a challenge for some.
  - Words containing adjacent strong vowels and diphthongs seemed to pose a problem for candidates in terms of finding the correct tonic syllable: *océano, balnearios, ejercicios*
  - Verbs conjugated in the third person were commonly mispronounced, with the stress on the last syllable. Noted errors were: *Mandan, repesentan, despiertan, ofrecen*. Here the stress was placed on the last syllable instead of the second to last.

## PROBLEMATIC WORDS

### Passage 1

*Diccionarios, redacciones, ortografía, utilizarlos, línea*

### Passage 2

*Preescolares, críos, habilidades, indudablemente, Einstein, autestima*

### Passage 3

*Tonificar, gente, adelgazar, equivoque, manejable, relajado*

### Passage 4

*Coincide, jorobados, avistamiento, lactancia, ballenato*

### Passage 5

*Multidisciplinarios*

### Passage 6

*Embotellamientos, balnearios*

## Recommendations

Teachers must ensure that the sound system of the language is understood from very early in the learning process. Syllabification and stress are major pitfalls which must be addressed from very early. Spanish must be constantly used in the classroom and opportunities must be created for students to produce the language as often as possible.

## Section III – Guided Conversation

The Guided Conversation section of the oral examination tests the ability of the candidates to respond to a number of questions based on four topics. This year the topics on which the candidates were tested were Daily Routine, School and Career, Sports and Recreation and Travel. Candidates were asked four questions on each of the topics and were assessed on comprehension and spontaneity, fluency and expression.

This section of the oral examination continues to be the most challenging for candidates. Some candidates at the upper end conversed easily and with great accuracy. Their answers to the questions were spontaneous and tended to be extended, demonstrating a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical correctness.

However, the vast majority of the candidates struggled with this section, handicapped by a limited vocabulary and poor knowledge of grammatical structures.

The errors in grammar evident in this section were much the same as those mentioned in Section 1 and included:

- General weakness in the conjugation and appropriate usage of verbs.
- Lack of concord between noun/adjective and subject/verb
- Incorrect use of *ser* and *estar*, *por* and *para*
- Difficulty in using object pronouns

The following are some specific comments on each of the four topics:

### Daily Routine

Many Candidates handled the questions in this section quite well. Most students responded promptly without asking for the question to be repeated. The main difficulty encountered in this section was using the verb *preferir*, followed by another verb. Example; *prefiero leo el libro y escucho musica.*

Many candidates did not know how to respond to the question *¿De qué manera tus responsabilidades en casa afectan tus estudios?* Perhaps they did not understand what the first three words meant.

Many candidates misinterpreted the question: *¿Hasta qué hora duermes los fines de semana?*, giving the time they went to bed.

Also the words *de postre* were understood by very few.

### School and Career

This topic was generally handled well. However candidates did not use the appropriate tenses when required. For example: *Si fueras director/directora, ¿qué cambios harías en tu escuela?* Response: *Yo cambio el uniforme.*

Candidates were unable to give a full description of their uniform with simple responses such as: *mi uniforme es camisa blanca y falda gris.* The very noticeable error was lack of noun/adjective agreement in the description:

*Mi camisa es blanco*

*Mis zapatos son negro*

### Sports and Recreation

Candidates encountered difficulty with some of the questions in this section because they lacked the necessary vocabulary to answer fully.

For example: *¿Cuáles son los beneficios de participar en un deporte?* The weaker candidates were unable to respond to this. Many responded to: *¿Cuál es tu grupo musical favorito?* by giving the type of music they like such as soca and pop.

For the question *¿Qué clase de novelas te gustan?* Candidates focused on the word 'clase' and gave the names of subjects that they are currently studying.

The question: *dime algo de una película que has visto recientemente* generally received either no response at all or simply the name of a movie.

### Travel

This topic was the most challenging for the candidates. The most challenging questions included:

*¿Cómo se puede viajar hoy en día?* This question was frequently misinterpreted to be “how does the candidate travel?”. Example: *viajo en carro*.

*¿Por qué viaja la gente?* Only the more able candidates responded fully to this question.

*¿Es fácil viajar entre las islas del Caribe? Explica.* Many candidates responded “yes” or “no” to this as they were unable to provide an explanation.

*¿Qué compran los turistas cuando visitan tu país?* Here, instead of saying what tourists buy candidates said where they buy. Example: *en el Mercado*.

*Describe unas vacaciones inolvidables.* For this question many candidates responded: *no sé* because they could not handle the question. Some of those who responded did not use the appropriate tenses - preterite/imperfect.

### **Recommendations**

Teachers must ensure that the communicative approach to language be adopted in the classroom. As far as possible use the target language in the classroom so that students will become comfortable hearing Spanish around them. Extensive use of Spanish in the classroom will not only strengthen students' listening and speaking skills, but will also increase their confidence when communicating in Spanish. Students must be encouraged to pay attention to the details which are required in the questions and listen carefully to the demands of the question.