



**CARIBBEAN
EXAMINATIONS
COUNCIL**

SPANISH



Equipaje
Equipaje de mano
Equipo de música
Error
Escaparate
Escobilla
Escribir
Escritor, a

Subject Report with Exemplars

June/July 2024



CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

JANUARY 2024

**SPANISH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY**

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INTRODUCTION

This guide has been put together using student responses to the 2024 January examination in CSEC Spanish. We have kept the report according to the original design of the examination paper.

In January 2024, 247 candidates sat the Spanish General Proficiency examination.

Approximately 44 per cent of the 2024 candidates achieved Grades I–III compared to 66 per cent in 2023 and 52 per cent in 2022.

Candidates' performance decreased across all four profiles when compared with performances in 2023.

PAPER 01 – MULTIPLE CHOICE

This paper, which comprised two sections, assessed candidates' ability to listen to and understand a number of aural items in the target language and to read and understand a number of written items. Both sections required candidates to have sufficient mastery of essential grammar and vocabulary. Performance in 2024 declined when compared with the performance in 2023.

Section 1 – Directed Situations

Demands of the Question

This question required that candidates carefully read the directions regarding each of ten situations described in English and then provide appropriate written responses in Spanish to each situation. Candidates' knowledge of Spanish vocabulary, inclusive of idiomatic expressions, and Spanish grammar rules and structure were key elements used to assess candidates' competencies in tackling this question. Marks were awarded if the response included all details in the situation and adequately communicated meaning. Responses were categorized as appropriate or partially appropriate and were awarded marks accordingly, with penalties for errors in quality of language. Inappropriate responses were awarded no mark even if the language of expression was perfect.

Candidates' Strengths

The situations were considered manageable. Most candidates responded in the target language. However, there were some candidates who did not attempt to respond to all situations or used English for most of them.

Candidates' Weaknesses

Candidates seemed weak in the use of correct/appropriate vocabulary to respond to the situations given. There were many candidates who would have received better scores if they had not made careless errors, especially with regard to spelling.

An area of challenge for many candidates was in converting what would be an appropriate answer in English to Spanish. In the process general grammar and vocabulary errors were noted.

Additionally, there were candidates who misinterpreted what they were expected to do with the information in the situation described, and therefore neglected to include all the elements required for a full response. There were also some candidates who unnecessarily complicated their responses, writing extended pieces where a shorter answer would have sufficed. Some candidates were penalized for writing more than one sentence. *Candidates need to understand that the more they write, the more mistakes they are likely to make so it is best to keep sentences short and to the point.*

General Areas of Weakness

Grammatical Errors

- Inability to correctly form commands both familiar and formal.
- Inappropriate uses of *Ser* and *Estar*
- Lack of gender agreement
- Incorrect conjugation of verbs

General Comments Per Item

(a) *Your friends want you to go somewhere after school, but you need your parents' permission. Write the text you send to your father asking for permission and promising to do something if you are allowed to go.*

Function: Asking permission with a promise

Full Response: *Papa, permítame ir al cine con mis amigos y voy a lavar tu coche todos los sábados.*

Most candidates were able to provide an appropriate response to this situation although quite a few scored partial marks because they failed to provide a promise. Students need to be taught how to find another way of expressing ideas and not depend solely on knowledge of specific vocabulary. *Ir a + inf* is the simplest way of expressing a promise.

Common errors included the following.

- Inability to use the verb 'promise' in Spanish, for example, *promiso, promito*
- Problems with the expression 'my friends and I', for example, *mi y mis amigos, yo y mis amigos*
- Lack of agreement regarding possessive pronouns with the noun, for example, *Mi amigos, mi padres*
- Unfamiliarity with the use of the infinitive after a conjugated verb, for example, *Puedo voy....* and *prometo lavo*
- Misuse of *después* and *después de*, for example, *después la clase*
- Incorrect conjugation of the verb *querer*, for example, *quieremos*

(b) *You arrive at the hairdresser for an appointment, but no one is there. Write the note that you see on the front door saying where he/she went and when he/she will return.*

Function: Providing information

Full Response: *Fui al médico pero voy a regresar en una hora.*

Although most candidates were able to give an appropriate response to the first part of this situation, many struggled with the second part.

Common errors included the following.

- Incorrect form of *ser* in the preterit tense, for example, 'Yo **fue** al banco'
- Misuse of *ser* and *estar*, for example, '**Soy** en el banco'.
- Unfamiliarity with the use of *en* (meaning 'at'), when referring to being at a particular place, for example, 'Estoy **al** banco'.
- Misuse of the verbs *regresar*, *volver* and *devolver*, for example, 'Voy a devolver en una hora'.
- Misuse of *en la tarde* and *de la tarde*, for example, '...a las dos **en** la tarde'
- Misuse of *a las* and *son las*, for example, 'Regreso **son** las dos de la tarde'

(c) *There is a big crowd at the mall because of the arrival of a local celebrity. Write the text message you send to your friend saying what the celebrity is doing and how the crowd is behaving.*

Function: Providing information

Full response: *Machel Montano está cantando y la gente está muy animada.*

For this response many candidates interpreted what the famous person was doing as just being in the shopping centre. As a result of this they gained partial marks. Others lost marks for not saying how the crowd was reacting.

Common errors included the following.

- Misuse of *ser* and *estar*, for example, *Machel **es** en el centro comercial/ Machel **es** cantando*
- Misspelling of shopping centre, for example, '**centre** comercial'
- Misuse of *en el* and *al*, for example, *Machel está **al** centro comercial*

(d) *Your community centre is having a concert. Write an Instagram post giving details about the cost of tickets and how they can be obtained.*

Function: Providing details

Full response: *Las entradas cuestan 20 dólares y puede-es-en comprarlas en el centro comunitario.*

This situation caused some difficulty for many candidates who were unable to use the appropriate grammar and vocabulary to fulfill its demands.

Common errors included the following.

- Unfamiliarity with the word for tickets, for example, *ticketas, boletas, billetes*
- Misspelling of the word concert, for example, *concertio, concerto, concerta*
- Use of *por* instead of *para*, for example, *las entradas por el concierto*
- Misspelling of *comunidad* and *dólares*
- Use of *dinero* for *dólar*

(e) *Your teacher is concerned about your little sister's behaviour. Write the text message that your teacher sends to your parents giving two reasons why he/she is concerned.*

Function: Giving reasons

Full response: *Juanita habla demasiado en las clases y no hace sus deberes.*

Most candidates were able to provide an appropriate response for this situation although many responses were riddled with errors.

Common errors included the following.

- Use of the familiar instead of formal when addressing parents, for example, *Tu hija*
- Misuse of *bien y bueno-a*, for example, *Maria no hace bueno en sus exámenes/no es bien estudiante.*
- Lack of agreement of noun and adjective, for example, *Maria es muy flojo.*

(f) *Your street is closed off to traffic. Write the sign that is placed at the top of the street explaining the closure and suggesting to motorists what to do*

Function: Explaining and suggesting

Full response: *Están reparando la calle y usted/es pueden usar otra calle*

This situation seemed to be one of the more problematic ones. Many candidates did not attempt it and scored zero. Those who did respond lost marks for grammar and vocabulary. Many responses indicated that the road was closed but gave no reason, apparently lacking the vocabulary to express reasons for closure.

Common errors included the following.

- Inability to use commands, for example, *Usar la otra calle*
- Confusion with the use of *mucho* and *muy*, for example, *Hay muy tráfico*
- Lack of agreement between subject and adjective, for example, *la calle está cerrado*
- Misuse of *ser* and *estar*, for example, *La calle es cerrada*

(g) *The mailman arrives at your home with a package but no one is there. Write the note that he leaves in your mailbox informing your family of when and where the package can be collected.*

Function: Informing

Full Response: *Usted/es puede/n recoger el paquete en la oficina de correos cada día hasta las cuatro de la tarde.*

Many candidates attempted to respond to this situation but responses were riddled with errors. There were many instances of no response seemingly because candidates lacked the required vocabulary. Candidates laboured to find vocabulary for words *package, to collect* and *post office*.

Some candidates gave a place where package could be collected but not when and as such scored partial marks. Very few candidates were familiar with the vocabulary for post office in Spanish.

Common errors included the following.

- The use of *a* instead of *en* when talking about a place, for example, *Puede recoger el paquete a la oficina..*
- Unfamiliarity with the Spanish word for post office, for example, oficina de **post, oficio postal**
- Expressing time in Spanish, for example, *son las* versus *a las ...*

(h) *Your cousin is planning a summer trip and is trying to encourage you to go with him/her. Write the message that he/she sends you inviting you to go with him/her and saying how you will benefit from the trip.*

Function: Suggesting

Full Response: *Ven conmigo y vas a poder visitar lugares históricos.*

Many candidates lost marks in this situation for not expressing an invitation. They simply said that they were going on a vacation instead of inviting the person to go with them. Others issued the invite but did not say how it would benefit the person.

Common errors included the following.

- Unfamiliarity with the imperative, for example, *Vienes conmigo*
- Use of *usted* instead of *tu* when addressing the cousin, for example, *Usted va a*
- Lack of agreement between subject and verb, for example, *Tú puede...*
- Unfamiliarity with subjunctive after *querer que*, for example, *Quiero que **vas** conmigo*
- Misuse of the verb *gustar*, for example, ***Gustarás la cultura/Te gusta fotos***

(i) You want your sister's opinion on an activity that you can do with your best friend for her birthday. Write the text message she sends to you recommending an activity, with a reason.

Function: Recommending

Full response: *Puedes ir al cine con ella porque hay una película nueva que quiere ver.*

This situation was reasonably well done. Candidates were able to suggest a place to go and give a reason for choosing the place, although with some errors.

Common errors included the following.

- Use of infinitive instead of imperative, for example, *Ir al cine*
- Use of *bien* instead of *bueno/a*, for example, *la playa es muy bien*
- Lack of contraction with *a* and *el* (to *al*) for example, *Puedes ir a el cine*
- Use of *ella* for *su/s*, for example, *Puedes ir con ella amigos*
- *A* instead of *en* to express being at a particular place, for example, *La comida a este restaurante es buena*

(j) While on a vacation with his friends, your brother encounters a problem. Write the text message he sends to your parents mentioning the problem and how they can help.

Function: Explaining

Full response: *Me robaron el dinero, pueden enviarme cien dólares.*

Most candidates attempted this situation although some said they needed help without mentioning what kind of help was needed.

Common errors included the following.

- Use of past participle for preterit, for example, *Paul fracturado el brazo/Yo perdido mi dinero*
- Exclusion of *para* (meaning in order to), for example, *Necesito dinero comprar comida*
- Addressing parents in the singular form, for example, *Mamá y papá, ¿puedes....?*
- Not using the personal *a*, for example, *Necesito llevar mi amigo al hospital*

Candidate's Response to Part (a) to (j) — Sample 1

- (a) Your friends want you to go somewhere after school but you need your parents' permission. Write the text you send to your father asking for permission and promising to do something if you are allowed to go.

¿Puedo ir con mis amigas al centro comercial esta tarde por favor? Prometo llegar a casa temprano.

(3 marks)

- (b) You arrive at the hairdresser for an appointment but no one is there. Write the note that you see on the front door saying where he/she went and when he/she will return.

Fui al supermercado para comprar refrescos pero regresaré a las cinco de la tarde.

(3 marks)

- (c) There is a big crowd at the mall because of the arrival of a local celebrity. Write the text message you send to your friend saying what the celebrity is doing and how the crowd is behaving.

Michael Jackson está sacando fotos con la gente aquí pero la gente está gritando y el centro comercial está ocupado.

(3 marks)

- (d) Your community centre is having a concert. Write an Instagram post giving details about the cost of tickets and how they can be obtained.

..... Las entradas cuestan doscientos dolares y pueden.....
..... comprarlas en la oficina aqui en San Juan.....
.....
.....

(3 marks)

- (e) Your teacher is concerned about your little sister's behaviour. Write the text message that your teacher sends to your parents giving TWO reasons why he/she is concerned.

.....  Tu hija no está haciendo su tarea y no habla.....
..... con las profesoras.....
.....
.....

(3 marks)

- (f) Your street is closed off to traffic. Write the sign that is placed at the top of the street explaining the closure and suggesting to motorists what to do.

..... Se prohíbe entrar porque se cayó un árbol y.....
..... puede usar la otra calle.....
.....
.....

(3 marks)

- (g) The mailman arrives at your home with a package but no one is there. Write the note that he leaves in your mailbox informing your family of when and where the package can be collected.

..... Ustedes pueden recoger el paquete en la.....
..... oficina a las tres de la tarde mañana.....
.....
.....

(3 marks)

- (h) Your cousin is planning a summer trip and is trying to encourage you to go with him/her. Write the message that he/she sends you inviting you to go with him/her and saying how you will benefit from the trip.

Vamos a España para pasar dos semanas
parque vas a divertirte y aprender más español

(3 marks)

- (i) You want your sister's opinion on an activity that you can do with your best friend for her birthday. Write the text message she sends to you recommending an activity, with a reason.

Recomiendo que vayas al restaurante "Picante"
porque es bonito y barato

(3 marks)

- (j) While on a vacation with his friends, your brother encounters a problem. Write the text message he sends to your parents mentioning the problem and how they can help.

Olvidé las llaves de mi casa esta delante de la puerta
y las olvidé traer conmigo pero no puedo guardarlas
para mí

(3 marks)

Examiner's Comments

This is an example of an excellent script. All situations were answered appropriately with all necessary elements included. The candidate uses correct grammar and appropriate vocabulary. Responses are not overly lengthy but to the point. The candidate seems to have read the situations closely before attempting a response thus getting full marks for appropriateness, and correct grammar and vocabulary.

Candidate's Response to Part (a) to (j) — Sample 2

- (b) You arrive at the hairdresser for an appointment but no one is there. Write the note that you see on the front door saying where he/she went and when he/she will return.

Muy buenas tardes querido cliente.
Estamos cerrado por hora de almuerzo.
En una hora volveremos abrir.
disculpa las molestias.

(3 marks)

- (c) There is a big crowd at the mall because of the arrival of a local celebrity. Write the text message you send to your friend saying what the celebrity is doing and how the crowd is behaving.

Hola amiga soy Anna. No te lo vas a creer pero hay una celebridad dando autografos en el centro comercial y la gente esta muy alborotada.

(3 marks)

- (d) Your community centre is having a concert. Write an Instagram post giving details about the cost of tickets and how they can be obtained.

Hola gente de Instagram estamos en el concierto y hay mucha gente comprando boletos en el estadio. Estan a un buen precio.

(3 marks)

- (e) Your teacher is concerned about your little sister's behaviour. Write the text message that your teacher sends to your parents giving TWO reasons why he/she is concerned.

Buenas tardes soy la profesora su hija Maria. le mando este mensaje ya que la actitud de su hija no es aceptable en la clase y

(3 marks)

- (f) Your street is closed off to traffic. Write the sign that is placed at the top of the street explaining the closure and suggesting to motorists what to do.

La calle esta cerrada debido al trafico
de hoy en dia. Entimos las molestias.
Puede tomar la calle a las izquierda
y despues a la derecha para su camino.
(3 marks)

- (g) The mailman arrives at your home with a package but no one is there. Write the note that he leaves in your mailbox informing your family of when and where the package can be collected.

Muy buenas tardes familia. Yoyle su
paquete habia llegado pero por desgra-
cia no habia nadie para reclamarlo.
lo puede reclamar en las oficinas -
(3 marks)

- (h) Your cousin is planning a summer trip and is trying to encourage you to go with him/her. Write the message that he/she sends you inviting you to go with him/her and saying how you will benefit from the trip.

Hola sobrino como estas soy Timmie
me gustaria saber si quieres venir
con migo a un plan vacacional. Se que
te gustan los parques de agua.
(3 marks)

- (i) You want your sister's opinion on an activity that you can do with your best friend for her birthday. Write the text message she sends to you recommending an activity, with a reason.

Hola hermana soy Samantha, sabes que
mi cumpleaños y me gustaria que
hicieras algo como un concierto
con tu amigo. Te lo recompensare luego.
(3 marks)

- (j) While on a vacation with his friends, your brother encounters a problem. Write the text message he sends to your parents mentioning the problem and how they can help.

Hola.....mama.....y.....papa.....s.y.....angel.....y.....tengo.....
un.....problema.....con.....una.....de.....mis.....amigos.....
y.....es.....que.....por.....accidente.....se.....comia.....
una.....comida.....en.....mal.....estado.....

(3 marks)

Examiner's Comments

This is an example of a script that could very well have gone in the very good to excellent category but lost marks for writing too much. As a result, a cutoff point had to be given and for almost all the responses, the candidate scored partial for not having included all the elements in the response. This is a very good example of how one can be penalized for disregarding the given instructions.

Recommendations

Teachers should do the following.

- Have frequent sessions using sample directed situations from varied CXC past papers with a focus on the language functions. This would help students gain a greater awareness of the role of the language functions in helping to achieve accuracy and appropriateness of responses.
- Conduct grammar sessions in thematic contexts so that students learn varied vocabulary and verbs in the context of topics such as shopping, travel, school, home and family etc.
- Teach students about circumlocution, that is, that if they cannot say something in one way, they should find another way of getting the message over.
- Have spelling exercises especially with words that bear close similarity to English words, focusing on developing a keen awareness in students regarding consonants that cannot be doubled in a Spanish word, and Spanish words with the b and v and d consonants; also words using ll instead of y. Activities that practice and reinforce correct spelling of other words in the target language should be included in teaching/learning activities.
- Use review and reinforcement grammar activities to further reinforce the following.
 - The use of *ser* and *estar*
 - Using the conjunction *y*, particularly when words that follow the conjunction are words that begin with the letter *i*
 - Advising or making recommendations using both the formal and informal registers
 - Expressing commands
 - The agreement of adjectives with nouns in Spanish
 - Preterit and imperfect tenses
 - Conditional and future tenses
- Drill students in reading the question carefully, being specific to the information required and recognizing the function which is required. In guiding their writing, teachers should emphasize the need for students to underline the key words and phrases in the situation so that they do not omit important information when constructing the responses.
- Encourage students to embrace the unique use of accents in Spanish especially in cases where they change the meaning of the word since their presence or absence will certainly cause them to lose marks.
- Teach students brevity in their responses. A significant number of candidates were unable to respond in one sentence so practice in this area is necessary. Teachers should encourage students to be direct (to the point) in their responses as lengthy responses may lead to careless errors which may prove costly. In addition, students need to be guided on how to link two sentences by replacing the full stop (.) with a semicolon (;) or with the conjunction *y*.
- Reinforce how to write questions. Many candidates omitted the interrogation marks at the beginning and end of questions.
- Modern language departments should work in tandem with the English departments because there is a general breakdown in the comprehension of English words.

To Candidates

- Candidates are encouraged to write more legibly, especially when writing accents or dots above vowels.
- Avoid writing, erasing and then rewriting (especially from pencil to pen). This creates a type of double print when copying is done and this makes the work difficult to read.
- Avoid writing within the margins of the response sheet since scanning is done based on the margin parameters and therefore, information outside of those parameters would be lost.
- Many candidates could have improved their performance by simply reviewing what they wrote.
- Improvements in this area of the examination require some basic rules that candidates need to follow — be brief and direct in responding to situations, avoid long responses and avoid giving a preamble to the response. Those situations which were longest tended to be a lot more disjointed.
- Exposure to more idiomatic expressions and the development of a wider range of vocabulary would improve the quality of responses.
- To ensure that responses are appropriate, candidates need to read and highlight the key functions being tested in each situation before attempting a response
- Candidates should not try to translate the situation. There are different ways of saying something without using the vocabulary used in the prompt.

Question 2 – Letter

Demands of the question

Candidates were required to produce a letter of 130–150 words based on a topic which fell well within the range of students at secondary level. Candidates were assessed on their flow of language, coherence, appropriateness to the topic, grammar, and vocabulary. The cues outlined gave candidates the opportunity to express themselves in writing with an adequate range of vocabulary and grammatical structures. The requirements for the letter fell well within the scope of candidates at this level. Most candidates attempted a response. The marks fell generally between the satisfactory and limited category, with many responses falling within the moderate and limited band. The topic was current and was one to which the candidates could easily relate.

LETTER

You responded to an advertisement online and got the job as a salesperson in your favourite store. Write a letter to your friend in Santo Domingo in which you include

- i. what kind of store it is and what the job entails*
- ii. how you prepared for your interview and your reaction when you got the job*
- iii. something interesting that happened during your first week*
- iv. how you plan to spend your first pay cheque.*

Candidates' performance

Strengths

Most candidates attempted the question. The following strengths were displayed.

- The cues were often followed.
- Fewer students wrote the day and year in words.
- The beginning and ending of the letter were well known.

Examples

Espero que tengas buena salud

Estoy escribiendo para decirte

¿Cómo te vas?

Escríbeme pronto

Saludos a tu familia

- The more competent candidates showed knowledge of tenses, including that of irregular verbs. The correct use of grammar and vocabulary created a comprehensive flow and coherence of language.

Examples

¡Qué gusto siento al volverte a escribir!

Me encanta lo que hago

Tenía una semana para prepararme mentalmente para ser entrevistado

*Escribí una carta a una compañía
Había una oferta de trabajo*

- The subjunctive was used appropriately by the more capable student.

Examples

Espero que todo esté bien

Hablé con mi papá como si él fuera el jefe

- Idioms and expressions were used by few candidates to enhance the style of writing.

Examples

¡Qué guay!

Me quedé paralizada

No podía creerlo

Sin embargo, lo averigüé

Weaknesses

General errors included the following.

- Placement of adjectives, for example, **La semana primera**
- Incorrect tense, for example,
*Yo **tiene** mucho dinero*
*Yo **soy escribe***
Me aplicado para un trabajo
- Translation of 'at' a place
*Recibí un trabajo **a** mi tienda favorita*
- Agreement of adjectives, for example, *Mi **primero** semana*
- Incorrect use of the infinitive, for example, *La tienda **vender** cosas*
- Subject pronoun used for object pronoun, for example, *Voy a visitar **tú***
- Unnecessary pluralizing, for example, **Ropas, Gentes**
- Omission of preposition, for example, *Ayudé **^** una vieja*
- Lack of subjunctive, for example, *Cuando **recibo** mi salario, compraré regalos*
- Use of *Por* instead of *Para*, for example, *Compraré regalos **por** mi mamá*
- Unknown words

Examples

Dinero for salario

Dólares for salario

Trabajar for trabajo

Reunión for entrevista

- Expression of *gustar*, for example, **Yo gusta**
- Use of *ser* vs *estar*, for example, **Fui muy emocionado; Yo quiero ser contigo**

- Misspelt words

Examples

Excelente

Bein

Cuidad

Nervosa

Examiner's Comments

This is an excellent response. All points are logically and clearly expressed with language which flows fluently and coherently. For the most part, grammar is good except for the occasional inaccuracy. A wide range of vocabulary and structures are used. Examples of good structures include the following.

Te escribo para contarte

Conseguí empleo

Le mostré los productos que le quedarían bien

Cuando cobre mi primer cheque

The occasional errors are mainly in accents and spelling.

23 de Mayo

Como estás

Espero ^ estes bien

Productos indecados para su piel

Le **quedarian** bien

Cuando **cóbre**

Candidate's Response to Question 2 — Sample 2

San Juan., 3 de enero.

de 2024.

Querida Aleena,

¿Qué tal?

¡Hola! ~~Estoy bien~~. Espera que estés bien. Estoy escribiendo esta carta

para decirte sobre el trabajo que conseguí en mi tienda favorita.

Conseguí trabajo en la tienda ^{"Wow Fashion"} ~~Chicas~~. Es una ropería y soy dependiente.

Tengo que ayudar a los clientes, arreglar las cosas y ~~ropa~~ y limpiar cuando

la tienda está cerrada. La entrevista fue bien porque estaba practicando ~~delante~~

del espejo por tres días. Estaba orgullosa y feliz cuando me dijeron que

consegui ^{tengo} el trabajo. Me dijeron que soy inteligente y amable y que eso es

importante. Durante la primera semana, ayudé a una mujer vieja y ella me dio

diez ~~dólares~~ dólares. ¡No podía creerlo! Estaba sorprendida. Van a pagarme

mañana y quiero comprar un vestido que la tienda tiene para mi mamá

porque mañana es su cumpleaños.

Bueno, eso es todo por ahora. Tenga que irme. Escribeme pronto.

Tu amiga,

Surí.

Examiner's Comments

This response falls within the Very Good category. Ideas are clearly expressed and developed with language which flows fluently though with less mastery than the excellent response. Grammar and vocabulary are correct with some inaccuracy.

Good structures

La entrevista fue bien

Estaba orgullosa y feliz

No podía creerlo

The occasional inaccuracies are mainly in accents and grammar.

Esta cerrada, feliz, **dolares**, **dío**, escribíme

Las cosas y **ropas**

Me **dijieron**

Ayudé ^ mi mamá

Recommendations

- Candidates who are not prepared in time for the January examination ought not to be encouraged to write it.
- Productive practice of grammar is necessary, not just in exercises but in context, for reinforcement. Grammar and use of expressions in context can be explained by analysing the Reading Comprehension passages.
- Translation from one language to the next is still a necessary tool which enables understanding of the nuances of the language and a smoothly transition from one language to the next.
- The strengthening of all four skills — listening, reading, speaking and writing — will help the enhancement of each individual one. Meaningful use of games, projects, classroom activities and technology will promote teaching and learning.

Question 3 – Contextual Dialogue

Demands of the Section

This section required candidates to complete a contextual dialogue using 80-100 words. Five cues in English were provided. They were assessed on use of language, accuracy, coherence, and clarity of expression. Their responses also had to fit in with the utterances that came before and after theirs. The contextual dialogue was in keeping with the information outlined in the syllabus and therefore within the scope of the candidates' ability.

Contextual Dialogue

You have arranged an interview for your school magazine with Luisa, a student who just won a major music competition. Write the dialogue between the two of you, giving her responses.

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

- (i) How long she has been practicing
- (ii) How she came to enter the competition
- (iii) What challenges she faced in her preparations
- (iv) What happened on the day of the competition
- (v) How she felt and reacted on hearing the results

For all cues to have been used well and appropriately, candidates should have provided the following information.

1st Yo: *Any appropriate response*

2nd Yo: *Mention that the experience was a challenge*

3rd Yo : *Explanation of why it was a challenge, including that there were many persons competing*

4thYo: *Mention of how long she has been competing and places where she has competed*

5th Yo: *Saying whether she liked or did not like being a member of the choir and that they had to practice a lot*

6th Yo: *Mention of how she entered the competition*

7th Yo: *Mention of a challenge that she had*

8thYo: *Any appropriate response saying how she felt*

9th Yo: *Mention of how she felt and what she did when she heard that she had won*

Candidates' Performance

Generally, performance on this question ranged from moderate to poor. Very few candidates scored in the Very Good to Excellent range. Although it was within the scope of candidates' ability, many did not attempt to answer the question at all. Candidates seemed to understand what was needed in English for each response but were limited by poor vocabulary and grammatical structure. Weaker candidates simply rewrote what they saw in the utterances of the second speaker and in many cases, most responses to cues were either left out or very badly done.

Candidates' Weaknesses

The majority of the candidates' responses were rated moderate to poor. A considerable number of candidates did not provide a response for their question, or they wrote minimal responses to the cues provided. It must be noted that many of the dialogues were disjointed because candidates did not write a complete response which blended with the preceding and following cue.

Common errors included the following.

- Lack of subject and verb agreement, for example, *Mis amigos **hablas**/la experiencia **eres** buena*
- Lack of agreement between noun and adjective, for example, *La experiencia es divertido*
- Use of incorrect tense, for example, *Mi papa muerto hace dos años/yo comenzado a cantar*
- Use of *ser* instead of *estar*, for example, *Era muy nervioso/mis padres **son** aquí*
- Use of *por* and *para*, for example, *Gracias **para** invitarme*
- Confusion between *muy* and *mucho*, for example, *Estaba **mucho** nervioso*
- Use of conjugated form of the verb after *por* and *para*, for example, *Gracias **por** invitandome*
- Vocabulary errors, for example, *sorpresa* instead of *sorprendido*

Candidate's Response to Question 3 — Sample 1

Complete the dialogue below.

Tú: Hola Luisa. Gracias por haberme permitido hablar contigo.

Luisa: ¡Hola! No hay problema. Estoy contenta para hablar contigo. 

Tú: Felicidades por ganar un concurso tan importante como La Voz. ¿Cómo fue la experiencia?

Luisa: Fue una experiencia inolvidable, pero fue un desafío.

Tú: ¡Un desafío! ¿Por qué lo dices? Eres una de nuestras mejores cantantes.

Luisa: ~~Tendría~~ que preparar mucho porque había muchas personas compitiendo también.

Tú: Me imagino que había muchas personas compitiendo también como dices. Pero hace muchos años que cantas, ¿no?

Luisa: Sí. Canté desde ~~los~~ nueve años y en ~~más~~ más de quince países.

Tú: ¡Tanto tiempo y has estado en tantos lugares! ¿Y, te gustaba cantar en un coro?

Luisa: Sí porque tengo que practicar mucho y puedo practicar con otras personas.

Tú: Claro que tendrás que practicar tantas horas. ¿Cómo entraste en el concurso?

Luisa: El mes pasado no tuve algo que hacer, así que decidí entrar en un ~~concurso~~ concurso.

Tú: ¡Qué bueno! Y como solista también. Has dicho que fue un desafío. ¿Puedes explicar más?

Luisa: Sí. Cuando estaba preparando, me dolía la garganta por consecuencia ^{tuve} ~~tenía~~ que hacer una pausa.

Tú: Esto pasa a veces cuando el sonido no es bueno. Háblame de lo que ocurrió cuando saliste al escenario el día de la competencia.

Luisa: Estaba nerviosa pero mis padres me dijeron que todo estará bien.

Tú: ¡Fantástico! ¡El público te adoraba! Entonces, ¿Cómo te sentiste al oír que habías ganado? y ¿qué hiciste?

Luisa: Estaba feliz y tuve una fiesta para celebrar.

Tú: Yo me sentiría igual. Pues gracias, Luisa, y otra vez, mis felicidades.

Total 20 marks

Examiner's Comments

This is an example of a very good to excellent dialogue. All cues are used well, and ideas are very clearly developed and expressed using language that flows very naturally. There is wide and proficient use of idiomatic structures and vocabulary that show coherence and clarity. The response contains a few errors but not enough to take away from it being in the Excellent category.

Candidate's Response to Question 3 — Sample 2

Complete the dialogue below.

Tú: Hola Luisa. Gracias por haberme permitido hablar contigo.

Luisa: *Hola, gracias a ti por invitarme*
.....
.....
.....

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Tú: Felicidades por ganar un concurso tan importante como La Voz. ¿Cómo fue la experiencia?

Luisa: *Gracias, fue una experiencia maravillosa*
pero a su vez un desafío
.....
.....

Tú: ¡Un desafío! ¿Por qué lo dices? Eres una de nuestras mejores cantantes.

Luisa: Si, porque habian muchos competidores
y muy buenos.

Tú: Me imagino que había muchas personas compitiendo también como dices. Pero hace muchos años que cantas, ¿no?

Luisa: Si, desde mis 5 años en el coro de
la iglesia, visitabamos otras iglesias
tambien.

Tú: ¡Tanto tiempo y has estado en tantos lugares! ¿Y, te gustaba cantar en un coro?

Luisa: Si, me encantaba pero los ensayos eran
largos.

Tú: Claro que tendrás que practicar tantas horas. ¿Cómo entraste en el concurso?

Luisa: Mi pastor me animó a que entrase
en el concurso, dijo que tenía una
gran voz.

Tú: ¡Qué bueno! Y como solista también. Has dicho que fue un desafío. ¿Puedes explicar más?

Luisa: Si fue un desafío por que nunca habia
entrado en una competencia sola y estaba
asustada además de problemas con el sonido.

Tú: Esto pasa a veces cuando el sonido no es bueno. Háblame de lo que ocurrió cuando saliste al escenario el día de la competencia.

Luisa: *Estaba nerviosa pero cerré mis*
ojos y comenze a cantar.
.....
.....

Tú: ¡Fantástico! ¡El público te adoraba! Entonces, ¿Cómo te sentiste al oír que habías ganado? y ¿qué hiciste?

Luisa: *Emocionada, lloré de alegría.*
.....
.....

Tú: Yo me sentiría igual. Pues gracias, Luisa, y otra vez, mis felicidades.

Total 20 marks

Examiner's Comments

This response is similar to Sample 1 in terms of excellence. Errors are mainly accents that were left out; these are considered spelling errors.

Recommendations

- More time should be spent on this component of the examination. Students need to be taught how to do a contextual dialogue, using not only the cues provided but also the utterances that come before and after to help them to make their response. They should also be encouraged to write their own dialogues so that they will have an idea of how dialogues flow.
- Candidates must be encouraged to read the dialogue before inserting their responses, to allow for the natural flow of conversation. Furthermore, they should be made aware that the order of the cues does not necessarily mean that the dialogue is written in the same order.
- Candidates need to be encouraged to avoid writing in English and then translating, whether writing in or out of the classroom.
- Candidates need to build and strengthen their vocabulary base. They also need to be exposed to and learn idioms, synonyms, and antonyms in the target language so that they can incorporate these into their writing.
- Students should be taught how to manage working with word limits. In addition, teachers need to encourage students to review and reread their work at all times. Teachers can plan and structure review time into each lesson to help students get into the habit of looking over their work before submission.

Question 4 – Reading Comprehension

This question tests a candidate’s 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.

Demands of the Question

This reading comprehension passage for the CSEC January 2024 examination was of a level that was quite appropriate for a candidate who would have already attempted this question in the previous year or even for one who was attempting it for the first time. The level of vocabulary and grammar was such that candidates should have consistently scored between 16 and 20 marks out of a total of 20.

Performance

Generally, candidates performed at a good level. There were some instances where lack of vocabulary influenced the kind of responses offered, whether it was lack of knowledge of English for Spanish or limited knowledge of English synonyms. There were those candidates who showed no comprehension of the passage and so they either did not answer the questions or repeated the responses for some questions. There were a few candidates who gained full marks but most candidates were awarded marks that ranged from 10 to 18.

Strengths

- Instructions were adhered to quite well.
- Generally, candidates gained at least two out three or one out of two marks for their responses.

Weaknesses

- The major weakness seemed to be with vocabulary in general. A lack of knowledge of vocabulary negatively impacted candidates’ responses.
- Although spelling is not marked in this section, incorrect spelling does affect a response. For example, candidates write ‘there’ when they mean ‘their’. Every effort should be made to address this.
- As was the case last year, candidates seemed to have a problem with structuring their responses. This indicates a weakness in reading and practice.

Comments on Individual Questions

(a) What word describes how the narrator and his siblings felt about their weekend plans?

This part, which was worth one mark, was generally answered correctly.

Example of a correct response: *Impatient*

Example of an incorrect response: Bored

(b) What did the narrator and his siblings look forward to on weekends?

Two marks were allocated for this response. Candidates generally produced the correct responses but there were those who gave an extended response that included the response for Part (c).

Example of a correct response: *Going to visit their grandmother who lived in the country.*

Example of a partial/incorrect response: Meeting their grandmother / Going camping.

(c) Explain why the weekend activity was so special to the narrator and his siblings.

This part was worth two marks. The response needed to include where the narrator lived, where their grandmother lived and how that impacted on making the visit special.

An example of a correct response: *They lived in the city and did not see their grandmother often.*

An example of a partial/incorrect response: They did not see her often. / Their grandmother took them.

(d) Give two details about the journey taken.

Two marks were allocated for this response but many candidates provided a partial response, gaining only one of the two marks. Some candidates also confused the response to this question with what was expected for Parts (e) and (f).

An example of a correct response: *They left on Friday evening and the journey lasted for two hours.*

Examples of partial/incorrect responses: They left in the afternoon, and it took two hours. / They planned to see different animals.

(e) What did the narrator and his siblings do during the journey?

This was another part that was worth two marks. Most candidates responded to the question. However, some responses were actually the answer for Part (f).

An example of a correct response: *They planned the activities they would do.*

An example of a partial/incorrect response: They made plans/They saw different animals and bathed in the river.

(f) Name TWO things the narrator and his siblings planned to do at their destination?

Candidates were challenged by the vocabulary used in the passage as it relates to this question.

An example of a correct response: *See the animals that live there, climb fruit trees or bathe in the river.*

An example of a partial/incorrect response: *See the animals and pick the fruits. / To go camping.*

(g) What happened at night before the narrator and his siblings went to bed?

This response was worth three marks. Some candidates gained full marks while several candidates gained either one or two marks. It is likely the vocabulary that challenged some of the candidates, especially “*historias folklóricas*”.

An example of a correct response: *Their grandmother told them stories about her childhood growing up in the village/folklore stories about the village.*

An example of a partial/ incorrect response: *She told stories about her childhood. / She told them stories. / She told them about her folks’ history.*

(h) What fascinated the narrator and his siblings?

Two marks were allocated to the part — one mark for stating that it was the grandmother’s adventures that fascinated the narrator and the other for stating with whom she enjoyed having these adventures. Most candidates were able to respond.

An example of a correct response: *Her adventures with her siblings.*

An example of a partial/incorrect response: *The adventures she had. / How she lived with her brothers.*

(i) How did the narrator and his siblings feel about returning home?

Most candidates gained the one mark that was allocated to this part. There were a few candidates, however, who could not respond correctly.

An example of a correct response: *They were unhappy.*

An example of an incorrect response: *They were bored.*

(j) What kind of relationship do the narrator and his siblings have with the person they visited? Explain.

As usual, this last question challenged candidates. Many candidates could not describe the relationship between the grandmother and her grandchildren, maybe because it was not explicitly stated. This points to an inability to make inferences.

An example of a correct response: *They had a very close relationship as they were impatient for the weekend when they could see her, and they were always reluctant to return home.*

An example of a partial/incorrect response: They loved their grandmother and could not wait to see her. / They had a close relationship. / They had a good one because they got gifts and were bored.

Candidate's Response to Part (a) to (j) — Sample 1

(a) What word describes how the narrator and his siblings felt about their weekend plans?

The word used to describe how the narrator and his siblings felt is
imminent

(1 mark)

(b) What did the narrator and his siblings look forward to on weekends?

They looked forward to seeing all the different animals that live by their grandmother as well as climbing the fruit trees ~~with~~ their grandmother go to the countryside to visit their grandmother

(2 marks)

(c) Explain why the weekend activity was so special to the narrator and his siblings.

The weekend activity is special because they cannot see their grandmother frequently since they live in the city whilst she lives in the countryside

(2 marks)

(d) Give TWO details about the journey taken.

The journey is two hours long and they leave their house on Friday afternoons

(2 marks)

(e) What did the narrator and his siblings do during their journey?

They planned all the activities that they wanted to do during their stay at their grandma's house

(2 marks)

(f) Name TWO things the narrator and his siblings planned to do at their destination.

They planned to see all the ~~same~~ animals that lived there ~~as~~ and they
climbed the ~~fruit~~ many fruit trees that were there.

(2 marks)

(g) What happened at night before the narrator and his siblings went to bed?

At night before they went to bed, their grandmother told them childhood stories
about historical folklore in the village.

(3 marks)

(h) What fascinated the narrator and his siblings?

They were fascinated by the fascinating adventures that their grandmother and
her siblings experienced.

(2 marks)

(i) How did the narrator and his siblings feel about returning home?

They were sad and ~~disapp~~ disappointed that they had to return to the
boring city.

(1 mark)

(j) What kind of relationship do the narrator and his siblings have with the person they visited? Explain.

They have a very close and loving relationship with their grandmother as
seen since they love to visit her to hear her stories and spend time in the
countryside with her. Their loving relationship is further emphasized by their
eagerness to visit her on the weekends and the sadness they feel to leave.

(3 marks)

Total 20 marks

Examiner's Comments

This is an example of a candidate who scored full marks. All responses were fully appropriate, showing an excellent grasp of the content of the passage. The candidate responded based on the number of marks awarded for each question, understanding that a question that carries two or three marks needs to have a more detailed response. The inference question at the end was well addressed in that the candidate was able to grasp from the passage the deep bond between grandparent and children which showed in their eagerness to visit and reluctance to leave.

Candidate's Response to Part (a) to (j) — Sample 2

- (a) What word describes how the narrator and his siblings felt about their weekend plans?

The narrator and their siblings were impatient because they were excited.

(1 mark)

- (b) What did the narrator and his siblings look forward to on weekends?

They looked forward to visiting their grandmother in the countryside.

(2 marks)

- (c) Explain why the weekend activity was so special to the narrator and his siblings.

It was so special because since they lived in the city, they weren't able to see their grandmother frequently.

(2 marks)

- (d) Give TWO details about the journey taken.

Two details are that they left on Friday afternoon and it took two hours.

(2 marks)

(e) What did the narrator and his siblings do during their journey?

They planned all the activities that they wanted to do during their stay.

(2 marks)

(f) Name TWO things the narrator and his siblings planned to do at their destination.

~~the~~ They wanted to bathe in the river close to their grandmother's house and do a lap around the house to see all the different animals that lived there.

(2 marks)

(g) What happened at night before the narrator and his siblings went to bed?

At night, their grandmother told them things about her children ~~brothers~~ and old stories about her town.

(3 marks)

(h) What fascinated the narrator and his siblings?

They were fascinated by the adventures that their grandmother lived with her brothers.

(2 marks)

(i) How did the narrator and his siblings feel about returning home?

They were bummed to return to their boring life in the city.

(1 mark)

- (j) What kind of relationship do the narrator and his siblings have with the person they visited? Explain.

They have a good and close relationship with their grandmother. This is evident because they wait impatiently to see her and she tells them stories every night.

(3 marks)

Total 20 marks

Examiner's Comments

The candidate displayed an excellence similar to that of the candidate in the previous sample. However, this candidate lost marks with the inference question, not fully explaining how he/she realized that the bond was so close.

Recommendations

- The need to learn and revise vocabulary constantly, in English and in Spanish, cannot be stressed enough. Special attention should be paid to synonyms in both languages.
- Practise, practise, practise. Past papers are easily available on CXC's website and in other places. As part of this practice, candidates need to spend some time learning how to express answers in their own words, so that they do not repeat the words of the question.
- Reading books, newspapers and magazines written in Spanish and in English would be helpful, especially when it comes to noting sentence construction.

These websites may be helpful.

www.spanish4teachers.org

www.fluentu.com

www.takelessons.com

www.123teachme.com

PAPER 03 – ORAL EXAMINATION

The CSEC Spanish oral examination tests the ability of candidates to

- produce appropriate responses in Spanish to a number of situations testing specific functions
- read aloud a short passage in Spanish
- carry on a conversation in the target language by responding to questions based on four out of six topics set out in the syllabus.

This year the topics were Home and Family, Sports and Recreation, and Shopping and Travel.

Section I — Responses to Situations/Instructions

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

Many candidates seemed to be unfamiliar with how to answer this section since it had been out of the exam for a few years. Candidates apparently had little or no practice with it and as a result struggled through this section. Many candidates claimed that they were unaware that situations had returned to the oral exam. However, there were those who were able to give appropriate responses albeit marred with grammatical errors. Those who kept their responses short and to the point scored well while those who had lengthy responses exposed themselves to more grammatical mistakes. The function that proved most challenging to candidates was that of expressing worry or concern. Most common errors found were those similar to the general conversation and will be incorporated in that section.

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. For this January exam, performance was satisfactory to poor. As usual 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. However, there was evidence of candidates who seemed unprepared for the examination and therefore did not perform well.

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. Their pronunciation was faulty and anglicized. They showed no knowledge of the importance of intonation and started and ended their reading passage in the same tone. Passages were not phrased correctly so meaning was lost. Also, punctuation like commas and full stops were not observed. Little or no knowledge was displayed of rules of accentuation and stress.

The following are some of the problems that candidates presented.

- The stress on the wrong syllable of words such as *alcohólicas, actividad, diversión, prefieren, despertador*
- Anglicizing words such as *presión, registra, entusiasmo, comercial, arena*
- The silent 'h' for example – *hombres, horas, hermanos, historia,*
- Pronunciation of the Spanish e like an English e in *te, registra, arena*
- Mispronunciation of ge and gi and ga sounds. Eg. *registra, dirige, argentina, llega*
- Mispronunciation of u as in *usan, reúnan,*

Recommendations

Challenges in fluency and intonation in reading as outlined above typically stem from inadequate preparation and practice. 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. There is a great need for exposure to authentic listening activities from the target language.

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 Home and Family, Sports and Recreation, Shopping and Travel.

Candidates were asked four questions on each of the topics and were assessed on comprehension and spontaneity, fluency, and expression.

Performance in this section was poor to satisfactory this year as many candidates were unable to handle the questions posed to them. A few 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 weaker candidates still experienced challenges in answering many questions. Many struggled with this section, handicapped by a limited vocabulary and poor knowledge of grammatical structures. There was limited comprehension of the questions asked by some who asked for repetition constantly and when they did answer sentences were short very often resulting in *Yo no sé*. The weaker students struggled with the descriptive questions.

Common errors encountered in this section included the following.

- Lack of subject–verb agreement, for example, *mi familia y yo va/van.../mi familia prefieres*
- Lack of noun–adjective agreement, for example, *Mi hermana es bonito, precios barato, mis hermanos son flojo*
- Unfamiliarity with the word *quehaceres*
- Use of ‘me’ with *preferir*, for example, *me prefiero... yo preferido*
- Excessive use of words such as *interesante/aburrido/divertido* and in inappropriate contexts
- Use of infinitive when a conjugated verb was needed. Eg. *Mi familia celebrar...*
- Misplaced adjectives, for example, *Mi favorita persona es...*
- Confusion in the use of *ser* and *estar*. *Mi hermano está inteligente.*

Some requests for repetition indicated a lack of comprehension of questions and fluency as candidates used the repeated questions to formulate their responses in the target language.

Recommendations

- Teachers must expose students to the consistent use of the target language in the classroom. This can be done through radio stations and podcasts, and online oral and aural activities.
- Exposure to native speakers will also assist in providing an authentic language experience to students.
- Extensive use of Spanish in the classroom will not only strengthen students' listening and speaking skills but will also increase their confidence when conversing in Spanish.
- Students must be encouraged to pay attention to the details which are required in the questions and particularly listen carefully to the demands of the question before responding.