



CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

CAPE[®] SPANISH UNIT 2



Subject Report

May-June 2025

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

MAY-JUNE 2025

**SPANISH
UNIT 2**

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INTRODUCTION

This report is based on candidates' responses in the May-June 2025 CAPE Spanish Unit 2 examination. This unit — Las Actualidades, la Tecnología y la Economía — comprises the following modules.

- Module 1: Las actualidades
- Module 2: La ciencia y la tecnología
- Module 3: La industria y los asuntos económicos

These modules are tested through the following papers.

- Paper 01 — Listening Comprehension
- Paper 02 — Reading and Writing
- Paper 03 — Literary Analysis and Themes
- Paper 04 — School-Based Assessment

This year, 249 candidates registered to take the CAPE Spanish Unit 2 examination. The overall performance of candidates on this unit also remained consistent with candidate performances in 2024 and 2023. In 2025, 99 per cent of the candidates received acceptable Grades I to V compared to 99 per cent in both 2024 and 2023.

Paper 01 — Listening Comprehension

Paper 01 — Listening Comprehension — consists of six compulsory questions arranged into two sections covering all three modules. Two questions are based on Module 1, one question on Module 2 and three questions on Module 3 of Unit 2. Candidates are required to have knowledge of the entire unit. The aim of this paper is to test candidates' listening skills. In Section A, which is based on Modules 1 and 3, there are five short selections in Spanish and short answers are to be provided in English. Section B, which is based on Module 2, consists of an extended conversation, interview commentary or discussion in Spanish with questions in English which candidates are expected to answer in English. The maximum number of marks available for this paper is 72. The paper contributes 30 per cent to the final assessment. Each module contributes 10 per cent.

In 2025, the highest score achieved by any candidate was 72. The mean score was 55.20 out of 72 (76.67 per cent) and the standard deviation was 10.38.

Paper 02 — Reading and Writing

Paper 02 — Reading and Writing — consists of seven questions. Candidates are required to be familiar with the entire unit. The aim of this paper is to test candidates' reading and writing skills. Section A consists of two passages based on Modules 1 and 3; candidates are required to respond using short responses. Candidates must answer all questions in this section. Section B consists of five essay questions based on Module 2. Candidates are required to write an essay in Spanish on one of the five questions. The total number of marks available for this paper is 72. The paper contributes 30 per cent to the final assessment. Each module contributes 10 per cent.

This year the highest score achieved by any candidate on Paper 02 was 67. The mean score was 43.17 out of 72 (59.96 per cent) and the standard deviation was 10.07.

Section A — Reading Comprehension

In this section of Paper 02, candidates were presented with two passages, both written in Spanish. They were required to respond to questions based on these passages. The questions for Passage 1 — Los Derechos Humanos en Venezuela — were written in Spanish. Candidates were required to respond to these questions using Spanish. For Passage 2 — El Ecoturismo en Bolivia — the questions were written in English and candidates were required to respond in English.

Passage 1— Los Derechos Humanos en Venezuela

Candidates were required to answer the questions in Spanish. This question was generally fairly done; however, there were some instances where candidates' responses demonstrated a challenge in comprehension and expression in Spanish. There were some candidates who made a strong attempt to answer the questions in their own words in Spanish, through the use of synonyms, syntactical changes and alternate verb forms; however, some candidates lifted directly from the passage.

Part (a)

For this question, candidates were required to "*Da el propósito principal del informe publicado por la ONU*". Most candidates responded accurately to this question, identifying the aim of the "*informe*", which was to highlight human rights abuse or violation in Venezuela and/or the Bolivarian State. However, some candidates omitted the key verb 'to highlight' from their response and did not attempt to use a synonym; others failed to mention Venezuela.

Part (b)

This question required candidates to “*Identifica los tres papeles de la Misión-MIIV*”. Generally, it was fairly answered, but many candidates lifted their responses directly from the passage. Only a few candidates attempted to respond in their own words.

Part (c)

For this question, which was pitched at the analytical level, candidates were asked to contrast the human rights abuse in Venezuela with that of the Bolivarian State. This question was generally well done. Candidates were able to identify the contrast in abuse at the level of state actors and non-state actors depending on the entity referred to. Candidates were also able to identify the types of abuse for the respective entity.

Part (d)

This question required candidates to give “*tres ejemplos de la violación de derechos humanos*” according to the article. Most candidates demonstrated excellent comprehension of this question. However, most candidates were also unable to use their own words to represent the examples and lifted directly from the passage.

Part (e)

For this question, candidates were asked to “*Describe las acciones tomadas por la Misión- MIIV para llegar a sus conclusiones*”. This question was fairly done, as some candidates were able to identify the concrete steps taken by the Misión-MIIV. Other candidates missed some aspects of the response, but most candidates were able to state the secret interviews with victims as one of the key steps. While some candidates used their own words, the majority lifted directly from the passage.

Part (f)

This question asked candidates to “*Da un resumen de las recomendaciones para remediar el problema presentado*”. This question was well done by most candidates; they were able to capture the four aspects of the summary. Some candidates used their own words to craft the summary whereas others lifted directly from the passage.

Part (g)

This question is an opinion-type question, pitched at the level of application and analysis. It asked candidates to state whether or not human rights violations exist in their country and to give three reasons or examples to support their answer. This question was generally well done, as most candidates were able to substantiate their response with appropriate examples or reasons such as the existence of pressure groups to regulate political action or the clamour for justice. Contrastingly, some candidates, who argued that human rights violation exists in their country, cited racism, lack of an unbiased judicial system, sexual and domestic violence and corrupt political systems.

Passage 2 — La Ecoturismo en Bolivia

This passage was based on the third module of the syllabus. Candidates were required to answer the questions in English except for items (g) to (k) for which they were required to answer in Spanish by finding the appropriate synonyms. This question was well done as many candidates were able to demonstrate comprehension of the passage by responding appropriately in English. However, there were a few candidates who translated the passage verbatim and wrote responses that made little or no sense in English.

Part (a)

For this question, candidates were required to “give two reasons why Bolivia is ideal for ecotourism”. This question was generally well done as many candidates were able to identify the natural and cultural richness of Bolivia as well as the diversity of its ecosystem. Some candidates missed aspects of the response, for example, they identified the ecosystem without mentioning the diversity or without specifying natural and/or cultural richness.

Part (b)

For this question, candidates were asked to explain the sociocultural impact of tourism. This question was generally well answered, as many candidates were able to capture the three main points linked to the question — losing control of their lands, changes in the traditional way of life and inequalities in the distribution of resources or wealth/benefits.

Part (c)

This question asked candidates to “discuss the infrastructural challenges to ecotourism in Bolivia”. The question was generally well done; however, some candidates failed to mention the difficulty in creating safe tourist routes in remote areas. ‘Safe’ and ‘remote’ were two key words to be included in the first part of the response.

Most candidates were able to grasp the difficulty in developing basic necessities such as electricity, accommodation, and connectivity or telecommunications.

Part (d)

This was one of the simplest or easiest questions and many candidates received full marks. Candidates were asked to state two threats to biodiversity in Bolivia, according to the passage. Many candidates identified illegal hunting and destruction of habitat as two major threats, but some candidates had a challenge understanding the nuances or identifying the correct translation; for example, some candidates wrote ‘illegal trading’ in place of *illegal hunting*.

Part (e)

For this question, which was pitched at the analytical level, candidates were asked to discuss the economic benefits of ecotourism to indigenous communities. This question was generally fairly answered. While some candidates were able to respond adequately and identify the benefits, other candidates demonstrated challenges with comprehension. Candidates were expected to show that income was generated from the activity.

Part (f)

This question required candidates to give a summary of the recommendations to address the challenges of ecotourism in Bolivia. This question was generally well done, as many candidates adequately summarized the recommendations as requested. Given that the recommendations were included at the end of every paragraph, it is evident that candidates had a strong grasp of paragraph structure and semantics.

Parts (g) to (k)

These parts evaluated candidates' skill at finding specific words or phrases from the passage that matched the meaning of given expressions. Most candidates showed that they could efficiently scan the text and identify the correct vocabulary or phrases that conveyed the intended meanings. This indicates that the majority understood how the target expressions functioned within the context of the passage.

Recommendations

- Candidates are encouraged to read and analyse the entire question and its parts before attempting to respond. This provides them a global understanding of what is required for the responses and to present answers that are relevant to each question.
- It is important that candidates pay keen attention to the marks that each question is worth. This will guide them in determining what to write and guard them against providing limited responses or additional, irrelevant information.
- Candidates are to be keen on differentiating between the command words that reflect the cognitive demand of the question, for example 'identify' versus 'explain' or 'state' versus 'discuss'.
- It is essential that candidates read the final question carefully and provide adequate explanations and justifications.
- Students should practise substitution activities, replacement and transformation exercises, and how to summarize and paraphrase words in order to improve their ability to use their own words and expressions.
- Students should practise responding to comprehension questions that are geared at developing the different cognitive levels of the Bloom's Taxonomy and Webb's Depth of Knowledge.

Section B — Essays

This section assessed candidates' ability to express themselves in Spanish in an analytical and logical manner related to the theme as outlined in Module 2 of the syllabus. Candidates were required to write an essay, in Spanish, of 300–350 words, on one of five topics. Candidates were assessed on content and presentation (organization and coverage of the topic, structure, logical reasoning, relevance and inclusion of facts, ideas and opinions) and correctness of expression (range of vocabulary and idioms, as well as accuracy of grammatical structures).

In general, candidates were adequately prepared to discuss the essay topics related to the selected themes. Nevertheless, some candidates presented ideas that lacked relevance and were limited in supporting details, references or evidence from research findings. Still, it is noteworthy that many candidates were knowledgeable of the rudiments of effective essay writing, evidenced by the inclusion of introductions, paragraphing, connectives and conclusions. Numerous candidates displayed competence in the organization and presentation of ideas and provided comprehensive definitions along with historical backgrounds as a foundation to develop theses and further arguments in the body of the essay. On the other hand, several essays contained vague introductions and thesis statements, with incongruence between the position stated and that which was elucidated in the paragraphs. Furthermore, some paragraphs had briefly mentioned or under-developed points and did not contain a topic or concluding sentence; in some instances, there was also a lack of coherence between the topic sentence and supporting details. Most essays contained conclusions; however, candidates should be encouraged to produce fully developed conclusions, and to use the language to re-state or summarize the main points of the essay, rather than present a mere verbatim of the thesis statement.

The use of language varied from basic to excellent, with a minority of candidates producing complex linguistic and grammatical structures. Candidates generally needed to utilize more idiomatic expressions as well as advanced and varied vocabulary that align with what is required at this level. They are therefore encouraged to increase their reading of texts and different genres in Spanish, so that idioms, vocabulary and complex linguistic structures can become more entrenched into their implicit linguistic systems. There were numerous responses that contained inaccuracies in the use of the subjunctive mood as well as the perfect and conditional tenses. More errors were evident in basic grammatical structures such as agreement, spelling, articles, accentuation, conjugation of verbs and proper word order. In some instances, candidates' poor quality of language resulted in misunderstanding or incoherence of what was being expressed.

Question 3

“La humanidad no tiene el derecho de manipular el camino y las leyes de la naturaleza. Discute.”

This was one of the least popular questions. Most candidates performed poorly to average in the areas of content and presentation as well as correctness of expression. The essays generally were limited in content. Candidates did not provide in-depth discussion but offered only a few facts, ideas and opinions with brief references to benefits, risks or ethical considerations tied to the question. Most candidates supported the claim that genetic manipulation reduces the risks of species becoming extinct, allows for the development of cures through vigorous research and leads to the development of resistant foods. The arguments against the issue focused on ethical concerns such as choosing a race or gender for a baby, discriminating, challenging the authority of God and creating moral and biological risks through cloning.

Common grammatical and sentence construction errors included the following.

- *muy involucrado*
- *el extinción*
- *porque matando*
- *destrucciones de habitates*
- *los serios humanos*
- *tecnologicas*
- *el derecho manipular*
- *carare de limites éticos*
- *puedemos manipular*
- *los scientificos*

Question 4

“La industria farmacéutica se preocupa más por los beneficios financieros que curar enfermedades. Discute.”

This was one of the least popular questions. Performances were generally average in content and expression. Most candidates agreed with the statement and seldom put forward an opposing argument. There were limited facts, opinions and ideas and so, the responses were generally weak. Some of the points focused on temporary alleviation of illnesses through medicine, lack of access to medicine due to high prices of medication and the worsening of illnesses through medication. However, the arguments were generally weak or poorly explained.

Common errors included the following.

- *una topico*
- *que puede discute*
- *hace la gente mas activo*
- *la gente ir a la hospital*
- *su enfermedades*
- *hace la problema mas mal*
- *consumiendo una variedades de frutas*
- *internal enfermedades*
- *ellan provie trabajar*
- *la industria farmacéutica provecha*

Question 5

“La red ha mejorado la vida social. Discute.”

This was the most popular question and performances were generally average in the areas of content and presentation as well as correctness of expression. Some candidates included excellent essay structure which consisted of an introduction with a thesis statement, clearly divided paragraphs and a conclusion. These candidates included topic sentences in their paragraphs and created linkages between the question asked and the paragraph. A few candidates used transition devices to create coherence in the essay. Generally, the essays included facts, ideas, and opinions, with references to the facilitation of communication, entertainment, and the formation of online support groups and communities. Most candidates presented opposing views which included the threat to traditional and face to face communication, social anxiety and isolation, reduced quality of interpersonal communication and cyberbullying.

Common errors include the following.

- *provichamiento*
- *adventajas*
- *capacidad*
- *augmenté*
- *partager*
- *corruption*
- *fraud*
- *rápido y barato comunicación*
- *personas a reunión nuevo persona*

Question 6

“La red contribuye a trastornos sociales. Discute.”

This question was not very popular and it was generally poorly done. Many candidates agreed with the topic and discussed the impact of cyberbullying, the lack of social skills and social anxiety resulting from overuse of the internet and the violent behaviours developed through content absorbed via social media. Candidates seldom focused on the opposing side of the argument. Most candidates performed within the good and fair or average bands for content and organization as well as expression.

Common errors in expression included the following.

- *la tecnologia ha integre*
- *son pueden convertir*
- *la red ha contribuye*
- *los niños son afrontar*
- *el ciberacosso*
- *la perdida de esfuerzos sociales*
- *el comportamiento malo*

Question 7

“La vida económica y la red van de la mano. Discute”.

Not many candidates attempted this question. Essays displayed generally fair organization in terms of having an introduction, paragraphs and a conclusion. There were not many incidences of thesis statements being included in the introductions and there were even less incidences of topic statements and concluding sentences in the paragraphs. Conclusions were generally fair. Not many candidates made use of transitional devices to strengthen the coherence of the essay. Generally, expression was fair; there was limited use of idioms and complex grammatical structure. Most candidates who discussed this question focused on the benefits of online shopping, increased productivity through remote work, the creation of an entrepreneurial spirit and increased efficiency. Some candidates also discussed challenges which include identity theft, hacking and security issues.

Common errors included the following.

- *para hacer cometida*
- *menos personas quiere*
- *la red puede utilizar*
- *consumadores*
- *en primer*
- *las personas trabaja remoto*
- *permiten individuos*
- *physico*
- *un conexión*
- *las personas no preocupan*
- *las empresas necesito*

Overall Comments and Recommendations

Main Strengths Identified

- Many candidates showed that they could structure their essays well, including a clear introduction, body, and conclusion.
- Several essays attempted to strike a balance by presenting both supporting points and opposing arguments.
- Stronger candidates incorporated real-world references such as current events, statistics and examples to strengthen their arguments.
- Most responses stayed focused on the main issue addressed by the essay prompt.

- Linking words and transitions were used effectively in many essays, improving flow and readability.
- A few candidates with stronger Spanish skills demonstrated range in vocabulary and sentence construction, expressing their ideas with clarity and variety.

Main Weaknesses Identified

- Some candidates misinterpreted key terms or concepts, oversimplifying central ideas
- Several essays were one-sided; candidates presented only a single perspective without counter-arguments; some repeated points without adding new insight.
- Several responses lacked depth; candidates merely listed causes or effects without clearly connecting them to the essay topic or explaining their importance.
- Weaker essays often showed grammar and vocabulary problems such as incorrect verb tenses, agreement errors or poor word choices that made meaning unclear.
- In many cases, key points were identified but were left underdeveloped, with little explanation, reasoning, or supporting examples. This left the arguments sounding generic or superficial, falling short of the depth expected at the CAPE level.

Recommendations for Candidates

- As with any skill, increased practice is important. Time should be spent practising the preparation of different drafts on current issues, beginning especially with those that are interesting and appealing.
- Students should get continuous feedback on their writing from teachers as well as their peers.
- Practise should involve continuously prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing practice essays.
- Reading from a variety of current and credible sources would be helpful.
- More attention should be paid to using Spanish often so that the grammatical structures of the language can be better and more naturally modelled and manipulated into writing.
- The use of current and relevant statistics, and factual information to substantiate claims/positions is encouraged.
- Candidates should listen to and watch debates and discussions on varied issues to help them develop the use of argumentative techniques and the practice of re-stating points in their own words.
- Keen attention should be paid to areas such as spelling, agreement, negatives, position of words, accentuation, grammatical structures, conjugation of verbs, the perfect tense, the subjunctive mood and omission of the definite and indefinite articles.
- Candidates should research and document facts, statistics, authorities, anecdotes, scenarios and cases that are relevant to the themes in the unit, and include them as supporting details in their writing.
- Candidates should work towards mastering the technique of interpreting essay questions correctly by underlining the key words and then linking arguments to these key words.

- It is important to read the questions properly and create an essay outline.
- In the cases where candidates take a position on an issue, they need to practise including counter-arguments, acknowledging and/or refuting objections, alternatives and challenges to the position.

Recommendations for Teachers

- Use the writing process and other related strategies to develop the writing skills of students.
- Use the mark scheme to develop rubrics or checklists for students to use for self/peer critique and evaluation exercises.
- Emphasize with students the difference between expository and discussion/argumentative genres of writing.
- For the duration of the module, have students listen to or watch podcasts, videos, news reports and documentaries and then discuss the issues in relation to their country and region, taking into account existing policies and laws, as well as solutions or preventative measures.
- Facilitate more debates in class, using creative means such as role-play/simulations.
- Have students develop an online blog to share and justify their opinions on current issues.
- Give students ample opportunity to express themselves in Spanish.
- Review the mark scheme.
- Emphasize with students the equal importance of presenting sound, logical arguments and using the language correctly and efficiently in order to improve their scoring.
- Build critical thinking skills via approaches and activities that allow students to analyse, synthesize and evaluate information.

Paper 03 — Literary Analysis and Themes

In Section A, candidates were required to respond to one of four possible extracts from the prescribed texts on the syllabus. Each question comprised four parts — Parts (a) to (d). The first three parts, (a), (b) and (c), required candidates to summarize the plot, identify narrative point of view, describe atmosphere, describe character traits and comment on literary devices used in the given extracts. Part (d) required candidates to relate aspects of the extract to the rest of the prescribed text. All answers were required to be written in Spanish and candidates were allowed the use of a dictionary.

The total number of marks available for this paper is 48. These marks are equally distributed across the three modules. The paper contributes 20 per cent to the final assessment.

This year the highest score achieved by any candidate on Paper 02 was 44. The mean score was 29.50 out of 48 (61.47 per cent) and the standard deviation was 6.90.

Section A — Literary Analysis

Question 1: Un hombre sin opciones

Candidates provided satisfactory responses for most parts of the question.

In Part (a), most candidates were able to identify the series of events that comprised the plot. They highlighted that the colonel and his wife had a difference of opinion about the cock, and eventually, the colonel consoled her with the assurance that they would not die from hunger in three months. However, some candidates failed to mention that the wife was ill in bed. There were also instances where candidates quoted from the extract to relate the plot.

In Part (b), most candidates correctly identified the narrative point of view as third-person omniscient narration. They also commented on the objectivity of this type of narration. However, some candidates did not provide adequate quotation to justify third-person omniscient narration. In some instances, 'el' and 'su' were used as examples of third-person omniscient narration in lieu of a detailed example such as "*El coronel había previsto aquel momento*".

In Part (c), some candidates were able to identify the mood as one of tension, sadness or frustration. They also provided a detailed example from the extract to support their response. However, there were instances where candidates provided inadequate explanation of the mood and therefore could not score maximum marks.

In Part (d), most candidates provided a valid commentary on the hardship of life as portrayed in the extract and in the novel. However, some candidates focused their response solely on either the extract or the novel, thereby neglecting a comprehensive analysis of both sources. There were also instances where candidates addressed other issues in the text that were not related to the hardship of life experienced by the coronel and his wife.

Question 2: El descubrimiento de Belisa

Candidates provided satisfactory responses for most parts of the question.

In Part (a), most candidates were able to identify the series of events that took place in the extract. However, some candidates failed to mention the cause of Belisa's decision to migrate. There were also instances where candidates quoted from the extract to relate the plot.

In Part (b), most candidates correctly identified the narrative point of view as third person omniscient narration and provided a valid example. However, some candidates failed to comment on the objectivity of this type of narration. In some instances, candidates provided incomplete quotations and therefore could not earn the mark for a valid example.

In Part (c), most candidates correctly identified two character traits of Belisa with valid supporting details for each character trait. However, there were instances where candidates focused on emotions instead of personality traits.

In Part (d), most candidates provided a valid commentary on the portrayal of nature in the extract and another short story, highlighting nature as hostile or cruel to humanity. However, there were instances where candidates focused on describing the natural environment in the extract and another short story without adequately analysing how nature was portrayed in relation to its hostility or cruelty towards humanity.

Question 3: Lo que Ti Noel descubrió

Few candidates attempted this question. Responses were generally unsatisfactory.

In Part (a), most candidates were unable to relate the series of events that comprised the plot. There were also instances where candidates quoted from the extract to relate the plot.

In Part (b), most candidates correctly identified the narrative point of view as third person omniscient narration and commented on the objectivity of this type of narration. However, in some instances, candidates provided incomplete quotations or quotations that did not effectively demonstrate omniscient narration.

In Part (c), a few candidates identified a symbolic element in the extract and commented on its use. In some instances, no response was provided.

In Part (d), many candidates provided general comments about oppression of Black slaves in the novel without referencing specific examples from the extract. In some instances, no response was provided.

Question 4: Fátima de los Naufragios

This question was not attempted by any of the candidates.

Recommendations

Teachers should focus on the following strategies to enhance students' literary analysis skills.

- Encourage students to avoid using citations when summarizing the plot.
- Expose students to literary terms such as *la trama*, *el ambiente emocional*, *el punto de vista narrativo*.
- Ensure that students are familiar with behavioural verbs such as *relata*, *comenta*, *explica*, *describe*, *discute*.
- Emphasize the importance of writing all citations in full.
- Ensure that students understand the difference between character traits and emotions.
- Remind students that Part (d) requires them to refer to both the extract and the rest of the text studied.
- Provide students with adequate practice using extracts from the text studied and questions related to plot, narrative point of view, mood, characterization, figurative language and other narrative techniques.

Section B — Themes

Candidates were required to write an essay of 450–500 words, in English, on one of the questions relating to the theme, *El mundo moderno* or *El compromiso político y social*. They were also required to use one of the prescribed texts for the theme selected and discuss issues relevant to the question. Candidates were awarded marks for Knowledge and Understanding (16 marks), Application of Knowledge (9 marks) and Organization of Information (7 marks).

Question 5

“In life, it is difficult to turn one’s trials into triumphs. Discuss.”

Candidates were required to discuss the extent to which it is challenging to make the best out of devastating situations, as portrayed in the text studied. All candidates who chose this question used the text, *Cuentos de Eva Luna*. Most candidates disagreed with the statement, highlighting how various characters overcame adverse circumstances. They argued that in *La mujer del juez*, Casilda chose to sacrifice her dignity to save her children and, in the process, discovered sexual pleasure and freedom. In *Dos palabras* in the face of abject poverty, Belisa chose to migrate, empowered herself by becoming literate and operated a thriving business of selling words. In *El palacio imaginado*, Marcia finally found true freedom and happiness among the Indians when the benefactor abandoned her in the summer palace. A major challenge that some candidates faced was the tendency to resort to storytelling instead of analysing the issues in the text. There were also instances where candidates were unable to demonstrate sound knowledge of the text, as they constructed their entire essay using one short story.

Question 6

“Most sacrifices made in life are often worth the effort. Discuss.”

This question required candidates to discuss the extent to which sacrifices made in life are worth the cost, based on the text studied. All candidates who chose this question used the text *Cuentos de Eva Luna*. Candidates were able to examine the sacrifices of various characters and how they redounded to their benefit. They argued that in *Dos palabras*, Belisa abandoned her family in her quest for survival and made the treacherous journey to the coast. She empowered herself by becoming literate and operated a thriving business of selling words. In *La mujer del Juez* when Casilda realized that her life as well as that of her children was threatened, she sacrificed her dignity to save her children. Moreover, in *De barro estamos hechos*, Rolf Carlé abandoned his role as journalist and decided to help Azucena. Although he was unable to save her, he was able to confront his past. A major challenge that some candidates faced was the tendency to resort to storytelling instead of analysing the issues in the text. There were also instances where candidates were unable to demonstrate sound knowledge of the text, as they constructed their entire essay using one short story.

Question 7

“The less fortunate will never be able to improve their life chances.” Discuss.

Candidates were required to discuss the extent to which the less fortunate characters in the text studied would be able to improve the quality of their lives. All candidates who chose this question used the text, *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba*. Responses, for the most part, were satisfactory. Most candidates were able to identify factors that militated against the less fortunate experiencing a better quality of life: social injustice, chronic illness, abject poverty, exploitation and political oppression. However, there were instances where candidates did not present clear arguments. Instead, they provided a summary of the text or did not link their responses to the question.

Question 8

“The seeds of rebellion are often sown in the soil of oppression.” Discuss.

This question required candidates to discuss the extent to which conditions of oppression led to the emergence and growth of rebellion or resistance movements in the text studied. All candidates who chose this question used the text, *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba*. In most instances, candidates were able to discuss acts of rebellion such as circulation of clandestine information and illegal cock fights that arose as a result of an oppressive regime. However, a major weakness was the lack of organization of response. There were also instances where responses were superficial since some candidates did not demonstrate sound knowledge of the text.

Overall Comments and Recommendations

Candidates' Strengths

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

Candidates' Weaknesses

- Some essays lacked analysis. They were mere summaries of the text studied.
- Some essays were padded with either long or irrelevant citations which limited informed personal response.
- Some essays included lengthy introductions with irrelevant details.
- Some essays only contained the points made. There was no clearly outlined introduction nor was there a conclusion.
- Some responses were riddled with factual inaccuracies related to the text.
- Some responses were extremely short.
- Some responses contained citations in English as well as English translation of the text (title and characters).
- Some candidates focused on one character or one short story, thus limiting analysis.
- Some candidates focused on irrelevant sub-themes rather than directly answering the question.

Irregularities

- Using the wrong text for a stated theme, for example, using *Como agua para chocolate* to answer a question on *El mundo moderno*.
- Making long references to personal experiences.
- Writing general essays with no reference to text studied.
- Writing literary critiques of the text studied rather than responding to the question.
- Writing the entire essay in Spanish.
- Rewriting the prompt without answering the question or writing few garbled sentences.
- Writing responses that were illegible.
- Writing responses outside the earmarked spaces, for example, writing in the white spaces that border the printed questions.

Recommendations

Teachers should focus on the following guidelines to enhance the quality of students' essays.

- Ensure that students identify and discuss the issues related to the theme within the chosen text. Historical and philosophical perspectives, though necessary for class discussion, do not need to appear in the written examination.
- Remind students to use at least three short stories from *Cuentos de Eva Luna* or *Fátima de los naufragios* when responding to a question on the theme, *El mundo moderno*. When less than three short stories are used, students will not score higher than the marks in the Satisfactory/Good band for Knowledge and Understanding.
- Ensure that students are not dependent on the English translation of the text studied.

- Advise students to take their time to read and select questions carefully according to the prescribed text studied for the theme.
- Advise students to stay within the word limit as examiners do not read beyond the stipulated word limit.
- Train students in proper editing of citations, as overly edited citations lose all meaning and value within the discussion/analysis.
- Advise students to use good penmanship as examiners are unable to award marks for responses that are illegible.
- Advise students to select citations that support the points conveyed and integrate them seamlessly into their response.
- Advise students to write their responses on the lines provided. The white spaces that border the printed questions should not be used to continue responses that cannot fit on the lines. Extra pages are provided at the end of the question paper for this purpose. In the event that students use these extra pages, they should make an annotation next to the corresponding question(s), for example, *Please see extra pages*.
- Help students cultivate practices of proper essay writing – introduction, body and conclusion.
- Advise students that an excellent response should include
 - a brief introduction with a clear thesis statement relating to the question and clear reference to the text used
 - four to five solid points supported by concise, appropriate, brief and complete quotes, and an informed personal opinion, each in a new paragraph, one of which should be a counterpoint to show balance in the response if required
 - a brief conclusion.

Paper 04 — School-Based Assessment

This component required students to (i) deliver an oral presentation on a chosen topic related to the three modules, and (ii) participate in a discussion with the examiner about the topic as well as broader current issues. Performance on the SBA for Unit 2 varied widely, from weak to outstanding, though most students achieved results in the Good to Very Good range.

General Comments

Examiners generally followed the SBA guidelines in terms of structure and timing, though a few inconsistencies were noted, such as examiners speaking too much or general conversations being too rudimentary. Most of the recordings were clear and well done. Many examiners guided students smoothly through the various sections, but there were still occasions when students were not clearly informed at the beginning about the examination format, as required. Additionally, in some cases, examiners moved from topic to general conversation without providing the appropriate transition cues to students. Examiners are also encouraged to ensure that the topic and general conversations are spontaneous so that the discussion can be as natural as possible.

Detailed Comments

Topic Presentation

Many students performed very well in the topic presentation. Their discussion demonstrated very good preparation and their topics were clearly aligned with the syllabus and units. In most cases, topics were linked to a Spanish-speaking country in the Caribbean region, but there were a few cases where students failed to reference a Spanish-speaking country. Many presentations demonstrated clarity of structure and organization. Students made adequate use of facts, statistics, and examples to substantiate their discussions, thereby demonstrating strong evidence of research. Some presentations were very descriptive in nature and did not present the students' position or stance on the topic being discussed. Most of the presentations adhered to the time limit, but a few were either way below or way above the stipulated timeframe for the examination.

Topic Conversation

Most students handled the topic conversation reasonably well. Many responded confidently to follow-up questions, showing fluency and using appropriate vocabulary and structures. However, in some cases, students demonstrated challenges in comprehension, fluency and expression. In other instances, discussions focused mainly on local or regional contexts, with little or no reference to the Spanish-speaking country linked to the presentation. Additionally, a few students gave brief, underdeveloped answers, limiting the depth of the exchange. In a few cases, students posed questions to the examiners; this made the examination appear more like a natural conversation.

General Conversation

In this section of the examination, students' performance was generally satisfactory. In many cases, the transition to this section was not very clear; however, students were able to respond to the questions despite the abrupt transition. Many questions focused on topics relevant to the unit, but there were a few cases where the questions were rudimentary, for example, there were sometimes long discussions on students' future aspirations or their reason for choosing subjects to study. Many students' responses demonstrated very good comprehension, fluency, intonation and grammatical structure; however, there were some responses with marked hesitations and pauses thereby demonstrating challenges in comprehension, fluency and sentence construction. Additionally, in some cases, the GC section was brief and did not adhere to the stipulated timeframe.

Challenges Observed

- Some students were not briefed on the exam format at the beginning.
- Topic conversations often emphasized local or regional issues without making strong connections to the Spanish-speaking country chosen for the presentation.
- Certain questions in the topic conversation repeated information already covered in the topic presentation, causing redundancy.
- In several cases, the shift from the topic conversation to the general conversation was either weak or missing altogether.
- The number of questions asked per student varied noticeably across different centres.
- The general conversation was occasionally shortened or omitted because too much time was spent on the presentation and topic conversation.

Strengths

- Topics selected were generally relevant and linked to the syllabus.
- In many cases, students showed good preparation and thorough research. They utilized statistics, facts and examples to substantiate their discussions.
- Some students demonstrated excellent comprehension with fluent, clear discussions and responses containing a broad range of linguistic structure and vocabulary.
- Stronger presentations displayed logical structure and coherence.
- Most discussions adhered to the stipulated format.

Recommendations

Teachers are encouraged to do the following.

- **Balance content:** Ensure both the presentation and topic conversation make meaningful links to the Spanish-speaking country; avoid overemphasis on local issues.
- **Avoid repetition:** Design topic conversation questions that are open-ended and analytical, rather than repeating points from the presentation.
- **Encourage smooth transitions:** Use clear strategies to guide students through each section of the exam, especially from topic conversation to general conversation.
- **Practise time management:** Keep the oral presentation within the three-minute limit to allow sufficient time for the general conversation.
- **Build spontaneity:** Incorporate more spontaneous speaking exercises in lessons to strengthen fluency and adaptability.
- **Encourage critical thinking:** Promote deeper analysis and fuller development of ideas to avoid short, superficial responses.
- **Clarify exam structure:** Clearly explain the SBA format to students during practice sessions and announce the structure at the start of the exam.