



CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

CSEC[®] SPANISH



Subject Report

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CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

January 2026

**SPANISH
GENERAL PROFICIENCY**

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INTRODUCTION

This report is based on the 2026 January CSEC Spanish examination. During this examination session, 256 candidates sat the examination. Approximately 49 per cent of candidates achieved Grades I–III. However, candidates' performance in 2026 declined across all four profiles when compared with their performance in 2025.

PAPER 01 — MULTIPLE CHOICE

Paper 01 — Multiple Choice — comprised two parts. Part A (listening comprehension) and Part B (reading comprehension). The paper assessed candidates' ability to listen to and understand 30 items read in the target language and to respond to 30 reading comprehension items. For both parts, candidates were expected to demonstrate sufficient mastery of essential grammar and vocabulary.

Candidates' performance in 2026 declined slightly when compared with 2025. The mean percentage in 2026 was 56.63 per cent, compared with 58.14 per cent in 2025.

PAPER 02 — FREE RESPONSE

Paper 02 — Free Response — comprised four compulsory questions and was worth a total of 100 marks. It accounted for 42 per cent of the overall examination grade. Candidates' performance on Paper 02 declined slightly when compared with 2025. The mean score in 2026 was 36.16, compared with 40.18 in 2025.

Section 1 — Directed Sections

Question 1

This question required candidates to read the directions for ten situations presented in English and then provide appropriate written responses in Spanish. Candidates' knowledge of Spanish vocabulary, including idiomatic expressions, grammar and sentence structure, was assessed. Marks were awarded when all the details outlined in the situation were included in the response and when meaning was communicated effectively. Responses were classified as appropriate or partially appropriate and marks were awarded accordingly; marks were deducted when there were errors in language quality. Candidates were not awarded marks when their responses were deemed inappropriate, even if the quality of the Spanish used was otherwise excellent.

Candidates' Strengths

Generally, candidates' responses were appropriate to the situations presented. In many cases, they incorporated idioms and appropriate vocabulary well. The stronger or better-prepared candidates read the situations carefully and ensured that their responses included the two elements required for a full response. They kept their responses short and to the point, thereby minimizing errors often associated with lengthy or unnecessarily complex responses.

Candidates' Weaknesses

Many candidates were unable to select correct and appropriate vocabulary to respond to the situations provided. Several candidates could have earned higher scores had they avoided careless errors, particularly in spelling and the use of accent marks, especially when these omissions altered the meaning of words.

Additionally, some candidates misinterpreted what they were expected to do with the information in the situation described and therefore omitted one or more elements required for a full response. Other candidates unnecessarily complicated their responses, writing extended introductions where a shorter response would have sufficed and so they were penalized for exceeding one sentence. Candidates should note that the more they write, the more likely they are to make errors; responses should be kept short and to the point.

Although handwriting is not related to grammar or vocabulary, candidates' handwriting presented challenges in distinguishing letters such as 'a', 'o', 'e' and 'c'.

The following were identified as general areas of weakness.

- Inability to correctly form commands both familiar and formal
- Inappropriate uses of *ser* and *estar*
- Errors in gender agreement
- Incorrect conjugation of verbs
- Not using the infinitive after a conjugated verb
- Not using the required prepositions after the verb
- Confusing *por* and *para*
- The failure to use the personal 'a' when required
- Errors when using the preterit tense
- Errors in the use of the subjunctive

The situations were considered to be manageable and most candidates responded in the target language. However, some candidates did not attempt all the situations or they provided responses that included a mixture of Spanish and English. Overall, candidates' performance ranged from satisfactory to poor; however, the work of a few candidates was very good to excellent.

Part (a)

Your neighbour is planning a surprise birthday party for her son and wants your advice.
Write the text message you send to her giving a suggestion and saying how you can help.

Functions: Suggesting and offering help

Full response: *Puedes invitar a sus amigos de su clase y traeré un pastel.*

Most candidates understood the situation and provided a suggestion along with an offer to do or bring something. However, many candidates failed to include either a suggestion or an offer of assistance. A few candidates simply asked if they could help, rather than offering specific help as required. Additionally, how candidates used the future tense or *ir a* + infinitive was generally weak. In many cases, candidates misspelled words and used accents incorrectly.

The following were identified as the most common errors.

- Using *para* instead of *por*
- Incorrect subject-verb agreement (for example, 'Yo puedes')
- Incorrect use of vocabulary (for example, 'bebes' instead of *bebidas* and 'llegar' instead of *llevar*).
- Not using the infinitive after a conjugated verb (for example, 'puedes compras')
- Not using subjunctive after the word *sugiero* (for example, 'Sugiero que compras')

Part (b)

You have been doing well in school and your mother wants to reward you. Write the note she leaves on your bed saying how she feels about your good grades and how she proposes to reward you.

Function: Expressing feelings

Full response: *Estoy tan orgullosa de ti y voy a comprarte un nuevo celular.*

This situation was generally well understood and most candidates were able to express feelings of happiness along with an offer of a reward. However, many responses contained numerous grammatical errors.

The most common errors included the following.

- Lack of agreement between words (for example, *'Tu resultados'*)
- Omission of the verb (for example, *'Yo muy feliz.'*)
- Misuse of *tú, te* and *ti* (for example, *'Un regalo para tú, voy a comprartu...'*)
- Incorrect use of the verb *ser* (for example, *'Soy feliz.'*)
- Incorrect conjugation of radical-changing verbs (for example, *'Puedemos ir de compras'*)

Part (c)

You have been missing a lot of football practice lately and your coach is upset with you. Write the note that you leave your coach with an explanation of your absence and a promise.

Function: Explaining and promising

Full response: *Tuve que estudiar para un examen, pero prometo que no faltaré más prácticas.*

Most candidates understood what was required in this situation; however, their responses were riddled with errors. While nearly all candidates were able to provide an excuse for missing practice and make a promise, the promise was expected to relate specifically to attending practice more frequently. Some candidates, however, offered promises that were unrelated to the situation. The most common excuses given were examinations and illness.

The most frequent errors included the following.

- Expressing apologies incorrectly (for example, *'Soy muy siento', 'yo soy lo siento' and 'lo siento por...'*)
- Misusing *me* and *mi* (for example, *'Me cabeza'*)
- Using subjunctive after *cuando* with future time (for example, *'Cuando estoy mejor iré a practicar más.'*)
- Using *'a'* after *prometer* (for example, *'Prometo a practicar en el futuro.'*)
- Using *en* when saying on weekend (for example, *'En el fin de semana'*)

Part (d)

A well-known sports person is coming to visit your community club. Write the text that your club leader sends to him/her suggesting two topics that he/she can discuss during his/her visit.

Function: Suggesting

Full response: *Usted puede hablar de los beneficios de practicar un deporte y de las cualidades necesarias para ser un buen deportista.*

This situation proved challenging for many candidates because they did not provide suggestions or were unable to find the necessary Spanish vocabulary to formulate an appropriate response. Many candidates suggested talking about a sport. Such suggestions did not meet the requirements. A few candidates misinterpreted the situation. They treated it as a message to the club leader asking him to suggest two things the sportsperson could speak about. Overall, candidates experienced difficulties with both vocabulary and grammar.

The most common errors included the following.

- Use of two conjugated verbs together (for example, '*Puedes hablas de ...*')
- Agreement between words (for example, '*Mi alumnos , cuanto horas*')
- Misuse of *gustar and encantar*. (for example, '*Los Jovenes gustan/encantan ...*')
- Use of subjunctive after *quiero que* (for example, '*Quiero que hablas de ...*')
- Use of *tópicos for temas*

Part (e)

Your uncle is planning a family vacation and wants your father's advice. Write the text message that your father sends recommending where your uncle should go and what kind of accommodation he should select.

Function: Recommending

Full response: *Puedes ir a Margarita y quedarte en una casa de huéspedes.*

This situation elicited a range of interpretations. Many candidates did not name a country as the destination but instead mentioned places such as the beach or a hotel. Generally, those candidates who correctly identified a country were able to suggest a hotel, guest house or accommodation provided by relatives. However, many candidates omitted the type of accommodation that should be used and therefore earned only partial marks. Vocabulary related to types of hotels was unfamiliar to many candidates. Responses also contained numerous spelling and grammatical inaccuracies.

The following errors were commonly identified.

- Use of infinitive instead of imperative or a verb of suggestion or recommending (for example, '*Ir a Margarita.*')
- Incorrect spelling (for example, '*vacciones*', '*marviloso*', '*recommiendo*', '*sugerio*')

- Confusion between *habitación* and *dormitorio*

Part (f)

You send a text message to your cousin to get his/her opinion on a birthday present for your aunt. Write the response that he/she sends giving his/her opinion with a reason.

Function: Expressing an opinion

Full response: *Creo que puedes comprarle una botella de perfume porque le encantan los perfumes.*

This situation was interpreted in two ways, both of which were accepted. One interpretation was that the cousin had already bought a present and was asking for an opinion about it. The other was that the cousin had not yet bought anything and was seeking ideas or opinions. Both interpretations were generally well handled when candidates provided an opinion along with a reason.

The most common errors included the following.

- The incorrect use of *gustar* and *encantar* (for example, ‘*Ella gusta flores.*’ ‘*Me gusta lo.*’ and ‘*Me lo encanta/mi encanta.*’)
- Incorrect placement and agreement of adjectives (for example, ‘*Un bonita vestido.*’)
- Misuse of *bien* and *bueno*, (for example, ‘*Este regalo es bien.*’)

Part (g)

While walking with your friends in the park, you witness something interesting. Write the text message you send to your brother saying what you saw and expressing your feelings about it.

Function: Providing information and expressing feelings

Full response: *Hubo un robo en el parque y estaba tan asustado/a.*

This situation proved to be one of the most difficult for candidates. Many candidates did not respond. Candidates appeared to be unable to think of an interesting event that could occur in a park or lacked the vocabulary to express their ideas. Most candidates who attempted the task provided only partial responses, often focusing solely on feelings rather than describing an event.

The following errors were most frequently identified.

- Inappropriate ways of expressing emotions, including fear and surprise
- Failure to conjugate verbs (for example, ‘*Yo ver*’)
- Incorrect conjugation of verbs (for example, ‘*El gato comiste*’)
- Use of ‘*a*’ instead of ‘*en*’ for at a place (for example, ‘*Ocurrió al parque.*’)
- Misuse of *mucho* instead of *muy* (for example, ‘*Era mucho guapo.*’)
- Omission of personal ‘*a*’ after verb (for example, ‘*Vi dos personas*’)
- Misspelling of words like *parque* (for example, ‘*Parke*’)
- Use of *estar* instead of *tener* (for example, ‘*Estaba miedo*’)

Part (h)

Your father returns to his car and notices a dent on the door. Write the note that is left on the windscreen offering to pay for repairs and saying how the person can be contacted.

Function: Making an offer

Full response: *Voy a pagar los danos y me puede contactar al....*

This situation required candidates to write a note in which there was an offer to pay for the repairs and contact information. Although a few candidates produced perfect responses, most responses were incomplete or contained numerous errors. Many candidates did not make a statement in which they offered payment; they simply apologized and provided contact information such as phone number or email. Candidates who did such were awarded partial marks.

The most common errors included the following.

- Using incorrect words or spellings for the phrase telephone number (for example, '*telefono numero*' or '*numero telefono*')
- Mispelling the Spanish word for telephone.
- Difficulty expressing I'm sorry for... (for example, '*Lo siento por tu carro.*')
- Inability to say call me or contact me in Spanish (for example, '*Llamarmi*', '*telefonear*' and '*contactome*')

Part (i)

Your brother returns home from shopping and realizes that he made a mistake with his purchase. Write the email that he sends to the store manager explaining his mistake with a request.

Function: Explaining and making a request

Full response: *Yo compré dos camisas en vez de una, ¿puedo devolver una?*

Candidates were expected to explain the mistake and make an appropriate request. Many candidates struggled to express both components because they lacked the vocabulary to do so. Many others did not provide an answer. Some candidates attempted to provide an explanation but omitted the request. Other candidates made the request but provided no explanation.

The following were identified as the most common errors.

- Using present tense instead of past tense (for example, '*Yo compro una camisa ayer.*')
- Misusing *volver* and *devolver* and *regresar* (for example, '*Puedo volverlo/regresarlo a la tienda.*')

Part (j)

In the post that you make on your community notice board, give two details about your pet including one outstanding feature.

Function: Describing

Full response: *Simba es un perro mestizo de color crema y tiene sólo un ojo.*

For this situation it seemed as though most candidates did not understand the phrase outstanding feature. As a result, responses often included only basic descriptive details such as colour or size.

The most common errors included the following.

- Incorrect placement of adjectives (for example, *'Es un blanco perro.'*)
- Errors in noun–adjective agreement (for example, *'Mi gato es gorda y blanca'*)
- Incorrect use of the verb *gustar* (for example, *'Mi perro gusta ladrar.'*)
- Misuse of *ser* and *estar* (for example, *'Mi animal está grande.'*)

Recommendations

To improve candidates' overall performance, it is recommended that the following be implemented.

- Regular practice sessions should be incorporated, using sample directed situations from various CXC past papers and focusing specifically on identifying language functions. This approach will help students develop greater awareness of the role language functions play in achieving accuracy and appropriateness in their responses.
- Grammar instruction should be delivered within meaningful thematic contexts. Topics such as shopping, travel, school, home and family can be used to help students acquire a wider range of vocabulary and verbs while reinforcing correct grammatical usage.
- Targeted spelling exercises should be incorporated, with particular focus on words that closely resemble English. During instruction, teachers should highlight to students the consonants that cannot be doubled in Spanish, contrasts between 'b' and 'v' and the 'd' sound, as well as distinctions between 'll' and 'y'. Activities that reinforce correct spelling of vocabulary in the target language should be an integral part of teaching and learning activities.
- Review and reinforcement grammar activities should be used to strengthen key grammatical areas, including
 - the use of *ser* and *estar*, the conjunction 'y', particularly before words beginning with the letter 'i'
 - making recommendations in both formal and informal registers
 - expressing commands, agreement of adjectives with nouns in Spanish
 - the use of the preterit, imperfect, conditional, and future tenses.
- Students should be taught to read questions carefully and be specific when giving the information required. Teachers should also ensure that students recognize the function that is being described in the question. In guiding students, teachers should highlight to students that emphasis should

be placed on underlining key words and phrases in the situation to reduce the likelihood of omitting essential details when constructing responses.

- Emphasis should be placed on helping students use Spanish accents accurately, particularly in cases where meaning is affected, as making such errors may cause them to lose marks.
- Given that many students were unable to respond in a single sentence, structured practice in this area is recommended. Students should be encouraged to be direct in their responses as giving lengthy responses may cause them to make careless errors. 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'.
- Many students also omitted the interrogation marks at the beginning and end of questions. Regular practice in the formation of questions should be reinforced. Attention should be paid to the consistent use of appropriate punctuation.
- Modern language departments should work in tandem with the English departments to develop and employ strategies to enhance students' comprehension of English words.

Candidates are encouraged to do the following in order to improve their overall performance.

- Write legibly, especially when writing accents or dots above vowels.
- Avoid excessive erasing or rewriting, as repeatedly erasing and rewriting (for example, from pencil to pen) can result in unclear or double printing. This makes responses difficult to read.
- Review responses. Many candidates could have improved their performance by simply reviewing what they wrote.
- Refrain from writing within the margins of the response sheet, as responses written outside the designated will not be scanned properly.
- Be brief and direct when responding to situations. Avoid long responses and avoid giving a preamble to the response. The responses that were very long tended to be a lot more disjointed.
- Develop a wide vocabulary and increase exposure to more idiomatic expressions. Doing so would improve the quality of responses.
- Read and highlight the key functions being tested in each situation before responding, to ensure that the answer is appropriate.

Section 2 — Letter

Question 2

Candidates were required to write a letter of 130–150 words based on four given cues. They were assessed on their use of language, accuracy, coherence and clarity of expression. The demands of this question were suitable, adequate and within candidates' life experiences. The cues were not narrowly structured so this allowed candidates to express themselves in language within their ability. Even candidates who had limited knowledge of grammar and vocabulary would not have been disadvantaged. The question required candidates to use of a wide range of tenses, including the present, preterit, imperfect and future.

For the scenario presented, candidates were expected to write a letter to a friend in Peru describing their experience after winning first prize in a shopping-spree competition. They were expected to address four key points: the type of competition and the method used to enter, how they discovered that they had won and their reaction, a detailed account of the shopping spree itself and the other competitions they intend to participate in in the future.

Candidates' Strengths

- Most candidates provided an answer. The following strengths were observed.
 - Generally, candidates followed the cues provided, even when they were unfamiliar with some vocabulary items.
 - Fewer candidates wrote the day and year in words and fewer included the 'el' before the date.
 - The beginning and ending of the letter were well expressed. Examples of effective expressions observed included the following.
 - *Espero que tengas buena salud al recibir esta carta*
 - *Estoy escribiendo para decirte*
 - *¿Cómo te vas?*
 - *Escríbeme pronto y dame tus noticias*
 - *Saludos a tu familia*
- The correct use of tenses, including that of irregular verbs, was seen in the responses of more competent candidates. Correct use of vocabulary and grammar produced a comprehensive flow and coherence of language. Examples of such are as follows.
 - *He estado muy ocupado.*
 - *¡No te vas a creer lo que me pasó!*
 - *Brinqué y grité.*
 - *Esto me motivó a participar en otros concursos de belleza.*
 - *Lo que más me gustó de la experiencia fue.*

- *Será una experiencia inolvidable.*
- *¡Qué experiencia tan emocionante!*
- The subjunctive was used appropriately by stronger candidates. Examples include the following.
 - *Espero que te sientas bien.*
 - *No podía esperar a que llegara el certificado.*
- Idioms and expressions were used by few candidates to enhance the style of writing. Some well-executed examples included the following.
 - *Por otro lado.*
 - *Apenas pude dar crédito a mis ojos.*
 - *No fue pan comida.*
 - *Temblé como un flan.*
 - *Dios mediante.*

Candidates' Weaknesses

General errors were as follows.

- Incorrect placement of adjectives (for example, '*Muy bonitos zapatos*')
- Incorrect article usage (for example, '*El competición*')
- Unnecessary use of the article (for example, '*Compramos el carne, la leche, el queso*')
- Incorrect tense usage, as seen in the following examples
 - *Escribo para contarte de una competición que hago.*
 - *Fue muy divertido cuando yo gano.*
 - *¿Cómo estés tu familia?*
 - *La tienda llamame.*
- Incorrect formation of tenses (for example, '*Tenerás un boleto*', '*Decieron*' and '*Me sentí en las nubes*')
- Errors in subject–verb agreement (for example, '*Dos falda negros*', '*Una día*', '*Muchas concursos*' and '*Un vestido blanca*')
- Lack of use or incorrect use of the infinitive (for example, '*Después de comprando*', '*Quiero entre*' and '*Yo participar en una competición*')
- Using a subject pronoun or another form instead of an object pronoun (for example, '*Mi mama entró mí*')
- Unnecessary pluralizing (for example, '*Ropas*' and '*Comidas*')
- Omission of the preposition (for example, '*Fui al centro comercial y comprar ropa*' and '*Estoy escribiendo esta carta ^ decirte*')
- Lack of subjunctive (for example, '*Espero que me escribes pronto*')
- Using *por* instead of *para* (for example, '*Un regalo por mi mamá*' and '*Estoy preparando por la competición*')
- Use of unknown or incorrect vocabulary, including *emocionado* for *emocionante*, *competition* for *competición*, *contesta* for *competición* and *pregunté for pedí*.
- Incorrect expression of *gustar* and *encantar* (for example, '*Yo encanta*' and '*^ Todos ^ gusta cosas diferentes*').

- Confusion between *ser* and *estar* (for example, '*Fui muy contento*' and '*La competición estaba en un hotel*')
- Misspelt words including omission of accents (for example, 'Competicion', 'Telephono', 'Emocionate' and 'Quiseria')

Recommendations

- Candidates should avoid sitting the January examination solely for practice without preparing adequately. Doing so defeats the purpose of taking an exam and often results in weak performances that do not reflect candidates' true potential.
- Effective practice of grammar and vocabulary should be ongoing, not only through exercises but also in meaningful contexts such as dialogues and role play, in order to reinforce learning. Grammar and use of expressions in context can be explained by analysing the reading comprehension passages and by understanding why particular tenses and other grammar concepts have been used.
- Translation exercises from are still necessary for learning the language.
- All four language skills — listening, reading, speaking and writing — must be strengthened simultaneously. Development in one area positively influences the others. Meaningful use of games, projects, classroom activities and technology can greatly enhance both teaching and learning, and foster better engagement with the language.

Section 3 — Contextual Dialogue

Question 3

This section required candidates to complete a contextual dialogue of 80–100 words. Five cues were provided in English and candidates were assessed on their use of language, accuracy, coherence and clarity of expression. In addition, their responses were expected to integrate smoothly with the utterances provided in the dialogue and the interaction was expected to be natural throughout. The task reflected the requirements outlined in the syllabus and was therefore well within the expected scope of candidates' ability.

Candidates were required to write a dialogue between themselves and a friend, Alicia, based on plans to attend a concert. In completing the dialogue, candidates were expected to respond appropriately to all the cues by expressing feelings about attending the concert, outlining preparations—including transportation—describing appropriate attire, stating the duration of the concert and plans afterwards, and discussing ticket arrangements and cost. Successful candidates demonstrated that they had the ability to sustain a natural exchange while clearly addressing all required elements.

In order for all cues to have been used appropriately and effectively, candidates were expected to include the following information in their dialogue, presented in a logical and coherent sequence.

1st Tu: Saying how you feel about the concert and asking how the other person feels

2nd Tu: Saying that you will get permission, but you must promise something. Also asking what has to be done first or any relevant question

3rd Tu: Saying that your brother is not sure about taking them. Asking where they have to go to purchase tickets

4th Tu: Suggest using the bus as transport

5th Tu: Saying how they should dress (informal)

6th Tu: Giving time and duration of the concert. Asking what they will do after the concert or any relevant question that fits in with the response that follows.

7th Tu: Asking if he thinks they should go there because friends said that it is not a safe place/any appropriate question with reason for question.

8th Tu: Saying what he prefers to do and asking when they will go to buy tickets and the cost of tickets.

9th Tu: Asking where they will meet

Candidates' performance ranged from moderate to poor. Very few candidates scored in the very good to excellent range. The question was within the scope of the candidates' ability, as most of them appeared to understand what was required. However, many candidates' responses lacked cohesion and clarity due to limited vocabulary range and weak grammatical structures.

Weaker candidates often reproduced or paraphrased the utterances of the second speaker instead of generating original and appropriate responses. In several instances, responses to certain cues were omitted entirely or produced in a manner that disrupted the flow of the dialogue.

Candidates' Weaknesses

Although most candidates attempted to respond to each cue, many others provided incomplete or partial responses, which negatively affected the coherence of the dialogue. In some cases, candidates used incorrect words for key vocabulary items, thereby altering the intended meaning of the conversation.

The second and seventh cues posed the greatest challenges. For the second cue, many candidates failed to recognize that a promise was needed in order to obtain permission to attend the concert. In relation to the seventh cue, candidates often did not understand that they were required to question the safety of the venue based on information provided by friends. These misunderstandings resulted in candidates providing responses that did not fulfil the communicative intent of the task.

The following errors were frequently observed among candidates.

- Errors in subject-verb agreement (for example, '*Mis padres me dio permiso*')
- Incorrect adjective-noun agreement (for example, '*Llevo un vestido roja*')
- Incorrect expression of time, including misuse of *a las* + hour and *son las* + hour (for example, '*El concierto comienza son las nueve*'). Time was also incorrectly expressed as '*es por dos horas*' and '*a son las seis*'.
- Incorrect use of *por* after *durar* to state the length of time (for example, '*El concierto dura para tres horas*')
- Misuse of *ser* and *estar* (for example, '*soy emocionada*'; *soy/estoy emocionante/igual*)
- Inappropriate substitutions that distorted meaning (for example, '*podemos usar el carro de mi padre*'; *no quiero ir al concierto*; *me pidió permiso*')
- Incorrect use of *conocer* instead of *encontrarse* or *quedar* to express to meet, particularly in the final response

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.

- Students 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.
- Students need to be encouraged to avoid writing in English and then translating, when writing in and out of the classroom.
- Students 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 they can incorporate such in their writing.
- Students should be taught to write within word limits. In addition, teachers need to encourage their students to review and reread their work. Teachers can plan and structure review time into each lesson to help students get into the habit of looking over their work before submission.

Section 4 — Reading Comprehension

Question 4

This question assessed candidates' ability to read a passage in Spanish and demonstrate that they understood it by responding in English to questions posed in English.

The reading comprehension passage for the CSEC January 2026 examination was of an appropriate level for candidates, whether they were attempting the examination for the first time or had previously attempted it in an earlier sitting.

Overall, candidates performed at a good level. In some instances, candidates' limited vocabulary impacted the quality of their responses, whether due to insufficient understanding of Spanish vocabulary or a restricted range of English synonyms. A small number of candidates (fewer than in previous years) did not comprehend the passage. These candidates either failed to respond to the questions or repeated the same responses for multiple questions. While only a few candidates attained full marks, the majority achieved scores ranging from 12 to 18 marks.

Candidates' Strengths

Instructions were adhered to quite well. Where questions were worth more than one mark, many candidates were able to earn partial credit, gaining either two out of three marks or one out of two marks. Candidates also demonstrated that they understood inference, particularly in Part (j), which was generally handled well.

Candidates' Weaknesses

Despite these strengths, a major area of weakness was vocabulary, particularly the use of verbs and adjectives. Limited vocabulary prevented many candidates from gaining full marks. As a result, Parts (e) to (i) proved to be the most challenging for candidates.

Part (a)

Question: What kind of boy was Antonio?

Example of a correct response: Antonio was intelligent.

Part (a) was worth one mark.

Part (b)

Question: How did Antonio always perform in examinations?

Example of a correct response: He passed subjects all except Maths.

Example of a partial/incorrect response: He did well.

Part (b) was worth two marks. The marks were awarded for identifying the two subjects Antonio passed and the one subject he did not pass. Most candidates produced the correct response, although some only stated that Antonio did well and therefore did not gain full marks.

Part (c)

Question: What was Antonio's main problem?

Example of a correct response: He was lazy.

Example of an incorrect response: Math was his main problem.

This part was worth one mark. There was only one correct response. While many candidates answered correctly, some candidates incorrectly identified Mathematics as Antonio's main problem, despite the passage clearly stating that laziness was the underlying issue.

Part (d)

Question: Outline what contributed to Antonio's problem.

Example of a correct response: Because it was easy for him to succeed, he did not see the need to try harder.

Example of a partial/incorrect response: He passed nearly all his subjects.

This part was worth two marks. Many candidates earned partial marks, while others received either full marks or no marks, depending on the clarity and completeness of their responses.

Part (e)

Question: What three things did Antonio's mother urge him to do?

Example of a correct response: She urged him to study more, go to church and pray.

Examples of a partial/incorrect responses:

- She urged him to study more, get help in English and talk to his neighbours.
- She urged him to spend more time in the exam, get help in English and get help from a neighbour.

This question was worth three marks; however, most candidates earned either one or two marks. The phrase *asistir a la iglesia* posed difficulty for many candidates, who confused *iglesia* with *inglés* and interpreted *asistir* as to assist. In addition, lack of knowledge of the verb *rezar* prevented some candidates from obtaining full marks.

Part (f)

Question: What did Antonio's neighbours do for him?

Example of a correct response: They prayed for his success.

Example of a partial/incorrect response: They helped him in English.

This part was worth one mark and approximately 50 per cent of candidates answered it correctly. Those candidates who did not get the mark seemed to be unfamiliar with the vocabulary required, as outlined in Part (e).

Part (g)

Question: What two emotions would describe how Antonio really felt about his situation?

Example of a correct response: He was worried and afraid.

Example of a partial/incorrect responses:

- He was busy and afraid.
- He was worried and anxious.

This response was worth two marks. While some candidates achieved full marks, many earned only one mark. Vocabulary difficulties, particularly with the word *preocupado*, likely affected candidates' performance.

Part (h)

Question: What three decisions did Antonio make?

Example of a correct response: He decided to listen to his mother, work harder and pray.

Example of a partial/incorrect response: He got help for English, worked harder and pay attention in class.

This question was worth three marks. Candidates' performance was closely linked to how they performed on Part (e). Candidates who struggled in that part often repeated similar errors.

Part (i)

Question: What two emotions would describe how Antonio felt upon receiving his results?

Example of a correct response: He was excited and relieved.

Example of a partial/ incorrect response: He was happy and alive.

This question was worth two marks. Similar to Part (g), candidates either knew the required adjectives and gained full marks or demonstrated partial understanding and earned only one mark.

Part (j)

Question: Explain what we could learn from Antonio's experiences.

Example of a correct response: If you want to succeed in life, you have to work hard and accept advice.

Example of a partial/incorrect response: If you work harder you will succeed.

Most candidates responded very well to this part and demonstrated a clear understanding of the passage. Incorrect responses were rare.

Recommendations

- Students need to learn and revise vocabulary constantly in both English and Spanish, paying particular attention to synonyms in both languages to improve accuracy and flexibility in responses.
- Consistent practice is essential. Past papers are easily available on CXC's website and in other places. As part of this practice, students 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 in both Spanish and English would be helpful, especially when it comes to noting sentence construction.
- Websites such as www.123teachme.com may be useful supplementary resources.

PAPER 03 — ORAL EXAMINATION

The CSEC Spanish oral examination tested candidates' ability to

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

This year, the topics selected were school and career, daily routine, shopping and travel. Overall, the examination focused on functional communication, pronunciation accuracy and interactive speaking skills.

Section 1 — Oral Situation

This section required candidates to produce appropriate oral responses in Spanish to situations or instructions described in English, using the language function specific to each situation. Overall candidates' performance was fair. Very few candidates performed within the good to excellent range. Many candidates appeared underprepared for this component. While several candidates demonstrated that they understood the functions examined, their responses were often weakened by grammatical and lexical inaccuracies.

The following observations were noted.

- Candidates who had limited vocabulary produced incomplete or inaccurate responses and, in many cases, were unable to address both segments of the situation.
- Idiomatic expressions were used infrequently.
- Subject-verb agreement posed challenges.
- Adjectival placement and agreement were problematic.
- Use of infinitive after a conjugated was often noted.
- Candidates found it difficult to express functions such as fear and seeking advice.
- Inability to distinguish between *ser* and *estar*, *por* and *para*.
- Use of anglicisms and sometimes even French was noted in some cases.

Recommendations

Candidates do not appear to be fully aware of the language functions required to respond effectively to the situations presented. The syllabus clearly outlines the specific functions candidates are expected to master in order to perform well in this section.

Teachers are therefore encouraged to design structured exercises that provide students with adequate opportunities to practise these functions orally. Oral practice in responding to situations should begin early in the teaching and learning process and teachers should avoid postponing the development of this skill until the examination year. Additionally, students should be encouraged to employ more complex vocabulary structures and idiomatic expressions, while moving away from cliché expressions and words.

Section 2 — Reading Aloud

This section assessed candidates' ability to read a Spanish passage of approximately 125–130 words, demonstrating accurate pronunciation of individual sounds, appropriate intonation and fluency.

In January 2026, candidates' performance was moderate. As expected, the few candidates who performed at an excellent level demonstrated a strong command of the Spanish sound system, were familiar with rules governing stress and accentuation, and read with commendable fluency. However, there was clear evidence of candidates who appeared unprepared for the examination and consequently performed poorly.

Common errors observed during reading included the following.

- General issues with intonation and stress, showing lack of comprehension of the passage
- Incorrect pronunciation of vowels 'i' and 'e'. Anglicized pronunciation detected
- Improper stress on accented words
- Cognates were anglicized
- Mispronunciation of *cc*, *ge* and *gi* and *h*.
- Difficulty producing correct diphthong sounds

The words that posed the greatest difficulty included *sociedades*, *calificaciones*, *cómodas*, *planeas*, *alguien*, *ejercicio* and *posibilidad*.

Recommendations

Challenges with fluency and intonation are typically the result of inadequate preparation and insufficient practice. Teachers must ensure that students develop a clear understanding of the Spanish sound system from the early stages of language learning. Particular attention should be given to syllabification and stress patterns, as these continue to be major challenges.

Spanish should be used consistently as the language of instruction in the classroom and frequent opportunities must be created for students to produce the language orally. In addition, students would benefit greatly from increased exposure to authentic listening activities in the target language, which can help reinforce accurate pronunciation, rhythm and intonation.

Section 3 — Oral Situations

The guided conversation section of the oral examination assessed candidates' ability to respond to a series of questions based on four topics. This year, the topics examined were school and career, daily routine, shopping and travel. Candidates were asked four questions on each topic and were assessed on comprehension, spontaneity, fluency and quality of expression.

As expected, candidates who performed very well demonstrated a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical structures, allowing them to answer questions readily and appropriately. These candidates exhibited clear evidence of thorough preparation for the examination. Weaker candidates often showed an understanding of the questions asked but lacked the vocabulary and grammatical accuracy necessary to produce effective responses. One-word answers were frequently provided and many candidates experienced difficulty elaborating or giving detailed responses. The common errors noted were similar to those identified in the oral situations component.

Recommendations

Teachers are encouraged to expose students to the consistent use of the target language within the classroom through various means, including Spanish radio stations, podcasts, and online oral and aural activities. Exposure to native speakers can further enhance students' understanding by providing an authentic language experience. Extensive use of Spanish in the classroom will not only strengthen students' listening and speaking skills but will also increase their confidence when engaging in conversation. Additionally, students should be encouraged to listen carefully to the questions asked and ensure that all required details are addressed in their responses.