

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

MAY/JUNE 2011

SPANISH

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Candidate performance improved in both Units of the 2011 examination. This improvement was especially noticeable on Paper 02 in both Units. With respect to the other papers, candidate performance was comparable with that of 2010.

DETAILED COMMENTS

UNIT 1

Paper 01 – Listening Comprehension

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

Section A – Short Selections

The results were generally satisfactory. Unlike previous years, most candidates completed the entire paper. However, some responses indicated that candidates needed to take greater care in reading questions. Moreover, many candidates relied heavily on previous knowledge instead of paying careful attention to the details of the passage.

Candidates' expression reflected many literal translations from Spanish to English, which at times led to ambiguity. A range of grammatical errors often posed challenges to examiners to determine the accuracy of the response. Additionally, vocabulary recognition was a major shortcoming of several candidates. Many of them did not understand the following words: *papel*, *escocesa*, *paloma*, *antebrazos*, *catorce*, *desocupación*, *guerra*, *pantalla*, *pariente*, *burla*, *contra*, *avaricia*, *mil*.

Selection 1

The performance on this selection, which looked at the significance of tattoos, was unsatisfactory. While many candidates understood the major elements of the question and provided the correct response, several of them did not realize that for Part (a), the tattoo was a very *old tradition* and that the significance varied *from time to time and place to place*. A rather common response was '...the significance of the tattoo from place to place'.

For Part (b), many candidates interpreted *el paso a la madurez* to mean 'passing or death of a loved one'. Also, candidates understood that tattoos were used as protection but gave varied responses with respect to what tattoos protected against. For example, some candidates said it protected against 'evil', 'diversity' or 'other countries'. Several candidates stated that tattoos signified 'a rite of passage', which was accepted as a correct response.

Part (c) asked candidates to indicate what usually brings about an important change in many persons. While some of them correctly referred to 'pain' in their responses, many did not give detailed enough responses. They did not know *soportar* and *vencer* and therefore were unable to state that people had to *bear* and *overcome* pain. A few other candidates interpreted the word *dolor* as 'dollars' and 'money'.

Part (d) was generally well done. Many candidates identified that people with tattoos in Japan ...were *dangerous criminals*. The vast majority of candidates did not score the full four marks on Part (e), as their responses were not detailed enough. Many candidates did not recognize that Jews were *tattooed with a number*. Their responses indicated that 'Jews got numerous tattoos' willingly. Several references to general knowledge about Jews (sometimes stereotypical) were made. Responses also showed that candidates did not understand the word *antebrazo*, as many of them interpreted it to mean 'arm', 'chest', 'biceps' and 'behind the arm', instead of 'forearm'.

Selection 2

The performance on this selection was very good with the majority of candidates scoring at least eight marks.

In response to Part (a), the majority of candidates were able to say that Brenda was 14 years old. However, far too many of them stated that she was 40 years old. The vast majority did not recognize her nationality (*escocesa*/Scottish) and rather, gave responses such as 'Unesco', 'Costa Rica', 'Glasgow', 'Soviet Union' and 'Pakistan'. There were other illogical responses, such as: 'Kelapadria', 'la padre echo', 'the coast of Cleopatra' and the 'Gulf of Paria'.

Part (b) was well done as many candidates correctly identified *insecurity* and *poverty* as factors responsible for the speaker's parents having to leave their country. However, many candidates did not know *desocupación* and therefore very few of them correctly responded with *unemployment*, but rather referred to 'jobs'.

Although most candidates identified Israel as the country to which the speaker migrated, Part (c), several spelt the word incorrectly.

For Part (d), very few candidates were unable to give the correct response *one year and one month* as the time that the speaker had been in her new country.

Part (e) was also well answered as the vast majority of candidates gave the correct responses to the question on 'three things the speaker misses about her country of origin'.

While performance on Part (f) was satisfactory, candidates' expression was generally not clear and many of them lost marks as a result. Many candidates misunderstood the idea that Brenda disagreed with her parents because she felt her parents *escaped from their problems*. Several candidates said that 'they are facing some of the same problems in Israel' or, 'they did not listen to her'.

Selection 3

The majority of candidates performed well on this selection, many of them earning full marks. Part (a) provided the most difficulty for candidates. Many of them failed to describe the people of Vauban as *living a good quality life*. Several of them stated that Vauban was a 'German village', which was irrelevant to the question asked.

However, almost all candidates provided the correct answer for Part (b), on the decision made by inhabitants, and Part (c), on what the inhabitants are doing instead. Responses were generally satisfactory for Part (d) as many candidates gave the correct response to the question on why some countries are following Vauban's model. Nevertheless, some candidates relied on their general knowledge of global warming to respond to this question.

Selection 4

This was the worst answered of the selections. Performance was generally poor. Most candidates scored three or fewer marks out of a possible eight.

Vocabulary recognition was a major challenge with respect to Part (a). Many candidates did not know the meaning of *paloma migratoria*. Many of them inferred that the entire passage was about the migration of people, polar bears, sheep, snakes, palm trees and deer. Other candidates inferred that people migrated to Paloma, USA for survival. Several candidates also interpreted *extinción* as meaning ‘extinguished’.

However, most candidates correctly responded to Part (b) by giving North America as the location of the phenomenon. For Part (c), understanding numbers proved to be problematic for a number of candidates. Very few candidates correctly responded to the question on what the population was two centuries ago.

For Part (d), while many candidates gave *man’s ambition* as the correct response, few of them identified *man’s greed*. The most common, but incorrect, responses referred to ‘cheap bird meat’ and ‘ministries and parliament’.

Part (e) was poorly done, mainly as a result of general misunderstanding. The most common response was that ‘man was vulnerable to attacks’, as opposed to *the pigeon being vulnerable to man’s attacks*.

Selection 5

Candidates performed fairly well on this selection. Most candidates scored one of the two marks allocated to Part (a), as they were generally not able to identify ‘environmental education’ as the role of the BEJA programme. Many of them felt that the programme was an academic university programme. On the other hand, Part (b) was poorly done. The majority of candidates interpreted *papel* as *paper* instead of as *role*. Few candidates referred to *the role of industry in the protection of the environment*.

Part (c) again provided evidence that numbers were a problem for candidates. Several candidates did not identify *dieciocho* (18) or *veinticuatro* (24). Also, many candidates failed to say that participants should have been *University students*.

While Part (d) was generally well done, some candidates did not realize that what participants had to do was to propose *an idea* as opposed to literally ‘fight global warming’.

Section B – Extended Interview

Selection 6

The sixth selection was an interview with the psychologist, Dr Enrique Salas, on the topic of domestic violence. Performance was generally good.

Part 1

Most candidates provided the correct response for Part (a). However, several candidates had problems with numbers. The number, ‘six’, (*seis*), was interpreted as ‘16’ or ‘26’. Candidates also misinterpreted *pariente* as ‘parent’.

Here are two sample responses:

‘A 16-year-old child was violently abused by a parent.’
 ‘Domestic violence has increased over the last 6 years.’

For Part (b), most candidates correctly explained why Dr Salas ‘feels sad’.

Part (c) was satisfactorily done. Many candidates simply stated that domestic violence was ‘common’ and ‘serious’. Many of them failed to say that it was *more common* and *more serious than people imagined*. On the other hand, Part (d) was well done.

Part 2

For Part (e), just as with Part (d), the skill of listing was required. Candidates performed well on this question.

For Part (f), most candidates were able to provide at least two early signs (insults/taunts/blows/punishment) of domestic violence. However, many candidates relied on their general knowledge of domestic violence and gave responses such as ‘cursing’, ‘quarrelling’ and ‘boyfriend beating girlfriend’.

While for Part (g) many candidates gave a response which was not completely accurate, they were awarded marks for the ideas present. Such responses included ‘Organization for Domestic Abuse’, ‘Association for Domestic Violence’ and ‘Society Against Domestic Violence’.

For Part (h), most candidates provided the correct response: *Call or visit the office*. However, for Part (i), as seen in previous questions, vocabulary recognition was a problem. Many candidates did not know *pantalla*, and thus said that the interviewer would put the telephone number on the ‘pamphlet’, ‘website’, ‘radio’ and ‘newspaper’.

Recommendations for Teachers

- Provide students with more listening practice with timed exercises
- Give students vocabulary recognition exercises and word association exercises as part of listening comprehension training
- Have students practise listening for gist to improve overall comprehension skills rather than simply listing information

Recommendations for Candidates

- Read questions before listening to the audio
- Consider the mark scheme in providing responses
- Proofread responses to ensure logic and coherence
- Write concise and precise responses to avoid ambiguity

Paper 02 – Reading and Writing

Section A – Reading Comprehension

In this section of Paper 02, candidates were presented with two passages, both in Spanish, and were required to respond to questions based on the material. For passage 1, candidates were asked to respond to the material in English to questions asked in English. For passage 2, the questions were in Spanish and candidates were to respond in Spanish.

Passage 1 – *Sexo, música y juventud*.

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

Overall, the performance on this question can be deemed as excellent as 70 per cent of the candidates scored in the 19–24 range. From the responses given, it was evident that candidates found the topic interesting and could relate to it.

While many candidates were able to give full answers for Part (a), there were a few problems with vocabulary items. There were problems with the words *letras* and *tempranas*. Candidates translated these items as 'letters' and 'temporary'. The answers given, therefore, were quite awkward. A very common answer was '... found that songs with the letters "sexual and degrading" caused adolescents to have temporary sexual relations'. Another problem that was noted was that many candidates used information from the entire passage to answer this first question. Candidates should be advised to refrain from summarizing the entire passage for any one question and to pay close attention to what is being asked in each question.

Part (b) was well answered by most candidates. Most of them gave complete answers to this question. What was unfortunate, however, was that many candidates translated the entire paragraph as their answer to this question, thereby providing information that was not required. Candidates need to be aware that giving unnecessary information takes additional time and this could affect the rest of the paper.

Part (c) (i) was also well handled by many candidates. However, there were some candidates who used their knowledge of Sociology to respond to the question. While it is commendable that candidates are able to transfer their knowledge to other areas, they must be informed that in a reading comprehension activity, answers can only be taken from the passage.

While most candidates understood the requirements of Part (c) (ii), in many instances, they did not provide full answers. Many of them were able to correctly interpret the statistical findings but failed to state what was found about young males and females. For those who attempted, it was found that the expression *tanto... como* was unfamiliar. Responses for this were at times contradictory, for example, some candidates stated that '... the same proportion was found more in men than women'.

There were some incomplete answers to Part (d). The question asked candidates to identify the advice that was given to parents. In many cases candidates responded, as it appeared in the passage, that 'parents need to be conscious of **this** ...', and in so doing were not specific about what 'this' referred to. Many candidates also misinterpreted the phrase *No están diciendo que los padres prohíban esta música* and said that parents 'should ban this music'. More careful attention needed to be paid when reading the passage.

While there was almost universal success in the answering of Part (e), on the result of sexual promiscuity among adolescents, in some cases candidates failed to provide the statistics.

Part (f) was also very well answered. Most candidates were able to say that *good sexual education* was needed to address the problem of sexual promiscuity. However, there were some cases where candidates only stated that ‘good education’ was needed.

Parts (g)–(k), the synonyms section of the questions, was fairly well handled. Most candidates were able to score at least four out of the total of five. While most candidates were able to find the synonym for item (g), a fair number failed to provide the complete phrase, writing *llevado* instead of *llevado a cabo*. However, for items (h), (i), (j) and (k) most candidates were able to identify the synonyms.

Passage 2 – *Reserva de Monteverde en peligro*

The questions on this passage posed challenges to many candidates. The major problem in correctly answering the questions was the apparent lack of vocabulary and the continued disregard by candidates of the instruction to respond in their own words. While it is important to note that candidates generally made a greater and very commendable attempt to put answers in their own words, there was still a significant number of candidates who took their answers directly from the passage. From the responses seen, it was clear that candidates were not as comfortable with this passage as they were with the first passage. Many of the responses were weak in terms of expression and grammar, specifically the use of tenses, subject/adjective/verb agreement and vocabulary usage. Approximately 35 per cent of the candidates scored in the 15–24 range.

For Part (a), most candidates were able to identify the three details given about the reserve. However, there was a lot of lifting from the passage. Many candidates appeared to be unfamiliar with the word *cuáqueros*, and dealt with this by not using the word at all. While this was disregarded in the marking, where only *norteamericanos* was accepted, candidates must be advised that specific information is often required in the answers for full marks to be awarded. It was not expected that such a term be defined in any way. Many candidates interpreted the word *fundado* to mean ‘funded’ and, as a result, gave responses such as *Los norteamericanos apoyan con dinero* and *Los norteamericanos dan dinero*.

Part (b) posed problems for many candidates. While many of them understood the requirements of the question, they attempted to answer by rephrasing the Spanish. Because of the lack of vocabulary, many of the responses were haphazard and barely comprehensible. Candidates were unable to gain full marks because of this.

There was the problem of a lack comprehension evident in candidates’ responses to Part (c). Many candidates were unable to express what the attraction of the ‘Tour Canopy’ was. For those who attempted to put the information in their own words, misinterpretation was obvious. Many others lifted the answer as their solution to the problem.

Part (d) appeared to pose few problems for candidates. Most of them were able to provide the correct response and many attempted to rephrase the response. On the other hand, Part (e) was also problematic for candidates. There was a general trend of lifting the answer from the passage. Misrepresentation was evident among those who attempted to put the response in their own words.

For Part (f) (i), most candidates were able to identify the measures that needed to be taken to protect the tropical forest. Part (f) (ii) required candidates to provide their opinions in a coherent manner. Many candidates failed to state how tourism affected the ecology of their country and instead talked about the effect on the country’s economy and its social impact. For those who did attempt to discuss the ecological

impact, the responses were often too minimal and therefore not adequately discussed. Some candidates simply took their information from the passage, not paying attention to the question which required them to discuss the effect *en tu país*. Some candidates simply stated that '*el turismo no ha afectado mi país*'. These responses were not accepted. Candidates were expected to discuss the points made in some detail.

Section B – Essays

Candidates were required to write an essay, in Spanish, of 250–300 words, on one of five topics. This section assessed candidates' ability to express themselves in Spanish in an analytical and logical manner related to the theme as outlined in Module 2 of the syllabus. Candidates were assessed on content and presentation (organization and coverage of the topic, relevance and inclusion of facts, ideas and opinions) and correctness of expression (range of vocabulary and idioms as well as accuracy of grammatical structures).

The level of competence ranged from excellent to poor with candidates unable to master basic grammar structures. Vocabulary, spelling, accentuation, adherence to literal translation and improper word order made it a challenging exercise for candidates to master. Many essays lacked structure. Candidates simply applied their knowledge on a theme and paid little attention to interpreting the questions correctly. They often did not state their position or support the points made, but used the wording of the question as their conclusion even though they may have made points to the contrary. There were a few excellent that clearly demonstrated that the candidates understood the question, showed reasoning and essays analysis and were able to write coherently.

Question 3

Es la responsabilidad de cada ciudadano de tratar de reducir las actividades criminales. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

This was the most popular choice among candidates. Candidates stated the different types of criminal activity that existed in society and tried to explain why it was each citizen's responsibility to try to reduce crime/criminal activities. Candidates often repeated the same point in all paragraphs. Some attempts at analysis degenerated and became illogical and incoherent. However, those candidates who scored in the 19–24 range argued that it was everyone's duty to help, if citizens as a community or world wanted to curtail criminality. They then proceeded to explain each group's impact in a very structured and logical way.

Below are some errors in expression that were produced by candidates:

- *La enculcacion de "Barrel families" puede developer*
- *Las pugnas del mundo*
- *Las actividades criminals puede ser de contaminacion de tierra a robando*
- *El mundo puede ser gratis de actividades criminals*
- *Podrean ayudar por no se involucieron escogiendo los derechos direccion*
- *En sus jovenes anos*

Question 4

El desempleo es la raíz de unos de los problemas más graves de la sociedad. Discute.

Many candidates correctly interpreted this question, although they were limited in their use of grammar and vocabulary. Candidates generally agreed that unemployment was the root of some of the most serious problems in society. They also emphasized that crime, poverty, disintegrated families and illiteracy also caused some of society's problems. Many candidates were able to make the link between unemployment and problems in society and argue their point of view very well.

Examples of difficulties with the candidates' expressions were:

- *Copar con estas problemas*
- *Por tan mas anos*
- *Perro como perro mundo que vivimos en*
- *Gente hace cualquier cosa para dolor rapido*
- *Lo depende – it depends on*
- *Nos gentes – our people*

Question 5

La emigración pone en peligro la vida familiar. Comenta.

This was the least popular question. Candidates linked emigration to the cause of many broken families and the increase in serious challenges in society. Usually it was claimed that the family benefited and there were many positive aspects to emigration. The money earned as a result usually ensured that economic and educational needs were met. Grammatically correct expressions suffered at the expense of efforts to make relevant points and expand ideas. Some common errors made by candidates included:

- *Cuando una persona mova trabajar*
- *Es importante provecer dinero para ciudad*
- *En una familia unico uno padre*
- *Menos personas probabilidad no simpatia la resultado conflictado*
- *En la familia son no presente los funciones*

Question 6

La televisión sirve principalmente como fuente de entretenimiento. Discute.

This was the second most popular question attempted and was handled quite well in some cases. Candidates understood the question and were basically able to discuss the issue as presented. Many of them saw the television mainly as a source of entertainment and were able to show how different age groups used television as entertainment, for example, older citizens may see news as entertainment because that was what they were interested in. The same rational was used for young children, for example, *Dora the Explorer*. On the other hand, many candidates explored the negative effects of bad programming and violence on the television. Others merely stated the advantages and disadvantages of tele-viewing, without linking the points to answer the question as stated. Again, candidates were limited in their expression and correctness in the use of grammar as listed below.

- *La television es utiliza hacer estresa llega*
- *No es cabo dudar que es un facto*
- *Los padres permiten sus ninos*
- *Desde los puntos de colocarse delante la tema*

Question 7

Lo más importante en el proceso de aprendizaje es ‘tener un buen profesor’. Comenta.

In most cases the essays were well done. Many candidates explained the vital role a good teacher has to play in the learning process and were able to show how other stakeholders were equally important. The teacher's positive attitude, ability to offer good advice and encouragement to students, were valued aspects of a good teacher that facilitated the learning process. So too was the role of the family, love and support. A good environment was key in the learning process with the student's effort and desire to excel, and the use of resources such as the Internet and the library were also factors that supported the learning process. These responses led to many balanced essays. However, the use of incorrect grammar with the prevalence of literal translations affected the award of marks in the higher range as the following examples show.

*Un pupil que es determinado
Un major funcional, una estudiante necesitare
Yo acuerdo que uno
No solo hace el professor hace el clase
La dia escuela es terminado no es dificil por que
Les sale hacer que ellos quieren hacer
El estudiante sera querer sacar buen notas*

It is important for teachers to stress the grammar. The examiners also needed to read the essays several times in order to decipher what candidates were trying to express. Structure was also sacrificed with many candidates not making their position clear or not drawing a proper or definite conclusion.

Some essays were written as one very long paragraph. It was also noted that candidates who attempted the essay as their first question performed better than those who left the essay for last. Candidates also need to guard against not answering the question that is asked in the examination and in fact writing a previously practised essay with no relevance to the task at hand. Examination strategy and techniques in answering questions can and should be taught.

Paper 03 – Literary Analysis and Themes

Section A – Literary Analysis

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

Question Popularity

QUESTION #	POPULARITY
1. La familia de Pascual Duarte	11 %
2. Crónica de una muerte anunciada	22 %
3. Felices Días, Tío Sergio	10 %
4. 17 narradoras latinoamericanas	57 %

Candidates generally demonstrated a clear knowledge of the texts studied, as they were able to recall facts from the entire text. However, some of these facts were not pertinent to the given extract and as such were considered unnecessary and were not awarded any additional marks.

Question Performance Breakdown

RANGE	QUES 1	QUES 2	QUES 3	QUES 4
15-16	5%	2%	2%	2%
12-14	15%	11%	6%	27%
9-11	26%	15%	23%	33%
6-8	28%	19%	34%	23%
3-5	18%	36%	27%	11%
0-2	8%	17%	8%	4%

Question 1: La familia de Pascual Duarte

In Part (a), candidates often confused the theme with the plot. As such, instead of responding to the *trama* of the extract, they wrote about the theme of the entire book. Some candidates gave an analysis of the extract rather than the sequence of events. The level of violence in the fight between Pascual and his mother somehow was missed by many candidates. Some candidates also missed the fact that, at the end of the extract, Pascual fled to escape. They seemed to think he just went outside to get some fresh air — *El campo estaba ... corrió las venas*.

In response to Part (b), most candidates identified the narrative point of view as first person narrator. However, they were often unable to justify their responses; their justification was simply that ‘yo’ was used. Also, in some cases, where the first person was clearly identified, the justification for the third person was given instead. Candidates could not identify why they had selected that response; they failed to mention that it was subjective and clearly gave the protagonist’s perspective.

Many candidates did not demonstrate a clear understanding of what was meant by the *ambiente* in Part (c). Many of them failed to capture the violence and brutality of the scene. Candidates did not highlight the animal-like behaviour. Some candidates took the term ‘*oscuro*’ quite literally in describing the atmosphere and said that it was *oscuro* because it was nighttime. On a positive note, most candidates were able to recognize the atmosphere as being tense.

For Part (d), most candidates could clearly describe Pascual as a character (*sin corazón, cruel, con odio* ...). However, they had great difficulty explaining why they would describe him in that way; justifying their answers proved problematic for many. Very few candidates picked up on the concept of remorse.

Question 2: Crónica de una muerte anunciada

Similar observations can be made for Part (a) of this question, as for Part (a) of Question 1. Candidates readily identified that Ángela was not a virgin. However, they showed some degree of difficulty in relating the exact sequence of events in the extract. Some candidates even mentioned the death of Santiago as a part of the plot, even though this was not a part of the extract selected. Also, many candidates seemed to confuse the aspect of the plot of the extract where Bayardo wanted to postpone the wedding to coincide with the Bishop's visit with Bayardo returning Angela to her parents after realizing that she was not a virgin.

Candidates described Ángela's character with reasonable accuracy. They noted that she was religious and that she was fearful of the consequences of persons discovering her secret. Some candidates correctly identified *taimada* as being one of her characteristics. This was justified by noting that in spite of the strict upbringing by her mother, she was still able to become intimately involved with someone and lose her virginity. However, the inaccuracies were seen for example, in candidates' description of Ángela as a 'liar'. This differs from the fact that she may have felt forced to lie on this occasion, as opposed to being a habitual liar. The extract clearly underlined her original intention to tell the truth. Another example of a similar inaccuracy was found in candidates' description of Ángela as a 'deceiver', as though she deliberately set out to deceive everyone. They missed the fact in the extract that she wanted to do the right, but unpopular, thing, which was to admit to her mother that she had lost her virginity.

For Part (c), while candidates did not actually identify the theme as *the importance of appearances*, many of them identified 'honour' as the theme. They felt that both Ángela and Bayardo pretended in order to maintain the illusion of being honourable to the society. They saw Ángela as taking the decision to conceal her loss of virginity in order to maintain her family's honour before society. Also, rich Bayardo was seen as having to maintain his family's honour in society's eyes, in having a lavish wedding blessed by the Bishop and so making it a social highlight. So the idea of the characters displaying certain actions and exhibiting certain behaviours in order to satisfy society's expectations was still conveyed.

The concept of 'honour' was often highlighted by candidates in response to Part (d). They understood that Ángela was worried because she didn't want her family put to shame or dishonoured because of her actions. Yet, they did not explain why this honour was so important. Some of them missed the fact that the realization of the absence of virginity came just before the wedding. The timing of the revelation was critical. Very little focus was placed by candidates on Bayardo and the fact that on the wedding night, he would need evidence to prove Ángela's 'virginity'.

An example of a good response would be *En su sociedad, da mucho vergüenza no ser virgen al casarse. Entonces, ella sabe que si alguien averigua la verdad de su secreto, su familia perdería todo, ...*

Question 3: Felices Días, Tío Sergio

Part (a) was reasonably well done by candidates who seemed to have grasped the main concepts. The facts that the uncle had died, the protagonist had gone to New York to bring the body back accompanied by an aunt, they met some of the uncle's friends and learned more about his life, then they brought the body back to Puerto Rico to bury it in the family plot, all seemed to have been well understood.

In Part (b), candidates confused the explanation of the narrative point of view with the identity of the point of view. Where they were able to identify the point of view as first person, a third person explanation was given.

Most candidates were able to identify the atmosphere as sad — *triste* — in response to Part (c). However, they hardly noticed the solemnity of the occasion. What they often did was to write the same adjectives used in the extract, *opaco* and *callado*, without explanation, to show that they clearly made the link between the news received and the type of day it was.

For Part (d), the most popular response given was *amor*. Some candidates took their answers, not from the ending of the passage, but from the main body of the extract. This led to wrong suppositions about feelings expressed. Rather than state a specific adjective, some candidates bundled the answer into a sentence to give the idea of the adjective. Many candidates gave a supporting statement but did not state the adjective that related to the support.

Question 4: 17 narradoras latinoamericanas

The majority of candidates who attempted Part (a) made inferences based on their knowledge of the rest of the story in relating the plot. These inferences were not needed to answer Part (a) and therefore their focus was more on sexual awakening and manhood, than on the sequence of events. Many of them omitted the last major point which was that his thirst was quenched.

In response to Part (b), the focus of candidates was more on sexual awakening/arousal, than on the fact that the water revived the boy. The ‘kiss’ suggests that he had to put his mouth to the mouth of the statue to drink and the water refreshed/revived him, and made him feel alive again. It was just a mere sexual reference that was made ‘at this point’ and it was not intended to be understood solely at that level.

Based on the responses to Part (c), there appeared again to be some confusion in the minds of candidates, although the response was better. Teachers need to remind students that the narrative point of view not only conveys the feelings of the protagonist, but also his/her thoughts.

In response to Part (d), although *el sentido de tacto* was identified in many cases, some candidates gave all five senses as answers or, in some instances, listed two or three senses. There was often no explanation of the phrase, and some candidates lifted words from the excerpt and used these as their sole explanation. Many candidates substituted the sense *tacto* with ‘*sensación*’ or ‘*toque*’. Candidates also used *sentido* and *sentimiento* to convey the meaning of touch.

Recommendations

- No English is allowed in Section A; candidates should therefore refrain from using English.
- Candidates need to make *good* use of the dictionary. Poor dictionary usage can easily throw an answer off; for example, ‘*El hombre fue satisface por la brisa fresco porque es fieltro bueno*’. The candidate was trying to indicate that the breeze felt good. This is a clear example of wrong context.
- Candidates should avoid using the citations to give the sequence of events. These should be used to support answers, not just lifted out and written back as answers themselves.
- Candidates should try to keep the length of the response commensurate with the amount of marks awarded for the question. Some candidates wrote an entire page to respond to one part of a question and yet there was very little information for which marks could be awarded.
- A plot entails recounting the sequence of events outlined in the extract. Candidates need not make quotations relating to each event, unless specifically asked to do so.

Section B – Themes

Candidates were required to write an essay, of 350–400 words, in English, on one of the questions relating to the theme *El individuo y la sociedad* or *La juventud*. They were also required to use one of the prescribed texts for the theme selected and to evaluate 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

It is nurture, not nature that makes a person who he/she is. Discuss.

This was the most popular question and was attempted by 47 per cent of candidates. Performance was generally satisfactory. In this question, candidates were expected to define nature and nurture in relation to the plot and theme of the prescribed text and discuss, using relevant examples, whether it is one or a combination of both factors that determines who an individual becomes in life. Some candidates confused nature in this context to mean ‘natural environment’ and therefore presented a contradictory response. Others presented evidence of nature and/or nurture in the texts studied but failed to mention how they influenced the characters’ behaviour and decisions. Candidates who used *Crónica de una muerte anunciada* to answer this question wrote better essays.

Question 6

Society avenges the rebellious individual. Discuss.

This was the second most popular question and was attempted by 30 per cent of the candidates. Performance was generally satisfactory. Candidates were expected to define ‘rebellious’ in the context of the chosen text, identify such individuals, explain why they were considered rebellious and how society responded to these individuals. Some candidates were not able to identify more than one rebellious individual especially in the case of *La familia de Pascual Duarte* and therefore their responses were, for the most part, superficial and stilted. Some of the better essays were written on *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*, where candidates identified and discussed how society dealt with the rebellious individuals, Santiago Nasar, Ángela Vicario, María Alejandrina Cervantes and the Vicario twins who, although they conformed to societal conventions, were subjected to the penal code.

Question 7

The experiences of adolescence can cause much emotional turmoil. Discuss.

This question was attempted by 21 per cent of the candidates. Similar to Questions 5 and 6, performance was satisfactory. Candidates were required to identify adolescent experiences as they related to the text studied, showing how each of these caused emotional turmoil, for example, confusion, disillusionment, solitude, resentment, anger, fear and betrayal. Better responses were written by some candidates who chose *Felices Días*, *Tío Sergio*. Some candidates who used all three stories from *17 narradoras latinoamericanas* wrote fairly good responses. However, some candidates used examples from the texts which did not relate to the experiences of adolescence.

Question 8

“Blood is thicker than water.” Young people eventually learn the truth of this statement as they grow up. Discuss.

This was the least popular question and was attempted by only one per cent of the candidates. Responses to this question were very superficial and candidates struggled to relate the question to the text studied. Candidates needed to demonstrate an understanding of the above statement which should have then been related to issues encountered in the text studied.

Candidates’ Strengths

- Some candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of the text studied and commendable analytical skills.
- In some instances, quotations were very appropriate and well integrated into the essay.

Candidates’ Weaknesses

- Some candidates exceeded the word limit.
- In some instances, candidates engaged in storytelling and summarizing instead of analysis.
- Some essays were padded with quotations.
- Some candidates were not explicit and direct in their responses, especially given the word limit.
- Some candidates presented inaccurate information. For example, Ángela was raped by Santiago/ Estirao was Mario’s father/ Pura Vicario forced Ángela to lose her virginity and then attempted to deceive her betrothed.
- There were misinterpretations of the questions. For example, nature vs. nurture (Candidates interpreted nature as the physical environment, nurture as destiny).

Suggestions and Recommendations for Teachers

Teachers should:

- Ensure that they identify and discuss the issues related to the theme within the chosen text. Historical and philosophical perspectives, though necessary for class discussion, do not need to appear in the written examination.
- Refrain from primarily training students based on past essays as students seek to regurgitate information, regardless of the question set ‘Generic’ essays).
- Advise students to take their time in reading and selecting questions carefully as some texts are more appropriate than others for certain questions.
- Advise students to stay within the word limit as examiners do not read beyond the word limit.
- Cultivate practices of proper essay writing — Introduction/Body/Conclusion.
- Advise students that an excellent response should include
 - (i) a brief introduction with a clear thesis statement
 - (ii) four or five solid points, supported by concise, appropriate, brief and complete quotes, and an informed personal opinion, each in a new paragraph
 - (iii) at least one counterpoint that shows balance in the response
 - (iv) a brief conclusion

Irregularities

- Responding to two essays
- Responding in SPANISH
- Using texts that are not on the syllabus
- Writing general essay instead of thematic essays
- Using the same text in Sections A and B
- Using the wrong text for a stated theme

UNIT 2

Paper 01 – Listening Comprehension

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

Section A – Short Selections

Performance of candidates on this paper was fairly good. The vast majority of candidates completed the paper so that sections with no responses (NR) were notably low.

Selection 1

The general performance was good. Vocabulary recognition was the downfall of candidates on this selection which looked at traditional Christmas meals in Spain and Mexico.

In response to Part (a), candidates understood that the meal was not eaten before midnight. However, many of them did not specify that it was a Christmas meal. A few candidates even stated, 'Christmas Eve never comes before midnight' and referred to Christmas in 'Mexico'.

For Part (b), the vast majority of candidates were not able to identify stuffed turkey as the traditional dish that is served at Christmas in Spain. Many of them wrote 'turrón', 'pao', 'pow', 'regional rice', 'paella', 'porridge'.

Candidates did not respond well to Part (c) which asked what the *turrón* was made of. Few among them knew the word for almond (*almendra*) and gave vague/incorrect responses, such as 'nuts' and 'sweets'. Candidates generally understood that caramel was involved, but some still gave responses such as 'salad' to mean '*salsa*'.

Most candidates knew how Mexicans spent Christmas Eve, Part (d). However, a few of them incorrectly stated that the Mexicans 'assisted in church' instead of *attended church*, indicating that they did not comprehend the word *asistir*.

For Part (e), most candidates were able to name at least two food items served in Mexico on Christmas Eve. However, many of them wrote 'fruit' instead of *fruit tea*, '*telefruta*' for *té de fruta* and 'tomatoes' for *tamales*.

Selection 2

This selection looked at poverty in Ecuador. Overall, performance was good.

Part (a) asked candidates about the statement made of the majority of people in Ecuador. Most candidates correctly responded with answers that were clear and to the point.

For Part (b), candidates were able to understand that the Ecuadorians earned less, but were not specific enough with respect to the amount of money earned — \$40, as against the amount of money needed, \$200.

Part (c) was generally well done. Most candidates were aware how many children were affected.

Most candidates obtained the two allotted marks for Part (d), which asked to what other social ills the situation in Ecuador contributes. However, many of them did not know the word *mendicidad* and translated it as ‘mental illness’ and ‘madness’.

Part (e) asked how Ecuadorians viewed their situation. Although most candidates were able to give the correct response, there were a few who wrote, ‘There was a lack of hope for possible alternatives’ which served as one idea instead of the two distinct ideas of *a lack of hope* and *a lack of possible alternatives/options*.

Selection 3

This selection looked at the dependence of the United States on foreign oil and the need for petroleum companies to work with environmentalists. This selection was well handled by candidates, most of whom understood the ideas and content matter.

For Part (a), some candidates were unable to point out that President Obama warned of the danger associated with the dependence on foreign oil. Instead, they wrote of ‘the danger of foreign oil’, ‘dangers of extraction of oil’ and ‘dangers of extinction of oil’. Several also interpreted *petróleo* as ‘petrol’ or ‘gas’.

Part (b), which asked about whom the energy companies were beginning to work, was exceptionally well answered by candidates.

Although many candidates correctly responded to Part (c) on what the goal of the White House has been for many years, there were a few candidates who incorrectly responded ‘every Saturday, it was a ritual to clean the White House’ and ‘clean energy’ instead of *to be independent of foreign oil*.

For Part (d), the vast majority of candidates were able to list three of the main oil providers to the United States.

Selection 4

This selection discussed some of the advantages and disadvantages of working from home and optimizing working conditions at home. Candidates performed satisfactorily on this selection.

For Part (a), very few candidates fully answered that the advantage of working at home was a combination of private and professional life. Candidates used general knowledge and educated guesses such as ‘less traffic’, ‘get to work at your own pace’, ‘to earn an extra income’, and ‘working at your own time’.

While most candidates mentioned that the ‘the small space’ was a disadvantage of working at home, Part (b), many of them were unable to highlight the inability to optimize the space. Instead, they wrote about not being ‘optimistic’.

Part (c) was well done, with almost all candidates identifying that the room should be *comfortable, quiet*, and away from *human traffic*. Quite a number of candidates lost marks for interpreting ‘*tráfico humano*’ as ‘human trafficking’.

In responding to Part (d), candidates repeated answers from Part (c). Some wrote ‘a separate room’ but did not specify that the room or space needed to be underutilized.

Selection 5

This selection was on shopping in markets of Andean countries. Candidates generally performed satisfactorily on this selection. In many instances, the responses were not specific enough to obtain optimum marks.

Candidates did not respond well to Part (a), which queried the high level of interest shown in shopping in Andean markets. Many candidates gave vague responses. They did not seem to understand that *artesanía* referred to craft items/handicraft and gave vague responses. Nevertheless, candidates understood that these different craft were made by native/indigenous people.

With respect to Part (b), candidates were able to comprehend that the designs on the materials were connected to the towns in which they were made. Unfortunately, they did not specify exactly what they reflected, for example, culture, character, nature of the town.

Part (c) asked candidates to name three items displayed in the markets. Many candidates mentioned ‘bags’ but did not state that the bags were woven. Some answers included ‘tissue bags’, and ‘handbags’. Where candidates wrote ‘traditional items’, the mark was not awarded because this response was not precise enough.

Part (d), on a negative aspect of tourism, was very well answered. However, a few candidates wrote ‘very difficult to buy from another business’, instead of *it was difficult to buy at a good price*.

Section B – Extended Interview

Selection 6

The sixth selection was an interview with Dr Duque on the topic of nanotechnology. Performance was generally good.

Part 1

For Part (a), most candidates were able to comprehend that atoms and molecules were involved in defining nanotechnology, but did not specify that it was a science that manipulated these atoms and molecules. Many candidates thought that a scale was involved, instead of identifying *nanoscale*.

Most candidates were able to show how nanotechnology was linked to modern life, Part (b). This question was very well answered. On the other hand, Part (c), on what nanoparticles are, was not well answered. *Similar to powder* was not specified, or heard incorrectly.

Excellent responses were received for Part (d), on naming the industry which uses nanotechnology. However, some candidates wrote ‘industry of elements’, ‘industry of ingredients’ and ‘health industry’.

Candidates also responded well to Part (e), on uses to which nanoingredients are put. However, some candidates did not write *creating consumption products* but wrote instead ‘creating products’. In addition, *Genetic characteristics* was misinterpreted as ‘energetic characteristics’.

Part 2

The performance on Part (f) was fair. Some candidates spoke of the development of nanotechnology as ‘a science of the future’, not realizing that it was already present in many foods. ‘It was used in the kitchen’ was written instead of *consumed daily*.

Candidates had no difficulty responding to Parts (g) — (i). For Part (g), most candidates were able to name four products in which nanoparticles were found. Part (h) asked about the benefits of the nanoingredients and Part (i) enquired about the safety of the nanoingredients. However, some candidates wrote, ‘It is harmful to one’s health’ in response to Part (i).

Candidates’ Strengths

- Candidates showed excellent skills in recalling items from a list.
- Some candidates were able to make accurate, educated guesses for the translation of certain Spanish words, for example, mendicity (*mendicidad*).

Candidates’ Weaknesses

- Many responses were unclear. The expressions used showed misuse of conjunctions prepositions and punctuation marks, which caused ambiguity and consequently, a loss of marks.
- Candidates relied heavily on general knowledge/ideas and created their own words when unsure of the English translation. As such there were a lot of padded responses and incorrect educated guesses.
- It seemed as though many candidates did not analyse and read over their responses, as this was evident in the incoherent grammatical structures, which often were not logical.
- There was a lack of comprehension with respect to what was required in some questions.

Suggestions for Teachers

Teachers should:

- Encourage their students to pay attention to the weighting of questions.
- Encourage students to make sense of their responses before they write them.
- Teach their students proper time management for this exam and other exam techniques specific to listening competency.

Paper 02 – Reading and Writing

Section A – Reading Comprehension

In this section of Paper 02, candidates were presented with two passages, both in Spanish, and were required to respond to questions based on the material. For passage 1, candidates were asked to respond to the material in English to questions asked in English. For passage 2, the questions were in Spanish and candidates were to respond in Spanish.

Passage 1 – *Se acusan los medios venezolanos de ser parciales*

This was a compulsory question which assessed candidates' ability to understand a passage in contemporary Spanish based on a topic of interest. Parts (a)–(e) required candidates to respond in English to questions asked in English. Parts (f)–(j) required candidates to provide synonyms taken from the passage for the items presented. This question was well answered by candidates. Approximately 60 per cent of the candidates scored in the 19–24 range.

For Part (a), most candidates were able to adequately discuss the controversy between the different media. However, it was noted that the expression *hacer crítica injusta* posed problems for many candidates. Many wrote 'doing critical injustice' or 'critically unjust'.

Part (b) was generally well answered. Many candidates were able to state that the aim of the law was to promote the responsible use of the media.

Part (c) (i) was well answered by most candidates. However, there was some misinterpretation by candidates of the expression *no se cumplieron*. A few candidates thought the expression referred to 'birthday' so many variations of this term were seen in the response. Other candidates also attempted to rephrase the Spanish word, *fiasco*, but did so incorrectly. Responses such as 'it was a fraud', '... failure', '... fake' and '... joke' were used by candidates. With respect to Mr Trapiello's criticism of official channels, asked in Part (c) (ii), most candidates were able to state that there was a *violation of Article 14*. However, a few candidates misinterpreted *violación* to mean 'rape' and provided answers which contained variations of this word, which were not in context with what was being stated in the passage. The second part of this answer also revealed a level of misinterpretation of the phrase *al menos* as it was used in the passage. Many candidates wrote '... less than 7 hours had to be aired' as opposed to *at least*. Many candidates also stated that it was '6 hours', rather than the *7 hours* as stated in the passage. Overall, however, the question was well handled by most candidates.

Candidates responded well to Part (d), on what a recent study revealed about the state media. However, there was a general miscomprehension of the word *oficialismo*. Some candidates completely ignored it in their answer and, as a result, were unable to earn full marks.

Most candidates could not earn full marks for Part (e), which looked at how government spokespersons defended state channels. Some candidates interpreted *única* to mean 'unique' and other candidates had difficulty with the word, *difunden*. As a result of this, the second part of the question, based on the private media's response, was not well answered.

Parts (f)–(j), on identifying the synonyms, were fairly well answered. Most candidates were able to identify at least three out of the five synonyms. Two items that proved difficult were (f), where many candidates failed to give the complete answer of *en torno a*, only giving 'torno', and (g), which was identified as 'promulgó'. Some candidates completely left out (h).

Passage 2 – Las calles de Chile sienten la crisis

This was a compulsory question assessing candidates' ability to understand the passage in the target language and to respond in Spanish to questions asked in Spanish. Overall, performance on this paper can be deemed as satisfactory. This question presented challenges to many candidates. The major problem in the answering of this question was that *candidates disregarded the instruction to respond in their own words*. A significant number of candidates took their answers directly from the passage and as a result of this, were heavily penalized. Too many responses were weak in terms of expression and grammar, specifically in the use of tenses, subject/verb agreement and vocabulary usage.

While examiners rewarded the efforts of those who followed the clearly stated instruction of answering in their own words, there were too many instances where the answers were quite unclear, with instances of Anglicism and often poor choice of synonyms. While candidates are not penalized for language, if the responses impede understanding of the answers, marks cannot be allotted.

While many candidates understood the requirements of Part (a), there was a high level of lifting of the answer from the passage. As a result, these responses were penalized. Some candidates only changed one word, *enfrentar*, from the sentence taken from the passage.

Just as they did for Part (a), far too many candidates took their answers directly from the passage in responding to Part (b). Sometimes only the word *aumento* was changed. Some candidates wrote the entire paragraph directly from the passage. Candidates are to be reminded of the need to rephrase.

There was also widespread lifting of answers for Part (c). For candidates who attempted to answer in their own words, there was some confusion as to the unemployment figure in Chile. Many candidates interpreted the rate of unemployment as 8.5 per cent rather than a growth of 8.5 per cent. A few candidates also did not understand the use of the comma in the figure and stated that the figure was 85 per cent.

Because of a lack of knowledge of the vocabulary items, Part (d) posed significant problems for candidates. Many candidates chose to simply lift the answer from the passage while others gave irrelevant information from other parts of the passage.

Part (e) also proved to be a challenge for the majority of candidates. Many of them were able to identify that Chile exports 60 per cent of its products, but some of them misinterpreted the first part which stated that Chile had to be affected because of the fact of exporting such a high percentage of their products. Many candidates lifted their answer but in the lifting left out important phrases such as *era imposible que el país*. Their responses started with *Chile no se viera afectado*, hence their answers were incorrect.

For Part (f) (i), the majority of candidates lifted sections from the passage and those who attempted to rephrase only changed *montones* to *muchos* and *recesión global* to '*recesión mundial*'.

Part (f) (ii) required that candidates give their personal opinions on the issue presented. There were some commendable attempts to answer and many of these were rewarded with full marks. However, some candidates disregarded the instruction *Aparte de lo mencionado* and focused on what was presented in the passage. Other responses were not well discussed and as a result full marks could not be awarded.

Section B – Essays

Candidates were required to write an essay, in Spanish, of 250–300 words, on one of five topics. This section assessed candidates' ability to express themselves in Spanish in an analytical and logical manner

related to the theme as outlined in Module 2 of the syllabus. Candidates were assessed on content and presentation (organization and coverage of the topic, relevance and inclusion of facts, ideas and opinions) and correctness of expression (range of vocabulary and idioms as well as accuracy of grammatical structures).

The questions for the essay component were in line with the syllabus objectives. The themes required candidates to be well read and knowledgeable on varying topics on science and technology and to be able to express their ideas and opinions showing the necessary skills in analysis and organization, and using correct grammatical structures. Generally, the majority of candidates displayed good organization skills in their essays evidenced by their ability to give an introduction, proper sequencing of points and a conclusion. Most candidates were able to use idiomatic expressions to introduce each point. Candidates generally were able to make valid points although they had some difficulty to developing their points fully. Their competence at correct grammar structure was however disappointing for this level. The most popular question chosen was question five with the least popular being question three. Many candidates stated their position, developed their points but in their conclusion restated the question, whether or not it was contrary to what was discussed.

Question 3

Poder elegir el sexo del feto es una opción atrayente. Discute.

This question prompted candidates to discuss whether being able to choose the gender of the foetus is a good thing or not and to support their ideas. Candidates should have given reasons supporting their arguments as to benefits/advantages of choosing the gender of the foetus in relation to the need of the family, couple or mother, or should have made reference to the following points:

- Desirability of a preferred gender: parents can plan
- Prevention of hereditary illnesses specific to the gender of a child
- As a guarantee to have a small family: one male and one female
- Traditional reasons: better to have a child of one gender to carry on cultural ties/family name/inheritance.
- To save a couple unnecessary pregnancies while trying to have a child of a particular gender

On the other hand, candidates could also have argued the following points:

- Ethical grounds/tampering with nature.
- Scientists assuming the role of God

Candidates who answered this question barely developed points to support the statement or to reject the statement. Some of the essays lacked depth in content as candidates did not seem to know how to develop the few points they made. Some candidates provided irrelevant details and did not score well. This question was the least popular and accounted for two per cent of the responses. Although this was not a popular choice, candidates performed satisfactorily.

Question 4

La piratería en la red es un crimen imposible de resolver. ¿Cuál es tu opinión?

For this question, candidates were expected to state whether piracy was indeed a crime and to support their point of view if they considered this act as a crime impossible to solve. There was a high level of

misinterpretation. In many responses, candidates merely explored the advantages and disadvantages of using the Internet or saw piracy as identity theft, hacking and virus creation. Some candidates commented on international laws, intelligence of pirates to breach security codes to gain access to the personal data of third parties and cyber terrorist organizations attempting to control or steal information from companies for their benefit or for the demise of others. Not many considered intellectual property or royalty issues such as music/film, plagiarism, or suggested attempts at preventing piracy by imposing laws, preventing the sale of pirated videos/DVDs or music on the street and in video clubs. Candidates also made little effort to explore freedom of expression, unwillingness of countries to enforce laws, the lack of resources and the availability of new technology as things that made the crime difficult to solve.

This question was not as well answered as the other essays.

Question 5

El internet es una importante herramienta educativa. Comenta.

This question aimed to test the validity of the Internet serving the role as an educational tool. The following points should have been covered:

- The Internet serves as a source of global information, resource tool for research/the media/news...
- It is a vehicle to access e-learning connectivity and classes among teachers, professors and pupils.
- It provides access to online programmes and courses at all levels which can be done in the comfort and convenience of one's home anywhere in the world.
- The Internet provides access to a database as resources, links, articles, e- books and e-journals. There is no need to search for books and articles in a library.
- It also allows the general public to explore cultures and languages in learning resource sites, for example hello-hello.com

Candidates provided several negative aspects of the Internet, stating that it is not an educational tool because

- it encourages intellectual laziness as people lack originality of ideas and do not present personal opinions due to plagiarism.
- there is exposure to paedophiles, pornographic sites, violence, mental demise, school failure, mismanagement of time on social networking sites.

Candidates attempting this question demonstrated both strengths and weaknesses in understanding the importance of the Internet as an educational tool. This was the most popular choice and accounted for the widest distribution of scores, from poor to excellent, 70 per cent of candidates attempted it. Candidates were able to draw from their personal experiences of the use of the Internet and its importance as a learning tool. However, many candidates misinterpreted what the question required and presented ideas and opinions on the disadvantages or negative impact using the Internet.

Some candidates were also able to produce well-argued, structured essays that displayed excellent coverage and organization of topics. Candidates also demonstrated a wide range of structures and vocabulary including good use of idioms. Candidates who performed poorly displayed little grasp of essential grammar, limited vocabulary, limited use of idioms, and numerous inaccuracies which often affected meaning. Their writing style seemed more like putting words together randomly and for the most part very literally. There was an overall weakness in grammar.

Examples of common vocabulary errors made by candidates included:

- *en facto* (in fact)
- *educación tercera* (tertiary education)
- *el necesito* (the need)
- *el tónico* (the topic)
- *muchos tiempos* (many times)
- *sanitario* (health)
- *no solo pero* (not only but)
- *es no* (it is not)
- *en mi modo de ver la tema*
- *una problema, la sistema*
- *pasando horas lentas en el internet*
- *pero/sino*
- *hay son* (there are)
- *esa for the relative pronoun,*
- *hacer/tener*
- *prestar/pedir*

Marked inaccuracies and errors entailed missing accents, accent insertion in wrong places and spelling errors, for example, *tecnologia*, *tecnología for tecnológica*, *comunidad*, *possible*, *comunicacion*, *bebes*, *area*, *país*, *jovenes*, *accessar*.

Question 6

Es imprescindible tener un teléfono móvil. Discute.

This was the second most popular question, attempted by 13 per cent of candidates. Overall performance was satisfactory. Candidates were expected to discuss why it is/is not necessary to have a cellular phone. Possible reasons that could have been explored include the following:

- Smart phones enable users to access the Internet, social networking and messenger applications — there is the ease of finding information, chatting with contacts and updating one's status from the phone instead of sitting in front of a PC desktop or laptop.
- Cellphones allow users to keep in touch with family and friends both locally and abroad, anywhere, any time.
- Cellphones are useful in cases of emergency, for example, accidents.
- Cellphones allow users to save time and to utilize the convenience of telebanking transactions.
- The connectivity of cellphones facilitates business.
- Cellular phones are relatively affordable.
- Availability — cellphone users can be reached at any time.

On the contrary, candidates should have been able to discuss:

- Mismanagement of one's personal budget in maintaining pre-paid/post-paid cellular phone plans.
- Road hazard — cellphones can be a major cause for accidents as users text/talk while driving.
- Cellphones take away from face-to-face interactions in social settings.
- Cellphones may intrude upon one's personal space and time.
- Cellphones can sometimes be a public nuisance.

Although many candidates did not seem to understand the meaning of the word *imprescindible*, (necessary or indispensable), candidates generally provided some relevant examples to support their argument. Many candidates focused on the use of mobiles in school, work and for safety reasons. However, essential grammar structure and mastery of expression tended to be weak and affected the quality of their essays.

Question 7

Los médicos que practican la fertilización in vitro deberían pensar en las consecuencias de sus acciones. Comenta.

The focus of this essay was that doctors should consider the consequences of their medical practice in relation to the procedure, in vitro fertilization. Some considerations are:

- Doctors and nurses should consider their oath in the practice of medicine to uphold/save lives. In vitro fertilization involves the loss of possible lives through the destruction of unwanted fertilized eggs.
- Ethical, religious and moral objections
- In unsuccessful IVF cases, children are more than likely to have birth defects. Examples: cleft lip, cerebral palsy, heart defects, oesophageal atresia
- There may be deformities/malformation in foetal development after the IVF procedure which can cause abortion
- The associated risks to the mother such as hyper stimulation, ectopic pregnancy, multiple births and lower birth rate.

Most candidates made mention of the possible violation of the ethical code of conduct by doctors where they do not make patients aware of the health risks associated with in vitro fertilization. Candidates discussed some of the negative consequences such as risks to the woman, social stigma, and the lack of respect for the authority of God. Justification for going through this procedure was also useful. Candidates also mentioned that doctors were mainly focused on the medical aspect of in vitro fertilization thereby not paying too much attention to other issues.

Candidates handled this question well with many scoring in the 15–18 range even though it was not a popular choice. Overall weakness in grammar, with marked inaccuracies hampered the attainment of higher scores. Responses to this question accounted for six per cent of the total.

Recommendations

The essay component requires candidates to be well read and knowledgeable on the CAPE syllabus. Candidates need to take into consideration the format/presentation of the essay, structure of the language and improvement of expression. Teachers need to help facilitate the learning process and stress correct use of grammatical structures, vocabulary and idioms. Students must be guided in the use of relevant facts, ideas and opinions on themes of the modules which must be researched prior to the sitting of this examination. This component requires higher order writing and thinking skills therefore candidates must practise writing essays in order to develop this skill.

It is recommended that students be trained in writing using the standard essay-writing structure. They should learn to start with an introduction with a thesis statement or position taken, at least three supporting points and a conclusion restating the thesis and giving a summary. Teachers should guide

students in correctly analysing requirements of questions in order to reduce the occurrence of rehearsed essays.

Paper 03 – Literary Analysis and Themes

Section A – Literary Analysis

In Section A, candidates were required to respond to one of four possible extracts taken from the prescribed texts on the syllabus. Each question comprised four parts (a,b,c,d). These questions focused on literary analysis of given passages and asked candidates to relate the plot, analyse characters from the extract, comment on narrative technique and setting, and identify literary devices and themes found in the given passage. All answers were required in Spanish and candidates were allowed the use of the text and a dictionary.

Question Popularity

QUESTION #	POPULARITY
1. <i>La lluvia amarilla</i>	7 %
2. <i>El llano en llamas</i>	30 %
3. <i>Chombo</i>	3 %
4. <i>El coronel no tiene quien le escriba</i>	60 %

Candidates generally demonstrated a clear knowledge of the texts studied, as they were able to recall facts from the entire text. However, some of these facts were not pertinent to the question given and as such were considered unnecessary and were not awarded any additional marks. Candidates needed to show greater care in selecting support material for their responses. Grammatical accuracy continued to be an area of great concern, especially at the level of Unit 2. Anglicized Spanish continued to surface in candidates' responses.

Question Performance Breakdown

RANGE	QUES 1	QUES 2	QUES 3	QUES 4
15-16	3%	2%	0%	3%
12-14	3%	16%	13%	10%
9-11	11%	33%	25%	19%
6-8	63%	31%	13%	35%
3-5	14%	10%	19%	25%
0-2	6%	8%	30%	8%

Question 1: *La lluvia amarilla*

This question was selected by seven per cent of candidates. Overall performance was satisfactory. For Part (a) (i), many candidates seemed to have read more into this question than was actually asked. A clear indication that the future tense was being employed to show that the event had not yet occurred was what was needed, whereas candidates either felt that they ought to relate the plot or explain the feelings and thoughts of the protagonist. Therefore, although this part of the question was awarded two marks, many candidates did not earn the full two marks.

In response to the second part of the question, Part (a) (ii), candidates seemed to have missed the reaction of the men referred to by the protagonist. They understood that he anticipated the return of the men, but could not explain how the men would react.

Part (b) was generally better answered. While most candidates clearly identified the literary device as a simile, others failed to see the inevitability of the advancement of the shadows. Similarly, Part (c) on nature, was well answered by most candidates. Their use of adjectives was precise, and the observation of the village being in ruins was well made.

For Part (d), most candidates realized that the use of the negatives was an indication of the abandonment of the town and that the theme of abandonment was one of the main themes of the novel.

Question 2: *El llano en llamas*

This question was attempted by 30 per cent of the candidates. Overall performance was good. In response to Part (a), candidates were generally able to identify the tone of the episode with ease. However, adequate support for the tone was not always forthcoming.

For Part (b), while most candidates understood that the narrative point of view employed in the excerpt was first person point of view, they were unable to see that it was a narrator/witness. Not many were able to capture the authenticity and vividness of the lack of hope. Far too often, candidates regurgitated a learned generic response to questions on the narrative point of view based on a simplistic definition of first or third person. They used as their evidence words such as ‘yo’ or ‘ella’.

Part (c) was satisfactorily answered. Most candidates were able to use good descriptive words to describe the river and establish the link between that and Tacha’s tears.

Responses to Part (d) were poor. Very few candidates were able to develop the concept of destiny and of it being linked to Nature. Their references to other stories in the novel were very vague or poorly made.

Question 3: *Chombo*

This question was attempted by three per cent of the candidates. Overall performance was satisfactory. For Part (a), most candidates confused literary technique and theme. Therefore, they were unable to identify ‘irony’ as being employed in this episode. They missed the fact that the students in the episode knew the reality of the Panamanian situation, but the teachers did not. A few candidates recognized the repetition of time.

With respect to Part (b), not enough candidates seemed to recognize the fact that Litó’s teacher was of African descent. However, they understood that Litó was proud of his Afro-Panamanian identity. Therefore, they missed the fact that Litó’s teacher rejected her origins, to the point of *relaxing/straightening* her hair.

For Part (c), while most candidates identified the main difference between the teachers as the fact that one teacher expelled Chabela and the other humiliated Litó, they did not identify that Chabela’s teacher was white and Litó’s was black.

Candidates did not perform well on Part (d). Most candidates recognized the racial discrimination against the West Indians. However, the deeper meaning was not clearly identified. They failed to highlight that the discrimination was not only of whites against black West Indians, but of colonial Panamanian blacks against black West Indians.

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

Sixty per cent of the candidates attempted this question. Overall performance was satisfactory. Candidates responded well to Part (a). They clearly recognized the sequence of events and the fact that the colonel hesitated in making his decision to sell the rooster.

However, Part (b) was very poorly done. It was misinterpreted by most candidates who seemed to have major difficulty in correctly analysing the saying, *La cara del santo hace el milagro*. Those who understood the point that if Don Sabas saw the rooster, he would buy it, missed the fact that he wouldn't be able to deny the real value of it on seeing it. Many candidates saw the saying as just a religious statement or as an example of sarcasm.

In response to Part (c), most candidates seemed to know enough about the colonel and his wife to be able to accurately identify aspects of their personality. However, they did not always provide support for their findings. For example, when they identified the colonel as *orgulloso*, they had difficulty citing an appropriate example.

With respect to Part (d), candidates often misunderstood the theme of the episode. Many candidates identified it as '*pobreza*', '*el gallo*', '*esperanza*', '*pelea contra la pobreza*' and even the theme from the syllabus '*el conflicto social y político*'. They missed that the main theme in the given extract was exploitation which is further developed in the novel.

Recommendations

- No English is allowed in Section A, candidates are therefore advised to respond in Spanish only.
- Candidates need to make *good* use of the dictionary.
- Candidates should avoid using the citations to give the sequence of events. These should be used to support answers, not just lifted out and written back as answers in themselves.
- Candidates should try to keep the length of the response commensurate with the amount of marks awarded for the question. Some candidates wrote an entire page to respond to one part of a question and yet there was very little information for which marks could be awarded.

Section B – Themes

Candidates were required to write an essay, of 350–400 words, in English, based on one of two themes: *La vida rural*, for which the prescribed texts were *La lluvia amarilla* and *El llano en llamas* and *Conflictos políticos y sociales en Hispanoamérica*, with prescribed texts *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba* and *Chombo*. Candidates were awarded marks for Knowledge and Understanding (16 marks), Application of Knowledge (9 marks) and Organization of Information (7 marks). Candidates performed satisfactorily on all the essays.

Question 5

Rural life is as simple as it is difficult. Discuss.

This was the most popular question, attempted by 44 per cent of the candidates, and was the best answered of the essays. Candidates were expected to define the terms 'simple' and 'difficult' as they relate to rural life. They were then required to identify examples from the chosen text which demonstrated simplicity and difficulty and to show whether there was a correlation. Candidates who chose *El llano en llamas* did not always select the appropriate stories, whilst other candidates limited 'difficulty' to merely

acts of nature. Some candidates produced generic type essays focusing mainly on difficulties without referencing the other part of the question — simplicity. Nevertheless, candidates were generally able to produce responses which ranged between satisfactory and good using both texts: *El llano en llamas* and *La lluvia amarilla*.

Question 6

Those who want to make progress have no option but to leave the countryside. Do you agree?

This question was attempted by 16 per cent of the candidates. Candidates were expected to provide, from the chosen text, examples of individuals who migrated from the countryside in search of material progress, compared to those who remained. Candidates who chose *La lluvia amarilla* generally provided better responses than those who chose *El llano en llamas*.

Question 7

In Spanish American societies, equality of opportunity is a myth. Discuss.

This question was attempted by 26 per cent of the candidates. Candidates were required to define the term ‘equality of opportunity’. In doing so, they needed to explain if the ‘playing field’ was level, and if not, why. They were also required to state whether they believed equality of opportunity to be an attainable goal in relation to the studied text. Some candidates misinterpreted the term ‘equality of opportunity’, and most of them who used *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba* struggled to show how equality of opportunity could not be achieved in light of the events of the text. Those who used *Chombo* were able to provide better responses.

Question 8

In the midst of political and social conflict, doing what is right is never easy. Discuss.

This was the least popular question, attempted by 14 per cent of the candidates. Candidates were required to identify instances of political and social conflict in the text studied and show how they impacted on the choices made by individuals. Most candidates failed to address the issues related to the question asked and generally produced poor responses.

Candidates’ Strengths

- Some candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of the text studied and commendable analytical skills.
- In some instances, quotations were used appropriately and well integrated into the essay.

Candidates’ Weaknesses and Errors

- Some candidates exceeded the word limit.
- Some candidates wrote general essays and others made references to films.
- Some candidates chose the wrong text for a stated theme.
- Some candidates studied the English translation or viewed a film on the chosen text and therefore wrote the title of the text/stories and quotations in English. Those who viewed a film wrote inaccurate information.
- In some instances, candidates engaged in storytelling and summarizing instead of analysis.

- Some essays were padded with quotations, historical and philosophical perspectives.

Suggestions and Recommendations for Teachers

Teachers should:

- Ensure that they identify and discuss the issues related to the theme within the chosen text. Historical and philosophical perspectives, though necessary for class discussion, do not need to appear in the written examination.
- Refrain from primarily training students based on past essays as students seek to regurgitate information, regardless of relevance ('generic' essays).
- Advise students to read and select questions carefully as some texts are more appropriate than others for certain questions.
- Advise students to stay within the word limit as examiners do not read beyond the word limit.
- Cultivate practices of proper essay writing — Introduction/Body/Conclusion.
- Ensure that students use Standard English and avoid making up words.
- Advise students that an excellent response entails:
 - (i) a brief introduction with a clear thesis statement
 - (ii) four or five solid points, supported with concise, appropriate quotes and an informed personal opinion, each in a new paragraph.
 - (iii) at least 1 counterpoint that shows balance in the response.
 - (iv) a brief conclusion.

UNITS 1 and 2

Paper 04 – School-Based Assessment

This paper required candidates to (i) make an oral presentation on their topic of choice within the framework of the three modules, and (ii) engage in conversation with the examiner on the topic as well as on current issues.

Candidates produced varying degrees of performance. Some candidates went beyond merely sharing information based on their research; they also analysed the information and gave their perspectives and opinions on the topics, which is what is required in the syllabus. Opinions were for the most part logical and coherent with the information presented.

Many of the outstanding candidates chose issues that were affecting Spanish-speaking countries. They included current findings and discussed the impact of those issues on aspects of life such as education, job opportunities, young people and the development of countries, comparing and contrasting with the home territories.

Overall, candidates selected topics within the units of study and their performance was generally quite good.

Most candidates generally appeared to have done their research and most presented their topics very well. Many of them were quite fluent and expressed many facts and ideas, although there was less proffering of opinions. The use of vocabulary and expressions corresponding to their academic level is also commendable for the most part. The inevitable structure and grammatical flaws did not impact significantly on meaning.

On the other hand, there were a number of cases where the performance did not live up to expectations:

- The topics were too general, or were not based on a specific country or module
- Presentations were mainly expository and were simply a summary of statistics
- Presentations were primarily opinions with little or no facts to support the points of view
- There was marked hesitancy in delivery
- The presentation was too long with a myriad of findings unrelated to the topic

Also, some of the predictable structural and pronunciation mistakes were a bit too prevalent:

- Lack of agreement between subject-verb, noun-adjective, noun-article (gender)
- Grammar, (use of subjunctive), pronunciation of *h*'s, open *i*'s and closed *a*'s.

General Comments

Although the topics selected were generally consonant with the units, there were some cases where candidates seemed to have lacked the necessary guidance and so chose unsuitable topics.

- Questions posed by the teacher were at times long and leading.
- Some teachers did not develop a conversation on the topic.
- Sometimes no questions or only one or two questions were posed. Also, some teachers asked only lower level questions thus denying candidates the opportunity to expound further on their topics.

Recommendations for Teachers

- Teachers need to distinguish between the topic and general conversation.
- Teachers need to allow students to engage them in conversation.
- Some teachers need to be more familiar with the marking scheme.
- Teachers should pose a wide range of questions in the general conversation.
- Teachers should try not to overly penalize students for grammatical mistakes.