

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

MAY/JUNE 2004

SPANISH

SPANISH

CARIBBEAN ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2004

GENERAL COMMENTS

Three hundred candidates registered for the Spanish Unit 1 examination and 189 for Unit 2. Ninety-two per cent of candidates achieved Grades I – V in Unit 1, and 95 per cent of candidates achieved Grades I – V in Unit 2.

DETAILED COMMENTS

UNIT 1

PAPER 01- Listening Comprehension

This paper required candidates to respond to a series of questions based on five short selections and one extended interview. The questions were set in English and candidates were required to respond in English. The topics chosen were in keeping with the experiences of the age group of the candidate. Candidates seemed to have found this paper quite challenging.

Section A - Short Selections

Section A was poorly done with many candidates scoring less than 50 per cent on each question. Syntax and clarity of expression were poor. Responses were very often vague or generalized. Selections 3 and 5, which were based on environmental matters, created some difficulty for candidates and very few were able to produce substantial responses to the questions based on these selections. Responses of candidates clearly illustrated their unfamiliarity with terms used in the Module “El medio ambiente”. Numerals in Spanish were however, generally captured.

Selection 1

Most candidates failed to give the desired response, “insomnia”, as the medical disorder mentioned in the selection. Several responses spoke of “diabetes”, “dropsy”, or “sleepy eye”. Many candidates wrote their own cultural remedies (for example, tablets, exercise, walking) and did not list what were given in the recording.

Candidates also confused “symptoms” with “effects” and answered one for the other.

Selection 2

This selection looked at the influence that television may have on the child. Many candidates failed to provide the specific responses desired, and instead gave answers from their own experiences rather than what were specifically mentioned in the selection.

Selection 3

Candidates tended to give answers which reflected their general knowledge of “Greenpeace”, rather than the facts given in the selection. Some candidates seemed to lack the level of vocabulary required on the topic ‘environment’ and therefore found the questions on this selection particularly challenging. The vast majority of candidates failed to provide the specific details required in response to questions based on this selection.

Selection 4

Low scores on this selection (on ways to save the planet) were due mainly to candidates giving answers in Part (a), “hints that could be used at home to help save the environment”, that were more relevant to Part (b), “hints that could be used outside of the home to help save the environment”. For example, they listed conserving energy and water in part (b), and proper garbage disposal in part (a).

Selection 5

This was the most challenging selection for candidates. A vast majority had a poor understanding of the concept “Greenhouse effect”. Other technical terms also seemed to have posed problems. Candidates must be encouraged to be more specific in their answers. Far too many candidates failed to provide full responses to the questions and consequently did not score as well as they should have.

Section B – Extended Interview

Selection 6

Candidates responded more successfully to this selection. Candidates demonstrated an understanding of the interview, and an ability to identify with the theme dealing with concerns of today’s woman.

There was a fairly reasonable distribution of marks on this question. The least able candidates performed satisfactorily and this is probably due to the content being

more familiar to them. However, it must again be noted that many candidates used their own knowledge to answer the questions, rather than basing their answer on the context given. In addition, they did not pay sufficient attention to detail, and therefore did not gain maximum marks.

The overall standard attained was satisfactory, with 57 per cent of the candidates scoring ten or more of the 20 marks on this question. It was pleasing to note that almost all candidates followed the instructions and responded in English. Only one candidate responded in Spanish rather than English.

Teachers should ensure that all candidates are totally familiar with the examination format.

PAPER 02 - Reading and Writing

Candidate performance on this paper was satisfactory, considering that for the most part, candidates are only one year advanced on their CSEC Spanish examination. Most candidates showed good skills in the area of comprehension, and many also showed good control of the language.

Section A – Reading Comprehension

Passage 1

This was a compulsory question testing candidates' ability to understand a passage of contemporary Spanish on a topic related to Module 1 of the Syllabus. This passage required candidates to respond in English to questions in English.

Candidates found the passage well within their capabilities, and performance was very good. Eighty-five per cent of candidates scored at least ten out of a possible 20 marks.

It appeared that while candidates were able to understand the general content of the passage, the specific items of vocabulary that were tested posed a few problems. Candidates appeared to experience particular difficulty with the following words and phrases:

ama excesivamente

idolatra

vencer / superar

al alcance de / abordables para.

Passage 2

This was a compulsory question testing candidates' ability to understand a passage and reply to questions in their own words, in Spanish, to questions in Spanish. As expected, candidates found the questions on this passage more challenging than questions based on Passage 1, as they were required to comprehend, analyse and evaluate, and then express their answers in Spanish paraphrasing elements from the passage.

Candidate performance was generally good with 70 per cent of the candidates scoring at least ten out of a possible 20 marks. While candidates appeared to have understood the content of the passage, many did not score maximum marks because they did not attempt to express the answer in their own words. Half of the marks available for each question, with the exception of (e) (ii), which required candidates to express their opinion, were awarded for showing comprehension. Half of the marks were awarded for expressing the answer according to the rubric "in your own words".

While it is not expected that candidates will be able to find synonyms for every word in the passage, or be able to paraphrase without using some of the language that appears in the passage, wholesale quoting from the passage only received half of the marks available for each question. It was heartening to see the large numbers of candidates who made genuine attempts at responding in their own words.

Although the passage was on a familiar topic and contained many cognates which would have been helpful to candidates, many of them found difficulty with words such as "ubicación", "alberga", "vida silvestre", and "superficie".

Section B – Essay

This section required candidates to write an essay in Spanish of 250-300 words on one of the five topics. This section tested candidates' ability to express themselves in Spanish in a thoughtful, reasonably mature and well structured way on a theme related to current issues as outlined in the syllabus. Examiners were looking for essays with a brief general introduction, three - five paragraphs focusing on the different angles of the topic and a brief conclusion. Sensible, thoughtful content, expressed in reasonably flowing, for the most part grammatically correct Spanish, and using an appropriate range of vocabulary, was rewarded with high marks.

Candidates were given a choice of five essays on topics related to Module 2 of the syllabus. The majority of candidates responded to the essay, "No es posible solucionar el problema de <los niños de la calle>. ¿Estás de acuerdo?" Candidates interpreted "los niños de la calle" in two ways. Some took the phrase to mean children who had

a home and family, but who were forced by adverse living conditions to go out on the streets and work or beg each day, returning home each evening. Others took it to mean “street kids” in the sense of those who have no home or family, and who are literally living on the streets. Both interpretations were accepted as valid and some very good essays were seen on this topic, which seemed to appeal to the youthful idealism of the many candidates who proposed a number of feasible solutions.

The essay next in popularity was the essay, “La religión es una institución que divide a la gente. Comenta.” While this may have seemed like a fairly easy option to some candidates, the quality of the essays was generally disappointing, with many candidates merely following the party line of whatever religion they ascribe to without really going beyond superficialities. It was felt that this was a topic for which few candidates had been prepared, as they made many errors in Spanish related to the names of the major religions.

Very few candidates attempted the other essays. Candidates’ performance on this section was satisfactory. Mean scores on essays ranged from 10.62 on essay # 5 to 14.00 on essay # 4.

A number of very good essays were presented showing that some candidates gave careful consideration to the topics. Points were well presented and argued, a range of vocabulary was used, along with relevant idioms.

However, many candidates fell into the “satisfactory” category, indicating that this type of question is one on which they need to keep practising. Candidates must also be reminded to follow the rubric related to “length”. An excessively short essay cannot really be expected to say very much, while an overly long essay suggests an inability on a candidate’s part to plan and carefully present his/her arguments.

Candidates made a number of grammar and vocabulary mistakes, suggesting that these are areas that still need extensive work:

Agreement of subject and verb (*la gente* + plural verb)

Agreement of noun and adjective (*muchas grupos*)

Negatives (a little surprising at this level) (*es no malo*)

Omission of personal ‘a’

Bien and *bueno*

Respeto and *respecto*

Padres / *parientes*

Por and *para*

Ser and *estar*

Tenses - confusion re: Preterite and Imperfect.

Use of Conditional to express should / *deber*

Deber + infinitive

Incorrect use of prepositions e.g. buscar para/ cuidar para

Errors with basic uses of the subjunctive

Vocabulary in general seems to have been a problem for some candidates, and much guessing and anglicisms of words occurred. Some candidates even provided the English word, at times in quotation marks, which is very damaging to the overall impression formed of their work, and which must be discouraged at all costs.

A possible way of providing extra practice for candidates on the finer points of Spanish grammar is to provide them with a gapped passage with two or more similar alternatives to fill the gap, only one of these alternatives being correct.

Example of a Gapped Passage

Select from the list provided the word or phrase which will correctly fill each gap, taking care to number your responses accurately.

La población hispana en Estados Unidos creció a un ritmo mayor de lo que se esperaba en los últimos 10 años,**1**.....un informe sobre el Censo 2000 publicado**2**.... el prestigioso periódico el Washington Post.

La cifra total es de 35,3 millones.....**3**..... latinos, tres millones más de lo que se esperaba, y una cifra similar a la población**4**..... , que totaliza entre 34,7 y 36,4 millones.

Con**5**.....a los latinos, se cree que el aumento tremendo se explica**6**..... los altos**7**....de inmigración y el pobre conteo de los censos pasados.

Los resultados del censo se utilizan no**8**.....para saber cuántas personas habitan EE.UU.,.....**9**.....también para establecer los distritos electorales y la distribución de millones de dólares en fondos federales.

Select from the words below the ones which will correctly fill each gap.

Con	número	respeto
De	para	según
Negro	pero	sino
Negra	por	solo
Niveles		respecto

PAPER 03 –Literary Extracts and Themes

Section A – Literary Extracts

This section required candidates to read a literary extract and comment on character, plot, setting and simple literary techniques. Candidates had a choice of two extracts:

- (i) a passage entitled “Ovejón” , an extract from Ovejón , a short story, and
- (ii) a passage entitled “El Misterio de Tita” , an extract from Como Agua Para Chocolate, a novel.

Most candidates chose to answer the second passage.

Passage 1 - Ovejón

Many candidates did not know the expression “desempeñar un papel” in the question “¿Qué papel desempeña la naturaleza en el cuento?” They therefore worked with the word “naturaleza”, and hoped to answer the question asked. While several of them spoke of nature being instrumental in curing the beggar, they failed to recognize that nature had harmed him as well. Many candidates stated that nature provide a contrast. This may be accounted for by the vocabulary of the passage: “Un naragato con sus curvas y recias espinas había rasgado profundamente aquellas carnes fofas.” Candidates should be familiar with the words “espinas”, “rasgar” and “carne”. They should therefore be taught techniques of deducing meaning by using the familiar words to arrive at the meaning of a sentence.

Passage 2 - El Misterio de Tita

Most candidates who attempted this passage responded appropriately to the questions. Although some candidates were aware that the “ocurrencia extraña” which occurred in the extract was related to Tita’s nursing the baby, either they found difficulty in expressing the strangeness about the occurrence or, they were unsure of the word “extraño” in this context.

In their responses to both passages however, candidates gave literary techniques rather than the literary point of view, or answered the question without referring specifically to the passage given.

The ability of candidates to express themselves in Spanish at this level was surprisingly poor. Many candidates made errors in agreement in terms of both verb with subject, and adjective with noun. For example,

* “el hombre fui”

* “una buen mujer”

The word “gusta” was used as a preposition. For example, “gusta un niño – like a child.”

The Noun “curado” was used to describe the man in Passage 1 as a person who cures. It is to be noted that the word “curandero” is to be found in the Spanish CSEC syllabus.

Linguistic *interference* was evident in candidates’ attempts to express themselves. For example, *“Tita miraba despues de un niño” and *““El misterio de Tita” es un episodio cual es de una mujer quien se encuentra en una posición más difícil cuando cuidando por un niño’.

Although performance on this paper was much better than in previous years, it is still obvious that candidates are not getting enough practice on the question of literary analysis. This paper does not demand any deep knowledge of literary analysis. Knowledge of a plot, how to do a character sketch, and how to identify a narrative technique are questions that keep recurring. Teachers are advised to use the specimen paper as a guide in the teaching of literary analysis. Candidates should be taught to use the marks allocated as a guide to the amount of information needed in the response.

Section B - Themes

This section required candidates to explore one of three themes listed in the syllabus, making detailed reference to one literature text while providing support from other sources.

Word limit was often not respected, resulting in sketchy responses. Candidates lost marks for writing a general essay without making reference to even one main text. When they did make reference, many lost marks for not including any additional

* Indicates a form that is grammatically incorrect

material. Teachers should ensure that all candidates are aware of the mark scheme for this question, highlighting the fact that they cannot go beyond a certain mark on the scheme if they do not refer to additional material. If candidates are aware of this, and practise writing their essays throughout the year with this in mind, much better responses will be produced.

Most candidates chose to respond to the theme of “La mujer en la sociedad”. The second most popular theme was “El individuo al margen de la sociedad”. Very few candidates attempted the questions based on “La juventud”.

On the theme “La mujer en la sociedad”, it was astounding to see the number of candidates who misspelt the name of the protagonist in “La Casa de Bernarda Alba”. Familiarity with the texts seemed to be fleeting, as some candidates misquoted the plot; for example, they said that Martirio committed suicide, when in fact it was Adela who had done so.

The second most quoted text was “El Túnel”, on the theme “El individuo al margen de la sociedad”.

“El Camino” was the text quoted by the few candidates who attempted to answer a question on “La Juventud”.

Question 3

This question was quite well done. Candidates made appropriate references to prescribed texts and additional material. However, the aspect of the battles being “sin esperanza” was not addressed by many candidates.

Question 4

Again, this question was fairly well done. The word “hermanas” was interpreted by most candidates in the limited sense of biological sisters. This interpretation therefore limited the scope of their responses.

Question 5

This question was not competently handled by the few candidates who attempted to answer it. In quoting from “El Túnel”, many candidates failed to come to grips with the word “fugaz” in the question.

Question 6

This question was fairly well answered. Candidates quoted effectively from “El Túnel” and “La Familia de Pascual Duarte” to address the issues raised.

Question 7

Of the few candidates who attempted to answer this question, very few grasped the main issues of the question - those of time to enjoy life, identify the complexities of life, and showing how they cause young people to mature rapidly.

Question 8

A very small number of candidates answered this question. Those who did, failed to define “el ser verdadero” as required by the question. In addition, they did not deal effectively with the word “búsqueda” in the question, by quoting examples of protagonists searching, and what this search involved.

PAPER 04 –Internal Assessment

Oral Assessment

This paper required candidates to make an oral presentation on a topic of their choice, and engage in conversation with an examiner on this topic, as well as on abstract and/or current issues. Most candidates presented their topics in a coherent and logical manner. It was evident that some research was done on the different topics. However, some candidates needed to do some more investigation and prepare a more detailed and interesting presentation. Some recordings were of a poor quality making the moderation difficult.

Examiners need to remember to introduce themselves and the candidates and also to state the names and numbers of their centres. This information should be written on the cassettes and the forms provided for this purpose. Examiners should remind the candidates to speak loudly and clearly. Orals should be conducted in an environment that would minimize as much background noise as possible. Examiners should be reminded that they should not interrupt the candidates while they present their topics. The candidates should be reminded that they should speak for a minimum of three minutes in the first section of the examination (presentation of their topic) and that in the other two sections there should be some interaction between the examiners and

the candidates; not just the examiners asking questions.

Prepared Topic

These were generally well handled by the candidates, many of whom had relevant facts to substantiate their points. However, some candidates rushed through their presentation which they had learnt by rote. There were numerous errors in pronunciation and stress.

Topic Conversation

This section was more challenging since many candidates, through lack of vocabulary and expression, were unable to respond properly, or spontaneously, to the examiner's questions on the topic.

General Conversation

In the general conversation most candidates performed well, showing that they felt more at ease and related better to topics which were part of their everyday experiences. Candidates had very little problem responding to the general questions asked but were hindered by vocabulary and expression. Not many asked the examiners questions or their opinions. Candidates should be encouraged to engage the examiners in a general conversation and the examiners should be encouraged to keep their answers short and not talk too much. Generally, the pronunciation of many candidates suggests that there needs to be more authentic contact with the language, either through contact with native speakers, or a visit to a Spanish-speaking country.

Some common grammatical errors made by the candidates were:

- article/noun agreement:
**una programa, *otros culturas, *un variedad, *el idea*
- subject/verb agreement:
**los medios de comunicación es, *los políticos es, *la gente son,*
- relative pronoun:
**los cubanos quien ..., *otras razones por cual*
- *ambos* instead of *tanto... como*:
**ambos los cubanos y los jamaicanos...*
- Non-conjugation of verbs
**la mujer no respetar, *los gobiernos luchar,*
- gerund with prepositions:
**es ayudando, *como robando,*
- omission of prepositions - for example - personal 'a'
**asistir la escuela, *ayudar los niños*

*** Indicates a form that is grammatically incorrect.**

- *ser* with the gerund:
**son viviendo*
- Incorrect inclusion of the indefinite article (interference from English)
**un otro país*
- *mostrar, demostrar* - used interchangeably
- combining two (2) structures:
**me llamo es...*
- *ser* and *estar* with past participle
- Radical changing verbs
- Past participle for Preterite

Written Assignment

In their written assignment most candidates were able to cover the facts that were relevant to the topics.

In many instances the cover of the written assignment did not have all the needed information – Name of candidate, teacher, school, candidate's number, school code and Topic of Study. Listed below are some suggestions as to the proper format of an assignment.

The assignment should be in sections with the main headings being:

Exposición de la cuestión /del problema
Reportaje de los resultados
Recomendaciones

Candidates may also include 'Apéndice'.

The statement of issue should not be simply "La Deforestación" but perhaps "Para investigar los efectos de la deforestación"

An excellent assignment will have adequate content, be neatly and attractively presented; must follow the guidelines and word limit of 500 words. Candidates may enhance their assignment by including illustrations.

Assignments must be done with reference to a Spanish speaking country. Some candidates submitted general presentations, for example "Las reservas naturales" with no reference to any Spanish context.

Language

Many candidates were allowed to submit poorly translated documents from the internet. There were numerous inaccuracies in spelling and agreement. The same grammatical inaccuracies mentioned for Paper 02 and the oral assessment were also made here.

Candidates need to be guided by teachers in their research and presentation. Teachers should make periodical checks to view ongoing work. Teachers should ensure that candidates meet their deadlines so as to allow ample time for checking and making corrections. Many errors were left unchecked by teachers.

Teachers are reminded to enter marks for the Internal Assessment when submitting samples for moderation. Some samples were not accompanied by marks.

UNIT 2

PAPER 01- Listening Comprehension

This paper required candidates to respond to a series of questions based on five short selections and one extended interview. The questions were in English and candidates were required to respond in English. The topics chosen were in keeping with the experiences of candidates' age group. Although candidates performed well on this paper and demonstrated a high level of comprehension, there is still need for greater practice in listening for specific, detailed information.

Section A – Short Selections

Selection 1

Many candidates were able to respond satisfactorily to this selection on an exhibition on Twentieth Century Mexican Art. Candidates' weakest response related to the date and place of the inauguration.

Selection 2

This selection on human rights in Argentina was well handled by candidates. Seventy-four per cent of candidates scored more than half of the ten marks on this selection. However, many candidates in responding to the question "What happened to children who were taken from their mothers?" confused "adopted" with "abducted".

Selection 3

There was a wider distribution of marks on this selection on how astronomers' observation of the Milky Way is affected by the many lights of the world's expanding cities. Some very vague responses were given for the question "How have astronomers been affected?" The correct response was, "it has interfered with their observation". Candidates however, supplied vague statements like "They have been affected and their work has been upset."

Selection 4

Generally, candidates scored well on this question on the potential of solar energy, although the least able candidates seemed to have encountered difficulties.

Clearly, some candidates had no clue of solar power, and rendered "burning at high temperatures" instead of "high temperature burners".

Selection 5

For this selection, candidates were required to identify the product introduced by the Mexican company. Many gave responses such as "la cola" and "la empresa". The required response, "artificial skin" was rendered as "artificial wood," "artificial hair," or "artificial leg". Many candidates also interpreted "mil" as million in their responses to Questions 5 (d) and (e).

Fifty-two per cent of the candidates scored more than half of the seven marks on this question.

Section B – Extended Interview

Selection 6

This selection on the subject of equal opportunity and treatment for Mexican migrant workers was generally well done, with 63 candidates scoring more than ten of the 20 marks on this selection. However, Question 6(d), "Why is it hard for migrant workers to keep a steady job?" was often misinterpreted, and candidates' responses addressed migrant workers' qualifications rather than the conditions under which they are employed.

PAPER 02 – Reading and Writing

Section A – Reading Comprehension

Candidates performed well on this paper.

Passage 1

This was a compulsory question testing candidates' ability to understand a passage of contemporary Spanish on a topic related to Module 1 of the Syllabus. Questions and answers were in English.

Candidates found the topic and the passage well within their capabilities, and performance overall was very good. Seventy-six per cent of the candidates scored between 11 and the maximum 20 marks on this question.

Although most candidates performed well on the question, a number of them had problems with the words “miseria”, “militancia”, “supuesta falta”. In addition, candidates needed to improve their expression in English.

Candidates are advised to be selective in the material they provide in their answers, a ‘hope-for-the-best’ and ‘scatter-shot’ approach may lead to ambiguity and loss of marks.

Passage 2

This passage required candidates to answer in Spanish, in their own words, to questions posed in Spanish. Candidates appeared to have found the question interesting and well within their capabilities.

Candidates' performance on this question was generally very good. Eighty-three per cent of candidates obtained scores of between 11 and 20 on this question.

Most candidates successfully answered the questions in their own words. However, a small number lost marks for quoting wholesale from the passage. Half of the marks available for each question, with the exception of (f), which required candidates to express their opinion, were awarded for showing comprehension. Half were awarded for expressing the answer according to the rubric ‘in your own words’. While it is not expected that candidates will be able to find synonyms for every word in the passage, or be able to paraphrase without using some of the language that appears in the passage, wholesale quoting from the passage only received half of the marks available for each question. Most candidates made genuine attempts at putting the answers in their own words.

Section B - Essay

This section required candidates to write an essay in Spanish of 250-300 words on one of five topics. This section tested candidates' ability to express themselves in Spanish in a thoughtful, reasonably mature and well structured way on a theme related to "La industria, el comercio y los asuntos económicos" as outlined in the syllabus. Examiners were looking for essays with a brief general introduction, three - five paragraphs focusing on the different angles of the topic and a brief conclusion. Sensible, thoughtful content, expressed in reasonably flowing, for the most part grammatically correct Spanish, and using an appropriate range of vocabulary, was rewarded with high marks.

Candidates were given a choice of five essays on topics related to Module 2 of the Syllabus. The most popular title with candidates was that of "El turismo ha tenido consecuencias más negativas que positivas. Comenta." (Essay #6). This is a topic with which most candidates would be familiar, and was generally well handled in terms of vocabulary, positives and negatives. A number of candidates wrote on the topic, "La globalización no ha tenido un impacto positivo sobre los países tercermundistas. Discute." (Essay #3). Essays #5 and #7 had fewer takers, while only two candidates attempted essay #4.

The general conclusion was that most candidates fell into the "satisfactory" category, and that they found this question very challenging. Bearing in mind that writing is the most difficult of the four language skills this is not too surprising, but if they are to continue their studies to a higher level it is one at which they must keep working.

Candidates must also follow the rubric related to "length". An excessively short essay cannot really be expected to say very much, while an overly long essay suggests an inability on a candidate's part to plan and carefully present his/her arguments.

A number of grammar and vocabulary mistakes appeared frequently, suggesting that these are areas in which candidates still need extensive practice:

Verbs followed by prepositions - *tratar de / enfrentarse con*

Confusion over when to use *a causa de* and *porque*

Problems with *resultar* and *resultado*

Agreement of subject and verb - **la gente trabajan, *el gobierno son*

Agreement of noun and adjective - **muchos compañías*

Definite article omissions, - **Turismo es la industria más lucrativa en...*

Misuse and overuse of the Passive Voice.

Anglicizing of words - *en facto, provider*, and many others.

Problems with false cognates- *asistir* for *ayudar*; *realizar* for *darse cuenta*; *relativos* for *parientes*

* Indicates a form that is grammatically incorrect.

Desde for puesto que, ya que

Por and para

Tenses -confusion re: Preterite and Imperfect.

Use of Conditional to express should / *deber*

Deber + infinitive

Errors with basic uses of the subjunctive

Vocabulary in general seems to have been a problem for some candidates, and much guessing and anglicization of words occurred. Some candidates even provided the English word, which is very damaging to the overall impression formed of their work, and which must be discouraged at all costs.

Candidates need to practice writing as much as possible on a variety of topics in order to develop the necessary fluency required at this and the next level. There still remains scope for improvement and refinement in the areas of vocabulary and grammar. Comments made in Unit 1 on the use of gapped passages as a means of providing candidates with extra grammar practice, are also applicable to this, and any other level.

PAPER 03 – Texts and Themes

This paper consisted of two sections.

Section A – Texts

This section required candidates to choose one of the excerpts from the prescribed texts and answer questions set on that excerpt. The questions were to be answered in Spanish.

Most candidates responded to the excerpt from “El Túnel”, the majority of them doing fairly well. However, many candidates recounted events from the beginning of the passage, rather than immediately prior to the excerpt. In addition, the sense of “la lucha” between opposing forces was difficult for candidates to express. Many candidates also failed to deal with the element of fate in the words “Pero no pude” (question 1d) and confined their answers to the sentence which preceded this quotation.

“Crónica de una muerte anunciada” received the second highest number of responses from candidates. This question was well answered with candidates showing a very good understanding of the concept of “la honra”, and how this concept relates to the novel. However, many candidates were unable to explain the idea of “la fatalidad”.

Many questioned the reason for the killing of Santiago but only a few expressed his killing as his destiny/fate.

Very few candidates answered the questions on “La lluvia amarilla” but those who did, generally responded quite well. They quoted effectively from the text to support their answers. The main weakness in the responses was in candidates’ inability to express the significance of the protagonist describing himself as “perro abandonado”.

Section B – Themes

This section required candidates to explore one of the three themes listed in the syllabus, making detailed reference to one literature text while providing support from other sources. Candidates still made very careless and simple grammatical errors. Just as occurred in Unit One, there were instances where candidates made no reference to additional material and were penalized. Teachers should ensure that candidates are alerted to the fact that the mark scheme stipulates a penalty for the non referral to additional material.

Questions 4-5 were based on the theme “Conflicto y cambio en Hispanoamérica”.

Question 4

This question was fairly well answered. Many candidates quoted from “El coronel no tiene quien le escriba” to answer this question. They dealt effectively with the conflicts in the novel, but failed to address the concept of “los cambios son muy pocos”.

Question 5

This question was also well answered. Many candidates preferred to Don Sabas in “El Coronel no tiene quien le escriba”. However, there were some instances in which candidates misquoted facts from the text.

Questions 6-7 were based on the theme “La vida rural”.

Question 6

This question was satisfactorily answered by candidates. However, there was need for more references to additional material.

Question 7

This question was better handled by candidates. However, many of them did not know the word “paradisiaca”, and were therefore unable to competently answer the question.

Questions 8-9 were based on the theme “Las relaciones interraciales” but only one candidate attempted question 8 and which was poorly done. No candidate attempted Question 9.

PAPER 04 – Internal Assessment

Oral Assessment

This paper required candidates to make an oral presentation on a topic of their choice and engage in conversation with an examiner on this topic as well as on abstract and/or current issues. Most candidates presented their topics in a coherent and logical manner. It could be seen that some research was done on the different topics. However, some candidates needed to do some more investigation and prepare a more detailed and interesting presentation. The poor quality of some recordings added to the difficulty in moderating.

Examiners need to remember to introduce themselves and the candidates and also to state the names and numbers of their centres. This information should be written on the cassettes and the forms provided for this purpose. Examiners should remind the candidates to speak loudly and clearly. Orals should be conducted in an environment that would minimize as much background noise as possible. Examiners should be reminded that they should not interrupt the candidates while they present their topics. The candidates should be reminded that they should speak for a minimum of three minutes in the first section of the exam (presentation of their topic) and that in the other two sections there should be some interaction between the examiners and the candidates; not just the examiners asking questions.

Prepared Topic

These were generally well researched by candidates with relevant facts. The presentations were very lively, and showed a maturity of language and expression.

Topic Conversation

Candidates performed quite well in this section. Some candidates gave a very impres-

sive performance in both topic and general conversation. They were able to defend their views and issues raised in their presentation.

General Conversation

In the general conversation most candidates performed well, showing that they felt more at ease and related better to topics which were part of their everyday experiences. Candidates had very little problem responding to the general questions asked, and showed a maturity of language. Many asked the examiners questions or their opinions. Candidates should be encouraged to engage the examiners in a general conversation and the examiners should be encouraged to keep their answers short and not talk too much. Generally the pronunciation of many candidates suggests an improvement over the year showing that practice is very essential to improvement of oral competence.

Some common grammatical errors made by the candidates were:

- article/noun agreement:
**una programa, *otros culturas, *un variedad,*el idea*
- subject/verb agreement:
**los medios de comunicación es, *los políticos es, *la gente son,*
- relative pronoun:
**los cubanos quien ...,* otras razones por cual*
- *ambos* instead of *tanto... como*:
**ambos los cubanos y los jamaicanos...*
- Non-conjugation of verbs:
la mujer no respetar, los gobiernos luchar,
- gerund with prepositions:
**es ayudando, como robando,*
- omission of prepositions - for example, personal 'a'
asistir la escuela, ayudar los niños
- *ser* with the gerund:
**son viviendo*
- Incorrect inclusion of the indefinite article (interference from English)
**un otro país*
- *mostrar, demostrar* - used interchangeably
- *ser* and *estar* with past participle
- Radical changing verbs
- Past participle for Preterite

* Indicates a form that is grammatically incorrect.

Written Assignment

Submissions for this paper were of very good quality. In their written assignment most candidates were able to cover the facts that were relevant to the topics and there were more opinions, solutions to problems posed and the recognition of different opinions by experts on the topic. However there were many instances where it was obvious that candidates were still unfamiliar with the format of the assignment.

Content

Although performance on this paper was quite good, in many instances the cover of the written assignment did not have all the needed information – Name of candidate, teacher, school, candidate's number, school code and Topic of Study.

Listed below are some suggestions as to the proper format of an assignment.

The assignment should be in sections with the main headings being:

Exposición de la cuestión /del problema
Reportaje de los resultados
Recomendaciones

Candidates may also include 'Apéndice'.

An excellent assignment will have adequate content, be neatly and attractively presented; must follow the guidelines and word limit of 500 words; Candidates may enhance their assignment by including illustrations.

Assignments must be done with reference to a Spanish speaking country.

The statement of issue should not be simply "la Clonación" but perhaps "Para investigar las ventajas y desventajas de la clonación".

Language

Some candidates were still allowed to submit poorly translated documents from the internet. Although the level of language was much better than for Unit One there were still many inaccuracies in spelling and agreement. The same grammatical inaccuracies mentioned for Paper 02 and the oral assessment were also made here.

Teachers must guide candidates in their research and presentation. Checks should be made periodically where ongoing work on the project can be seen. Deadlines can be given to submit certain stages of the assignment for example, topic, plan, biography to be used...

Teachers are reminded to enter marks for the Internal assessment when submitting samples for moderation. Some samples were not accompanied by marks which made moderation difficult.

Teachers should ensure that candidates meet their deadlines so as to allow ample time for checking and making corrections. Many errors were left unchecked by teachers.

