

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION
MAY/JUNE 2005**

SPANISH

SPANISH
CARIBBEAN ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

MAY/JUNE 2005

GENERAL COMMENTS

Three hundred and ninety eight (398) candidates registered for the Spanish Unit 1 examination and two hundred and twenty three (223) for 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. These questions were set in English and candidates were required to respond in English. The topics were set in line with the Modules of the syllabus, as well as with candidates' experiences in this age range. Although some questions in the Listening Component of the examination were well handled, there are still challenging areas that need to be addressed urgently.

Section A – Short Selections

There was an improvement in Section A compared with last year with more candidates managing to score at least 50 per cent on each question. Not many candidates scored marks at the top end of the scale.

Selection One

This selection which dealt with the issue of the “Telemadre” as vocabulary, seemed to be within the grasp of candidates. There were still instances where candidates' responses were vague, generalized and based on common sense which indicated that they were not listening to the extract as attentively as they should have.

Many candidates for instance in Question 1 (a) indicated that the type of client was “youngsters” as opposed to **(single) young men / people**. Candidates also lost marks especially for part 1(b) where many made up their own responses for the service that the “Telemadre” offered. Many interpreted for example, that she was an “adoptive mother” instead of one who **provided home-cooked meals**. Most of the marks were gained for parts c- f.

Selection 2

This selection which dealt with “breathing exercises” proved to be more challenging. The most popular score tended to be in the region of four to five out of 10 marks. Many candidates struggled to produce answers that resembled the recorded extract. Questions 2 (a) “How do people tend to treat life” (b) “To what Two activities should fifteen minutes each day be devoted” and (c) “What Three negative emotions can be eliminated by these activities” proved difficult for many candidates. Hardly anyone noted in Question 2 (b) that a **breathing** exercise was one of the 15 minute activities. In 2 (c) many were not able to confidently list all three negative emotions that can be eliminated from such exercises. As a result, candidates wrote “bad humour,” “bad behaviour,” “laziness,” “tiredness” and other responses that were inappropriate. There was one instance recorded of no attempt at all for this selection.

Selection 3

This selection which highlighted oil pollution was not badly done. Many candidates scored at least half marks and many scored in the upper ranges. A large percentage of candidates had problems, however, interpreting the expression **“un barco volcado.”** This, in turn, affected how they answered Question 3 (b) “Cause of the problem”. Many thought, therefore, that the cause of the problem was due to a “volcano.”

The only other problematic area would have been Question 3 (d) “Request made by President” where clarity of expression may have hindered the possibility of gaining full marks. There was one instance recorded of no attempt at all for this section.

Selection 4

This selection was a True / False extract based on the smuggling of tarantulas and scorpions from Bogotá into Japan. This selection was reasonably well tackled by most candidates. No major problems were detected here. True / False questions asked were fair and unambiguous.

Selection 5

Candidates made a modest attempt in this selection, to deal with the question of the **Ozone gas problem** in some parts of Europe. The average mark was four to five marks out of eight marks. There were very few perfect scores.

Many candidates failed to produce full answers in Question 5 (a) (i) “What is said about the ozone gas in some parts of Europe” worthy of two (2) marks. Many did not include for instance both requirements that ozone gas was at its highest in ten years. In Question 5 (a) (ii), “What is blamed for this?” marks were lost when candidates used common sense to give answers for the reasoning behind this increase. Instead of **heat wave**, answers ranged from “industrialization,” “concentration of dangerous gases,” “air pollution” to list but a few. Candidates must, therefore, listen to the extract and not rely on guesswork or inappropriate vocabulary they may have learnt in class pertaining to the theme. Question 5 (b-c) were fairly well answered.

Section B – Extended Interview

Selection 6

Candidates’ responses to this section were pleasing to the examiners. Candidates showed a general comprehension and great interest in the topic about street children. The average marks ranged from 12-14 out of 20 marks.

Some responses were, however, clearly influenced by the use of cognates which led to the decline in quality of some answers – “**violación le preocupars**” being main examples. In some instances, candidates used common sense to answer particular questions.

Many candidates did not score the maximum amount of marks for Question 6 (a) “What statistics are given on the number and ages of street children in Guatemala?”. The statistics required to answer this question successfully proved problematic. Many missed crucial elements pertaining to Guatemalan street children statistics of either *5,000 boys and girls* and age ranges from **7 – 14** in order to receive the full three marks. ‘**Mil**’ was sometimes taken to mean million and “**alrededor de cinco**” for 2/5.

Responses were sometimes too general in Question 6 (b) “Give Two reasons why these children live on the streets?” where some candidates barely stated “family problems” as a reason for living on the street when specific information was given in the selection.

In Question 6 (c) “What Two kinds of jobs do they perform?”, many candidates did not know the word “**parabrisas**” and some simply used “sell,” “wash,” and “clean” without stating what was washed or cleaned.

In Question 6 (d) “State Two means of survival for those who cannot find jobs.” Some candidates made up means of survival based on common sense or misinterpreted answers required for Question 6 (c) where the question asked for the kinds of jobs that street children performed.

In Question 6 (e) “Why does Sr. Marino say that they lead risky and dangerous lives?” was done quite well, whereas in Question 6 (f) “How do the general public feel about these street children?”, far too many candidates misinterpreted the information and stated that the children were the ones who should clean the streets as opposed to society seeing them as **social garbage**. Question 6 (g) “Explain why the government cannot help these children” was fairly well answered by most candidates.

For Question 6 (h) “**Casa Alianza**” was stated in some instances as a home or a place that finds shelter / is made for street children. Information on this item was misinterpreted generally.

Question 6 (i) was fairly well answered whereas in Question 6 (j), candidates' general misinterpretation of Mr Marino's hope for street kids led to responses such as "Marino wanted to defend all the children living on the street."

Overall, this component of the examination indicated that the candidates still need to sharpen their listening skills. There has been some improvement noted, however. Teachers need to continue emphasizing the importance of listening to native speakers as part of their overall quest for proficiency in this skill. More importantly, answers should be based on the information provided from the examination material.

PAPER 02 -Reading and Writing

Candidate performance on this paper was satisfactory. Many candidates showed a good level of skill in the area of comprehension and many also showed good control of the language.

Section A-Reading Comprehension

Passage 1 -Aumenta el número de estudiantes hispanos en las escuelas estadounidenses.

This was a compulsory question which tested the candidates' ability to understand a passage of contemporary Spanish based on a topic related to Module 1 of the syllabus. The passage required candidates to read the passage in the target language and respond in English to questions asked in English. The responses to these questions indicated that candidates generally understood the passage. At least 80 per cent of the candidates scored a minimum 10 out of the possible 20 marks allotted.

While there was a general understanding of the passage, there were a few vocabulary items that proved problematic for many candidates and this was evident in the responses to certain questions. The items that were problematic were:

docente; ocasionado; el dominio; calificaciones; carentes de

These items were translated as cognates of English words and this led to some answers being "awkward" in many instances. For example, for Question 1 (a), "What has been the result of the increasing presence of Hispanic candidates in American

schools?" many responses were read as "many important changes were *occasioned*" and for Question 1 (c) where candidates were asked to list the demands of the federal government, a large percentage of candidates stated that schools were "expected to improve the *dominion* of English in the schools." While in some instances these direct translations did not affect the answers, in some cases, the answers were contrary to what was stated in the passage. The prime example of this was Question 1 (d) which required candidates to give reasons for concern by the federal government. Many candidates gave the response for this question as "There are many workers *with only* a basic education," when the response was that there were "...workers *lacking* basic education."

Candidates were able to handle the synonyms section very well with most candidates being able to correctly identify at least four out of the five synonyms that were required. The item that was most problematic for candidates appeared to have been "educativo" since the synonym ***docente*** was not a term that they knew.

Candidates are reminded to pay attention to the requirements of the questions, as many marks were not awarded because candidates did not give sufficient details as required by the questions. For the questions that carried three and four marks, some candidates gave only one-point answers, when they should have given at least three.

Passage 2 - Hablemos del Estado del tiempo

This was a compulsory question testing the candidates' ability to understand a passage and respond to questions in their own words, in Spanish, to questions in Spanish. Overall, candidates displayed a general understanding of the passage judging from the responses to the specific questions. This range of scores for this passage was generally slightly below that of the previous passage, as was expected. However, the differences between the two were not very striking. Close to 80 per cent of candidates scored 10 out of the possible 20 marks.

While the passage was reasonably understood, a large percentage of the candidates ignored the rubric regarding questions in their own words. For Questions 2 (a) to Question 2 (d) many responses were taken directly from the passage with little or no attempt made to use one's own words. Candidates should be reminded that there are heavy penalties for ignoring the instructions given. Some candidates did attempt to put answers in their own words and they were rewarded with full marks.

Question 2 (e), (i) and (ii) required candidates to give their opinions on Global Warming. There was a misinterpretation of the questions, especially (e), (i) where instead of outlining the factors that contribute to global warming, many candidates identified the effects of the phenomena. For (e) (ii), many of the responses were too vague. Candidates are asked to be very specific in these questions that require personal opinions.

Again, it is essential that candidates recognize the importance of paying careful attention to the total marks given for each question. Many candidates lost marks for not providing sufficient details to the specific questions. Generally, the marks indicate the number of points that should be outlined in each answer.

Section B - Essay

In this section candidates were required 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 an informed, analytical and logical manner on a topic related to the theme **"La Sociedad y Los Asuntos Sociales"** as detailed in Module 2 of the syllabus. Examiners were looking for essays with an introduction outlining the stance taken by the candidate on the topic presented for discussion, three to five paragraphs focusing on the various angles of the topic and a brief conclusion summarizing the essence of the views expressed by the candidate in the main body of the essay. Candidates' performance was judged by the relevance of the essays' content to the specifics of the question, the organization and coverage of the facts, ideas and opinions included, the level and range of vocabulary and accuracy of grammatical structures used.

The most popular topic chosen was number 5 **"La television corrumpe la vista de la realidad que tienen los jóvenes. Discute,"** perhaps because it was perceived to be the least challenging. Despite its popularity, this question was not very well answered as the majority of candidates who attempted this topic interpreted the question to be a general discussion of the impact of television and few pinpointed the issue of whether or not television distorts young people's view of reality. Some even ventured to discuss the pros and cons of reality TV.

Questions 3, 6 and 7 were also popular choices. However, it was again evident that candidates were not able to do justice to these questions due to lack of knowledge of the subject matter under discussion and misinterpretation of the questions themselves. Question 3 **"Las mujeres son las que alientan al machismo. ¿Estás de acuerdo?"** - Many candidates understood 'alienate' for 'alientan', and interpreted 'machismo' as 'men' themselves or as the **concept of women assuming traditionally male roles in society due to the absence of a male figure in the home.** Some of the candidates who attempted Question 6, **"La migración a la ciudad afecta negativamente la economía de muchos países latinoamericanos. ¿Estás de acuerdo?"** presented some very cogent arguments and performed quite well. Unfortunately, many others dealt with migration as moving from one country to another and those who did write on internal migration as required dealt more with the advantages of moving to the town but not emphasizing the effects on the economy of Latin American countries. Candidates who chose Question 7, **"El papel de la escuela en la sociedad contemporánea ha cambiado. ¿Qué opinas?"** tended to narrowly focus their discussion on the social aspects of the role of the school. There was little or no attempt to compare the traditional role of the school to its perceived role today perhaps due to the fact that some candidates did not understand the term **"contemporánea"**. Few candidates included any mention of change to suit a rapidly advancing technological world. Very few candidates attempted Question 4, **"Al despedir a los trabajadores mayores muchas empresas se roban de sus mejores empleados. ¿Qué opinas?"** and for the most part the arguments presented were really quite superficial.

Most candidates fell into the "Satisfactory" or "Good" category with some in the "Very good" and a small number in the "Excellent". Many candidates did not take the time to identify exactly what the questions were asking them to discuss and that their responses lacked the depth of analysis and maturity of thought required by this question. Candidates must also pay closer attention to the word limit set. Poor handwriting made some essays extremely difficult to decipher.

There were a number of recurring vocabulary and grammar errors which candidates ought to try to eliminate at this level:

***Agreements** - noun and adjective, subject and verb, article and noun

***Negatives** - *hay no, es no, son no*

- ***Personal ‘a’** - *la tele educa los niños*
- ***Subjunctive** - *los padres quieren sus niños aprender*
- ***Conjugation of verbs** - radical changing - *mostrar ver* - ‘*vean*’ for ‘*ven*’
- ***Accentuation** - accents missing or on wrong letter
- ***Omission of ‘que’** from ‘*tener que*’ + infinitive
- * **Use of Conditional Tense instead of Imperfect Tense**
- **derecha* for *correcta*
- **realizar* for *darse cuenta de*
- **pasar dinero* for *gastar dinero*
- **es necesita* for *es necesario*
- ***Spelling** - *programmas, proffesoras, efectos, attender*
- * *extranos* for *extranjeros*
- * *sola* instead of *unica*
- * *estes* for *estos*
- ***Anglicisms** - *la element de disguise, hacen sus bebes, no supervision adulto, como resultado, el rato alto de violencia*
- ***Coinage of words** - *el manimismo*

At this level candidates must be encouraged to broaden their scope of reading material to include several aspects of these multi-faceted topics. Exposure to relevant material in the electronic media will not only help to develop sound vocabulary and grammar skills but will provide the candidates with an extensive content base from which to formulate coherent and thought-provoking discussions in their essays. Candidates must be encouraged to give opinions on contemporary issues both orally and in written Spanish.

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 “Ernesto y Paula” an extract adapted from Paula, Isabel Allende.
- (ii) A passage entitled “La visita del alcalde” from *Un Día de éstos*, Los funerales de la Mamá Grande, Gabriel García Márquez. Most candidates chose passage 2.

Passage 1 –Ernesto y Paula

- (a) Relata la trama del episodio.

Most candidates answered this question competently. Weaker candidates simply copied from the text, instead of recounting the plot in their own words.

- (b) (i) ¿Qué comparación se hace entre el amor y una ráfaga de viento?

Very few candidates zeroed in on the comparison between the ‘ráfaga de viento’ and ‘el amor’. They seemed to be searching in the passage for the actual words to illustrate the comparison. On the contrary, the answer was to be found in their understanding of the passage; that is to say, in the implications of both the narrative and the dialogue.

- (ii) ¿Cómo se manifiesta el tema del episodio?

Candidates seemed unsure of the theme. Weaker candidates thought that it pertained to the 'ráfaga de viento'. Those candidates who identified the theme correctly as 'el amor', found it challenging to show the level of sophistication required. Many were able to deal only with the love between Paula and Ernesto.

- (c) Identifica el punto de vista narrativo y su función en el cuento.

It is evident that many candidates were not comfortable with the 'punto de vista narrativo'. The function of the narrative point of view was answered in a general manner. No deep analysis relevant to the passage was given. Candidates also failed to recognize that there was more than one narrator.

- (d) De lo que has leído, ¿qué se aprende de Paula?

Most candidates dealt with Paula's outlook on life; that is to say, they interpreted **de** in the question to mean **from** Paula. Those candidates who interpreted **de** to mean **about**, spoke more of her qualities than of her life, both being equally valid answers.

Passage 2 - La visita del alcalde

- (a) Relata la trama del episodio.

As with passage 1, most candidates answered competently, with weaker candidates simply copying from the text, instead of recounting the plot in their own words.

- (b) Identifica la técnica narrativa del episodio y explica su función.

This question was particularly challenging for candidates. Most were unable to answer competently. The candidates need to distinguish between 'narrative technique' and 'literary technique'.

- (c) Describe los sentimientos del alcalde a través del cuento.

This question was competently answered by most candidates.

- (d) Describe tres aspectos del carácter del dentista.

This question was very well answered by most candidates.

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.

Three themes were presented:

La Mujer en la Sociedad
El Individuo al Margen de la Sociedad
La Juventud

Of these three themes, most candidates answered the two questions offered on 'La Mujer en La Sociedad' (questions 3 and 4).

Question 3

La sociedad demanda un comportamiento irrealista de las mujeres. Comenta.

Most candidates found it difficult to define "comportamiento irrealista", therefore, their argument/s did not support the thesis statement.

Question 4

La hipocresía de las mujeres es necesaria para la protección de sus hijas

Very many candidates failed to deal with 'la hipocrecía' adequately in answering this question. They dealt with control and cruelty of the mothers, as opposed to showing how in fact Bernarda and Mamá Elena were hypocritical in their actions.

On the theme 'El Individuo al Margen de la Sociedad', Question 6 was more popular with candidates than was Question 5.

Question 5

Los marginados están creados por varios factores sociales. Comenta.

Very few candidates attempted this question.

Question 6

Los marginados serán marginados: les es imposible la reintegración social. ¿Qué opinas tú?

This question was answered competently, with candidates taking different opinions, and defending them effectively.

On the theme 'La Juventud', very few candidates opted to answer either of the two questions offered.

Question 7

Los jóvenes descubren la verdad del mundo de los adultos durante su adolescencia. Discute.

Very few candidates opted to attempt to answer this question.

Question 8

Los jóvenes desean vivir una vida independiente lo más pronto posible. Comenta.

Candidates did not give many references to texts and additional material; but rather, they dealt with these topics in general terms.

GRAMMAR

In this section, grammar was allotted 33% of the total mark. On the whole, grammar was average or below average for most centres. Candidates made errors in subject/verb agreement, personal 'a', and adjectival agreement. It is hoped that in the future these basics of Spanish grammar will be grasped by candidates.

GENERAL REMARKS

Candidates often failed to answer the question asked.

Candidates are, therefore, reminded of the need to read the question carefully, plan their essays, and take care to remain relevant to the question asked/topic given. Also, they need to integrate additional material into the body of the essay, and not leave it to the last paragraph of the essay. Candidates need to stick to the rubric of the question, especially as it relates to the number of words required for a question. There was a distortion of 'El Túnel' where some candidates wrote about Juan Pablo Castel being marginalized as a result of his mother's death when he was young. Some candidates stated that Juan Pablo was a poor struggling artist, thus a marginal character.

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.

General Comments

Many of the tapes were very unclear. There was a lot of background noise making moderation very difficult, sometimes impossible. Examiners need to ensure that the area in which the examination is taking place is free of noise be it from street traffic or other candidates. Examiners need to ensure that they submit recordings of an acceptable standard using standard size cassette tapes and not the micro tapes that were submitted by some. There needs to be a clear introduction of each candidate before each presentation. During the moderation there was much difficulty because candidates were not identified or taped in the order in which the mark sheet was submitted. Examiners must remember that the candidates are the ones who should do most of the talking. Examiners provide the stimulus material and should not dominate the conversation.

Prepared Topic

Many candidates were well prepared and made good detailed presentations in a coherent and logical manner. It was evident that some research was done on the different topics. They had relevant facts to substantiate their points. Others memorized their work and made errors in pronunciation and stress in their rush to finish. Some candidates need to do more research on their topic in order to make it more detailed and interesting.

Topic conversation

Many candidates handled this section fairly well while others had difficulty answering questions on their presentation. It was noted that the candidates who learnt their topics by rote were unable to respond properly or spontaneously to the examiner's questions on the topic. Many had difficulties on this section through lack of necessary vocabulary and expression.

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 little problem responding to general questions but were hindered by vocabulary and expression. Not many candidates asked questions of the examiner. Generally, the pronunciation of many candidates suggests that there is a need for more authentic contact with native speakers.

Some common grammatical errors made by the candidates were:

*Ser/estar

*Sino/pero

*Por/para

Ser with the gerund: for example, **es jugando* **soy estudiando*

Prepositions and gerund:

For example, **en castigando* **con ayudando* **sin haciendo*

Subject/verb agreement:

For example, **yo tiene *la gente piensan * el gobierno deben*

Article/noun agreement:

For example, *la sistema * la problema * un parte*

Noun/adjective agreement:

For example, ** otro parte * unas compromisos * los leyes *un institución*

Omission of *a/de*:

For example, *ayudar los ninos salir la casa*

Written Assignment

Submissions for the written assignments were generally good. Most candidates presented the topic for discussion clearly and included a fair amount of facts, ideas and opinions. Moreover, the solutions or recommendations put forward were sensible and candidates seemed knowledgeable about the countries studied. There were instances though, of presentations that lacked enough personal input and did not adhere to the format set out in the syllabus. Some candidates seemed to have done an internet search on their topic and printed and submitted the information. Teachers need to be vigilant of this sort of plagiarism which should be harshly penalized. Teachers should not wait until the last minute to view the student's assignment, rather the whole process should be an ongoing one with constant guidance and advice. If this is done a lot of plagiarism can be avoided.

Content

The majority of submissions contained much information about the countries chosen, general facts and statistics, maps and other relevant data and quotes from various sources. However, candidates must be careful not to bombard the reader with too much extra information in their unwillingness to leave out anything that was collected during their research. Remember that there is a word limit. In many cases topics were too broad. Instead of talking about "la polución del aire" in general the topic could have been "La polucion del aire en Mexico". In some cases it was unclear as to the main purpose of the study as well as the candidates stance on the issue. A few submissions had no structure, were poorly organized and contained no recommendations. Candidates should be advised on this. They should also be taught how to do a proper bibliography.

Language

Many candidates were allowed to submit very poorly translated versions of their topic. Many candidates were guilty of amateur internet translations with English words. They should not be allowed to submit work that has not been checked beforehand but rather should be required to submit a first draft to be checked and commented upon before it is redone for final submission. Grammatical inaccuracies mentioned before were also made here.

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. These questions were set in English and candidates were required to respond in English. The topics were set in line with the Modules of the syllabus, as well as with candidates' experiences in this age range.

Generally speaking, candidates' performance was disappointing.

Section A – Short Selections

Selection 1

This selection, which dealt with political unrest in Medellin, was done very poorly. The average mark was between 2 – 3/10. Although everyone was practically able to answer. Question 1(a) "Type of attack", vocabulary seemed to be out of reach for the candidates. Many candidates did not understand *sede de campana* which proved problematic in answering Question 1 (b) "Site of attack".

Many were uncertain as to who was hurt in Question 1 (c) and the material damage caused for Question 1(d). Question 1 (e) "Cause of violence" proved particularly challenging for candidates who gave responses that had nothing to do with the selection on cassette surrounding the cause of the violence. The word "**Campana**" seemed to be the problematic word there. For Question 1 (f) "Victims of previous violence" many did not manage to supply a full answer for victims of previous violence so as to be awarded the entire three marks. Those who did score partially, were able to pick up the number of candidates running - though no one understood "**alcaldes**" - as one of the requirements to answer this item. Vocabulary of a political nature seemed to be the major problem overall.

Selection 2

This was much better done and the average marks ranged between four to seven marks out of 10. There were a few instances of perfect scores. The topic dealt with the popular singer the late Celia Cruz, and it seemed to appeal to candidates. There were some areas of misinterpretation and instances of invention based on common sense.

Question 2 (a) "How was Celia Cruz commonly known?" caused most problems where candidates were just saying that she was known as "salsa." They lost marks for this seemingly simple error. Question 2 (b) "What kind of people came to pay tribute to her?" was done well but many did not pick up in Question 2 (c) "What Two qualities are ascribed to her?" that she had a powerful voice. No one noted here contagious energy at all. Questions 2 (d-e) were managed satisfactorily as well whereas many stumbled at Question 2 (f) "What measures did her fans take to enjoy her music?". Many thought that the measures her Cuban fans took were for example to travel the world to see her, attend her concerts and buy her music and not to listen to her music secretly.

Selection 3

This extract examined the introduction of a new technological product, the Japanese SONY video camera. This selection was well done generally. Items 3 (a-b) were adequately answered as they required simple identification of product and date for responses. Question 3 (c) "Special features of product" however, posed the most challenges concerning product features. Popular errors, for example, included confusing "**gramos**" with "rams" along with mentioning the 230 g weight as "with" the battery included.

Surprisingly, a few candidates confused "**mil dólares**" for "one million dollars" as the suggested retail price in 3 (d). Numbers continued to prove problematic again at Question 3 (e) "Initial amount expected to be produced" and this prevented some candidates from answering correctly the 7,000-unit figure amount for the initial expectation of products to be produced.

Selection 4

This selection looked at the SARS epidemic and its impact on the world's economy. This was another area that was quite well done with many candidates scoring close to the maximum scores for this section. Very few scored a failing mark in this category.

Many candidates continued to have challenges with numbers. For instance, in Question 4 (a) "How many persons have died so far from this disease", some candidates mistook "**cientos**" for "100." Although many understood Question 4 (b) "What else, apart from people's health is affected by the epidemic?", there were still not enough full responses which suggested that the "world's economy" would have been affected. Many settled for the economy. A few candidates did not notice the year 2002 in item Question 4 (c) "When and where did this epidemic begin?". Far too many received partial marks for this question. In Question 4 (d) "What is the challenge facing the scientific community?" many variables were provided concerning challenges facing the scientific community. Many candidates were able to articulate the general idea that finding a cure was the major concern at hand.

Selection 5

This section, which dealt with Space travel, was not handled very well. Vocabulary in this extract was somewhat challenging to candidates and answers suggested some unfamiliarity with the topic. There were few cases of perfect scores and the average marks were two or three out of seven.

Many did not answer number 5 (a) "Why is this flight significant?" properly. Those who did, had problems with articulation. Many did not give a full response, which would have included mentioning the Columbia tragedy.

Question 5 (b) “Which Two nationalities are represented in this flight?” was either totally omitted, or, the nationalities represented on the flight were a fabrication - such as “Columbians” and “El Salvadorians.” A few answered correctly. Some mentioned nationalities as countries. Though Question 5 (c) “How much time will they spend at the space station?” was well done, Question 5 (d) (i) “How many crews have inhabited the space station so far?” was not well done. Numbers indicating crews having inhabited the space station so far varied from 3 to 6 to 41. Question 5(d) (ii) was answered correctly for the most part.

Section B – Extended Interview

Selection 6

This interview examined the advances and challenges of e-commerce. This interview was challenging for the candidates. Though there were a few instances of perfect and very high scores, the average candidate mark ranged between 6 – 11/20.

Candidates generally attempted the questions in Part 1 but many made no attempt at the questions in Part 2. Most were able to attain marks in Question 6 (a)’s description of e-commerce. This was fairly well answered. Difficulties arose for Question 6 (b – c). For instance, candidates listed “million” instead of **trillion** concerning projections in earnings from e-commerce. Hardly any candidate indicated that it would exceed. Question 6 (d) “What are three disadvantages of e-commerce?” was handled quite well.

Part 2,e (i) “What is the greatest disadvantage of e-commerce?” was challenging especially in expression. Many gave answers concerning the greatest disadvantage of e-commerce as being “that of easy access to information which decreases confidentiality level.” Question 6 (f) “Why are some sites described as unreliable?” was by far the worst answered and the vast majority of responses were guesses. Question 6 (g) “What measures are being taken to solve the problem of fraud?” was well answered generally, whereas, many attempted to give concrete reasons for what businesses need to do at Question 6 h (i) but alas, many were not reading the question which said “according to Sr Valaverde”. Some candidates made good attempts to answer the last part to earn the two marks allotted at Question 6 h (ii) “How do they need to do this?”.

This paper indicated that Unit 2 candidates need to review numbers and strengthen critical areas of vocabulary. Generally, vocabulary here was not overwhelming and candidates were stumbling unnecessarily. If improvement is to be noted, more practice of the aural skill must be considered as one of the utmost importance.

PAPER 02 - Reading and Writing

Section A-Reading Comprehension

Candidate performance on this paper was generally satisfactory.

Passage 1- Esposas de preso cubanos piden mejores condiciones para sus esposos.

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

The responses to the questions for this passage proved that there was a very good understanding of the material. At least 70 per cent of candidates scored a minimum of 15 marks out of the total 20. The responses were accurate and detailed for most of the questions.

Candidates had problems in the section that required them to give synonyms for the given words or phrases. Because of the lack of understanding of a few vocabulary terms, many candidates were not able to score full marks in this section. The words that were most problematic were: *presos* and *misiva*.

The only other vocabulary term that proved difficult for some candidates was the word *mercenarios* which these candidates translated as *missionaries*.

Candidates must be reminded to read carefully each of the questions and respond to all parts of the questions. A good example of this lack of attention was Question 1(e) which required a two-part answer. Many candidates did not answer “how” the prisoners protested and only focused on “why” the action was taken.

On the whole, this exercise was well handled by the majority of candidates.

Passage 2- ¿Es posible clonar seres humanos?

This compulsory question required candidates to respond to questions in their own words, in Spanish, to questions in Spanish. The content of this passage proved difficult for a significant number of candidates. Less than 40 per cent of candidates scored 15 out of 20 marks and 60 per cent of candidates scored at least 10 out of the 20.

An overriding problem in the responses to this passage was the wholesale copying of answers. A significant number of candidates ignored the instruction of answering “in your own words.” Responses that were taken directly from the passage were heavily penalized with candidates losing half the marks that were allotted for the particular questions. In some instances, where candidates copied answers, they gave quite irrelevant details which indicated the problems with comprehension and vocabulary.

There were instances where some candidates answered questions based on their own personal knowledge and values rather than on what was contained in the text. For example, for Question 2 (f) candidates were asked to give a disadvantage of cloning. A few candidates suggested that “Habrá demasiado personas en el mundo.” There were also a large number of instances where candidates answered questions with irrelevant details, again highlighting the problems with comprensión.

Question 2 (g) which required candidates to give information from the passage as well as their own opinion, was quite problematic for a number of candidates. Many ignored the part of the question that asked “según el pasaje” and only gave their own opinions. Other candidates misinterpreted the questions and gave a moral standpoint on the issue.

Section B - Essay

In this section candidates were required 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 balanced, coherent and analytical manner on a topic related to the theme of Module 2 - “La Industria, el Comercio y los Asuntos Económicos” as outlined in the syllabus. As in Unit 1, examiners were looking for essays which focused specifically on the topic presented for discussion, comprising an introduction stating the position taken by the candidate, three to five paragraphs examining the various angles of the subject and a brief conclusion summarizing the essence of the arguments advocated in the main body of the essay. Candidates’ performance was judged by the relevance of the content to the specifics of the question, the organization and coverage of the facts, ideas and opinions included, the level and range of vocabulary and accuracy of grammatical structures used. Given the word limit imposed, candidates must always be mindful of expressing their views as succinctly as possible.

The general performance in this section ranged from Satisfactory to Good while some candidates fell into the Very Good and Excellent categories. In some cases the content was good but far too many essays contained irrelevant material. Candidates must read carefully and identify exactly what **aspect** of the topic they are being asked to discuss. There were also many instances where individual points were not adequately developed. Emphasis must be placed on planning the essay and care must be taken not to allow responses to be too generalized.

There was a fairly even distribution among the topics chosen by the candidates. However, the least popular was Question 5 “**El transporte aereo se ha hecho mucho mas peligroso en la actualidad. Comenta.**” Candidates who attempted this Topic treated the subject in a one-dimensional way, preferring to deal solely with advances in aerodynamics and not with other relevant issues such as terrorism, for example. Question 3 “**El transporte y la comunicación moderna han transformado el mundo en una aldea mundial. Comenta.**” - There were a few good responses yet some candidates simply listed advantages and benefits of modern transport and communication without making the link to the influence on globalization. Question 4 “**La sobrevivencia de los países caribenos depende de la integración económica. Estás de acuerdo?**” - There were a number of exceptional essays among these with candidates demonstrating an indepth knowledge of the topic and a facility and ease with the relevant vocabulary and structures necessary to express their opinions. Some candidates, however, discussed the advantages of integration, not necessarily economic, and then failed to make the connection to the survival of Caribbean nations.

Question 6

“ El éxito de la industria turística se logrará por la educación de la población entera. Discute. “ - There was some ambiguity in the minds of the candidates about the word ‘educación’ which was interpreted as formal education and how this would help in the acquisition of jobs in the tourist industry. Question 7 **“ La oficina hogareña es la opción más práctica para las madres que quieran seguir con sus profesiones. Comenta. “** - Candidates answered fairly well, though some focussed on women in general and not mothers specifically while some did not link the mother being at home with actually accomplishing anything as far as her job was concerned.

A significant proportion of candidates performed well on this section, but some candidates appeared unprepared for this level of analysis and expression of thought, especially in a foreign language. Only a few candidates included evidence and facts to support their arguments indicating a lack of research and detailed knowledge of the topics presented.

Once again, basic grammatical errors marred many responses. Incorrect sentence structure showing the predominant influence of English was also evident. Accent and spelling mistakes as well as a lack of vocabulary in some instances contributed to mediocre performances in this section. These are some examples:

- * *el mundo nos vere*
- * *desarrollaren*
- * *muchas paises*
- * *obtenera*
- * *por usando*
- * *dejar instead of permitir*
- * *crian por sus niños*
- * *ir a trabajar*
- * *ser bien*
- * *desde hay aprender como hacer estas cosas*
- * *la debe educar la gente*
- * *es importante que la gente de las islas del Caribe colaborar*
- * *consequencia*
- * *cierto aspectos del economy son hecho mas mejor*
- * *como resultado*

It is evident that the following grammatical structures need to be revised :

Ser vs estar

Conjunctions

The Subjunctive

Por vs Para

Conditional clauses

Appropriate tenses

Impersonal ‘se’

Concordance - subject/verb, noun/adjective

Finally, candidates need to gain more knowledge about topics such as these be it in the print and electronic media and formulate opinions on the topics. They must also study topics from several angles and not limit themselves to one aspect only. They also need to interface more with native speakers during class time and discussions among themselves to encourage exchange of ideas and points of view. They must also practise their writing skills more often in order to be fully prepared for this aspect of the examination.

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.

Passage one- excerpt from El túnel

Passage two- excerpt from Crónica de una muerte anunciada

Passage three- excerpt from La lluvia amarilla

Most candidates opted to answer passages 1 and 2.

Passage 1: El Túnel

Candidates answered questions on this excerpt more competently than they did those on passage 2.

Question (a) Describe los acontecimientos que preceden este pasaje.

Most candidates answered this question fairly competently. Some candidates, instead of relating the events that immediately preceded the excerpt, gave a summary of the entire novel up to the excerpt.

Question (b) ¿Qué importancia tiene la carta de Maria para Castel?

Most candidates answered this question competently.

Question (c) Explica los diferentes emociones que experimentan Castel en este episodio.

Candidates seemed unsure whether to simply state the emotions, or to give examples of them.

Question (d) Explica el significado de las palabras “¡Ah, y sin embargo te maté!....yo tan estúpido, tan ciego, tan egoísta, tan cruel”.

Some candidates found this question difficult since they opted to define the quotation and few adequately made the link to his character.

Passage 2: Crónica de una muerte anunciada

Question (a) Relata la trama de este episodio.

Most candidates answered this question competently.

Question (b) ¿Qué indican estas palabras de la personalidad de los hermanos Vicario?: “¡A quién carajo se le podía ocurrir que los gemelos iban a matar a nadie....!”

Some candidates found difficulty in finding three points.

Question (c) “ El hermano del narrador contesta que Santiago Nasar está muerto aunque los hermanos todavía no lo habían matado. Explica el significado de sus palabras. This question was generally poorly answered. Candidates were unable to understand the technique of foreshadowing.

Question (d) Da TRES razones por el asesinato de Santiago Nasar por los hermanos.

This question was competently answered.

Passage 3 : La lluvia amarilla

Very few candidates chose this option. Those who attempted it performed poorly.

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.

Conflict and change was the most popular theme addressed by candidates. Candidates answered Questions 4 and 5 reasonably well.

Question 4

Los conflictos enfatizan lo malo del carácter humano. Discute.

Not many candidates were able to deal effectively with the bad aspects of human character.

Question 5

Las masas sacrifican mucho y ganan poco de los conflictos políticos. ¿Estás de acuerdo?
This question was competently answered.

Rural life was not a popular theme among candidates. More candidates opted to answer Question 6 than Question 7.

Question 6

La imagen exótica del campo enmascara la lucha del individuo para sobrevivir. ¿Qué opinas?
Few, if any, candidates dealt with “la imagen exótica del campo” in their essays. Nor did they deal with this image masking the struggle. Most essays were limited to man’s struggle to survive.

Question 7

Es mejor vivir adinerado en la ciudad que morir pobre en el campo. ¿Qué opinas?

Most candidates did not attempt this question.

Even though a very small percentage of candidates attempted essays on the thematic area **Relaciones Inter-raciales**, it was heartening to see that there were more answers this year than in previous years.

Both Questions 8 and 9 were answered. The poems from “Songora Cosonga” were the main text chosen by all candidates. In some cases, however, candidates failed to show how these poems supported the position they took in their answers.

GRAMMAR

In this section of the examination, grammar was allotted 33 per cent of the mark for this question. On the whole, grammar was average or below average for most centers. Candidates made errors in subject/verb agreement, personal ‘a’, and adjectival agreement.

GENERAL REMARKS

Some candidates wrote general essays on the topic without much reference to prescribed texts or to additional material. Teachers should remind candidates of the need to quote from the prescribed texts, as well as the need to incorporate additional material into their essays.

Some candidates referred to additional material more than they did to prescribed texts.

Some candidates referred to texts by mentioning them, but failed to analyse them in any detail.

It cannot be overstated that candidates need to adhere to the rubric and keep their essay within the prescribed word limit.

PAPER 04 – Internal Assessment

GENERAL COMMENTS

Oral Assessment

Most candidates were well prepared. There were some interesting presentations in this unit. The overall quality of candidates’ performance ranged from excellent to satisfactory. There was some interaction between examiner and candidate, however, candidates should be invited to ask more questions. Many examiners did not provide any positive reinforcement. Most tapings had external interference and some tapes were of such poor quality that they were very difficult to moderate.

Teachers are reminded of the following points:

no half points are to be awarded on the mark sheets

time limits should be adhered to.eg. 3 minutes for the presentations

provide reinforcement, for example,. “bien” “muy bien”

identify candidates before asking them to present their topics

record all marks in the proper spaces provided for them on the mark sheet and not where the moderator is supposed to write

speak loudly and clearly

avoid extraneous sounds such as cell phones

label the cassettes properly and rewind before submitting them

record marks in blue, not in red

if samples are presented on the same tape, label the tape properly so that the moderator does not have to spend a lot of time searching for the right candidate
do a preliminary run before taping to ensure the quality of the taping and the cassette.

Prepared Topic

Generally, candidates did well on this section. They made detailed and interesting presentations although some needed to do some more research. Some had difficulty with stress and pronunciation of certain words.

Topic conversation

Most candidates handled this section quite well. Some still had problems answering questions on their topic but generally performance here was much better than in Unit 01 .

General Conversation

Candidates performed well in this section. They seemed much more comfortable with everyday situations. Most candidates engaged their examiner in conversation (sometimes very lively ones) and asked the opinion of the examiner. Again a big difference was noted in performance when compared with Unit 01.

Some common grammatical errors made by candidates were:

-por/para

-asistir/ayudar

-subject/verb agreement

-article/noun agreement

noun/adjective agreement

-personal 'a'

-tenses

Written assignment

Submissions for this paper were of a very good quality. In their written assignments 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 still instances where candidates seemed to be unfamiliar with the format of the assignment and other instances of blatant plagiarism. Teachers need to 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, and bibliography.

Teachers should ensure that candidates meet their deadlines to allow ample time for checking and making corrections.

Content

Although performance on this paper was quite good, in many instances the cover of the assignment did not have the necessary information – Name of candidate, teacher, school, candidate's number, school code and topic of study. Many candidates did not divide their study into sections for example: Statement of the problem; Report on findings; Recommendations and conclusion.

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 01 there were still many inaccuracies in spelling and agreement. The grammatical inaccuracies mentioned before were also made here.