

**CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL**

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION  
CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

**MAY/JUNE 2009**

**SPANISH**

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## SPANISH

### GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS

MAY/JUNE 2009

#### GENERAL COMMENTS

Candidates' performance in the 2009 examination mirrored that of 2008 across the three papers. Several candidates demonstrated high levels of linguistic competence, spontaneity, fluency and accuracy. The Reading and Writing aspects continue to pose challenges for candidates. In addition, candidates are experiencing difficulties with the English Language which subsequently impede their comprehension of the foreign language.

It is important to instil in the students the idea that language is dynamic and that there is not only one correct way of saying something in Spanish or in any language for that matter. Students must be aware that language is a creative and an ever evolving process and this knowledge should carry them very far in their studies of foreign languages.

Foreign language teachers must make use of their creative imagination to introduce challenges in their classrooms through the use of different activities. They must provide opportunities for the students to freely express their opinions about current events, and topics of interest to them in the foreign language they are studying. This will allow students to become more familiar with idiomatic expressions used within an appropriate context and, at the same time, will widen their vocabulary.

Activities such as visits to Spanish-speaking countries, visits of native speakers of Spanish to their classroom, creation of Spanish /French language clubs will help sustain the students' interest in the foreign language which they study. Another such activity could be the students' enrolment in Latin dancing classes such as *salsa* and *merengue*, where the classes are conducted in Spanish. Singing, another activity to which a great numbers of students are attracted, can play an interesting part in the process of foreign language acquisition. Students will love singing the songs of their favourite young Spanish-speaking singers like Shakira. Singing, apart from giving the students an enjoyable time, will help the students to enhance not only their vocabulary but also the language intonation patterns and add a different dimension to foreign language learning which may prove enjoyable to them.

#### DETAILED COMMENTS

##### Paper 01 - Multiple Choice

This paper which comprised two sections, tested candidates' ability (i) to listen to and understand a number of aural items in Spanish and (ii) to read and understand a number of written items. The overall paper required that candidates master the essential grammatical structures and vocabulary. The performance on this year's paper was comparable to that of the previous years.

##### Paper 02 – Free Response

###### Section I - Directed Situations

In this section the candidates were presented with 10 situations to which they had to provide a response for every situation complying with the function required (such as inviting, expressing opinion, providing information). The candidates must demonstrate control of the grammatical

\* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

structures and appropriate vocabulary to respond very clearly and appropriately to every situation complying with the function required.

In general, candidates' performance ranged from excellent to cases where no efforts were made at all by the candidates to provide an answer. The following observations were made during the marking of this section:

- There are still candidates who do not conform to the rubric and continue to write the response for every situation on a different page and
- Lengthy responses were given instead of the one full sentence required.

### Situation 1

It is your friend's birthday and you send him a photo of himself in place of a birthday card. What do you write at the back of the photo? (Function: expressing good wishes, birthday greetings).

Candidates generally performed well on this item. Most of them used: *Feliz Cumpleaños*.

It was heartening to see candidates giving responses such as:

*“Te deseo lo mejor hoy por ser día de tu cumpleaños.  
Esta foto representa nuestra linda amistad, feliz cumpleaños.  
Que dios te bendiga con más años, feliz cumpleaños.  
Que Dios derrame bendiciones sobre ti por el resto de tu vida.*

However, there were spelling mistakes such as: \**felix*, \**felice*, \**félix*, \**compleanos*, \**cumpleanos*, \**cumplir anos*. The ñ grapheme seems to be a challenge to the candidates.

A few candidates opted to describe the picture and the memories it brought to them and never got around to extend the good wishes.

### Situation 2

You are in Mexico on an exchange visit. Send an e-mail to your friend telling her of something you like about your new environment. (Function: stating likes and providing information).

The candidates performed well and were able to state what they liked about their new environment focusing on the food, music or general culture of the country. There were good expressions and use of vocabulary, for example, *ambiente*, *edificios históricos*, *vista pintoresca*.

The use of the verb *gustar* presents a challenge to the candidates. *Gustar*, meaning to be pleasing to someone, is used in a special construction to express the equivalent of the English “to like”. The verb *gustar* needs to be given special attention in the classrooms.

*Quiero* was also used to render “I like”.

Candidates did not read the question carefully and replaced *Mexico* with other countries, for example, *Venezuela*, *España*, *Cuba* and others.

There was omission of a **tilde** over (é) *México*. It must be clarified that **tilde** in Spanish is the accent placed over a stressed vowel (á, é, í, ó or ú in words such as *mamá*, *café*, *alelí*, *cantó*, *Lulú*). The letter **Ñ, ñ, (eñe)** has its own unique grapheme represented as: **Ñ, ñ**.

\* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

It was encouraging to find the following responses among the candidates' scripts:

*Lo que más me gusta es la amabilidad de todas las personas.*

*Me gusta mucho el ardor de la gente.*

*Me chiflan los rascacielos*

Less encouraging responses were:

*Me gusta Méjico (Mexico) es \*bonita y \*simpática.* (Incorrect agreement: noun /adjective) . it should be : *Méjico es bonito y simpático.*

*Me gusta México es \*tranquillo \*y interesante.*

*Correct: Me gusta México/ Méjico es tranquilo e interesante.*

### Situation 3

You send a card to your brother who is about to write an important exam. What do you write? (Function: expressing good wishes/ encouragement).

This situation required the candidate to express good wishes, encouragement to his/her brother on an examination.

The candidates performed well. The most popular response was: *Buena suerte* which was misspelled thus:

\* *Buenas \*suertes*

\* *Buenos \*suertes*

Other good responses given by the candidates were:

*Que te vaya bien / Dios te bendiga / Estoy orando por ti / No te preocupes.*

-Candidates also misspelled the word *examen*: \**examine*, \**exemin*, \* *examinación*.

There was misuse of possessive adjectives: *tu/ tus, sus/ sus*.

*Espero que hagas bien en \*su examen.... (Que salgas bien en tu examen)*

*Bueno suerte mi hermaño..... (Buena, suerte hermano)*

### Situation 4

You are designing your own invitation for your birthday party. What do you write? (Function: inviting)

Many candidates gave lengthy answers, thus decreasing their opportunity to score full marks. This situation brought to the forefront several challenges experienced by the candidates. Among these challenges were:

(a) The candidates showed difficulty when writing the date in Spanish, as seen by these responses:

\**Mi fiesta cumpleaños tendrá lugar en ocho de Julio a mi casa* instead of

*Mi fiesta de cumpleaños tendrá lugar el ocho de Julio en mi casa.*

\* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

\**Quiero que asistas mi fiesta en viernes porque será muy estupendo* instead of:  
*Quiero que asistas a mi fiesta el viernes porque será estupenda*.

- (b) Candidates did not demonstrate understanding of the correct placement of object pronouns, for example, \**Invito tú* instead of : *Te invito*
- (c) Challenges with the use of *ser* and *estar*
  - \* *Eres invitado* instead of: *Estás invitado*
  - \* *Tu invitaste*
- (d) Some candidates used *Bienvenidos* inappropriately as in: “*Bienvenido a mi feliz cumpleaños.*”
- (e) Omission of the personal **a** was also noticed, not only in the answering of this question, but in the paper in general.

### Situation 5

You are chatting online with friends and they asked you to do something. Explain why it is inappropriate. (Function: expressing opinion)

This situation was open to various interpretations and the candidates generally performed well, explaining why they could not do a particular activity. Candidates confused the use of the adjective *malo* and the adverb *mal*. Candidates also confused the use of *por qué* and *porque*.

There was incorrect use and omission of prepositions *in* sentences such as:

“\**No voy enviar esa carta a mi profesora*”. It should read: “*No voy a enviar esa carta a mi profesora.*” Errors involving misuse of prepositions featured prominently in this paper.

Other responses given to this situation were:

- “\**Yo abajo años.*” Other ways of expressing this idea could be: “*Soy menor de edad*” or “*soy muy joven.*”
- \**Porque la cama romperá y mi mamá estará triste.*
- \**No puedo fumar porque es malo por buena salud.*
- \**No puedo porque mi mamá es aquí en mi cuarto.*

Some appropriate responses were given to this situation for example:

- *No seas tonto, eso es peligroso.*
- *No puedo y no es correcto, pueden regañarme.*
- *Tener sexo es difícil y a mi mamá no le gustaría.*
- *No, eso es para mi noche de boda.*
- *Podemos meternos en un gran lío con la policía.*

### Situation 6

You send an e-mail to your aunt who lives abroad informing her of something special you would like to do when you visit her. (Function: expressing desire)

In this situation quite a number of candidates expressed what they like to do: *Me gusta ir a la playa, Voy a la playa*, but failed to use the subjunctive after *cuando*.

\* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Writing about an action that has not yet taken place requires the use of the subjunctive. This escaped quite a number of candidates. Some of the candidates who used the subjunctive failed to use the correct object pronouns. The more common errors were:

- Failure to use the subjunctive after *cuando* for example: *Cuando te \*visito*
- Incorrect use of the object pronoun: *Cuando visite \*tú. Quiero ir a la playa con ti. Me gusta ir \*a al cine cuando vaya a \*vistarte*
- The appropriate use of *gustar* continues to offer challenges to the candidates as well as the correct use of “*por*” and “*para*”, for example, *Yo gustaría a comprar un premio \*por mi madre.*
- Realizing that *quiero* and *me gusta* are not synonymous.

Among the correct answers given to this situation were the following:

*Me gustaría ir de compras cuando te visites.*

*Me gustaría visitar el museo cuando te visites.*

*Yo querría visitar a los estudiantes en el hospital para ayudarles.*

### Situation 7

Your father has left a note reminding you of a task which he would like you to complete. What does the note say? (Function: requesting/instructing)

- Most candidates effectively fulfilled the function of instructing by using a command but failed to use the familiar form correctly, for example: *\*Lavo los platos, \*lavas el perro.*

- A common error was the use of the subjunctive after *querer* in responses such as:

*Quiero tu \*lavas los platos vs. Quiero que laves los platos*

*Te quiero lavar los platos vs. Quiero que laves los platos*

The verb *lavar* was rendered as: *\*llavar, \*llevar*

A few candidates also used: *No olvides...*

*Recuerda ...*

There were instances of good responses for example:

*Favor de lavar los platos cuando te levantes.*

*Quiero que laves el garaje, por favor.”*

*Tienes que darle agua al gato.*

### Situation 8

A secret admirer is shy and wishes to invite you on a date. Write the note which he/she sends you. (Function: Inviting)

Some candidates focused on how much they admire the person and never got around to ask the person for a date. It seems that some candidates did not know the Spanish word for **date**. Some of the common errors are mentioned below:

- Use of the words *\*daté* and *fecha* instead of the Spanish word “*cita*”.
- Incorrect use of verbs such as: *encontrarse, tomar, invitar, tomar vs. traer, llevar saber and conocer.*
- The verb “to love” was rendered using “*gustar*” and many of those who used “*amar*” used it incorrectly, for example, *\*Yo amor tú.*

\* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Other instances of incorrect responses:

\* *Me gusta tú ven con mí al cine anoche.*

\**Te invito al cena anoche tu viniste.*

\**Por favor en domingo a las ocho vengo con mi para cena en el Chino restaurante porque me gusta tú mucho.*

Commendably, there were a couple of romantic responses to this situation such as:

-*Te admiro en la clandestinidad pero quiero invitarte a ir al cine conmigo.*

-*Michael, ¿puedes acompañarme al cine? Tú eres el chico de mis sueños.*

### Situation 9

Your cousin has lost a competition and is very upset. Write a note of encouragement that you send to him/her. (Function: Expressing encouragement)

This situation showed some candidates were unable to convey encouragement and in several instances simply responded by saying: “*Lo siento.*”

Some of the common errors were:

- Incorrect spelling of *hacer* in the future tense: *Tú \*haceras bien en el futuro.*
- Some candidates misspelt *hacer* as: \* *aser* or \* *acer.*
- Incorrect use of the negative commands: “*No estas triste.*”
- Use of *ser* instead of *estar* in expressing emotions
- Challenges with the use of adjectives vs. adverbs - *bueno* vs. *bien.*
- The erroneous use of *tiempo* for *vez* and *otra* for *próxima*

Some candidates completely misunderstood the situation and hence their responses applauded the cousin for a job well done; other candidates attempted to cheer up the cousin by extending an invitation to go somewhere; some candidates decided to state how much they loved their cousin. A few candidates used the wrong expressions such as: “\**Mi más profundo pésame*” and “\**Que te majores pronto*”.

Among the appropriate answers were:

*No te des por vencido”/ No te desanimas, en los juegos o ganas o pierdes.*

*No te preocupes chica, hay otras competencias en que puedes entrar.*

*Lo siento mucho pero es mejor participar que ganar.*

*No te preocupes porque puedes ganar la próxima vez.*

### Situation 10

The security guard at your school has unjustly accused you of something. Write a note to the principal explaining how you feel about it. (Function: Expressing feelings)

In this situation several candidates did not adequately convey how they felt, but explained the situation in detail without even mentioning that they did not do what they have been accused of. Many candidates were able to state that whatever happened was not their fault. They used expressions such as:

- \**Estoy dessapointemente;*

\* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

- Candidates spoke about not liking the guard: “\*no me gusta que dice el guardo”. Many candidates are not aware of the use “lo” as illustrated above. The sentence should read “No me gusta lo que dice el guardia.”

Other errors included:

- Misspelling of words: \*enfajado for enojado; \*enoja for enojado; \*fruroso for furioso .
- Incorrect use of the preterite tense of “hacer”: No hagalo, no hizolo, no hacerlo.
- Incorrect position of negative words: \*Estoy no contento instead of: No estoy contento.

Among the correct responses were:

*Me siento muy mal al ser acusado de algo que no hice.  
Señora, estoy enfadado con el señor Valdez, no salí de la escuela temprano ayer.  
No estoy contento porque no hablé en voz alta en la cafetería.*

### **Recommendations when answering this section:**

- Candidates should identify the function they are asked to respond to: whether inviting, instructing, expressing feelings, apologizing,
- Candidates must obey the rubric: they must answer **in not more than one sentence**, which fulfils the function required.
- Do not translate from English.

### **Section II- Letter / Composition**

The overall performance of candidates in this section ranged from poor to excellent, with the majority of the candidates performing at a satisfactory level. There were a few excellent scripts. Both options, letter and composition, seemed to have been equally popular among the candidates. Stronger responses showed creativity in their approach while the weaker ones merely answered part of the questions. The format of the letter was generally respected. However, the inability to master basic grammar structures is a cause for great concern.

For the most part, the candidates were able to meet the word length required. Nevertheless, there were weak responses which did not meet the number of words required in the letter nor the composition. Many candidates, in an effort to comply with the rubric which demands 130 to 150 words, used several lines listing names of friends or classmates. There were candidates who also lifted sections from the Reading Comprehension as well as the Contextual Dialogue to use in this section.

It is important to note that candidates experienced problems in writing the date in Spanish. For example, some candidates used the definite article “el” in front of the date when writing the letter, for example,: \* *el 6 de mayo*, instead of simply writing *6 de mayo de 2009*. This is a source of interference from the French language, as in French one must use the definite article *le* in front of the date as in: *Le 6 Mai, 2009*.

There were many scripts where similar errors were repeated and other scripts were filled with invented words. Some of the errors are noted below:

1. Poor spelling.
2. Incorrect use of *Ser / Estar* in general.

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3. Incorrect agreements: subject/predicate and noun-adjective for example: “*Nosotros estábamo \*triste y \*emocionado*,” instead of: “*Nosotros estábamos tristes y emocionados*.” The use of “*todo el mundo*” a collective noun in Spanish should be used with the verb in the third person singular: “*Todo el mundo miró*” instead of \* “*Todo el mundo miraron*”. Difficulty with gender and number agreement between articles and nouns and adjectives fall into this error category.
4. Incorrect placement of object pronouns.
5. Incorrect position of negatives eg. “\**Es no*” instead of “*No es*.”
6. Confusion with the use of *por qué / porque*.
7. Uncertainty about the use of *mal / malo, sólo / solo, bien / bueno*
8. Incorrect word order.
9. Incorrect use of the subjunctive - this generally was not properly handled except by the “very good” candidates.
10. Omission of personal ‘a’
11. Difficulty using “*para*” and “*por*” correctly within a sentence for example: “*Por mi*” instead of “*para mi*” or vice versa and “*para ahora*” instead of “*por ahora*”. The omission of the preposition “*de*” was also noted after *después de* and *antes de*. Prepositions in general present a challenge to the candidates.
12. Problem in using correctly the conjunction “*y*” → **e** before i / hi in cases such as: “\**y interesante, y hicieron*” instead of “*e interesante, e hicieron*.”
13. Disregard for sequence of tenses.
14. Difficulties with the use of reflexive verbs such as: *llamarse, divertirse, enamorarse*, which present a challenge to candidates.
15. Difficulty with the conjugation of verbs in general and in particular in the preterite tense, for example \* *fuemos* instead of *fuimos*, \*

20. Difficulty expressing possession as in: “\**Mi español professor*”, instead of “*Mi profesor de Español*”; “\**mi papá carro*” instead of “*el carro de mi papá*”; “\* *Nos professor*” instead of “*Nuestro profesor.*”
21. Misuse of accents distorting meaning, especially in the preterite tense.
22. Limited and/or in appropriate use of vocabulary and creation of words.
23. Use of “*su*” instead of “*tu*” to end the letter.
24. Confusion between “*mirar a*” and “*buscar a.*”
25. The usual vocabulary “coinage” of words was frequent for example: “\**el tripo*” instead of “*el viaje*”, “\**el ticketo*” instead of “*el tiquete*” etc.
26. Handwriting styles also made it difficult to read some scripts

### **Section III- Contextual Dialogue Contextual Announcement**

This section required candidates to choose to write either (i) a contextual announcement or (ii) a contextual dialogue completion. Cues were given in English for both options. The performance of candidates in this section ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory. Though the contextual dialogue was more popular than the announcement there were better responses to the contextual announcement.

The dialogue was well structured, allowing the candidates to be quite flexible in their responses to the cues. The cues

8. The conjugation of irregular verbs in the future tense in the contextual announcement resulted in errors such as: “\**tenirán*” for *tendrán*; “\* *salirán*” for “*saldrán*” In general, the conjugation of regular and irregular verbs needs more attention in the classrooms.
9. The subjunctive was either omitted or misused, for example, “\**quisieramos que darne dinero* or “\* *quiero que contribuir dinero.*”
10. The use of the pronouns *mi* and *tú* instead of *me* and *te*.
11. The correct use of prepositions presents a challenge to candidates.
12. Poor spelling in items such as: \**professor/a* for *profesor/a*, \**attention*, \**atención* for *atención*, *apreciación* for *apreciación*, \**diferente* for “*diferente.*”
13. Wrong placement of accents which, at times, can change the meaning of the words as in *canto* and *cantó* as happens in this case when it means a change of grammatical tense.
14. Some candidates left out the letter “h” in words such as *-hace*, *-hay*, *-hasta*.
15. In general, there is uncertainty when to use prepositions: *por* vs. *para*, *de*, *en* and other prepositions. This aspect always needs revision.

### **Positive points found in the answers to this section**

Candidates made a better attempt at this question and some were able to construct creative dynamic Spanish with a variety of idiomatic expressions and excellent sentence structure such as “ *estamos festejando*”, “ *pasarlo bomba*”, “*no te lo pierdas*”, “*trato hecho*” and other similar expressions.

### **Recommendations when answering this section**

- Greater emphasis must be placed on the need to follow instructions and on the structure demanded by the announcement. It is of vital importance to use the cues given and also to manage time properly.
- While preparing the students for this examination teachers must draw the students’ attention to the fact that they must choose **ONE** of the tasks as it is clearly stated on the question paper: “ Use the cues provided to complete EITHER an announcement OR a dialogue.” This also applies to the letter/composition.

### **Contextual Dialogue**

Candidates failed to read the instructions properly and to use the cues. Generally, candidates demonstrated poor comprehension skills as their responses broke the flow of communication/understanding. In many instances, candidates wrote back the cues or part of them already given in the section. This resulted in incoherent answers which were not conducive to a proper dialogue. Following are some of the challenges experienced by the candidates:

1. Looking at the third cue in the dialogue, many of the candidates failed to mention the length of time they were living in their previous community before they moved out. The connection with the next link was not made.

\* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

2. Responses reflected a lack of understanding of the polite idiomatic expression “*El placer es mío*” and misunderstood it to mean “My place...” thus went to say: \* *¿Dónde es tu placer?*
3. Candidates used phrases like: \* *dos semanas ahora*, \* *sobre dos semanas* instead of “*hace dos semanas*”.
4. Candidates experienced challenges conjugating reflexive verbs such as “*mudarse*”. They completed the dialogue by writing \**me mudaron* for “*me mudé*.” Some of the candidates did not make the connection with the previous or the next cue. They also experienced challenges using the reflexive pronouns.
5. Responses indicated that candidates have difficulties in using the verb “*gustar*”. Some candidates used *Me/Yo gusto, yo gustar* or *gustaríamos*.
6. The idiomatic expression “*hacer falta*” (To miss somebody or to miss something) was poorly used by candidates. Many candidates wrote: “\**hago falta / hacen faltan mis amigos*” in lieu of “*me hacen falta mis amigos*”.
7. Candidates had difficulty understanding that the present participle in English does not function in Spanish as it does in English. Thus they made mistakes such as: *Mis actividades favoritas son \*bailando y \*cantando* instead of: “*Mis actividades favoritas son bailar y cantar*.”
8. There were challenges with subject /verb agreement when the subject was a collective noun for example: \* “*la gente son amables*”, \* “*las/los gente son simpáticas*”, “\**la gentes son generosos*,” instead of “*la gente es amable*”, “*la gente es simpática*”, “*la gente es generosa*”.
9. Candidates failed to make the necessary connection when filling in Soledad’s part of the dialogue, on her penultimate intervention, when Julio responds to her: *Si, voy a hablar con mis padres...* Soledad’s part could have been for example: “*¡Qué bien! Aquí tienes mi número de teléfono, llámame, por favor.*”

### **Positive points found in the answers to this section:**

1. On a positive note, there were examples of improved use of the subjunctive for example: *quiero que vengas*.
2. Responses showed very good use of commands for example: *llámame, no olvides*.
3. It was encouraging to find expressions such as: “ *echar de menos*” and “*extrañar*” being used by candidates.

### **Recommendations when answering this section**

- More time should be spent on practising dialogue.
- Closer attention should be paid to the rubric and use of ALL cues given.

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## Section IV – Reading Comprehension

Once again, the Reading Comprehension has highlighted candidates' lack of knowledge of **basic** Spanish vocabulary. Hence, this resulted in a misunderstanding of key areas in the passage. However, there were candidates who demonstrated an overall command of the language to the extent that they were able to achieve full marks, or at least in the 15-20 band of marks.

The following were the areas of concern related to grammar in this section:

1. Candidates were confused with regard to the use of a word that can be past participle/adjective. For example, “*organizada*” was taken to mean a person who organizes things or one who is organizing. The same can be said for “*querida*” – taken as loving as opposed to loved, and *dear* (not English) as opposed to dear.
2. “*Encontrar parqueadero*” was misunderstood. Candidates thought that it referred to meeting or finding a person without recognizing that such an interpretation needed the personal “*a*”.
3. “*Camino a casa*”, which is a vocabulary item and idiomatic expression was mistaken for the third person singular of the preterite tense with the accent missing.
4. Translation of Spanish vocabulary in the given context; for example:

*Maestra*- boss, principal, headmistress, lecturer, professor, counsellor, maid, cashier, supervisor, music teacher, model.

*Costumbre* – costume, design

*Quince*- five, fifty

*Parqueadero* – park attendant, parking attendant (or they simply did not know the word).

*Pinchazo* – pinched, itch, punched, corn, pain, cramp, pimple, stroke, stung, prick, house rat.

*Cambiando la llanta* – changing her clothes, the weather changed, it rained.

*La llanta* – key

*Las compras* – the shoppings, the clothes.

*Lugares* – luggage, bags.

*Me tomé un refresco* – she refreshed herself, freshened up.

*Me acosté a descansar* – interestingly enough “she was laid to rest”.

*Taza* – glass (or they simply did not know the word and used it in their answer).

*Te* – tie, juice.

*Mantequilla* – make-up, tequila, mannequin, mayonnaise, lizard, scorpion, snake, a person's name, a place, stick, cheese, cream, milk, bill, receipt, lard.

*Nevera* – freezer, cupboard, stove, drawer, butter place, butter pan, butter container.

*Cartera* – cart, trolley.

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*Anécdota* – anecdote

*Fin del cuento* – end of the bill.

5. Although this is a Spanish examination, in the comprehension segment candidates are expected to answer in English. Across the region, candidates experienced problems with spelling in English.
- “dare” for “dear”
  - “Strick” for “strict”
  - “punchare, puncher, pungshut” for “puncture”
  - “Grusries” for “groceries”
  - “sand witch/wish” for “sandwich”
  - “botter, bauter, botha” for “butter”
  - “bost, bust” for “burst”
  - “tired” for “tyre”
  - “sonny” for “sunny”

Although this paper tests comprehension skills, teachers are exhorted to insist that students be wary of English spelling as it can contribute to a distortion of the answer given, leading to confusion that may influence the awarding of marks. Here now are the questions with the correct and incorrect answers.

1. Describe the qualities of Doña María Luisa.

Correct – Loved by many, organized and strict.  
She was well-liked, organized and as a teacher, she was strict.

Incorrect – She was \*organizing (an organizer), well-wanted and \*strick.  
She was well-known, an organizer, and mighty.

2. What was her profession?

Correct – She was a teacher.

Incorrect – She was a costume designer.  
She was a cashier in the supermarket.

3. What was the first difficulty she encountered?

Correct – She waited fifteen minutes to find a parking space.  
The first difficulty she experienced, was that she had to wait 15 minutes to find a parking space.

Incorrect – The students laughed at her.  
The first difficulty she had was to find an attendant.

4. What difficulty did she experience next?

Correct – The tyre of her car was punctured.  
The car had a punctured tyre.

\* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

- Incorrect – The bank was locked.  
She realized that she didn't have a jacket./ She was pinched./She had an itch on walking home.
5. What was the weather like on that day?
- Correct – It was a hot day.  
It was sweltering/ hot like hell
- Incorrect – It was rainy  
The weather changed and it was hot  
It was snowing.
6. What did she do on her return home?
- Correct – She packed her groceries in their respective place, had a soft drink and went to take a rest.  
When she returned home, she unpacked all her shopping (groceries) in their respective places, took a soda and slept/relaxed/rested.
- Incorrect – When she returned home she freshened up.  
On her way home, she went to the stores and got all the respective things she wanted.  
On her return home, she allowed Fernando to continue his lesson.
7. What did she do at 3 o'clock?
- Correct – She got up to prepare a cup of tea and a sandwich.  
At 3 o'clock, she got up and prepared a sandwich and tea.
- Incorrect – It was 12 o'clock.  
At 3 o'clock she had lessons.  
At 3 o'clock she arrived at her destination and set the tea and sandwich table.
8. What surprised María Luisa?
- Correct – The butter was not in the fridge but the cell phone was there instead.  
The cell phone was in the fridge instead of the butter.
- Incorrect – The cell phone was inside of the butter bag.  
Someone jumped out and said 'Surprise'.  
She got a call from Mantequilla, from a lady she don't know.
9. What was in her handbag?
- Correct – The butter was in her handbag.  
In her handbag was the butter she was looking for previously.
- Incorrect – A lizard was in her hand bag.  
A bottle of tequila was in her handbag.  
The note from pero was in her handbag.  
The end of the bill was in her bag.

10. Why do you think Fernando expected Doña María Luisa to accept his response?

Correct – He expected Doña María to accept his story because she had just told him a similar one. He thought that was reason enough for her to understand.

Incorrect – He expected her to accept his response because he was by her and left it at her house.

I think Fernando expected Doña Luisa to accept his response because it was written and signed by his parents instead of just him going to her and giving her an excuse by mouth.

She liked him because he was her favourite.

### **Recommendations for answering this section**

More emphasis needs to be placed on developing the skill of reading comprehension and vocabulary building within context. Reading comprehension is as much a skill as any of the others and should not be ignored.

Students should be exposed to as many comprehension passages as possible. These can be sourced from many Spanish web sites available on the Internet and any other up-to-date Spanish text. There is also a need to build students' vocabulary and expand their reading skills by exposing them to reading materials with topics that are related to those in the syllabus.

Therefore, teachers should create a classroom that encourages students to avail themselves of as many forms of the language usage as possible, for example, grocery items, instructions manuals, television channels with Spanish features, song lyrics and advertisements.

### **Paper 03 - Oral Examination**

#### Responses to Situations.

Performance on this section of the examination revealed a range of abilities among the candidates. Several candidates attempted all the situations and were forthcoming with appropriate responses. Some responses were produced with a fair degree of fluency and creativity. Many candidates were spontaneous and precise in their responses. They were able to provide appropriate responses using varied vocabulary and correct grammatical structures.

There are, however, many candidates who are still unable to perform with satisfaction a range of functions: giving directions, descriptions, explanation, suggestions, expressing feelings/opinions... Challenges came in providing relevant vocabulary and idiomatic expressions to effectively express ideas. The quality of language was severely flawed. These candidates produced disjointed and partial responses using sparse vocabulary that contained several grammatical errors.

Some common vocabulary errors included:

*bebes* for *bebidas*

*regresar* for *devolver*

*la revuelta* for *el vuelo*

*exitar* for *tener éxito*

*a tiempo* for *a veces*

*más bueno* for *mejor*

\* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

Areas of grammar that reflected weaknesses were:

- Use of *Ser* vs *Estar*
- Noun/Adjective agreement and placement
- Omission of the personal “a”
- Subject/Verb agreement
- Use of definite and indefinite articles (candidates used a combination of articles, for example, *una la fiesta*)
- *Ir a* + infinitive (candidates used a conjugated verb instead of the infinitive)
- Use of infinitive instead of a conjugated verb (. \**yo mirar la televisión*)
- Insufficient knowledge of irregular forms in the future tense
- Improper use of the gerund (\**yo no viniendo*)
- Incorrect use of object pronouns; incorrect placement of object pronouns or no use of object pronouns at all, when needed.
- Formation of the Perfect Tense (using *Tener* instead of the auxiliary *Haber*)
- Incorrect usage of the verb *Gustar* (\**Yo no me gusta tu camiseta*)

### Reading Passages

Generally, candidates’ performance on this section was commendable. Many candidates read with acceptable pronunciation and fluency.

However, for some candidates the reading was punctuated with mispronunciation, incorrect phrasing and grouping of words, thus reflecting a marked lack of comprehension of the passage.

Errors included:

- Incorrect pronunciation of discreet vowel sounds:  
*fui* for *fue*  
*fondamental* for *fundamental*  
*veriidad* or *veriedad* for *variedad*  
*quija* for *queja*
- The tendency to give cognates an anglicized pronunciation. This was very apparent in the words *socialización*, *región*, *biología*, *generacional*, *integración*, *industria*, *ingredientes*, *cultural*, *base*.
- Incorrect Stress:  
  
*jovénes* for *jóvenes*  
*ámable* for *amable*  
*indigéna* for *indígena*  
*próceso* for *proceso*  
*rutinaría* for *rutinaria*  
*lidéres* for *líderes*
- Mispronunciation of the consonants *h*, *ll*, *j*, *z* and *c*, and the combination *gu*, *qu* and *cui*. Also the letter “g” before “i” and “e” was often incorrectly articulated in words like *indígena*, *protegidos*, *vegetación* and *region*.
- The tendency to stumble over words with three or more syllables, or the omission of one or more syllables in such words.( *imprescindible*, *mejoramiento*, *crecimiento*, *aladear*).

\* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

- Generally incorrect pronunciation of words, such as:

*bajaje* for *bagaje*  
*ciudado* for *cuidado*  
*frieir/freiar/frerir* for *freír*  
*reyón* for *región*  
*oppertunidad* for *oportunidad*  
*meria/meyoría* for *mayoría*  
*suerje/surgue* for *surge*  
*saquiarla* for *saciarla*  
*chica* for *chichi*  
*atrajé* for *atrae*  
several variations for *contribuir*.

Students should be exposed to extensive practice in reading aloud. Opportunities should be created to allow students to listen to authentic Spanish in an effort to reduce the deficiencies observed in pronunciation and intonation.

### Guided Conversation

Some candidates appeared well prepared for this section, responding spontaneously and providing full responses. Responses were lively, and in some cases, imaginative. These candidates handled the task with confidence and a fair degree of fluency.

For the majority of candidates this was the most challenging aspect of the examination. While all the questions seemed manageable, several candidates paid little attention to the details required. On hearing a familiar word they gave a prepared answer which, in most cases, was irrelevant and inappropriate. It was clear that many questions were generally misunderstood.

Some candidates were unable to differentiate between the interrogatives such as *quién*, *cómo*, *cuánto*, and consequently rendered inappropriate responses. There was little evidence of a wide vocabulary and sufficient command of basic elements of grammar. The lack of oral practice was clearly manifested. Candidates seemed to have little or no knowledge of high frequency words for the themes.

### **Section A - (Home and Family)**

Many candidates did not comprehend the phrase *peor defecto*. *Tarea doméstica* also seemed problematic, and many candidates did not realize that the question was about their mother and not themselves.

### **Section B - (Sports and Recreation)**

*Deporte* was sometimes interpreted as a place or person and no differentiation was made between *deporte* and *deportista*. The word “*cualidades*” also seemed incomprehensible.

In response to question 3, *¿Que lugar de interés en tu país prefieres visitar?*, many candidates mentioned a foreign country.

### **Section C - (Daily Routine)**

*¿Qué tomas al desayuno?* was often interpreted as the time, and *¿Con qué te desayunas?* frequently obtained the response *con mi mama*, or any other relative.

\* An asterisk indicates an incorrect form, spelling or structure.

*¿Quién hace más tareas domésticas ...?* often resulted in a list of chores (*saco la basura, limpio mi dormitorio...*).

Candidates generally had problems responding to the following questions:

*¿Cómo se prepara tu plato favorito?*  
*Si pudieras cambiar tu rutina diaria ¿qué cambiarías?*

#### **Section D - (Travel)**

Candidates seemed to be more comfortable with this section except for *¿Viajan mucho tus amigos?* which was interpreted as *...con tus amigos?*

*Cuando viajas, ¿prefieres hospedarte con familia o en un hotel?* was often misinterpreted. The word *hospedarte* was problematic.

#### **Recommendations for Paper 03 (Oral Examination)**

- Continue the practice of oral activities as the reading of passages, conversation and responses to situations.
- Candidates need to be prepared to expand on their responses, as happens in normal conversation, even when the question posed is a closed question.