

C A R I B B E A N E X A M I N A T I O N S C O U N C I L

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

JUNE 2006

SPANISH

SPANISH

GENERAL AND BASIC PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS

JUNE 2006

GENERAL COMMENTS

There were varying levels of performance ranging from excellent to poor, but the overall performance was significantly improved over that of 2005. Several candidates demonstrated high level of linguistic competence, spontaneity, fluency and accuracy.

It is important for candidates to be exposed to as many real-life situations as possible. Teachers are encouraged to be innovative and creative in teaching their students the difficult aspects of the language. Learning through dramatization, simulations and other fun-filled activities facilitates much retention and the development of communicative and other skills.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Basic and General Proficiencies

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

This paper, which comprises two sections, tests candidates' ability to listen to and understand a number of aural items in the target language and to read and understand a number of written items. Both sections require candidates to have sufficient mastery of essential grammar and vocabulary. The good performance on this paper was comparable to that of previous years.

Paper 02 – Free Response

General Proficiency

Section 1 - Directed Situations

This question demands that candidates identify the function for which the situation forms the context, and demonstrate their control of appropriate grammatical structures and knowledge of relevant vocabulary in clearly worded, concise responses. The better candidates were able to satisfy these requirements. Candidates' performance on the whole ranged from outstanding to occasions when no attempt was made to answer the questions in the section.

Situation 1

Shortcomings:

- a. Translating the situation
- b. Inability to form the imperative of *traer*, *contribuir*
- c. Limited vocabulary for item to be contributed

Mostly well done, but many candidates coined the verb *contributar* and those who knew *contribuir* found difficulty in giving the correct form of the command *contribuye* or *contribuya*. In some instances *tomar* was incorrectly used instead of *dar* or *traer*.

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

Some candidates just gave a general comment e.g. *el comite está planeando una fiesta para el fin de año y cada estudiante tiene una nota en la cual está escrita lo que va a contribuir.*

or

Estamos planeando una fiesta de fin de año.

The specific challenge in this item related to the use of the imperative mood in telling the candidate what to bring.

Traería, traigas, traerías, traes.

Several candidates also used the first person in telling the candidate what to bring: *traigo, llevaré...*

There was also some confusion in the use of *por/para* when using *a fiesta* (some used the word *el partido*)

trae jugo de naranja por la fiesta.

Situation 2

Shortcomings:

- a. Failure to apocope *bueno* before *viaje*
- b. Inability to perceive the inappropriateness of *felicidades* in this context.
- c. Absence of subjunctive after *esperar*
- d. Expressing the hope that the guest had enjoyed his stay

Many candidates gave simple correct responses *Buena Suerte, Buen viaje* etc. When they attempted longer responses there were many errors. In some instances, candidates interpreted the question as they being in Mexico. The house guest was returning to them in Mexico and so they began with *bienvenido*.

Most candidates handled this fairly well. Some, however, interpreted the question as welcoming someone to the country:

Example:

Bienvenida a Mexico

Bienvenidos que Dios te bendiga

Several candidates misinterpreted this item. Some welcomed the person/house guest to their home

Bienvenido a mi casa

While others neglected to extend good wishes, they simply said “*Adiós*” or “*Hasta luego*”. Even when the response was appropriate, there was some confusion in the correct use of the subjunctive.

Espero que tienes un buen viaje / un viaje bueno*

Un feliz viaje

Others used the adverb instead of the subjunctive form

Bien viaje/ Buen viaje and still some failed to drop (*apocope*) the “o” off *bueno*

Bueno viaje or keep it *viaje bueno*.

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Situation 3

Shortcomings:

- a. Evading the issues of expressing feelings and confining the response to dissatisfaction with being unable to wear new clothing bought for the occasion. This displayed an absence of sensitivity with regard to the context.
- b. Inability to use *lo siento*, *sentirse* and *sentir por* appropriately.
- c. Use of *terminar* for *cancelar*

There was a variety of responses, but great difficulty in expressing “I am sorry that” and the subjunctive. Sometimes the disappointed was implied rather than clearly stated.

- Good response:
- a. *Estoy un poco desilusionado porque pensé que él era tu amor verdadero.*
 - b. *Siento oír las noticias malas.*

Many candidates were not sure how to express disappointment in Spanish; there were responses such as: *Estoy celosa*

Sentir – in most cases was incorrectly used:

- Lo siento oír mucho*
Lo siento sobre su boda.

This item produced many varied responses with candidates in the process neglecting to express disappointment.

Qué pasa, qué pasó, explícalo

When they did express disappointment using: *lo siento* it was used incorrectly (sometimes) when further explanation / comment was forthcoming:

- Lo siento que la boda / el matrimonio*
Lo siento oír...
Lo lamento...

Some of the correct responses (fully appropriate were)

¡Qué desilusión! Estoy triste, lo siento, la lamento, estoy desilusionado/a/decepcionado

Situation 4

Shortcomings:

- a. Absence of mastering of imperative forms – affirmative and negative.
- b. Failure to use formal structure.
- c. Use of *ser* with *mojado*.
- d. Attempts at explanations that showed a disregard for the economy of words required in signs.

Many candidates used appropriately correct expressions. Too often the answer was given in the familiar form. *Ten cuidado* – Problems with spelling *cuidado*, *Piso mojado* was often used, but many times the attempt was incorrect in terms of spelling *pisa moja* or *piso mohado*

This item also gave problems as to the warning sign

Example

Caution

Caución

or there was a translation of the items

La señal dice que el suelo está mojado or *Hoy una mujer con fregasuelo en la señal**

Many varied responses were written.

Piso mojado, el piso está mojado, el piso no está seco, es peligroso

Some of the errors included the use of English caution; confusion in the use of *ser/estar* in describing the floor – *el piso es mojado*, the use of the subjunctive in negative commands *no caminas/ andas*

Situation 5

Shortcomings:

- a. Inability to discriminate between *bueno* and *bien*
- b. Ignoring the superlative nature of the performance

The item was generally well done. Short responses obviously were more usually correct than the longer ones. *Excelente* was very often mis-spelt *excellente**. Problems with the use of *Muy bien* and *Muy Bueno* – *Muy buen trabajo* or *trabajo muy bueno* and the incorrect form *muy bien trabajo*. Candidates were also using *trabaja* and *trabajar* instead of *trabajo*. *Proyecto* was often misspelt *projecto*.

This item was done exceptionally well except that many candidates spelt the word ‘excellent’ in Spanish incorrectly.

Example: *Excelente/exelente*

There was again confusion in the correct use of *bien/buen* in describing the work **Bien trabajo* as opposed to *buen trabajo* or in the positioning of the adjective and the need to change the spelling: *Trabajo buen* as opposed to *trabajo bueno* or *Has echo* **bueno* as opposed to *Has hecho bien*.

There were quite a few candidates who misspelt the word *excelente* with *Excelente* being the most common of the errors relating to this word.

Situation 6

Shortcomings:

- a. Indicating what they liked doing or a personal characteristic instead of specifying the job that they wanted to do – failure to respond to the specific demand of the situation
- b. Failure to omit the indefinite article in statements about profession
- c. Inability to use *gustar*

Me gusta or *quiero ser* and profession were often used instead of *Me gustaría* or *quisiera/querría ser*.

This item was fairly well done, except some candidates used the article (definite /indefinite) with the occupation.

Example: *Yo quiero ser una secretaria*.

In many cases the word ‘secretary’ in Spanish was rendered as *secreteria/secretario*.

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

Quiero ser / quisiera / me gustaría when used were too often used with the article when it should have been omitted.

Quisiera ser (un) bombero

Profesor was in quite a few instances spelt with “ss”

The majority of candidates expressed the desire to work with computers though misspelt in several instances, for example, *computadores*.

Situation 7

Shortcomings:

- a. Inability to discriminate between *bueno* and *bien*
- b. Misspelling of *delicioso*
- c. Literal translation of *the school lunch* *la escuela almuerzo*

Candidates had problems with vocabulary for lunch – *el comido* instead of *el almuerzo*. Sometimes, in describing the lunch, there was no agreement of adjectives. Often *sal* was used instead of *salado/a* to describe food as salty.

This item was well done except, in some cases, where candidates mixed up the uses of *ser* and *estar*, for example, *La comida está buena*.

The use of noun and adjective agreement was not heeded, for example, *La comida es delicioso*.

There was confusion in the use between *bien/bueno* in describing the lunch. Incorrect use of *mal/malo* was also evident.

Al almuerzo es mal/bien

Several candidates also misspelt the word for lunch: *el morzo/ el comido*

Some candidates made reference to the lunch hour or the need to go home for lunch without any reference to the school lunch as requested in the item.

Situation 8

Shortcomings:

- a. Making a statement about unsatisfactory situations at the hotel, rather than making a suggestion for improvement
- b. Inability to use *gustar*
- c. Failure to use subjunctive with *sugerir, aconsejar, recomendar*

Many times candidates simply wrote a comment rather than a suggestion, for example, *no me gusta el servicio / La comida no es buena*.

For “ought to” or “should” – the conditional tense of the verb was being used rather than *Deber* and the infinitive or *Tener que* and the infinitive, for example, *limpiarían los baños más* rather than *Deben/Deberían limpiar las baños más*.

Some candidates used *sugiero que* and subjunctive very well.

Good response: *Sugiero que las empleados trabajen más para hacer a los huéspedes felices*.

Servicio was often misspelt *service*.

Most candidates commented *only* on the service and gave no suggestions.
El servicio en el hotel es malo.

Many candidates expressed dissatisfaction with the service without making a SUGGESTION as to how it (the issues) should or could be improved.
El servicio es malo.

Some candidates did not demonstrate an awareness that they were addressing someone in the polite form – *recomiendo que cambies el chef**

Some candidates could not come up with a verb to express displeasure and used the word *por favor* as a verb. – *Mi familia y yo no son por favor con el servicio.*

Situation 9

Shortcomings:

- a. Translating the situation
- b. Expressing regret for unacceptable behaviour
- c. Misspelling of *prometer*
- d. Failure to use the future tense

Many candidates dealt with this question very well and there was a wide range of simple appropriate responses.

Prometo no fugir en la sala.
Prometo no mirar television por una semana.
Prometo no haberlas una voz alta/Prometo no fumar otra vez.

However, too many times candidates spelt *Prometo* as “*promito*”* or used *Promisio* or *Promeso*

This item was a bit confusing to the candidates and some responses were not really practical or realistic.

Example:

Mamá prometo no limpiar la casa
Mamá y papá no prometo que voy a tomar alcohol

Some candidates did not mention anything in particular, for example, *Prometo cambiar.*

The key verb that was used, given the nature of the situation, was *prometer*. In quite a few cases it was incorrectly spelt – *promiso/ prometto / promisio / promito*

The use of the word not in bold print gave many candidates the impression that they had to use the word *no* in their response – *no prometo lavar los platos.*

There was also some confusion in the use of the future, depending on how the candidate structured his/her response.

Te/les prometo no iré a la playa
Prometo que no ir a la playa
Mis padres prometieron que no miro la televisión durante la semana

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

Situation 10

Shortcomings:

- a. Widespread use of *asignatura* for assignment
- b. Concern with classmate's health, rather than with providing information about the assignment
- c. Difficulty with familiar imperative of *hacer*

Vocabulary for *homework* posed a problem. *Trabajo de casa* surfaced or *deberes* was used in the singular form *el deber* or *tarea* in the plural form *las tareas*.

There were also some interesting, appropriately correct responses, for example,
No es necesario porque la tarea es una presentación oral.
Estas enfermo, la profesora dice que no tienes que hacerla.

Although there were some good answers this item was also not well interpreted.

Example:

Esperque te mejores pronto
No puedo ir al colegio quiero el trabajo
Voy a mandar esta nota contigo

The word *asignatura* was used constantly for *tarea*.

There was some confusion in the interpretation of the content of the note re: *sender* and *recibir*. Some interpreted it as the child sending a note to the teacher or made reference to a subject area other than Spanish.

Some of the more common errors related to the spelling of the word for homework. *Los debres, la tareja**

Some candidates neglected to make agreement with *números* and *páginas* when reference was made to more than one number or more than one page. *Asignatura* was used for assignment.

La asignatura es... página dos y tres, número seis y siete.

General Comments

- For items which required the candidate to send a text message, candidates in a few cases used abbreviated forms as obtains in (real life) situation where words are not spelt out completely.

Sample responses

1. *Jorge, compre las bebidas por la fiesta por favor*
Rosita, por favor trae un paquete de tazas para la fiesta
2. *Espero que llegues temprano*
Buena suerte cuando vuelvas a México
3. *Ya compré mi vestido ya*
Hola, solo quiero que sepas que te voy a extrañar mucho y que tengas un feliz viaje.
4. *Se prohíbe andar en el suelo*

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

5. *Bien escrito*
Este proyecto es excelente
6. *Me gustaría hacerme abogado*
Me gustaría ser secretario
7. *El almuerzo es terrible*
El almuerzo es demasiado caro
8. *Cocine comida bien*
*Es necesario que provea más toallas**
9. *No hablaré en voz alta en mi clase cuando mi profesora está hablando, prestaré atención.*
*No salirá en la noche con el coche**
10. *Voy a visitarte para dar la tarea a ti*
Tengo ganas de darte los deberes cuando regreso a mi casa

Section 2 – Letter/Dialogue/Composition

This section is intended to assess the candidates' ability to produce written language within the parameters set out by the syllabus. In addition to mastery of relevant vocabulary, idiom and language structure, the ability to express ideas clearly and coherently, is emphasized. The three options given were the letter, the dialogue, and the composition, each of which was marked out of 30.

Grammar

Agreement

There were many errors with subject/adjective agreement, particularly when the candidates had to describe the school and the teacher. No care was taken to ensure that subject and adjective agreed, and there were even cases when there was a mixing of the two i.e. *mi profesora es alta, Delgado y bonita*.

A very common and seemingly obviously avoidable error was: *mi escuela nuevo*. Yet another error to be noticed was that of subject/verb agreement e.g. *yo estuvo, mi papa trabajo* and the ever popular *me gusta mis amigos, mis amigos es simpatico*.*

Accentuation: this is often made due to inattention and the candidates desire to “finish quickly”. As a result, clearly avoidable mistakes were still made with basic words: *porqué, está, cómo, día, tú, más*. More than 60% of the candidates did not use the accents.

A less obvious but noticeable grammatical issue was observed with the direct and indirect object pronouns. Specifically, these were often misplaced or misused as subject pronouns – *la era fantástico, la estaba tarde, mis amigos ayudanne con mis deberes*.*

Verbs. Interestingly, most candidates had a fair grasp of the verb and their conjugation in the different tenses. There was also a good use of the subjunctive in the opening lines of the letter: *Espero que estés bien*, but it was not used consistently throughout as in *mi madre me quiere estudiar mas en la nueva escuela*.

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Content

It was clear that the topics for the letter was the topic of choice by many candidates. They were well prepared with vocabulary and structures recently learned for the oral examination where there were questions which required the candidate to “describe their school, teacher, best friend/s from school.”

Common errors

1. Uses of *ser* and *estar*
2. Ambivalence between *haber* and *tener*
3. Ambivalence between *por* and *para*
4. Confusion of *bien* and *bueno*
5. Confusion of *dio* and *dijo* – many candidates used *dio* when they meant *dijo*
6. *La gente* and *la familia* - candidates need to be reminded that these take a singular verb. Also, *todo el mundo*
7. *Gustar*
8. Verbs that require the infinitive and verbs that require a preposition before the infinitive.
9. Omission of the “personal a”
10. Omission of the definite article before the proper noun qualified by a tilde e.g. *el señor García*
11. Omission of the accent especially in foundation words in the language e.g. *mamá, papá, día*
12. Uses of the imperfect and *preterite*
13. Sequence of tenses with the subjunctive. Some candidates attempted to use the subjunctive but used the present where the past was needed. The exceptional candidates used the past subjunctive correctly.

Section 3 – Reading Comprehension

It is strongly recommended that teachers give adequate practice to their students on analysis of comprehension passages, to ensure that candidates improve their performance in this area.

Use of the booklet – Teachers need to guide students on the use of the booklet so that they are answering one question per page and not parts of one question on different pages.

It would seem that some candidates were not prepared for the examination.

The overall performance was satisfactory. Many of the vocabulary items posed a challenge to the candidates. The following words were misinterpreted:

- *asistían* – they helped, they assisted
- *ensayo* – essay, seminars, meetings, theatre.

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- *papeles principales* – the principal papers, the principals of papers
- *director* – professor, teachers, principal, judge

The candidates had difficulty expressing themselves in the English Language. Their inability to express themselves in the language impacted negatively on their overall performance. Candidates should make an effort to spell the words correctly.

Question 1

The overall performance on this question was unsatisfactory. The candidates for the most part misinterpreted *asistían* and *ensayo*.

Examples of incorrect answers

- They helped to open the theatre.
- They assisted in the orphanage
- They attended an opera.

Question 2

Candidates misunderstood the context in which the word *papel* was used so many of them ended up with it being related to papers.

They also interpreted it as an award being presented to Javier or Yola.

Other examples include

- Honour was bestowed upon Yola and Javier.
- Enough embarrassment was bestowed on them.

Question 3

In the response to question 3 candidates were required to refer to Rosa's talent as well as desire to act with Javier. However, a number of candidates cited one aspect.

Question 4

Candidates' performance was satisfactory.

Question 5

The question required candidates to state that the director was aware of Yola's absence. This idea was not captured in most of the responses. The general response cited Yola's absence only.

Examples: Yola couldn't be found.
Yola was not there.

Question 6

The responses to this question were good as they captured the idea that Rosa was asked to play Yola's part.

Question 7

This question required that candidates include in their response, Yola's arrival, the decision taken by the director to let her continue in her role and Rosa's disappointment (stated or implied). Again, many candidates referred to, or included only two aspects – Yola's arrival and Rosa's disappointment.

Section IV – Expanded Paragraph

This year's Section IV performed fairly well. The cues were understood by most of the candidates and in some cases were quite well used. Some candidates did not appear to understand that they could put words in between the cues: (example – *pasajeros asustados*) – *los pasajeros estaban asustados*.

The "*Semana pasada*" cue was used as is, "*La*" was hardly used.

Common errors

1. Confusion of *ser* and *estar* – e.g. El viaje estaba agradable
2. Confusion of *por* and *para*
3. Contraction of "a+el" and "de+el" was hardly seen
4. "*Ir DE vacación*" was hardly used – "*ir EN un(a) vacación*" was used instead
5. The present tense was used in some cases throughout the entire passage, even where the past tense was required
6. "*DE*" after time expressions was substituted with "*en/por*"
7. The personal 'a' was often omitted
8. "*Mucho*" vs "*muy*" – often confused
9. "*Asistir*" was used instead of "*ayudar*"
10. FRENCH was also used: "*yo arrivé*"
11. "*Legar en*" instead of "*llegar A*"
12. "*Que*" used as a possessive adjective. "*Ese*" as a relative pronoun
13. Candidates used the preterite tense badly, especially the irregular preterites - *pensar, comenzar, tener, estar, hacer, conducir, saber, ir, llegar*
14. "*Saber*" vs "*conocer*" – "*El medico no conoce que hacer*"
15. Use of "*más tarde*" ... e.g. *Diez minutos tarde* instead of "*diez minutos más tarde*"
16. The preterite and imperfect tenses were confused especially – "*estar, tener, hacer*"
17. Verbs such as – "*decir, hacer, venir*" and "*conducir*" gave problems in the preterite tense with conjugation
18. The preterite of "*DAR*" and "*DECIR*" was confused e.g. "*dio/dijo/ dijeron*"

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19. “*En la mañana*” instead of “*de la mañana*”
20. Use of OBJECT PRONOUNS – mostly indirect
21. “*Ser*” with occupations, many candidates used “*estar*”
22. Confusion of – *haber and tener*
asistir and atender
parecer and mirar/buscar
23. Improper use of the passive voice
24. Use of the first person plural – anybody “*y yo*”: often used third person instead
25. Omission of the infinitive after the propositions
26. Past Participle vs Preterite Tense

E.g. *El viaje salido*
El piloto hecho
Yo decidido
Mi familia comprado el viaje
27. Subject verb agreement was a problem for quite a few candidates
28. “*Porque de*” was used instead of “*a causa de*”
29. “*Tan*” was used for “so” as opposed to “*asi*”

COINED WORDS ENCOUNTERED THIS YEAR

<i>Tener un buen/bien tiempo</i>	–	to have a good time
<i>Hizo seguro</i>	–	made sure
<i>Buena cosa</i>	–	good thing (there was a doctor on board)
<i>Fortunamente/ Graciadamente</i>	–	fortunately
<i>Aeroplano</i>	–	plane
<i>Allí estaba / hay fue / Estaba</i>	–	there was
<i>Allí amigos</i>	–	their friends
<i>El vuelto</i>	–	flight
<i>Nosotros viaje</i>	–	our trip
<i>Allí</i>	–	their (instead of su)
<i>Rato en vacaciones</i>	–	while on vocation

In spite of this there were a few positives. There were some good phrases and idiomatic expressions seen this time around:

1. ¡*Qué asco!*
2. *Dentro de poco*
3. *En un cerrar y abrir de ojos*

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

4. *Por fortuna / suerte*
5. *Dar las gracias a ...*

Some cues were incorrectly copied, for example,

<i>Mérida</i>	—	<i>Merida / Merido</i>
<i>Excelente</i>	—	<i>excellente</i>
<i>Pasada</i>	—	<i>pasado</i>
<i>Vacaciones</i>	—	<i>vacciones</i>
<i>Piloto</i>	—	<i>pilito</i>

Other cues seemed to cause problems for candidates:

Sano y salvo

viaje agradable

Aterrizaje inesperado

There was much improvement in the use of *HABÍA*.

Another noteworthy positive was the change of “y” to “e” when “and” in Spanish came before a word starting with the same sound. There was also good use of the SUBJUNCTIVE and synonyms such as *de golpe* and other higher registered phrases instead of just “inmediatamente”

CANDIDATES MUST BE REMINDED ABOUT PENALTY FOR DISREGARDING THE RUBRIC REGARDING LENGTH.

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

Reading Aloud

The performance ranged from limited to outstanding, with the majority falling in the good range. There was evidence of very good preparation despite the weaknesses in pronunciation and intonation displayed by some candidates.

Many candidates mispronounced the vowels, struggled with longer words and those letters which have different sounds in English. This was so for ‘*Michoacán*’, ‘*norteamericanos*’, ‘*definitivamente*’, ‘*atracciones*’, ‘*representativos*’. There was diphthongation of vowels e.g. *guías* as ‘*guyas*’ and ‘*aguas*’ as *agúas*’. The ‘ll’ was sometimes rendered ‘l’ or ‘j’ e.g. *hajan* / *halan* for *hallan*.

Many of the candidates were able to demonstrate a satisfactory level of fluency and adequate pronunciation while reading. Appropriate variation of intonation indicated that most candidates understood the main ideas contained in the passages. However, some candidates found it challenging to correctly pronounce, among others, the following:

flamenco (*flamenso*)
gitanos (*guitanos*)
sean (*cien*)
geografía (*anglicized pronunciation*)
tierra (*tiria*)
patron (*parón*)
Guadalupe (*guadalup*)

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Climática (claimatica)
Obstáculo (obsticalo)
Descanso (descansio)
Sur (suer)

The standard of reading was generally good. Despite the occasional stumbling, most candidates were able to pronounce and intone at an acceptable standard.

The most problematic words/sounds were:

variedad – veriedad
cultura – coltura
conserva – anglicized “ver”
carretera – caretera
Guerrero – Güerrero
caraterísticas – various mispronunciation
sean – sían
ferias – ferías
virgen – anglicised
senedad – sieiedad
hallan – halan
tranquilo – tranquilo
abundancia – abundancia
gama – jama
clima – claima
version – anglicised

Responses to Situations

There were some very good candidates who were spontaneous and quite accurate in their responses. Many candidates misinterpreted the requirement of the situation presented. Many did not pay attention to pronunciation as they were trying to concentrate on producing the vocabulary and grammar structures. The weaker candidates failed to use the subjunctive or imperative. “*Tome tu al policia*” for “*Te llevaré a la policia*”. “*No te preocupado*”. “*Presa*” was given for “*prisa*”. “*Escúchante*” was used for “*dispénsame*” “*Tiquetes*” was used for “*boletos*”.

Generally, candidates were able to respond appropriately to situations or part of them. Limited vocabulary and poor command of key grammatical structures affected the fluency and correctness of answers. Some candidates did not understand the word ‘queue’. Some of the errors made are as follows:

No me gusta...
¿Dónde es tu mama...
Muchos gracias...
Soy tarde
No estoy hambre
No vengaria...
Puede voy...

Several candidates demonstrated a lack of understanding of the situations. Limited vocabulary also restricted their ability to convey meaning. Many candidates were unable to express mixed feelings, make suggestions, recommendations, express annoyance and so on. There was much limitation and many verbs were used in the infinitive.

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Guided Conversation

Some questions were not readily understood by many candidates and as a result, they were not spontaneous with the answers. Vocabulary and adequate command of grammatical structures were somewhat limited, resulting in some answers not being appropriately and correctly rendered. Some responses lacked the appropriate variation in intonation with several words having anglicized pronunciations. The questions requiring descriptions and justifications proved extremely challenging for some candidates.

Candidates demonstrated a generally inadequate command of the basic vocabulary, thus limiting their ability to comprehend and respond to simple questions.

Conversation presented a challenge to many candidates. Some had difficulties understanding and readily responding in a fluent manner to the various questions because of limited vocabulary and difficulties with basic elements of grammar. Anglicized pronunciations were also noticeable. Questions requiring descriptions and stating reasons for responses created major problems for some candidates. Some candidates were unable to readily understand the following:

¿Hace cuánto tiempo...?

¿Cuáles...?

Asignaturas

¿Qué se puede ver...?

¿... las mejores compras?

¿Cómo reaccionan...?

Candidates' performance on this section could be considered as average based on the fact that some were excellent whereas others responded incorrectly. The majority had a general knowledge of the topics and responded appropriately.

Nouns and adjectives were sometimes reversed e.g. "mi favorito pariente es..."; IN B5 *¿Cómo es tu profesora de español?* most identified their teacher by name only; errors with time as in B7 were encountered, also. "Tengo clases de español son las nueve y media" or "a son las..."

"Shopping" was fairly well answered as candidates were able to name their favourite shop, describe items purchased and state with whom they preferred to go shopping.

In "Sports and Recreation" *¿Quién...?* Was sometimes misunderstood for "*¿Qué?*" thus they were unable to supply correct responses.

Conversation

Some candidates failed to answer the questions asked even after repeats. Answers were often disjointed or totally irrelevant. There was evidence of lack of preparation and oral practice. The weaknesses in grammar and the lack hindered them seriously. Simple questions like *¿Cómo es...?* were greeted with silence or a wrong answer. The word "pariente" was not known. Some erroneous statements included:

Mi mamá profesión es...

Mi madre alto y negro

Hay personas ocho...

... y historia muy mucho

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

Basic Proficiency

Paper 02 – Free Response

Section I – Directed Situations

The objective of this section of the paper is to test candidates' ability to produce short, written responses to a series of 10 real-life situations. The responses are assessed for appropriateness and correct linguistic expression and are awarded a total of 15 marks. This section parallels Section I of the General Proficiency paper and there are 5 situations in common - Questions 1-5 on the General Proficiency and Questions 6 – 10 on the Basic Proficiency.

Overall, most candidates performed quite well. Although the rubric emphatically instructed candidates to write no more than one sentence, a few wrote two sentences, while some wrote one very long sentence – about 5 lines in some cases.

Some candidates, in formulating their answer, addressed the situation given, rather than the function which they were to use Spanish to carry out. For example, item # 5: A radio station has announced ... Write a note... stating how you can be contacted. Many candidates said something like “*El ítem es mío/la bolsa es mía*”.

Situation 1

Most candidates answered competently. A common response was “*me duele la cabeza*”

Situation 2

Many candidates found difficulty understanding what this question was targeting. There were answers like:

- *vengo en avión mañana*
- *Ya voy*
- *No hay autobús*

Situation 3

Most candidates did not know the word “*fecha*” (date) some used “*día*” instead, while others preferred answers such as “*Nos vemos el sábado a las tres.*” Many also did not know the word *reunión* (meeting).

Also, there were several instances of candidates not reading the stimulus material properly, or not understanding the stimulus material. They therefore offered responses like *la nueva fecha de reunion fue cambiada*.

Situation 4

This item gave candidates the opportunity to use the verb “*deber*” or “*poner*” in the imperative, or favor de + infinitive. Most candidates seemed not to have mastered any of these three constructions. They therefore wrote “*Quiero ...*” Some candidates simply wrote the name of a dish. The problem was posed when candidates chose to write an English dish like “cook up”, “macaroni pie”.

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Situation 5

Most candidates attempted to use “*llamame/llámeme*”. No candidates used the structure “*se puede ponerse en contacto conmigo en*”

At this level, candidates effectively used “*mi número de teléfono es ... or vivo ...*”

Situation 6

Candidates were required to show competence in using vocabulary on the theme of a party. Answers such as *música, dinero, decoración, comida, bebida*, were accepted. Most candidates did not use the verb *contribuir* properly. Instead they created a verb “*contributar*”.

Situation 7

This item was reasonably well done. Answers such as “*Buen viaje,*” or “*Buena suerte*”, were given.

Situation 8

Lo siento was offered by most candidates. However, many candidates did not seem to know that before a finite verb, they should write only *siento*. For example, “*Siento oír de tu boda,*” instead of *lo siento oír de tu boda*.

Situation 9

Candidates were most creative in answering this item. “*Cuidado, Piso Mojado,*” were accepted.

Situation 10

Most candidates responded appropriately with *muy bien or excelente*. However, *excelente* was incorrectly spelt – *excellente*.

Section II – Questionnaire

The objective of this section is to test candidates’ comprehension. Candidates are required to complete a multiple-choice questionnaire in Spanish, after having read information in English, based on a practical situation. This section is worth 10 marks.

Many candidates performed well on this section, and completed the questionnaire fairly accurately. There were, however, a few candidates who clearly demonstrated a total lack of comprehension. Responses to questions 1, 2 and 4 revealed some weaknesses with respect to candidates’ ability to recognize numbers.

Section III – Gapped Passage

In this section, candidates are required to complete gaps in a passage, with items which require knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

While many candidates may be familiar with the vocabulary, there is a clear indication that their competence in spelling is weak. Failure to place accents and tilde was very common.

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Candidates also encountered difficulty conjugating verbs in the present tense. Where a conjugated verb was required, candidates used an infinitive or an inaccurate verb form or tense. There were several variations for *quieren* and *dice*. These include *queren*, *querren*, *dece*, *desen*.*

For items 6 and 8, many candidates failed to provide the correct adjectival form to agree with the noun given.

Vocabulary for items 9 and 10 proved to be the most difficult for many candidates.

Section IV - Reading Comprehension

Overall, candidates did not perform as well as one would have expected them to, even at the Basic Proficiency level.

Where candidates seemed to have understood the stimulus material, they found it difficult to express this understanding.

Question 1

Some candidates interpreted this question as asking for a translation of the name of the store. Some candidates stated that it was a place, without using the word shop/store/boutique.

Question 2

The word *locales* in the stimulus was problematic for weaker candidates. Several responses revealing a lack of comprehension of the word were given. These include:

- ...is famous for the production of important and local people
- ...is famous for importing goods locally and abroad
- ... is famous for their important products and location

Question 3

Some candidates gave a literary interpretation and produced answers such as:

“It is described in a convincing way so that consumers can go and buy.

Question 4

Most candidates did not know that *calzados* means footwear/shoes. Some used the Spanish word, while others gave several meanings to *calzados*; from underwear to belts, hats, scarfs, etc.

Question 5

Most candidates got full marks for this item. Even if they copied the Spanish, it was difficult not to get the full marks, as the word perfume is spelt the same in both Spanish and English.

Question 6

This item was one of the most challenging for most candidates. They found it difficult to express “decorative cloth” or “household material”. A common response was: “it could be decorated or plain”.

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Question 7

The word *regalos* was interpreted as watches by a large number of candidates.

Question 8

Some candidates did not know the meaning of *visítenos* and therefore offered very creative responses such as

“to come to shop on the 5th of May.”

Question 9

Some candidates, instead of giving the address, gave the e-mail address.

Question 10

Most, if not all candidates scored full marks on this item.

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

Reading Aloud

The reading passage seemed to be challenging to many candidates. Performance on this section was disappointing in many instances. Candidates produced a myriad of errors, spanning all the areas of expected difficulty.

It was generally observed that candidates were unable to fully execute vowel sounds. While for some words the correct vowel sound was made, there were inconsistencies shown when this same vowel sound would be mispronounced a few words later.

The words presented as cognates were anglicized, and those that looked close to an English word were made just that (e.g. occasion, excursion). Other discrete sounds which seemed problematic include:

- ll* in *bullicio, millones, desarrollado*
- h* in *hay, hispanoamericanos, hispanohablante*
- g* in *región, argentinos*
- q* in *quinceañera, equipos*

Multi-syllabic words were the most difficult for many candidates. The length of the word seemed to serve as a deterrent. In addition to approaching the word hesitantly, and stumbling over it, fluency, intonation and pronunciation were severely affected.

Responses to Situations

Generally, the candidates had difficulty interpreting the situations and offering an adequate response. The vocabulary was exceedingly limited for even basic items like clothing, or even asking the price of something.

Also, there was evidence of insufficient knowledge of basic grammar. Common errors included:

- incorrect subject/verb agreement
- confusion in the use of *ser* and *estar*
- adjectives wrongly placed and used incorrectly

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- *me* used interchangeably with yo.

Far too many candidates opted not to attempt to offer a response.

Guided Conversation

Again, in this area, a lack of vocabulary proved to be the main challenge, both in allowing candidates to understand the questions and in formulating rich answers.

Candidates had problems with the meanings of the interrogative pronouns and question phrases. Basically, there was a clear lack of knowledge, of simple vocabulary. In response to *¿Cómo es?*, most candidates gave a name instead of a description. Words like *deportista*, *tienda*, *pariente* were generally unknown.

The responses offered were too brief, and candidates should be encouraged to provide additional information after stating *Sí* or *No*.

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