

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

JANUARY 2005

SPANISH

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SPANISH

GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATIONS

JANUARY 2005

GENERAL COMMENTS

The performance of candidates on Sections I, II and III continues to be better than that on Section IV. This suggests that there is much need for students to be assisted with the acquisition of vocabulary.

Candidates who performed well show commendable levels of competence and managed to use the language with creativity and fluency in all four sections.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper I – Multiple Choice

This paper is divided into two parts – Part A: Listening Comprehension and Part B – Reading Comprehension. Each section comprises 30 items.

PART A - Listening Comprehension

Candidates are required to respond to items read aloud in Spanish by:

- (i) Choosing the correct option from a list of four pictures in a series.
- (ii) Answering or completing sentences read twice.
- (iii) Answering questions based on public announcements.
- (iv) Answering questions in English based on a continuous passage.

Some of the main difficulties include: the lack of vocabulary, unfamiliarity with some idioms such as **menudo, de puntillas, de rodillas, a prueba de**.

An asterisk (*) denotes wrong form, spelling or structure.

PART B - Reading comprehension

Items in this section are grouped under the categories – Vocabulary, Grammatical Structure and Reading Comprehension.

The choices made by students revealed guessing in some cases. However, there were some good responses, some items were not properly answered.

Candidates need to be equipped with a wide range of verbs and other vocabulary for them to do well in the situation with the visual stimuli.

Paper 02 – Free response

Section I

This section of the paper tests candidate's ability to perform specific linguistic functions. Candidates are given ten real-life situations and are required to produce the/a response, which would be used in each situation. Responses are assessed for accuracy and appropriateness and are awarded a total mark of 25. If the response includes all elements in the situation, and adequately communicates meaning, it is marked out of five. If the response is partially appropriate, meaning that it adequately communicates meaning but does not include all elements in the situation; it is marked out of three. The performance in this section was mainly in the 15 – 20 range. This was good. Very few candidates scored below the 3 – 5 range. The functions tested this year were apologizing, expressing disagreement, complaining, explaining, informing, instructing, suggesting and responding to a query.

Overall, the questions were fairly well handled by the majority of the candidates. Although, a minority had difficulty with basic vocabulary such as **tener que, hablar** versus **decir**, there was generally good use of idiomatic expressions, object pronouns and exclamations.

Question 1 – Apologizing

Many candidates received a partial score as they apologized but did not say for what they were apologizing.

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Question 2 – Disagreeing

This was fairly well handled. The candidate error was “No dogs” rendered ***No perros.**

Question 3 – Complaining

A number of candidates did not state what the problem was and therefore their responses were partially correct.

Question 4 – Explaining

This question was handled very well for the most part.

Question 5 – Informing

This question was fairly well done. Some candidates did not mention what the item was that was taken from the house. Some candidate spelt ***projecto** as **projecto**, also ***accidente** for **accidente**.

Question 6 – Advising and informing.

This question was well answered.

Question 7- Suggesting

Responses to this question were fair. In most answers, where the subjunctive was required, it was not used, for example, ***Sugiero que practica** instead of **practique**.

Question 8 – Explaining

This question was well done.

Question 9 – Replying

This question was fairly well done.

Question 10 – Instructing

Many candidates did not seem to know **al día** and so quite a few used **tiempos** for example, **dos tiempos** for **dos veces**.

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In some cases candidates used a mixture of polite and familiar forms for the command in the same response, for example, ***tome tu medicine.**

Section II

Letter, Dialogue, Composition

The purpose of this section is to test candidates' ability to write coherent, grammatically correct and appropriate paragraphs relating to specific situations; using a range of vocabulary and idiomatic expression. Candidates are expected to develop the main points provided, in a clear, coherent Spanish.

Letter

Most candidates who attempted this question used the correct format. However, there was a tendency to for some to mix formal and informal register, for example, beginning with Snra. or Snr. and then using tú. Some candidates continued to use and address.

Dialogue

This question was attempted by more candidates this year than is the custom with the January examinations. There was a mixture of good and moderate dialogues. Weaker candidates demonstrated difficulty with vocabulary – especially “waiter” – **camarero**.

Composition

This section was fairly well done. Only one candidate did not attempt Section II. This is commendable.

Common errors in this Section:

haber – used for **tener** for example ***he ir a casa**,

bienvenido – used as a verb

gracias used as a verb

Por favor written as one word

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***tabla**/table for **mesa**

cita – for – **sitio**

***tratar** – for **probar**

***jenero** for **enero**

***muy mucho**

***yo amo tú**

***mesa por dos**

queda for **estancia**

***una otra**

***gracias para** for **gracias por**

cuando llegado for **cuando llegar**

Section III

The reading comprehension tests candidates' ability to read and comprehend Spanish. Responses are written in English, as language is not being tested here.

The majority of candidates' marks fell in the 7 – 10 range. This performance while being fair can be improved. Candidates need to be given more practice with comprehension.

Question 1

Some candidates did not know the word **vuelo** and thought the incident occurred on a boat or ship rather than on an airplane.

Question 2

Very few candidates used the word 'cockpit' in their answer.

Question 3

Some candidates did not explain that the co-pilot had fainted but just said that he was not feeling well.

Question 4

Most candidates responded appropriately to this question.

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Questions 5 and 6

Most candidates had a partial response to these questions, which required more than one element for a complete answer.

Question 7

Most candidates seemed to have understood the problem but some did not express clearly that Dr Gonzales was a doctor of Mathematics and not a medical doctor.

Section IV

Expanded Paragraph

The purpose of this section is to test candidates' ability to produce a coherently written report by connecting cues provided in a logical way. Candidates score marks for accurate use of grammar, content coherence and clarity.

The main difficulty encountered with this question was vocabulary. Although the words used are high frequency words, some presented problems to candidates: **primera cita**.

Cada al rio – this cue was particularly problematic so candidates were unable to use it in the normal form.

Bien vestibles – was used as **buenos vestidlos**

Risas was used as a verb.

Paseo en bote – was used as a verb.

The highest score for this question was 18 and the majority scored in the three to five range.

Paper 03 – Oral Examination

This paper comprises three sections:

- (i) Reading aloud,
- (ii) Responses to situations,
- (iii) Guided conversation.

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Comments on Section I

This section tests candidates' ability to read aloud and pronounce discrete sounds: vowels, consonants accurately. Candidates are also expected to intone accurately and possess overall fluency in reading.

The performance ranged from moderate to outstanding. Only one case of very limited performance was reported. Generally, candidates demonstrated a sound knowledge of pronunciation system and were able to read with good intonation.

There were several candidates however, who transferred anglicised sounds to the Spanish. These included:

barrio, Aires, Portero, enriqueció, Europa, riqueza, guerra, celebra, figurillas, antibióticas, medinales, tecnológicos, farmacias, espectáculos, remedios.

The sound of the following letters was also very problematic – **ii, u, gi.**

Recommendations

A wide range of activities should be done in class to aid candidates in developing their listening skills. Candidates should be encouraged to watch television talk shows and to listen to radio programmes in Spanish.

Section II

The performance of candidates in this section was mainly in the satisfactory to outstanding range. For the most part, candidates generated correct responses. Different abilities in the control of grammatical structure and knowledge of vocabulary accounted for the performance of weaker candidates. Some candidates did not know the difference between **regresar** and **develouer**. The imperative also presented difficulty for some candidates.

Some communicative functions presented problems for weaker candidates and even for some whose performance was good. These were:

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- (i) making a suggestion,
- (ii) giving directions and
- (iii) making an offer.

Section III - Guided conversation

The majority of candidates were rated good, as they were able to understand the questions asked. Other candidates seemed ill at ease with some of the vocabulary used in this section. Words such as: **opinas, lugar, admiras** and **jarte** were not known.

There were also candidates who demonstrated limited facility with areas of structure, lexis, general fluency and spontaneity. These candidates spoke haltingly and made constant requests for questions to be repeated.

Recommendations

Practice of listening skills through the use of the tape recorders, compact disk players, radio, television, with sounds, dialogue, listening comprehension can be effective ways of reducing these problems.

Some useful reminders:

1. Addresses are not to be written when writing letters only the date is to be written.
2. The numbers in dates are to be stated in figures for example, **el 29 de enero de 2005.**
3. Teachers may ask for assistance from CXC with particular questions for example, workshops.
4. Candidates should keep responses to situations concise, as longer responses tend to have more errors.
5. Teach candidates synonyms for nouns, verbs and expressions.
6. Encourage candidates to use the language both inside and outside of the classroom.

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