

# SPANISH (PRINCIPAL)

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Paper 9781/01  
Speaking

## General comments

It was really encouraging to observe that candidates of all levels had prepared thoroughly for both exam sections and most of them displayed first-hand knowledge of the Hispanic world.

In discussion in both parts of the test, candidates sometimes gave plausible, well-framed answers that did not connect with the question asked: e.g. '*Has the government raised living standards?*' Response: '*The government must invest in education...*, etc.' which has a detrimental effect on the overall mark.

Visiting examiners were most grateful to centres for their flexibility in arranging visits and their diligence in sending timetables and Topic Submission Forms.

## **Discussion of article (DoA)**

All six cards available for this part of the exam were chosen by a good number of candidates, but **Card 1** on siesta and **Card 4** on tourism in Colombia were the most popular.

The majority of candidates summarised their chosen article well and showed a very good understanding of the article. Some candidates made a good attempt to lead the conversation.

**DoA card 1** (siestas) saw some very sound arguments about the need for sport or other forms of *ocio* to combat stress, though a number of candidates made statements about the decline in the siesta lifestyle that conflicted with the evidence in the text. With **Card 2** (fires), several candidates overlooked the key statistic that 96 per cent are started deliberately. **Card 4** (tourism in Colombia): some chose this card despite not having much to say about tourism and a few candidates did not seem to understand the allusion to the Peace Process.

## **Topic of Discussion (ToD)**

Most candidates managed to convey a genuine interest in their chosen topic and their enthusiasm about their topic was evident in most cases. They not only displayed excellent factual knowledge of their chosen topic but it was good to see that they also coped well with unexpected questions as most had researched their topic extensively using a wide variety of sources.

In the presentation, many candidates used their introduction to announce what they would say in the ensuing discussion – overlooking that the examiner leads the discussion, and can omit certain headers that she or he feels have been reasonably covered by the introduction or are of lesser significance (or interest). Candidates should take care to avoid monotonous intonation during the introduction to the topic. Reciting pre-learned material was sometimes done in a rush, with syllables disappearing and intelligibility reduced.

In very few cases, the choice of topic was vaguely connected with the culture of a country where the language is spoken, as defined by the Pre-U syllabus. With that in mind, we would recommend candidates to anchor their Topic title to a specific country in those cases where it may not be obvious. In case of doubt, it is always advisable for centres to contact Cambridge Assessment as early in the academic year as possible.

The choice of historical topics risks the test becoming very factual and limiting the amount of opinion expressed by the candidate. Consideration of some controversial aspects of the topic in question is always advisable.

Research on a topic should aim for a balanced and comprehensive overview: e.g. a presentation on '*nationalism in Spain*' that takes as its starting point the year 1936 overlooks the preceding '*century of nationalism*'. Very occasionally candidates seemed not to have put much rigour into historical research.

Visual images bring to life presentations on artists, but in planning such a presentation it is worth taking into account that analysing pictures uses up time.

Visiting examiners always welcome forms filled in with detailed information since it helps with their test preparation.

## Language

There was much fluent speaking amongst this year's cohort, although pronunciation errors were common. There were, in particular, many wrongly stressed verb endings across all tenses and even infinitives (examples: *deberíamos* pronounced as though without an accent, *busco/buscó* used interchangeably). '*De hecho*' was frequently sounded as a single two-syllable word, and '*por ejemplo*' similarly shortened. Examiners sometimes found themselves using the word *difícil* in a question only to have the candidate repeat it back in their answer with a different stress pattern. Other common errors were *significa* (stressing second syllable), or *diferente* followed by *a* rather than *de*.

Artificially working in subjunctives and other advanced structures is better than not using them at all. A few candidates spoke expertly in both parts of the exam in 'authentic' Spanish, but without using a range of structures and scored some 15 per cent lower than might have been expected for their level of language skill.

With some candidates there was a sense that they had resigned themselves to randomised use of *ser* or *estar*, having given up or perhaps never taken the trouble to learn the clear distinctions. There were also instances of *ser* being misused in place of *haber*, e.g. *han sido muchas protestas*.

At vocabulary level, some candidates invented variants on *prevenir* and in very few cases there were a number of English intrusions of the type '*like*' and '*so*'. Most candidates had a range of structures and vocabulary at their disposal, and they responded well to all question types throughout the exam.

Adjective agreement was often a useful guide for examiners choosing the right language score.

# SPANISH (PRINCIPAL)

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Paper 9781/02  
Reading and Listening

## Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- focus only on the required information and communicate it precisely in their answers
- pay particular attention to conveying the required information to the examiner in unambiguous language.

## General comments

This report will look at candidates' performance in this session, but will also concentrate on giving advice and guidance for future examinations.

This is a mixed-skills paper that allows candidates to show their Spanish-language skills in Reading and Listening. Candidates have 2 hours 15 minutes to complete the paper. They are advised to spend 1 hour 15 minutes on the Reading exercises and 1 hour on the Listening exercises. They may choose the order in which they prefer to tackle the exercises.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Part I – Reading (30 marks)**

There are two passages with a combined limit of 500–650 words. The first passage has reading comprehension questions in Spanish requiring answers in Spanish. Although these answers are not assessed for quality of language, candidates must not 'lift' phrases from the passage. The second passage has questions in English that require answers in English. The third exercise is a retranslation from English into Spanish of a paragraph of about 75 words based on the stimulus of the earlier second reading passage.

**Reading Text 1** was a passage about alternatives sought by Madrid local council to current sanctions for the consumption of alcohol in the streets of the city. The text is marked positively and the objective is to communicate the correct response, but not to reproduce the original text word for word. It is important for candidates to use their own words. Full sentences are not required in the answers but the correct information must be conveyed successfully. Accent errors are only penalised if they affect meaning and slight spelling errors are accepted if the word is recognisable, but not if the spelling error leads to another word. **Question 1** was mostly answered correctly, the idea of *severidad* proving not too difficult to understand. **Question 2** also caused very few problems. Only a handful of candidates lost the mark, usually because they confused the two *finés* referred to in the text, thus indicating perhaps that they did not fully comprehend *menor de edad*. **Question 3** was a two-mark question and most candidates answered the first part successfully but a good few did not score the second mark because they misunderstood *asistir* in this context meaning to attend, not to help as some candidates seemed to think. **Question 4** asked how the streets would be if the law achieved its goal. It was important, therefore, that the answer described the streets as *más limpias*, for example, but just *menos basura* was not accepted. A significant number of candidates missed the fact that a lack of *medios* was one of the problems holding the police back in **Question 5**. Most candidates understood that the risk of causing further disturbances was the second element to this question. **Question 6** proved to be not too challenging to the majority of candidates – the most common challenge, perhaps, being able to turn *irritación* into an adjective. This type of exercise can be demanding in places, but overall the Examiners found that the majority of candidates displayed a good understanding of the Spanish material and were able to write their answers with an appropriate standard of Spanish language.

**Reading Text 2** was about the inequality of opportunity to go to university between city dwellers and those who live in the countryside in Argentina. The material was generally understood by the candidates, who succeeded in answering the English questions set on the passage in a fluent, comprehensible way. In **Question 7** some candidates incorrectly translated *carrera universitaria* as university career. **Question 8** was generally answered well, though a few candidates who wrote that it was too expensive without referring to rent only scored one mark. **Question 9** was generally well understood by most candidates, but it was important that they wrote that the students studied from home for the second mark. Those who wrote work from home didn't score the mark as this was deemed to be too broad a meaning. Both marks were usually gained for **Question 10**, though some candidates wrote living costs, which, again, was not specific enough to gain a mark. **Question 11** targeted Nestor's tenacity and determination as the inspiration behind the establishment of the network of student residences, which most candidates understood, although this did prove to be a little more difficult for some candidates, possibly because the answer was a little spread out in the text. Finally, whilst a lot of candidates were able to understand that Nestor advised people never to be afraid of dreaming in **Question 12**, many struggled to successfully convey *no hay que cansarse de golpear puertas* by giving answers such as 'there is no need to tire yourself to break open doors' [sic].

**Reading Text 3** was a paragraph in English based on the material in Reading Text 2. Candidates had to translate this into Spanish. The previous text contained words and phrases that could help them, but some manipulation of language was required. For marking purposes, the text is divided into 30 boxes and these are each awarded one mark or zero. The total score is converted to a final mark out of 10. The correct information should be communicated and suitable and accurate alternative renderings are accepted. Slight spelling errors are disregarded, but not if the meaning of the word is altered. Most candidates performed reasonably well in this exercise this year. Although slight errors are permitted, the examiners point to several common errors. One particularly challenging section of the text for translation proved to be 'aims to increase'. Verb forms such as *quiere* and *desea* were accepted, but it seemed some candidates were too focused on finding an equivalent to aims (*meta\**[sic], *apunta\**) rather than thinking about the meaning. Most candidates realised that the section following required a present subjunctive. It was quite common for candidates to struggle rendering 'more than a thousand students'. *Más de un\* mil...* was surprisingly common. Many candidates had problems translating 'have registered', usually not realising the need for a reflexive in Spanish, as was also the case for the equivalent of 'will double' further down the text. A lot of candidates used the infinitive instead of the gerund in Spanish for 'continue to grow' (e.g. *sigan a crecer\** [sic]). Candidates are usually wise at spotting where a subjunctive is needed in Spanish, but a few missed it in the sentence 'When the new centre in Catamarca opens in January', a sentence which threw up another surprise – the relatively large number of candidates who didn't know the word for 'January' in Spanish!

### **Part II – Listening (30 marks)**

Candidates have control of their own individual listening equipment. They may stop, rewind and replay the recording at will, and they may make notes and write their answers at any point. There are three passages with a combined limit of 700 to 850 words. The first has listening comprehension questions in Spanish requiring answers in Spanish, whereas questions for the second passage are in English and require answers in English. Answers in the target language are not assessed for quality of language but for communication. Candidates then listen to a third recording of about 250 words and summarise it in English using bullet points for guidance (maximum of 100 words).

The extract for **Listening Text 1** was an interview with an expert on the development of Spanish in Latin America. The test is marked positively and the objective is to communicate the correct response, but not to reproduce the original text word for word. It is important for candidates to use their own words. Vocabulary items need to be understood but they should be conveyed in an answer that is a logical response to the question. Full sentences are not required in the answers but the correct information must be conveyed successfully. Accent errors are only penalised if they affect meaning and slight spelling errors are accepted if the word is recognisable, but not if the spelling error leads to another word. It would appear that candidates understood the material well and produced sound responses. Many candidates scored highly in this exercise, though one or two areas caused problems for some. In **Question 15**, for example, some candidates didn't catch that academics believed that indigenous languages had no influence in the development of Spanish in America. For **Question 18** it was important to answer the question precisely – that 37 per cent was the percentage of the first Spanish settlers who came from Seville or other parts of Andalucía. Some answers, albeit unintentionally, conveyed something different (e.g. *los primeros colonizadores eran de Sevilla o otras zonas de Andalucía* [sic]). The rest of this exercise proved to be fairly straight forward for most candidates.

**Listening Text 2** was a news report about efforts to improve the survival of the Iberian Lynx in Spain. Candidates appeared to understand the material well and produced some good, thoughtful answers.

**Question 21** required a precise answer. Answers such as 'the number of lynxes has increased' were not awarded the mark. In **Question 22** a significant number of candidates did not know the meaning of *conejos silvestres*. The shortage of rabbits was all that was required for the first mark – additions of words such as silver (for *silvestres*) were ignored. It is important to note that, in order to avoid penalising candidates twice for not understanding *conejos*, in **Question 25** any mistranslation of the word was ignored as long as the answers demonstrated how in 2013 the prey was reintroduced in the natural habitat of the lynx but now it is the other way around. In **Question 26**, a general concept of poaching or hunting was accepted as the third threat to the lynx. However, any incorrect specific answers (such as deer traps) were not accepted as the text referred to fox traps. A lot of candidates understood that the fact that the poachers hid something made it difficult to detect this threat, but they incorrectly thought that they hid the traps as opposed to the corpses of the lynxes. To score the mark for **Question 27**, it was important to specify what Manuela wanted people to donate to, i.e. her organisation.

**Listening Text 3** was a news item about Jhonattan Vegas, a professional golfer from Venezuela. The test required a summary of his life in no more than 100 words in English. There were four bullet points of information to be covered. The full gist of the passage needs to be understood, there has to be detail and it needs to be well selected. The material should be expressed concisely, read well and be informative. The 10 marks available are awarded positively according to these criteria. Length is important. A summary with fewer than 80 words is likely to be self-penalising, as all the above criteria are unlikely to be met. On the other hand, candidates should beware of writing over-long summaries. It should be stressed that the examiners operate a cut-off point and any material written beyond that point cannot be assessed, even if it is correct. Many candidates appeared to find the material accessible and there were some high marks awarded in this exercise. They appeared to be familiar with much of the vocabulary and concepts in the extract. Candidates were able to infer ideas and showed an ability to select key facts and to communicate this information concisely. Sometimes, however, candidates wrote in note form, only using isolated phrases that they had heard in the text without attempting to make sense of them in coherent statements. Although continuous English prose is not required to answer this test and bullet points are acceptable, they must contain enough information with logical links and coherent statements. Otherwise, the marks cannot be awarded. This year some common errors included writing that Jhonattan's father owned a golf course and marks were missed by missing details such as those underlined in the mark scheme. Sometimes, as some candidates set out their summary in bullet points, it was not clear to whom they were referring with sentences such as 'He closed a lot of golf courses' (Jhonattan or Chávez?). Generally, however, most candidates produced a suitable summary and gained good marks.

### Advice and Guidance to candidates

#### Listening and Reading Comprehension

##### What comprehension skills are required?

- The material for the texts may come from any of the Topic Areas in the Syllabus;
- the material could be factual or abstract;
- inference – you have to work out the answers;
- manipulation – you will be expected to manipulate the language;
- explanation – you will need to explain;
- synthesis – you may need to combine points of information;
- full information is always required – answers may be long;
- a high level of Quality of Language is expected – accuracy and sophistication are needed.

##### Answering Spanish questions set on the texts

- Remember that full sentences are not required. However, the full information asked for must be given;
- highlight the question words (*¿quién?*, *¿cómo?*, *¿cuándo?*, etc.), so that it is clear what information is needed;
- note how many marks are awarded for each question, so that no essential information is omitted;
- try to use your own words and do not reproduce the language of the texts word for word;
- practise building a wide Spanish vocabulary, so that you are at ease using synonyms for words in the texts;
- remember that your Spanish answers must make sense. If they do not, then there is something wrong.

### Answering English questions set on the texts

- Write your answers in good English and check your spelling;
- beware of 'false friends' (words that look alike in Spanish and English but have different meanings);
- realise that some Spanish words can often have two meanings; choose the correct one;
- find the appropriate English word, not necessarily one that looks similar to the Spanish word;
- make sure your whole answer sounds like real English and makes sense to someone reading it;
- make sure that you give the full information required; do not omit any essential information.

### Retranslation for Reading Task 3

- Study the Spanish stimulus passage in Reading Task 2 carefully: it gives vocabulary and structures to be used and re-worked;
- read the English passage and understand what is required;
- study the setting, context and tone of the extracts;
- use sensible and intelligent guesses where vocabulary is not known;
- never leave gaps;
- think carefully about the grammar of the sentence being translated; examiners regularly point to the failure of candidates to translate tenses correctly, to spot adjectival agreements and to link pronouns with the nouns to which they refer;
- beware of literal translation and poor/meaningless Spanish;
- beware paraphrasing – do not stray too far away from the original;
- but, on the other hand, do not be afraid to change word order, parts of speech, etc.;
- remember that accuracy is more important than creativity.

### Summary skills for Listening Text 3

#### What are summary skills?

- All the bullet points have been covered.
- The gist of the passage has been understood.
- There is detail and it is well selected.
- The material is expressed concisely.
- The material reads well and is informative.
- There is no incorrect information.

#### Advice on summary skills

Writing a good summary is a matter of regular practice and also of acquiring the correct technique. An unsuccessful attempt at a summary may be due to lack of understanding of the original text, but more often than not, it is the way the exercise has been tackled that is at fault.

- Listen to the passage until you have a good idea of what the whole text is about;
- do not start summarising (or even translating) every sentence; you will not be discarding the less significant details and you will quickly run out of words;
- make rough notes on the question paper; you are not likely to have time to write out a full version of the summary and then write out a clean copy;
- it is often not necessary to know the meaning of every word – don't panic if you don't understand something;
- remember this is a summary – be selective – you cannot include every bit of information;
- make sure that you cover all the bullet points;
- spread the words: it is a common error to say too much about the first half of a passage and too little (or nothing at all) about the last parts;
- 'prune' written summaries, removing unnecessary words without deleting the main points that you wish to convey;
- absolutely stick within the word limit – do not exceed 100 words;
- check the accuracy of everything you have written.

### The Quality of your Spanish Language

- Remember that essential Spanish grammar knowledge is required; you should aim for responding in accurate language;
- be confident in your use of all Spanish tenses, in particular the present, preterite, imperfect and conditional, both regular and irregular;
- be able to use tenses with all persons, not just the first person;
- be able to switch between the first and third persons with confidence, as this is often required in comprehension passages;
- use pronouns with confidence, in particular *le* and *se*, and be able to switch from first person to third person pronouns and adjectives with ease (e.g. *mi* to *su* and *mío* to *suyo*, etc.);
- use *gustar* and similar verbs properly in all tenses;
- be strict when applying the correct articles and adjectival endings (e.g. *un problema*, *cinco rosas rojas*, etc.);
- know when accents are important (e.g. *trabajo* or *trabajó?* *esta* or *ésta?*);
- be familiar with the subjunctive mood: know when and how to use it successfully;

# SPANISH (PRINCIPAL)

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Paper 9781/03  
Writing and Usage

## Key messages

In Paper 3 candidates are expected to express an opinion on the topic of the essay title they have chosen, demonstrating general knowledge of the topic. Candidates need to think carefully about the key words in each essay title and choose one on which they have an opinion which they are able to justify using examples and a wide range of vocabulary. They need to ensure that their response is fully relevant. Candidates also need to show an understanding of how grammatical structures are applied accurately.

## General comments

In order to perform well in **Part I**, candidates need to go beyond the merely descriptive and should express personal views supported by real life examples. It is for this reason that the advice given is to choose an essay on a subject about which the candidate has an opinion they can justify. Most candidates were well prepared and had something interesting to say about their chosen topic; however, some examples were more credible than others.

Overall, handwriting was clear and answers were well organised into paragraphs. However, there were some candidates whose presentation was untidy, often making their answers difficult to read. Candidates need to be aware that untidy or bad handwriting can get in the way of comprehension and that examiners cannot reward what they cannot read.

Many candidates have drafted or planned their essays, which is very commendable and it is a great tool to use. It is advisable that students cross-out draft material so examiners know for certain where the essay starts.

A number of candidates wrote over-long essays (in excess of 1000 words in some cases). This usually resulted in a lot of repetition or superfluous information that did not add to the quality of the answer and, in some cases, detracted from it.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Part 1 Discursive Essay**

- (a) This was the most popular title in this series. Most candidates tackled the subject of the *redes sociales* well, giving good, sometimes personal, examples of the use of the new technology as a communication tool. The overwhelming majority of answers showed a thorough understanding of the topic and displayed an ability to reference real life situations to back up their arguments – President Trump's use of Twitter was the most common example given.

Some candidates focused on social networks in general but didn't link their ideas to the concept of journalism. Others put the internet, news web pages, blogs and social networks in the same basket, blurring the division between these and confusing the different concepts and ideas.

- (b) This title was answered by a relatively small number of candidates and was not usually dealt with thoroughly. Some candidates haven't found it easy to say something of substance on this topic and have identified the *Código de vestir* merely with gender inequality in the place of work, presenting vague and stereotypical concepts about gender roles and wealth with no examples to support their argument. Some candidates drifted a little from the question by writing about the school uniform.



- (c) This was a very popular choice. There were some very convincing essays, in which candidates displayed good understanding of the topic and range of approaches to the question, often using their personal experiences to support their arguments. A minority of the candidates seemed to want to convince the examiners of why we all should have a dog in our lives, instead of analysing the bigger picture: the impact of dogs in people's lives.
- (d) This was the least popular choice. However, there were some very good answers with candidates able to draw on their own experiences of having tattoos and also showing a good knowledge of the meaning of tattoos in western society nowadays. The best answers recognised the importance of tattoos in the different cultures in the world all through history.
- (e) This was a very popular question which produced essay of impressive quality with many relevant examples incorporated. Some of the essays become somewhat repetitive because of the narrow range of vocabulary used. It is very difficult to write about the armed forces when one lacks such basic vocabulary as *soldado*, *armada* or even *militar*.

## Part II: Usage

### Exercise 1, Questions 2–6

Candidates coped well with this exercise. In general, the questions that candidates found more challenging were **Questions 5** and **6**, where the pluperfect indicative and subjunctive were tested. Some candidates also had difficulty with **Question 2**, which tested the present tense of a radical changing verb.

This exercise is a good example of the importance of accents, as marks were missed both for overusing them and missing them: e.g. '*bajara*' (no accent) or '*habría*' (accent).

### Exercise 2, Questions 7–11

Candidates performed well in this exercise. However, for some candidates it proved somewhat demanding in terms of the language manipulation needed. **Question 10** in particular seemed to be challenging, as the word 'madre' was not always recognised as feminine and some wrote 'cuyo' instead of 'cuya'.

### Exercise 3, Questions 12–31

Many candidates scored highly in this exercise. The most challenging item proved to be (25) where many candidates didn't recognise 'honorarios'. For item (31) a number of students chose 'en contra de' rather than the correct 'a favor de'.

# SPANISH (PRINCIPAL)

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Paper 9781/04  
Topics and Texts

## Key messages

To achieve high marks for content a focused, wholly relevant and analytical response to the question is required. Essays should keep to the recommended length of 350–500 words for **Part I** and 450–600 words for **Part II**.

## General comments

This year's candidates answered questions on six of the eight Texts and four of the five Topics. As in previous years, most candidates showed true engagement with the works they had studied, demonstrating a sound knowledge of themes and devices, and showing the ability to make critical judgements.

The best essays were thoroughly and logically planned, made deliberate and specific reference to the terminology in the question and used quotations to justify the argument. In less successful essays, candidates lapsed into narrative and did not target the terms of the question with sufficient precision. Last year's Report noted the arbitrary use of quotations, which was seen again in a number of instances. Quotations should be selected carefully, analysed thoroughly, and used to justify the candidate's argument, rather than, for example, used simply to finish a sentence.

Candidates showed a thorough understanding of the works that they studied, as well as their broader contexts. Whilst many candidates had developed their own personal opinions and interpretations, and selected references accordingly, leading to convincing and interesting arguments, candidates from a few centres demonstrated an overreliance on pre-learnt material, which occasionally rendered essays less convincing. This included selecting quotations that did not fit the specific context of the question, and in some cases, whole generic introductory paragraphs that did not reference the question. Centres should encourage candidates to form their own opinions, develop their own individual phraseology, and to be flexible and selective in their references.

Many candidates also referenced critical reading. This was most effective when used to lend further weight to the argument. In a few cases, overuse of critical references detracted from the candidates' arguments.

The most effective and convincing essays were also structured using shorter, sharp paragraphs. This is something that centres should encourage to ensure that rambling sentences do not detract from the clarity of the ideas being expressed.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Part I: Topics**

The range and sophistication of vocabulary employed was generally very impressive. Candidates were also confident in identifying specific literary and cinematographic techniques in the target language. However, the effect of such techniques and the impact on the reader or audience should also be explored.

The candidates who scored the highest marks for language were able to use complex sentence patterns, including subjunctive phrases specifically manipulated to fit the context, object pronouns, prepositions, relative pronouns and the impersonal *se*. When done correctly and consistently this showed a true sense of idiom. Stumbling blocks included *gustar* in more complex forms, the personal 'a', and use of the passive. A few candidates also had difficulty with the verb *mostrar*, as well as *ser* and *estar*.

### Question 1 – La Argentina del Siglo 21

### Question 2 – La Mujer en el Mundo Hispano

- (a) This question was done well on the whole. There was a little confusion between *soledad* and *solidaridad* in a limited number of cases. Some candidates dealt with one of the works and then another separately. This minimised opportunities for comparison and so some of these candidates were not able to demonstrate a full understanding of comparative issues.

### Question 3 – El Cine de Pedro Almodóvar

Most candidates referred to two of the films. Those who chose to reference all three did not necessarily sustain the same depth of analysis, although a few candidates did manage to do so.

- (a) This was a very popular question among candidates who generally grappled adequately with the question. The most successful candidates gave some definition of the *universo femenino*, and organised the material intelligently by looking at various aspects (such as motherhood, solidarity, resilience), going beyond a description. The least successful candidates failed to analyse the *universo femenino*, talking loosely about some of the women in the films, and some students included irrelevant material or spent too much time on details regarding Almodóvar's life. The role of men and the machista culture needed to be put into the context of presenting challenges for the women to overcome. Students should also be wary when expressing views on Franco's regime. One candidate went as far as to blame Franco for Julieta's pregnancy. In dealing with the *universo femenino*, some students tended to focus almost exclusively on Raimunda and Manuela, with scope for greater consideration of Agustina in *Volver*, for example, and Huma Rojo in *Todo sobre mi madre*.

Candidates should take care to ensure that quotations are accurate and that they are not taken out of context.

- (b) Detailed knowledge of the films paid dividends here, and a number of students dealt impressively with this question. It was clear that they had made use of supplementary material during the course of their studies to really grasp the use and significance of visual effects in the film.

Many candidates talked intelligently about Almodóvar's colour coding, unusual camera angles, shots in slow motion, 'kitsch' décor, and sequencing. The best candidates make the link with Almodóvar's objective of encouraging us to reconsider common perceptions.

### Question 4 – América Latina

Most responses focused on *Diarios de motocicleta* and *También la lluvia*, with relatively few candidates talking about Neruda.

- (a)
- (b) A number of candidates wrote about forms of oppression rather than, as the question required, the portrayal of oppressors. Some identified money, society or lack of opportunity as oppressive forces, without identifying the agents behind them. Others overlooked the medical care and sustenance offered at the leper colony and instead condemned the medics as oppressors because of the rule about wearing gloves when treating patients, without referencing the segregation that this symbolised. Likewise, the multinationals' provision of employment (albeit at low wage rates) was eclipsed for most candidates by the inhumane manner of the Anaconda foreman. Recognising these ambivalent portrayals of oppressors was often the mark of a high-scoring answer. Few candidates remarked that the nuns/water company staff/Bolivian security forces are mestizos or *indígenas*. The best answers were able to identify many of the factors and entities responsible for oppression and to contextualise many major issues within the general framework of colonialism and its accompanying ills, including the central factor of dispossession with relation to the land and capitalism.

### Question 5 – Serrat y Sabina

- (a) The best answers here referenced both the way that the culture of the Hispanic world shaped the work of Serrat and Sabina, and the way that, in turn, their work impacted upon Hispanic culture. Some successful candidates, for example, analysed Serrat's use of the poetry of Machado and Hernández within his songs, whilst looking also at how Sabina became a voice of consolation for many Spanish American communities, talking of pain and rejection, as well as offering support for liberal movements. Many candidates also referenced the relationship between these artists and their audiences across Latin America as depicted in *El símbolo y el cuate*.

### Part II: Texts

Candidates answered confidently on the texts. Few candidates attempted commentaries this year. Among those who did, the most successful attempts demonstrated thorough analysis of the text whilst also commenting on how themes, devices and characters within the extract are portrayed more broadly. However, the prime focus must always be on the extract itself. Some of the less successful commentaries made little reference to the extract itself, or simply used the text as a springboard to focus on broader themes.

### Question 6 – Lazarillo de Tormes

- (a)
- (b) This question was well answered on the whole. Some candidates attempted the question without sufficient knowledge of what the seven deadly sins entail. However, they employed the knowledge that they had wisely and managed to present solid responses addressing some of the deadly sins. Many candidates spoke confidently about the greed of the cleric, the pride of the squire and the lust of the Archpriest. Interestingly, there was comparatively little analysis presented on the pardoner, and assertions about the greed of the blind man were less convincing.
- (c) This question proved challenging to some candidates who sought to employ a simple 'for and against' structure, when a more nuanced approach might have been advisable. The slap stick comedy, for example, does not mask the sadness and tragedy of the cruelty that Lazarillo suffered as a child, and similarly, the humour surrounding the squire is borne out of from his own misfortune. Many candidates successfully identified irony as the central source of humour in the text, although fewer identified the narrative style and the use of language as contributing to the humorous episodes in the novel.

### Question 7 – Bodas de Sangre

- (a) A handful of candidates attempted this commentary. The most successful efforts made detailed comments on the passage and linked it convincingly to other parts of the play. The less successful attempts made lapsed into description. Remarkably few candidates commented on the Madre's hesitation when she tells her son to follow the Novia. Some candidates did a good job of addressing language, although others did not really know what to say and made irrelevant comments.
- (b) This question was a very popular choice and was generally tackled with a good degree of success, with many students able to contextualise their responses within the rigid gender roles of 1930s Spanish society. There were some very good, nuanced analysis of the Madre, the Novio and the Novia, with fewer candidates referring to the Mujer and the Suegra when treating the female role. A small number of candidates addressed only one of the gender roles, and occasional simplistic assertions that Lorca addressed gender or presented certain themes because of his homosexuality were unconvincing.
- (c) There were quite a few impressive responses to this question with some students showing parallels between elements of Greek tragedy and aspects of Lorca's work, as well as linking this theme to Lorca's broader critique of Spanish society. Some candidates made a little too much of the Lullaby and over interpreted the fact that the horse is Leonardo – the horse does not want to drink, to drink is to live and therefore this is a premonition of Leonardo's death. Not everyone identified the Mendiga as Death personified (even though it says so in the play).

### Question 8 – Las ataduras

- (a)
- (b) This question required a very good and profound understanding of the psychology of the novel and the suffocating love of the father for Alina. There were a few outstandingly balanced and mature responses to this question. The most successful candidates not only focused on presenting their views on whether or not the comment was justified, but also were able to consider both the context in which the comment was made and to a certain extent, the reason(s) why Phillipe made this comment.
- (c) This was the most popular question on *Las ataduras* and was generally dealt with in an **admirable manner**. Many candidates referenced the fact that in a way alienation is the opposite of *ataaduras*, although both bonds (familiar, amorous, etc.) and loneliness or solitude are problematised in the novel. Candidates spoke very well of Alina's alienation in Spain and in Paris, with regard to her husband and her father. The best essays went further and analysed **the significance and impact of the day when Eloy announced his departure and Santiago died, and a number of successful candidates explored the alienation in the lives of other characters like Eloy, as well as the alienation of Benjamín, as his role as a father becomes obsolete**. Candidates were, on the whole, able to explain their points, back up their statements and give examples.

### Question 10 – Borges

- (a)
- (b) The challenge in this question lay in that there are six stories to choose from, each with its own plots and peculiarities. The best essays looked at a variety of stories and identified various forms of conflict: our meta conflict when we need to decide what is real, conflicts that transcend good versus evil, and violent, physical conflict. Many candidates brought in references to critical reading, but they should ensure that they do not over-cite from critical sources, as on occasions, this hampered the flow of their argument. That said, those candidates who were able to select their references carefully and present a clear, structured argument did very well here.
- (c) In this question candidates were able to identify a range of stylistic features, including use of direct speech, distortion of time and space, concision of narrative and alternative realities in which supernatural forces are in effect. A number of candidates referred to labyrinths, although the most successful candidates were able to place this in the context of mysterious imagery present across all of the selected stories. The most convincing essays went on to discuss why Borges employs such stylistic features and the impact they have.

### Question 11 – Soldados de Salamina

- (c) This was a very popular option and **there was a rich assortment of responses with candidates engaging with the different perspectives presented in the work on what constitutes a hero, and a number of candidates reaching the interesting conclusion that Cercas was indeed the hero in the work**. Whilst some candidates assumed that Miralles was the Republican soldier, the most successful candidates took a more nuanced stance, explaining how Cercas wants Miralles to be the Republican soldier so that he can find a hero to the story he is constructing. The most successful candidates also commented on Mazas' **latter years when assessing his suitability as the hero of the work**.

### Question 12 – Del amor y otros demonios

- (c) This was a popular question among candidates who studied García Márquez. Many candidates identified the weakness of the aristocracy, the injustice born out of a rigid class structure based on race, and the authoritarian power of the Catholic Church. Successful essays also linked these to the plight of Sierva María, as well as Dr Abrenuncio.