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Examiners' Report

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AS Spanish: UNIT 1 (6811) - LISTENING AND WRITING (1 hour; AS 30%, AL 15%)

Candidates are required to listen to authentic recorded target-language material and to retrieve and convey information given in the recorded material by responding to a range of mainly target-language questions, and by producing a guided summary in English requiring transfer of meaning from the target language. The questions elicit non-verbal responses, target-language answers, and two personal responses in Spanish of 30-40 words each. Candidates have individual control of the recording: they may stop, rewind and replay the recording at will, and they may make notes and write their answers at any point. Dictionaries are not permitted in the examination.

Assessment Principles

Candidates' performance is assessed positively: up to 26 marks are awarded according to a specific mark scheme, for correct information successfully retrieved and conveyed in response to target-language questions. Superfluous information, information not contained in the recorded material and self-contradictory combinations of correct and incorrect information do not gain credit. Up to 8 marks are awarded, according to the published grids, for the content and quality of language for each of the two personal responses written in Spanish. Up to 8 marks are awarded, according to a specific mark scheme, for a guided English summary exercise.

Candidates' Responses

In general, the candidates' answers reflected a positive response to the Listening and Writing test. It was pleasing to see such a good performance. Centres had clearly prepared candidates well and most scripts reflected an appropriate level of competence and knowledge. The majority of candidates were able to finish the paper within the allotted time and there were few examples of unfinished scripts.

Extract 1 was a radio advertisement for a CD collection, with a True/False/Not in the Text exercise. Few candidates scored low marks here but statement (c) was sometimes believed to be true, rather than false.

Extract 2 involved a radio item about tourism in Galicia, with two exercises set. The first required the insertion of the correct missing words. Whilst several candidates scored well in this exercise, others had difficulty in identifying the words: *oriente* was often heard as *oyente*, *se ubica* was spelt in a variety of ways, and *cumbres* and *litoral* were often not identified. The second exercise involved matching sentence halves. Most candidates scored well on this exercise, with any confusion occurring between 1 and 7, and 5 and 9. But, generally, this exercise produced high scores.

Extract 3, the interview with Marta, a young Spaniard who explains how hard she had found it to give up smoking, had two exercises set on it, with a total of 28 marks. The first exercise, involving straightforward Spanish questions to be answered in Spanish, was generally well done. It was pleasing to see candidates perform so well in this type of exercise. The test is marked positively and the objective is to communicate the correct response, but not to reproduce the original text word for word. All the relevant information must be given but candidates are not required to

answer in full sentences. The Examiners only mark what is correct. All irrelevant and superfluous information is disregarded, unless it adversely affects the correct target information. Nevertheless, there was evidence of many weaker candidates attempting to transcribe the material without really understanding it.

For (a), most candidates gave a correct answer, although some failed to change the verb from the first person *estuve* to the third person *estuvo*. There was evidence of transcribing without comprehension, as in the example *despues de starvarious dias en coma con gripa es infumar*. A variety of responses were accepted as correct for (b) and most candidates scored well on this question. However, there was a wide variety of spellings of *psicológicamente*, *olfato* was sometimes understood as *su fato* or *sulfato*, there was confusion between *sentirse* and *sentarse*, and the expression *se nota en el bolsillo* was mis-heard by some as *se notan el bolsillo* or *se notó el bolsillo*. Most candidates understood the material for question (c), although the worst evidence of transcribing without comprehension was noticed here, as with one candidate who wrote *habeces a llegado a combatirse en una obsesion ademas de los primeros meses imberti mucho dinero en caramelos para equitarme la anidad*. Most candidates scored well on (d), although occasionally a double negative was introduced that invalidated the answer, eg. *hay menos personas de mi entorno que no fuman*. In question (e) there was occasional confusion between *el humo* and *el humor* and some candidates were not at ease applying the pronoun "le" and used "se" instead, thus saying *se molesta el humo*, rather than *le molesta*. Questions (f) and (g) were generally understood and answered correctly, but (h) produced problems with some candidates who did not understand that the warnings were on the *cajetillas* (cigarette packets), but heard a variety of alternative places, such as *cafeterías*, *carreteras*, *cartillas*, etc.

The second exercise, requiring candidates to write personal responses to the questions arising from the listening extract, produced a wide range of answers. The topic was clearly popular with candidates, who found plenty to say about smoking. For (a), most candidates gave an explanation of the difficulty of giving up smoking and included references to Marta's experiences, addiction, obsession, etc. For (b), whilst most candidates understood the demands of the question, some misunderstood *el derecho de fumar en lugares públicos* as *la ley que prohíbe fumar en lugares públicos*. This confusion led them to start their answer with *Creo que es una buena idea* but then to go on to contradict that statement by giving reasons why people should not smoke in public places. In general, however, both exercises gave candidates an opportunity to express personal views and many did so with a wide range of appropriate lexis, such as *el fumar pasivo*, *cáncer del pulmón*, etc. although weaker candidates had difficulty with some basic vocabulary, writing *el humo* as *el fumo* and not able to use parts of the verb *oler*. The extracts also enabled many candidates to demonstrate a good use of the subjunctive mood, which they did successfully, although a few candidates tried to use the subjunctive after expressions such as *creo que* and *pienso que*, which do not require it.

The two personal responses are worth 16 out of the total 50 marks for the paper. It is essential, therefore, that candidates should understand what is required of them. The Examiners seek a personal response, giving opinions and with some reference to the stimulus material that has been heard. On the other hand, material that is simply transcribed from the text will not gain marks. The first question will usually make a direct reference back to the stimulus text and the second question will generally be more open-ended. Candidates are also advised to use their own words and not fill the response with pre-learned set phrases.

Extract 4, an interview with a young Spanish fireman, required candidates to produce a guided English summary within a limit of 60 words. Specific information is required, as is full information. Many candidates lost marks for the sloppiness of their English expression, rather than for the lack of comprehending the Spanish material. In (a) “a psychological test” led to a variety of weak spellings, whilst many candidates heard “ecological test”. The “technical specialisation” was often written as a “special technique” and the Examiners were surprised at the number of candidates who misunderstood the technical jobs required, writing “conductors” for *conductores* and “soldiers” for *soldadores*, etc. Question (b) required details of two of the physical effects felt by the firemen and, whilst there was some evidence of guessing the answer, such as “smoke gets in your eyes”, most candidates identified the effects correctly, but were often not able to spell them in English, as with “dehydration” and “disorientation”. The importance of the hosepipe in question (c) was that it was their only connection/link with the outside, but several candidates wrote a stilted answer that did not properly convey the Spanish original into common English, eg. “the unique union with the exterior”, whereas others just guessed the answer, as with “it enables the fireman to have a drink of mineral water while they are in the fire”. For (d) many candidates confused *no tenía la casa asegurada* as meaning “safe” or “secure”, rather than “insured”. Virtually all candidates understood question (e) and scored the mark here. Nevertheless, the Examiners were pleased to see an improved performance than previous years with this exercise and many candidates scored high marks.

Advice and Guidance

There were some very good performances in this Listening and Writing unit. Nevertheless, several points of guidance could be made to enable centres to improve candidates' performance.

- Use of Spanish. Candidates should practise searching for Spanish synonyms and expressing answers in their own words. Transcribing information from the text (often without understanding) should be discouraged. It is also necessary to stress that correct Spanish grammar must be used in the answers. This year, there appeared to be an increasing carelessness in the use of accents and a surprising number of candidates failed to distinguish between the pronouns *le* and *se*. At AS level, candidates must always be able to use present, preterite and imperfect verb forms correctly.
- Spanish vocabulary and spelling. Dictionaries are not allowed in this examination, so it is essential that candidates should build up their vocabulary knowledge during their preparation, ensuring that they have covered the relevant sections in the General Topic Areas. Basic spelling rules must be adhered to and should be practised.
- Knowledge of Spain. The Assessment Objectives for this Unit no longer require candidates to include an awareness of the target-language country/countries while writing their personal responses. Nevertheless, the Listening passages will all be taken from authentic sources, so it is still essential that candidates have a general knowledge of Spanish geography, life and culture.
- General listening skills. Candidates are encouraged to practise listening to authentic Spanish recordings in preparation for this examination and to consider Spanish speech patterns. This could help avoid such errors as writing *estar varios* as a single invented word *starvarious*, *mi entorno* as *mientorno* and *se nota en el bolsillo* as *sinotan bolsillo*.

- Word limits. The two personal responses to Texto 3 and the guided summary for Texto 4 have word limits. Credit cannot be given for material that appears beyond the stated length. Conciseness in answering questions is important. For example, it is not necessary to repeat the question when formulating an answer.
- Time management. Candidates have control over their cassettes: they may stop, rewind and replay at will. But they should be trained to use the time sensibly. Most candidates finished the examination in the allotted time, but some rushed the last question and did not do it full justice.
- Tidiness of presentation. This year this Unit was marked on-line, with the candidates' scripts scanned into the computer system. There were problems with the occasional use of pencil and of scripts where the candidate had first written in pencil and had then written over in ink, leaving the answers illegible. All candidates are encouraged to present their work as tidily as possible, to write their answers in the designated spaces and, in particular, to take care that the Examiners can read the difference between the vowels a, e and o.

AS Spanish: UNIT 2 (6812) - READING AND WRITING

Candidates are required to read authentic printed Spanish material and to retrieve and convey information given in the material by responding to a range of mainly Spanish questions. In the last question, they are required to write 140 - 160 words in Spanish (letter, report or article) based on a short printed Spanish stimulus and involving the development of specific points from Spanish instructions.

Assessment principles

Up to 40 marks are awarded positively for correct information, successfully retrieved and conveyed in response to the Spanish and English questions. The quality of language is only an assessment factor in so far as it impedes communication. Superfluous information, information not contained in the stimulus information and self-contradictory combinations of correct and incorrect information cannot gain credit. The last question requiring an answer of 140 -160 words of Spanish is marked positively out of 40 using the grids printed in the syllabus.

Candidates' responses

Text 1. Q1.

A text about the new system of payment for taxis from Barajas into Madrid was generally well understood and many candidates scored 3 or 4 marks. (d), possibly through the application of common sense rather than close study of the text, and (f), despite the double clues of 'antes de iniciar el viaje' and 'prepago' were the commonest wrong answers. Surprisingly some candidates give only 3 possible responses, thus throwing away a mark.

Text 2. Q2.

A text about the modern trend of Spanish twenty - thirty year olds continuing to live at home was generally well received. This question did however begin to sort out the weaker candidates who were sometimes unable to identify which type of word was needed to complete the sense of the sentences. In (a) 'gran' was a common wrong answer and oddly in (f) several candidates correctly identified 'reciban' but failed to realise the subjunctive was still needed for the second verb and chose 'es'. This type of exercise, where candidates have to manipulate language to explain the meaning of a text, is a useful and straightforward way of improving comprehension skills at the same time as improving written accuracy and can be applied to texts of all types and difficulties.

Text 2. Q3.

Candidates were required to find synonyms in the passage for 6 words. Candidates are increasingly at ease with this type of question, but weaker candidates still too often fail to look for a similar word and so provide verbs as the response to a noun and other such mismatches. They should also remember that items come in order within the text and so this is, or should be, a further guide to the correct answer. (e) and (f) presented the biggest problems with 'mejorar' or 'conseguir' and 'a la hora de' being common wrong answers. Candidates must remember they are only required to give the equivalent word or phrase, and extra words are likely to invalidate the answer. In both these questions candidates are being asked to copy the correct answer from the written text, once they have identified it. Spelling mistakes are

therefore extremely careless and perhaps reflect the casual approach to linguistic accuracy among some candidates.

Text 3. Q4.

This was an article about a young Spaniard who has suffered from chronic insomnia for some years, but has learned to live with and even profit from his problem. Candidates have to respond to a series of factual questions in Spanish based chronologically on the text. Often this requires quite simple manipulation of verb forms, something which still proves to be beyond the scope of weaker candidates. Candidates are also expected to give precise answers and so in (b) 'tiene tiempo para hacer muchas cosas' is too vague to gain the mark. Some questions, like (c), require careful reading of the question and an answer that shows understanding of the text. Weaker candidates missed the idea of 'successful diagnosis' and simply responded 'es insomnio (crónico)'. Positive and negative answers were acceptable and candidates found many acceptable ways of scoring the mark. In (d) 'desde cuando' still leads to confusion. (e) although well answered by many sometimes only picked up one mark because there was no mention of the money they gave him and on occasions he or they were researching/studying his illness/problem. Nor was it acceptable to say he was given a job in the University. (f) and (g) were the questions that highlighted the discomfort of some candidates when handling pronouns. 'Gustar' is a perennial problem but candidates often mix up object and reflexive pronouns, thus destroying or confusing the sense of their answer. In (f) the idea of making him more tired was missed by some, who either said he was less tired or were imprecise with ideas like very tired. (h) had several possible answers and candidates were often able to correctly identify 2 of these to gain the marks.

Although not all the mistakes highlighted above denied comprehension marks, it is worrying that there are so many basic errors, bearing in mind they have to provide original language in Question 5. More consolidation of basics would improve marks greatly. At the other end of the scale, there were an encouraging number of candidates who answered fully and in accurate Spanish.

Text 4. Q5.

This question required English answers to questions on a passage about the increase of ethnic restaurants and staff in Barcelona. In general this question appeared to produce higher marks than in the past, possibly because candidates are reading the questions more carefully and answering them more precisely. The poor quality of English expression continues to be a severe handicap to some candidates. In question (f) for example answers like 'to improve the formation of the large number of immigrants who look for a professional exit' could not be accepted. (a) was generally well answered, either targeting the variety of tastes/flavours/food or the increase in ethnic restaurants. References to culture and people however missed the point. The answer to (b) produced a wide variety of wrong, often quite complicated answers, although not surprisingly the majority scored the mark. Some failed to highlight the link between the increase in immigrant staff/businesses and a high level of service. Others thought the challenge was to recruit more Spanish staff, or to improve the service available. (d) was generally well answered though some talked about longer hours for less pay and a few missed the idea of pay. Occasionally candidates failed to be precise enough with 'días festivos' and simply talked about working during their holidays. (e) again was often well answered although some candidates talked about working in the kitchen as opposed to being a chef. Apparently for some being a waiter is depressing. (f) proved to be the biggest challenge with 'formación' and 'salida profesional' being the main stumbling blocks.

Some also failed to specify jobs related to service in restaurants were the ones needing to be dignified.

Text 5. Q6.

Candidates were asked to respond to a stimulus about the violence of today's television programmes. As usual there were 4 bullet point to address and develop as the candidates saw fit. Candidates are reminded that this is a Reading and Writing paper and so information in the stimulus and instructions should be incorporated where relevant, for example you saw the programme last night and you were writing to a friend. Many candidates entered enthusiastically into descriptions of violence in programmes like The Bill, various soaps and films like Kill Bill. Others sadly only mentioned the violence without giving details. It was sad to see so many candidates unable to correctly use 'vi' which too often was rendered as 'viste/visto', thus at best confusing the message. The descriptions of violent moments sometimes fell short because of vocabulary confusion: people lying in pools of 'sangría' on 'carpetas' having been murdered with 'espaldas'. Another vocabulary confusion was the random use of 'violencia/violento/violente'. Most candidates were able to give a personal reaction to the programme, although grammatical inaccuracy often proved a handicap. Virtually all candidates were able to give their thoughts on whether there is too much violence and what should be done about it. For some there was no problem, violence is a part of life so we should be exposed to it on TV - perfectly acceptable as a response as long as the Spanish could cope. Good candidates came up with imaginative solutions like special pay per view violence channels or child protected channels and so on.

Sadly some able candidates still lose marks by writing way beyond the word limit. It is not necessary to fill up all the available space, part of the skill is writing to a word limit. Teachers should make sure candidates are clear how long 140-160 words is and practise this length of essay in preparation for the exam. There was a feeling among some examiners that the general level of language was weaker than in the past in this question. Apart from the problems previously highlighted verb forms in general, use of ser/estar/haber, confusion of poner/poder, 'tanto' rendered as tan mucho and failure to make adjectives agree were common failings. Some candidates are clearly armed with complex subjunctive phrases to insert at some suitable point, but these sadly lose their effect when surrounded by gibberish. A sound command of basic grammar is the main requirement.

Advice and guidance

All candidates should be familiar with instructions for answering the different types of questions. It is advisable for them to have seen past papers to make sure they understand fully what is required.

Basic grammar mistakes still cause many candidates major problems. It is recommended that candidates are able to use “gustar” and the preterite tense, and make adjectives agree successfully, as a bare minimum for AS. If they can then master subjunctive constructions, compound tenses and other colloquial usage, this will be of great benefit to them.

Candidates need to be familiar with a variety of writing registers and should target their reading to this end. Equally, when they practise writing they should be encouraged to write factually about events and to offer their own views and opinions on the issues raised, within clearly defined word limits. It would also be helpful to examiners that where candidates cross out large parts of their work they produce a fair copy to be marked which is easily accessible to the examiner.

AS Spanish: UNIT 3 (6813) - PREPARED ORAL TOPIC (10-12 MINUTES; AS 30% A 15%)

Candidates are required to present and to discuss with the examiner for 10 to 12 minutes a topic of their choice related to Spain, or a Spanish-speaking country or community. In the course of the discussion they must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of contemporary society or the cultural heritage of the relevant country or community.

Assessment Principles

The test is assessed positively out of 60 using the grid printed in the Specification: Quality of Language 20 marks, Response 20 marks, Knowledge and Understanding 20 marks.

Candidates' Responses

Most of the candidates showed a good understanding of the requirements for this unit. They had researched their topics well and had sufficient information and ideas to deal confidently with the questions posed by the examiner. In the majority of cases the performance was highly satisfactory, and there were some excellent presentations.

The range of topics presented, associated with Hispanic life, culture and history, was fairly wide. A few candidates opted for popular topics such as Bullfighting, Flamenco, Immigration and the Position of Women in Spain. However it was gratifying to note that there is an increasing tendency for candidates to choose areas in which they have expertise and a strong personal interest. For example, musicians spoke knowledgeably and sensitively about Spanish composers; students of Art demonstrated appreciation of Spanish painters.

Some problems involving the choice of topic presented themselves. There were some that were too large to be dealt with effectively and in some depth in ten to twelve minutes, for example, *Colombia*. Others were rather general and nebulous, such as "*la familia en España*", "*las preocupaciones de los jóvenes españoles*", "*el deporte en España*", and "*la moda*." Candidates usually performed better when they had limited the scope of the topic.

There were many presentations concerning tourism in various parts of the Spanish-speaking world. Candidates should be reminded that they are expected to give evidence that thorough research of the topic has been done. Personal experience alone is not likely to gain high marks.

A few candidates presented topics related to pre-Hispanic civilisations, such as the Aztecs, the Incas or the Mayas. Although some were able to establish their relevance by examining their legacy in contemporary Latin-America, others restricted themselves to examining a period before Spanish was spoken in the continent. Such topics fell outside the scope of the Specification and were considered irrelevant.

There were some cases in which the discussion moved into consideration of a particular phenomenon in Britain or in other non-Spanish speaking countries. All such material was considered irrelevant. Oral forms, too, were sometimes misused and included prompts such as factual information, statistics, beginnings of sentences and even whole sentences.

Centres are reminded that candidates cannot be rewarded for language or information that is read from the oral form.

The majority of candidates had prepared their topics very thoroughly. Examiners found evidence of thorough research, using a variety of sources, for example books, magazines, films, television, newspapers, the Internet, surveys and personal experience. Candidates who demonstrated detailed and extensive factual knowledge, combined with clear analysis and well-founded opinion achieved very high marks.

When the topics had been thoroughly prepared, the candidates were able to approach the test with confidence and to respond readily and fluently to the questions asked. They were able to develop their replies, without too much reliance on the prompting of the examiner. Good candidates took advantage of the two-minute introduction to provide an outline of the topic and to set the framework within which the subsequent discussion would take place. In most cases the introduction was of the correct length. But some candidates had clearly learnt it by heart and recited it with little attention to appropriate phrasing, intonation and pronunciation. This approach should not be encouraged.

Those candidates who clearly knew more about the chosen subject than they were able to deliver in the time available were usually very successful, in that they were able to deal fully and confidently with any aspect of the topic that was selected by the examiner.

It is necessary again to remind teacher examiners that the candidates are rewarded for their ability to engage in a natural conversation. If an attempt is made to recite pre-learned material, the candidate should be interrupted and diverted into a more spontaneous mode. A few cases were encountered where the whole test had clearly been pre-prepared, and the examiner and the candidate were delivering a memorised script. On these occasions the lack of spontaneity was reflected in the application of the mark scheme and the candidates received low marks for response. Every opportunity must be given to the candidates to display their ability to talk naturally and fluently about a subject that they know well, but in a situation where the exact questions had not been predicted. Over preparation is counter-productive and detrimental to the candidate.

Most of the candidates could communicate in Spanish with sufficient fluency and accuracy to sustain the discussion. The level of language, however, was very variable and was sometimes rather basic and more akin to what is expected at GCSE. But many possessed a range of vocabulary that was appropriate for their purposes and sufficient linguistic structures to enable them to present the material they had prepared. It was noted, however, that the use of the subjunctive and of the passive appeared unfamiliar to a large number of students at this level.

The incidence of basic error was unfortunately rather high for a significant number of candidates and as a result communication was sometimes seriously impaired.

Faulty stress was particularly common. It often occurred with nouns ending in *ía*; when using the third person preterite, which was frequently pronounced as the first person present; and when using the future tense. It was quite surprising to note that some candidates even misplaced the stress on the names of the individuals who were the subjects of the presentation, *Gaudí*, *Dalí* and *Almodóvar*.

Genders and adjectival agreements caused problems, even with some very familiar words. Wrong verb endings were common in all tenses. *Fui* and *fue* were frequently confused. Many candidates still fail to distinguish between *ser*, *estar* and *haber*. The correct use of *gustar*, even in its simpler forms created problems.

It was noticeable that some candidates who could use complex subjunctive clauses with ease were found wanting in certain basic expressions, for example: weather, *es muy calor*; dates, *en mayo el quince*; numerals, *Carlos cinco*; cost, *son 300 libros*.

Advice and Guidance

- Centres are reminded that the oral forms submitted by the candidates should contain only a title and brief headings in the target language. The purpose of this is to provide guidance to the examiner and a reminder to the candidate of those aspects of the subject that s/he wishes to discuss. They must not contain lists of facts, dates, statistics or useful vocabulary. Examiners have been instructed to discount any material that is written on the oral form and re-produced in the discussion when arriving at an assessment of performance.
- No materials other than the oral forms are allowed in the examination room. This includes supplementary notes and visual aids. Reading of any part of the test, including the introduction, constitutes a breach of examination regulations.
- The correct timing of the tests must be observed. Marks are deducted when tests are significantly short, and candidates whose tests are longer than necessary are subjected to excessive demands and consequently may also lose marks.
- Care must be taken with the recording of the tests. It is essential that the examiner and the candidate can be clearly heard and that there is an absence of interference or external noise. Examiners should ensure that the tape does not run out before the test is concluded. All tapes must be checked before they are dispatched to examiners, and if a candidate has not been recorded, the examination must be taken again.
- The appropriate paper work must be used and forwarded with the tapes. At the start of each tape the centre name and number must be announced, and the name and number of each candidate must be stated in English at the start of each test. Tapes must be clearly labelled with the name and number of the centre and the names and numbers of the candidates, and should be rewound to the start of side A.
- Care should be taken with the packaging and dispatch of tapes. A number of them were broken when examiners received them.

A2 Spanish: Paper 4.1 (6814) - ORAL DISCUSSION OF ISSUES (15 MINUTES; A 15%)

Candidates are required to demonstrate a definite stance on a chosen issue and to use the language of debate and argument to discuss the issue with the examiner. Candidates are further required to demonstrate the ability to continue a discussion that moves on and away from the initial issue.

Assessment Principles

The test is assessed positively out of 60, using the grid printed in the Specification: Quality of Language, 20 marks, Response, 20 marks, Grasp of the Issue, 5 marks, Justification and Debate, 15 marks.

Candidates' Responses

Most candidates had a good understanding of the requirements of this unit and responded well to its demands. Some very pleasing performances were noted. A small minority lost marks because the Teacher Examiner failed to engage the candidates in debate, or because the discussion did not move beyond the initial issue.

Issues debated included, among others: Abortion, Euthanasia, Death Penalty, Bullfighting and Immigration. and Homosexual Marriages. Issues surrounding smoking, drinking and homosexuality continued to be very popular.

Candidates were rewarded for their ability to defend their point of view, to justify their opinions and to engage in debate with the examiner. When the Teacher Examiner did not present a challenge to their views, they were unable to demonstrate their skills in this area. In a few cases the examination was conducted as if it were another AS Unit 3, in which knowledge, information and clarification rather than opinion were sought. As a result the candidates scored few marks for Justification and Debate.

It is a further requirement of this unit that candidates demonstrate their ability to engage in a natural and unpredictable conversation with the examiner. Two thirds of the examination, ten minutes in all, must be spent on the discussion of at least two further issues, in which the candidate continues to express opinions and justify views. In a few cases, the Teacher Examiner allowed the discussion of the initial issue to occupy the full fifteen minutes, and as a result the candidates were seriously disadvantaged.

It is essential that the discussion should be natural and spontaneous and that the candidate should have no advance knowledge of the issues to be raised. In most instances this appeared to be the case. The most successful tests were those in which the examiner skilfully linked the unpredictable issues to the topics that had gone before. It should be noted that areas such as leisure time activities or plans for the future, that do not give rise to an exchange of views, have no place in this test.

Well-prepared candidates, who had thought seriously about the issue they defended and had anticipated counter arguments, were able to deal successfully with the opposing arguments put to them. The majority of examiners were able to stimulate their students to animated debate.

The quality of language employed by almost all of the candidates was of a good standard. They used a wide range of appropriate vocabulary and structures without committing too many grammatical errors, and they had become familiar with the language of debate. Pronunciation and intonation was generally good.

However, even at this level, a number of basic errors such as faulty agreements between noun and adjective and subject and verb were noted, as was confusion between the verbs, *ser*, *estar* and *haber*. Only the very best candidates were totally at ease with the subjunctive mood or with the rendering of the passive.

Advice and Guidance

- The topic declaration form must be completed indicating the issue and the stance that the candidate intends to take, the topic presented for Unit 3 and the topics or texts studied for Unit 5. The candidate must also sign it. The current version of the declaration form must be used.
- No materials other than the topic declaration form and, if required, an article in the target language are allowed in the examination room. This includes supplementary notes and visual aids. Reading of any part of the test, including the introduction, constitutes a breach of examination regulations.
- At least two further issues must be introduced and must not be known to the candidate in advance.
- Careful attention must be paid to the timing of the different parts of the test, five minutes for the initial issue and ten minutes for the unpredictable areas.
- Candidates must choose a controversial issue that lends itself to debate.
- The views of the candidates must be challenged so that they can demonstrate their ability to argue a case and justify their opinions.
- Care must be taken with the recording of the tests. It is essential that the examiner and the candidate can be clearly heard and that there is an absence of interference or external noise. Examiners should ensure that the tape does not run out before the test is concluded. All tapes must be checked before they are dispatched to examiners, and if a candidate has not been recorded, the examination must be taken again.
- The appropriate paper work must be used and forwarded with the tapes. At the start of each tape the centre name and number must be announced, and the name and number of each candidate must be stated in English at the start of each test. Tapes must be clearly labelled with the name and number of the centre and the names and numbers of the candidates, and should be rewound to the start of side A.
- Care should be taken with the packaging and dispatch of tapes. A number of them were broken when examiners received them.

A2 Spanish: Paper 4.2 (6814/02) -INTERPRETING (15 MINUTES; A 15%)

Candidates are required to carry out an interpreting task involving a speaker and a non-speaker of Spanish who wish to communicate to each other in a purposeful, practical situation.

Assessment Principles

The performance of the candidates is assessed positively using the mark grid printed in the Specification: 20 marks for Accuracy (grammar, structures, pronunciation and intonation), 20 marks for Appropriateness of the Target Language (vocabulary, structures, idioms and register) and 20 marks for Transmission (relevant information conveyed from one interlocutor to the other).

Candidates' Responses

There were two scenarios, each containing two variants, in the context of travel and leisure. One was a meeting in Spain between an English parent and the Spanish host who had accommodated the former's child, in which they discussed ways of travelling around Spain. The other involved a conversation between a Spanish and an English teenager where various leisure activities were arranged.

The majority of candidates coped very well with the demands of this test. They had been well-trained in interpreting techniques, understood the scenario, had an adequate range of appropriate vocabulary and structures and showed confidence and ability in responding to the language presented to them. Only a very small minority experienced serious comprehension problems, or lacked sufficient vocabulary to express themselves. Most were able to sustain their efforts over a period of fifteen minutes.

The interpreting situation was well understood by all candidates who appeared quite clear as to the roles of the three persons involved and were consequently able to follow the direction that the conversation was taking.

Some confusion and inconsistency was noted with regard to register, particularly in the case of *tú* and *usted*. Having read the scenario, the candidate should decide which form is the most appropriate and use it consistently. Confusion also arose at times with regard to adjectival agreements, when the candidate used their own gender rather than that of the English speaker.

The tests were generally very well conducted, and in most cases the quality of recording was good. However, since every utterance is marked, it is essential that there is an absence of interference and background noise and that everybody speaks clearly. Candidates, whose utterances were rushed or mumbled, risked losing marks for transmission if their renderings were indistinct.

Candidates should be encouraged to avoid over literal translation. This frequently results in unnatural English or unidiomatic Spanish. It is preferable to reshape the original syntax in order to achieve convincing structures in the other language. On the other hand, however, some candidates produced versions that were so loose that much of the original was lost.

Many candidates demonstrated a pleasing degree of accuracy both in their Spanish usage and their renderings in English of the Spanish original. Others, however, used some inaccurate language, particularly with regard to verbs, pronouns and prepositions.

Comments on individual tests

Test 1

Spanish to English

- 1 Problems in recognising and pronouncing *Valladolid*.
- 3 *volver a* frequently not recognised.
- 5 *cómodo*: very disappointingly translated; 'comfortable' was usual. Idea of *tener fama de* not grasped by many.
- 7 OK
- 9 *enseñar* frequently 'teach' or 'tell'; *pillado en un mal momento* quite well done; unidiomatic 'broken' (rather than 'broken down') often given for *estropeado*.
- 11 Generally well understood.
- 13 *pintoresco*, surprisingly, often not known; *en obras* grasped by only a few and if they misunderstood this they often then resorted to guess work for the last two bits.
- 15 *fuéramos ... podríamos*: tenses often wrong; *a primera hora* had them guessing; *tranquilamente* (not easy to convey) sometimes wide of the mark.
- 17 literal versions of *fenomenal* too common.
- 19 OK

English to Spanish

- 2 inconsistent use of *tú /usted* widespread.
- 4 'not bad' threw them (*no estuvo mal*); 'it didn't take long' a problem universally, because of misuse of the verb as impersonal (*no tardó mucho* would refer to the plane).
- 6 Very difficult; hardly any perfect versions; often wrong words for 'diverted' and 'fog'.
- 8 Quite well done, but *encontrar* frequent for 'to meet'; many not familiar with *campo*.
- 10 Quite well done overall.
- 12 OK, but often *dónde* instead of *adónde*.
- 14 *Tordesillas* often mispronounced by English speaker (reasonably!), so candidate also mispronounced; syntax threw many candidates who didn't work in *merece/vale la pena* correctly.
- 16 'since' sometimes *desde*; often wrong person for 'have to'; all sorts of problems with 'to worry about', especially omission of reflexive pronoun.
- 18 Subjunctive rare in 'when you have found out'; 'time' too often *tiempo* rather than *hora*.

Test 2

Spanish to English

- 1 As for Test 1.
- 3 As for Test 1.
- 5 OK
- 7 First section not bad; *enlaces aéreos* a big problem for all.
- 9 OK.
- 11 Some did not understand AVE and thought the term was 'train of high velocity'. Apart from this the major problem was *algo parecido*, perhaps showing a failure to think their way into the situation.
- 13 *combinaciones* misunderstood generally.
- 15 *aunque parezca mentira*: much hesitation here, then literal rendering.
- 17 Fairly good section: *ferrocarril* and *ampliación* usually understood
- 19 Quite well done, but same difficulties as with 15 above.
- 21 As for Test 1, 17

English to Spanish

- 2 As for Test 1
- 4 Fairly well done by competent candidates.
- 6 *Cádiz* often mis-pronounced.
- 8 OK, but sometimes lacked idea of 'should' (*debiera* etc).
- 10 Often missed one of the adjectives 'excellent' and 'fast' (couldn't keep both in their heads?).
- 12 Quite good, but very few used plural (*son*).
- 14 Second bit a real test (several tricky components); only done well by best candidates.
- 16 *ridiculouso* common; 'considering' and 'compared' were a challenge, and much circumlocution indulged in; many failed guesses at 'cost'.
- 18 They struggled with 'Nevertheless'; otherwise quite a good section.
- 20 Same problems as for Test 1, 16.
- 22 OK

Test 3

Spanish to English

- 3 OK
- 5 *extraño* often 'foreign' ; *¡Como apenas hablo inglés!* a major problem because *apenas* not understood.
- 7 First bit often 'I hope so, yes' - unfamiliarity with idiomatic Spanish; sometimes failed to pick up gender of friend, or to understand that it was he/she who didn't have time to go out.
- 9 Quite a good section. Managed to deal well with four consecutive words of second bit (very familiar words, therefore easier to hold in the mind?).
- 11 *socio* often not known and not picked up from context.
- 13 Second bit very frequently mis-translated as 'I'm here for a couple of days', with consequential errors for the third bit; *aunque* sometimes not known; last bit usually incorrect: *echar de menos* only known by a minority.
- 15 Surprising degree of muddle here: often thought 'I' hadn't been in touch with friend; last bit often loosely transmitted.

- 17 First bit OK; most just about managed second bit; third bit marred by misunderstanding of *por lo visto*, often thought to be 'from what I've seen' (unfamiliarity with idiomatic Spanish).
- 19 Quite good, but *sacar el mayor provecho* gave problems, despite it being a logical thought following the previous statement.

English to Spanish

- 2 OK
- 4 Very normal opener, but too few rose to the challenge and *para* frequent as translation for 'for'.
- 6 'Don't worry' generally correct use of *tú* form here, but often inconsistency crept in later with use of formal address; many used unidiomatic *como eso* for 'like that'; few were able to cope with 'You'll soon get used to it' (many incorrect forms of verb here, even if *acostumbrarse* was known).
- 8 First two bits OK but in third one subjunctive often lacking after 'anywhere'; big problem with syntax in last bit, with unnecessary attempts to translate 'in' after 'interested' (using *interesarse*).
- 10 Two problems here: 'athletics', often *atlético(s)* and 'meets' for which *reunirse* was rarely used.
- 12 In second bit they failed to pick up the construction that had just been used in the Spanish (*dejar entrar*); otherwise not too bad (though 'take part in' and 'entrance fee' gave problems).
- 14 Very colloquial section: imperative not usually used for 'Let's do that' but they could get away with *Hacemos eso*; syntax of next bit often wanting: eg *¿Y qué sobre la noche?*
- 16 The first bit was not badly done but the second threw them: 'getting together' and 'High Street' were particular problems.
- 18 *También* for *tampoco* came up frequently; 'those of us who drive' proved too difficult for almost all candidates; few managed to produce the imperfect subjunctive in 'if you came'; 'fix up to go to other places' was often transmitted too loosely.

Test 4

Spanish to English

- 3 As for Test 3.
- 5 *orientando* was often simply misunderstood, but those who knew it transmitted skilfully.
- 7 As in Test 3, sometimes failed to pick up gender of friend, or understand who had to go out on his/her own.
- 9 Quite a good section.
- 11 *¡Qué va!* was not understood by most. Those who did know it got into the spirit of the Spanish ('No way!' etc); they ought to have come up with something better than 'it's exaggerated' for *es exagerado*; surprisingly, many candidates did not pick up the sense of *el dinero ...no me llega*.
- 13 Quite good.
- 15 *esperado* in the middle phrase should be 'expected', but disappointingly was often rendered by 'hoped'.
- 17 Two problems in this section: *imprescindible*, often rendered by too weak an idea (like 'important') and *no me queda más remedio* which simply was not understood.
- 19 Reasonably well done.
- 21 *CDs* and *quedamos*, used in this colloquial way, sometimes not understood.

English to Spanish

- 2 OK
- 4 As for Test 3
- 6 Problems with how to convey 'don't you'. Transmission of this sort of tag ought to be a part of the training for the paper.
- 8 Often unconvincing but difficult to do well (presumably *Entonces, ¿qué has estado haciendo?*).
- 10 OK
- 12 This section seemed more straightforward than it was: *adónde* missed; 'someone to show you', if rendered by a subjunctive construction, led them into difficulty; 'half the price' was a big challenge and, surprisingly, very few knew *grandes almacenes*.
- 14 The construction for 'I would be delighted' caused problems; subjunctive after 'whenever' often missed.
- 16 Reasonably well done, but some problems with 'Let's go...' and 'meet up with'. 18 'meet' should have been *conocer here*, not *encontrar*; same problem with 'if you came' and 'fix up to' as in Test 3, 18.
- 20 Second bit not very convincing; needed to say something like *...mis amigos, sí (que) saben* (which a few used).
- 22 OK

Advice and Guidance

- Candidates often failed to realise that an incorrect form leads to a breakdown in transmission. Control of verbal forms - tense, mood, person - is essential for accurate transmission.
- A focus on *tú /usted* discrimination as part of the training would be beneficial to performance.
- A lot of mistakes came about through a failure to think their way into the test. Usually (but not always) the next statement will be logically linked to the previous one. The good candidate is able to anticipate what comes next, (which is part of the normal process of dialogue).
- Lack of familiarity with some straightforward colloquial expressions cost marks. Less familiar expressions (eg *¡Qué va!*) had to be guessed by most, but their meaning might have been anticipated as logical responses to the previous statement.
- Literal renderings (eg 'That seems a phenomenal idea') affect authenticity of transmission.
- The ideas of 'should' and 'could' were often rendered too loosely.
- The notion of 'meeting' was prominent in the tests (as might be expected in these types of scenario): candidates were frequently unable to distinguish between *conocer*, *encontrar*, *reunirse* and *quedar* (used colloquially).

A2 Spanish: Paper 5.1 (6815/01) - TOPICS and TEXTS

In this unit students are required to answer two questions in Spanish on topics or texts chosen from the prescribed list in the Specification. The answers, which must be of at least 250 words, may be on either two topics or two texts or one topic and one text. Students are not permitted to take any books or texts into the examination room.

Assessment Principles

The answers are assessed positively using the grids printed in the Specification: (i) 30 marks for Knowledge and Understanding, (ii) 9 marks for Organisation and Development, and (iii) 6 marks for Language. In (i) candidates are rewarded for their knowledge and understanding of the topic or text, their grasp of the implications and scope of the question, the relevance of the answer, and clarity and analytical ability. In (ii) they are rewarded for organisation and control of the material and the coherence and development of the argument. In (iii) they are rewarded for accuracy, appropriateness and range of lexis and structures. In assessing the answers, emphasis is placed on the use of detailed and relevant factual knowledge, and the ability to evaluate and form independent judgement. The examiners have before them notes on the questions, prepared in advance, which contain points likely to be made in the answers. However, candidates may well express ideas that the examiners had not anticipated and in such cases full credit is given as long as the material is relevant and fully substantiated.

Candidates' Responses

Some candidates for this examination produced excellent carefully planned answers, written in very good Spanish with a high degree of understanding and appreciation of the topics or texts that they had studied. Very few candidates limited themselves to the minimum of 250 words. Most answers were in the region of 400 to 500 words. Where they were considerably longer than this, they were often rambling and digressive. The best answers were carefully planned, selective and totally relevant.

Q1 La política española desde 1975 hasta 1996

Candidates who had studied this topic in depth were able to present successful answers to both questions. There were some excellent accounts of the factors that contributed to the attempted coup and some sound evaluation of the significance of its failure in consolidating Spanish democracy. The successes and failures of the government of Felipe González during his 14 years as Prime Minister were usually well documented and evaluated, but less attention was paid to his leadership in exile and to his role as opposition leader.

Q2 La sociedad española de hoy

Answers to the two questions on this topic were variable. There were some who possessed appropriate information about the botellón phenomenon in Spain and who were able to substantiate their analysis with details and statistics and consideration of the legislation that the government has put in place. Others, however, wrote generalised answers about the problems of addiction to alcohol that could have applied to any country. Most of the candidates who attempted the question on terrorism were able to describe the activities of ETA and the March 2004 bombings. Some, though, were less successful in analysing the political effects of these events.

Q3 Temas contemporáneos de Latinoamérica

Both questions produced some positive responses, with others that were quite faulty. Many candidates chose to write about Mexico City, and were able to back up their analysis with facts and figures, and to give a sound evaluation of the effects of expansion on the population. Some wrote without any reference to a specific city, and yet others chose to examine Rio de Janeiro, which is outside the scope of the Specification. The best answers to the second question related to the economic policies of Cuba, and there was some excellent analysis of both the policies and their effect on the life of the country. Some candidates, however, failed to understand the meaning of *política económica*.

Q4 Una comunidad autónoma de España

A number of very good answers were presented on the cultural elements of one of the autonomous regions. A few however were insufficiently analytical and provided only the type of information that would be found in a travel guide. The importance of culture for the local population was often restricted to its contribution to tourism. Those who chose the second question usually had a good grasp of the economic activities of the region, but sometimes failed to provide sufficient data or to examine the current state of the economy.

Q5 El cine de Carlos Saura

This topic continues to be very popular with candidates and some very perceptive answers were produced in response to both questions. The central importance of music in Saura's films was well appreciated and candidates had no difficulty in illustrating the way in which it characterises the period in which the films are set, highlights themes, establishes moods and emphasises relationships and change. Elements of machismo were found in each of the films that the candidates had studied, whether they were set in the Franco period or in democratic Spain. The best candidates were able to provide a reasoned evaluation of the importance in Saura's work of relationships between the sexes.

Q6 El individuo y la sociedad en la obra de García Márquez

Both questions produced some thorough and knowledgeable analyses of the works of Márquez. They had little difficulty in describing the misfortunes that many of the characters experienced, and in analysing their attitudes and behaviour when faced with adversity, they drew attention to the indomitability of the human spirit. Although most candidates considered that the negative aspects of society outweighed the positive, they were all able to find some characteristics that presented a more optimistic picture.

Q7 El teatro de Lorca

The theatre of Lorca continues to be a very popular topic and some excellent answers were produced in response to both questions. Not only did candidates fully understand the significance of motherhood in rural Andalucía in the thirties, but they could also appreciate the particular interpretation of that role that was witnessed in these plays. The attitudes and behaviour of Yerma, Bernarda Alba and the mother of the novio were analysed and the conclusion usually drawn that in the circumstances frustration was inevitable. The struggle between honour and passion was recognised as central to Lorca's dramas, and the conflicting demands of each were well analysed and illustrated. It would be useful with questions of this nature if the candidates were to provide working definitions of the terms.

Q8 La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes

Most of the candidates were able to identify some of the elements that appear to give unity to this work, such as the development of the protagonist, anticlericalism,

hypocrisy and the motifs of bread and wine. In assessing the success of the author in this respect, due account was taken of the fragmentary and anecdotal style of the work. There were some excellent responses to the second question. The words and actions of Lazarillo were carefully analysed and the conclusion was generally drawn that he could not be considered a genuinely religious person. Unfortunately, some candidates chose to place the emphasis on the behaviour of the masters he served rather than on Lazarillo himself.

Q9 F. Fernán-Gomez: Las bicicletas son para el verano

There was considerable interest in this new text that appeared in the Specification for the first time this year. Both questions were well received by candidates, and some very good answers illustrated and analysed the changes experienced by the characters as a result of the war. Consideration of use and significance of the symbol of summer produced more variable responses. Some candidates seemed to lack the close textual knowledge that would have enabled them to do justice to this question.

Q10 L. Esquivel: Como agua para chocolate

Candidates had clearly enjoyed this novel. The central significance of food was fully appreciated and the way in which Tita used her culinary skills to express her creativity and individuality was well documented. There was intelligent analysis of how her cooking enabled her to cope with adverse circumstances. Those who chose question b were able to interpret the story of Tita and her family in terms of the emancipation of women, and the significance of the setting of the Mexican Revolution was noted by the more perceptive candidates.

Q11 B. Atxaga: Esos cielos

Candidates who chose to study this text that appeared for the first time this year generally produced very good answers. They were able to analyse in detail the psychological journey taken by Irene during her physical journey from Barcelona to Bilbao. Good evaluation was provided of her state of mind at the start and at the end of the journey.

Candidates who chose question b understood and evaluated the influence exercised on Irene by her companion Margarita during the prison years.

Q12 E. Mendoza: Sin noticias de Gurb

Good knowledge and understanding of the text was shown by most of the candidates who chose to study this new prescription. They had clearly enjoyed the novel and were able to recall some of the aspects of Barcelona that had been satirised by the author. In answer to both questions there was some good investigation and evaluation of the characteristics of the narrator that distinguished him from human beings and that made life on earth difficult for him.

Q13 R. Sender: Réquiem por un campesino español.

This continues to be a very popular text with candidates and some excellent answers were produced in response to each question. Close textual knowledge was required to do full justice to the first question, both to establish the attitude of the villagers and to evaluate the author's presentation of the villagers' point of view. Some candidates inferred what their attitude might have been without providing the necessary substantiation. In charting the growing distance between Paco and Mosén Millán, all candidates referred to the episode in the cave, but some then jumped to the end without examining the stages in between. All candidates were able to provide some reasons for their alienation, and there were some excellent evaluations in which not only the character and behaviour of the priest was examined but also the political climate and the role of the Catholic Church at the time.

Advice and Guidance

- Candidates must resist the temptation to present pre-prepared all-purpose essays. Credit cannot be given for answers that do not address the question directly.
- Candidates should not attempt to answer questions on topics they have not studied in depth, even if, on the surface, they appear accessible.
- Careful planning is essential. Candidates are rewarded for their organisation, and rambling answers in which the train of thought is unclear cannot earn high marks.
- Answers should contain balance. Where a question requires discussion of more than one text, film, character, etc., sufficient weight should be given to each.
- Each question contains an evaluative element. Candidates must ensure that this aspect is given full treatment.
- Although carefully chosen quotations skilfully used can enhance an answer, they should be kept to a minimum, correctly incorporated into the sentence, and, in particular, should be accurate and correctly attributed.

A2 Spanish: Paper 5.2 (6815/02) - COURSEWORK (AL 15%)

Candidates are required to submit two pieces of extended writing in Spanish on a chosen topic related to Spanish (Hispanic) countries and/or communities. The first piece should be approximately 500 words in length and the second piece should be approximately 1000 words in length. Candidates are expected to choose and research their own individual topics. Each piece of coursework must cover distinct content areas.

Candidates must demonstrate by means of their coursework assignments:

- (i) knowledge and understanding of the culture and/or society of Spanish (Hispanic) countries or communities;
- (ii) the ability to organise and develop their ideas on the chosen topic;
- (iii) the ability to write accurately and effectively in Spanish.

Candidates' Responses

The following mark grids are used:

Knowledge and Understanding (K/U) carried a maximum of 30 marks;
Organisation and Development (O/D) a maximum of 9 marks; and
Quality of Language a maximum of 6 marks.
Total: 45 marks.

The mark for the shorter piece is out of 45, that of the longer piece is doubled (45 x 2 = 90), and the total for the Unit is therefore 135 marks.

It is encouraging to note how many candidates continue to choose the coursework option. In general, work produced is of a very high standard. Moderators are pleased to report that topics such as 'Bullfighting', 'The role of women in post-Franco Spain', 'The problem of AIDS', 'Drugs', are seen much less frequently than in previous years.

Some assignments are outstanding in every aspect and are awarded top marks. In such cases, it is clear that candidates and their teachers follow the guidelines carefully and produce work of the highest quality which is original and thoroughly researched.

Almost all Centres follow the three discreet mark grids and their requirements (see the Edexcel Specifications) and accurate teacher assessment continues to impress. Marks for some candidates still need to be adjusted - a number are, in fact, raised - but teachers are to be thanked for their hard work and professionalism.

Short, focused titles are to be encouraged. A question format is particularly helpful.

It is encouraging to report that plans are shorter and more succinct than has often been the case; one or two lines of bullet points for each paragraph or section of development are preferable.

The following is a list of the more interesting titles submitted this year:

- *¿Es España un país o una federación después del Estatuto de Autonomía de Cataluña? ¿Es el principio del fin de España?*
- *A la luz de la crisis de los inmigrantes subsaharianos entrando en Melilla, ¿debería España mantener la soberanía de este territorio español?*
- *Belchite: 'el pueblo de todos' - la destrucción de un pueblo en la Guerra Civil Española.*
- *¿Por qué existe la familia colchón en España?*
- *¿Es el graffiti en España arte o vandalismo?*
- *Una entrevista entre una víctima y un periodista sobre los bombardeos de Madrid.*
- *Una vieja se queja del botellón.*

Almost all candidates accurately and honestly identify relevant Internet websites. Very few candidates are suspected of plagiarising their work. Skilful use and clear acknowledgement of sources again led to some extremely impressive assignments. It needs to be emphasised that, wherever possible, books and articles should be consulted and drawn upon (especially for literature-based assignments) for candidates to meet the requirements of the Specification.

Although the Coursework Specification has been running for several years, teachers still have an opportunity to attend INSET meetings during the year. Such an opportunity for feedback, questioning and shared concerns continues to prove helpful.

A2 Spanish: Paper 6.1 (6816/01) - LISTENING and WRITING (45 minutes A2 - 10%)

Candidates are required to listen to authentic recorded target-language material and to retrieve and convey information given in the recorded material by (i) responding to a range of target-language questions in Spanish and (ii) producing a structured English summary (80-100 words of continuous prose) requiring transfer of meaning from the target language. Candidates have individual control of the recording: they may stop, rewind and replay the recording at will, and they may make notes and write their answers at any point.

The recorded target-language material is drawn from the General Topic Areas and is related to contemporary Hispanic countries. Contemporary sources are used, such as interviews, radio talks, reviews, conversation, discussions and current affairs broadcasts. The material totals 400-500 words and between 2 and 4 minutes' recording time. There are two passages, both on the same topic. This year, the topic was disability in Spain.

Assessment Principles

Candidates' performance is assessed positively. There are 15 marks allocated for the Spanish questions and 20 marks for the English summary (including 5 marks for the quality of the English grammar, punctuation and spelling).

Candidates' Responses

In general, the candidates' performance reflected a positive response to the Listening test. It was pleasing to see such good listening skills. Most candidates attempted all of the questions. There were few examples of candidates not finishing the paper.

Extract 1, the interview with Ximena Merino, founder of a Madrid company where 90% of the employees are disabled, with straightforward Spanish questions to be answered in Spanish, was generally very well done. 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.

For (a) most candidates correctly identified the two points of working in a professional capacity and having a permanent contract, although some candidates heard *con profesionales*, rather than *como profesionales*. Question (b) required candidates to explain the meaning of the company slogan "*discapacidad no significa incapacidad profesional*" and just copied out the slogan with no explanation. At this level, candidates will be expected to explain the meaning of statements in the passage. A correct answer would have been along the lines of "*el hecho de ser una persona discapacitada no significa que no pueda trabajar de una manera profesional*". A past tense was required for question (c) and most candidates successfully identified the word *rechazo*. Generally, (d) was answered well and most candidates gained the two marks available for identifying that the figure referred to the number of disabled people in Spain with permanent work contracts. Nevertheless, several candidates showed difficulties in comprehending numbers and percentages in Spanish. For (e) there was too much evidence of candidates' simply

“lifting” the information from the passage and transcribing it, without any alteration or explanation. This is not appropriate at this level. Question (f) required candidates to understand that Antonio had applied for a job as a telephone operator after such a long time failing to obtain a post as a psychologist, which was his real career. Several candidates confused the two verbs *aspirar* and *aspirar a*. In this case, the personal *a* was needed to give the answer correctly, or else another verb such as *conseguir*. Many candidates successfully gained the two marks for (g), explaining that potential employers often reacted to disabled people, not by saying that they would not employ them because they were disabled, but by telling them, with kind words, that their profile was not suitable for the post. Question (h) was generally answered well, although several candidates understood *pegas* as *pedas*. The final question (i) was another example where candidates often just transcribed the material, without explaining what is meant. There was also some confusion between *eliminar* and *iluminar*.

Overall, however, the majority of candidates displayed a good understanding of the Spanish material and were able to write their answers with a good standard of Spanish language.

Extract 2, an interview with Marta, a young woman who does voluntary work in the summer with autistic children, required a summary of 80-100 words in English. As 20 marks are now available for this exercise, it is important that candidates should devote enough time to completing it successfully. For the 15 summary content marks, the four bullet points have to be covered fully, 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 15 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, too many candidates wrote 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. This year some candidates spent too much time giving information about Marta’s work in such detail that they did not have enough words left to do justice to some of the other bullet points.

Marta’s opening statement *Hace dos veranos que trabajo con ...* led many candidates to misunderstand the timescale and write “Two summers ago Marta worked with ...” and then continue to write the whole summary in the past tense, rather than the present tense. Other comprehension errors included: “in a canteen” for *alicantina*, the number of children should have been 16, but often the figures 17 or 26 were given, *se autolesionan* was often understood as “isolated”, *agredir* as “aggravate”, etc.

As well as having some problems with comprehension, candidates often lost marks because of weak summary skills. Some accounts lacked conciseness and did not read well. There was some confusion about the role of the mothers and candidates wrote vaguely about “they”, so it was not clear if it referred to the mothers or the children or the volunteers.

The summary is then marked again, with up to 5 marks available for the quality of the English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Correct English syntax and lexis were needed, with the appropriate register. Items that were commonly mis-spelt were: beach (beech), aggravate, patient (pachiant or pacient), etc. A small case letter was often used for Alicante; abbreviations, such as “don’t” should be avoided; there was often a lack of commas and full stops.

Nevertheless, many candidates produced excellent summaries that demonstrated a good understanding of the gist and detail of the original Spanish extract. They were able to infer ideas and showed an ability to select key facts and to communicate this information concisely. They also displayed a good use of English grammar, spelling and punctuation. The following is an example of an excellent summary that gained the full 20 marks:

“Marta has worked for two summers as a monitor of autistic children on a beach in Alicante, where she ensures that children can relax and enjoy the beach. The children’s mothers are sometimes over-protective and worried as to how the children will react to new surroundings and remain close so as to control them. Communication is a problem, as some of the children can barely speak, and this often leads to aggressive behaviour and self-harm, as a result of their inability to express themselves. However, the children overcome their initial sadness at changing their daily routine and begin to enjoy the sun and sea.”

Advice and guidance

There were some very good performances in the Listening Comprehension test. Nevertheless, several points of guidance could be made to enable centres to improve candidates’ performance.

- Using one’s own words. Candidates should practise finding synonyms and expressing material using their own words. This is a comprehension test, not a dictation.
- Use of Spanish. It is necessary to stress that correct Spanish grammar must be used in the answers. This year there appeared to be an increasing carelessness in the use of accents and a surprising number of candidates were not able to use pronouns such as *le*, *los*, *se* correctly. In particular, there is no excuse at this level for not being able to use the basic verb forms accurately.
- Time management. This is an important element. Candidates have control over their own cassettes; they may stop, rewind and replay the recording at will. But there is a final time limit of 45 minutes. Candidates should use their time sensibly and devote enough time to the second question, worth 20 marks.
- Word limit. The summary has a word limit of 80-100 words. Many candidates wrote far more than this. Credit cannot be given for any material beyond the stated length.
- Tidiness of presentation. This year there was an increased number of scripts where the handwriting was very difficult to read. Many scripts were poorly presented with many words/sentences crossed out untidily, asterisks and arrows. Candidates are encouraged to take care with the orderly presentation of their work.

A2 Spanish: Paper 6.2 (6816/02) - READING AND WRITING

Candidates are required to read authentic printed Spanish material and to retrieve and convey information (i) by responding to a range of questions in Spanish and (ii) by carrying out a short translation exercise from English into Spanish based on the comprehension stimulus passage. Some vocabulary can be found in this passage.

Assessment principles

Up to 8 marks will be awarded for correct information retrieved for the questions and answers in Spanish (Q1), in addition up to 7 marks are awarded for Quality of language. Up to 10 marks are awarded for the translation exercise. See Mark Scheme.

Candidates' performance

Examiners noted that candidates were much more able to show off their good language in response to Question 1, especially when answering 3 and 4 where the longer answers required allowed candidates to use complex language effectively if they so wished. Conversely weaker candidates found this a real challenge and either opted for simpler language or failed to come to grips with the level of response expected at this level. However it was pleasing to note that candidates at the top end successfully used subjunctives and conditionals in their responses, thus scoring well for both comprehension and Quality of Language. In Question 2 candidates again seemed better equipped to cope with this type of question, even though some still spurn the help provided in the original passage, and there were far less really weak answers.

The passage on which both questions were based was about education in the 3rd world and the help provided by Spanish charitable organisations.

Q1

Candidates seemed familiar with the content of the article, as they should be, although certain vocabulary items caused problems.

(a) Those who had problems with this question usually failed to use 'saber' in their answer, even though it was in the question. Answers that consisted of 'son analfabetos' alone did not gain credit.

(b) Many managed to express the idea of poor quality or not high enough standard in a variety of ways.

(c) This question gave some scope for using more complex language especially for those who explained why the help was important in the 3 different areas mentioned in the passage. At a simpler level candidates often had little problem hitting the target answer, but some only helped teachers rather than training them and others missed the idea of providing students with a skill to enable them to get a job. 'Oficio' caused problems, some thinking it meant office.

(d) Here candidates had to see what the failings were and explain how to put them right, giving plenty of scope for the use of complex language. Those who simply recounted what was wrong with the schools did not answer the question. Others very imaginatively introduced material not in the text, but no doubt very helpful with regard to school improvement. There were several possible answers and examiners marked the first 3 attempts at gaining the mark. At the top end there some very

sophisticated responses. At the other end there were far less minimal or even blank responses, suggesting the candidates were aware of what was required even if their Spanish was not always quite able to convey the correct ideas.

Q2

Those candidates who regularly practice this type of exercise will score better than those who perhaps are tackling it for the first time. Regular practice helps their awareness of grammatical structure and is often seen as an enjoyable challenge. While the use of vocabulary and structures from the original passage is not essential, it seems short sighted not to use at least some of this material.

The passage as usual was divided into 30 sections, each worth 1 mark and the final total was then divided by 3 to give the mark out of 10. A wide variety of alternative renderings were accepted as long as the candidate did not stray from the meaning of the original passage. Spelling had to be correct to gain the mark in each section, oddly enough mistakes of this sort tended to feature in words from the original passage e.g. los ONG, en desarrollo and analfabeticos (sic). Common errors included no capital letters for Europa and Tercer Mundo, aceptamos, un parte, poor use and position of negatives, su(s) vida(s) instead of nuestra(s) / la(s) vida(s), odd spellings of no gubernamentales, have an important role to play rarely correct, proyectos, campaña and país used for country(side), más without an accent and not using an infinitive after a preposition.

Advice and guidance

Candidates need to have access to a variety of reading materials in different registers and to become used to answering questions in Spanish, in the first instance accurately and precisely both for comprehension and language. They should also have frequent opportunity to put short pieces of English into Spanish, perhaps based on topics or texts with which they are familiar. In this way they should become more confident about handling the language effectively at this level.

A2 Spanish: Paper 6.3 (6816/03) - WRITING IN REGISTERS (1 HOUR 15 MINS)

Candidates are required to respond to **one question only** from either *Creative Writing* (three questions, one a journalistic option) or *Discursive Essays* (four questions) - in 230-250 words in Spanish - or *Task-based Assignments* (two questions) - 200-225 words.

Assessment Principles

Marks are awarded positively for

- (i) Content (with a separate grid for Task-Based Assignments);
- (ii) Accuracy of the Target Language;
- (iii) Range and Appropriateness of Vocabulary;
- (iv) Manipulation of Language.

Accuracy of the Target Language requires candidates to ensure that **forms** particularly (eg correct person and verb formation, especially the imperfect and preterite and all subjunctive tenses, object pronouns, etc) are correctly conveyed, while Manipulation of Language requires **structures** particularly to be wide-ranging and sophisticated (conjunctions, subordinate clauses, etc). Candidates are assessed on their ability to write effectively and accurately in Spanish.

Candidates' Performance

The majority of candidates observed all aspects of the rubric for the Unit, although too many still write in excess of the word counts. Examiners do not mark superfluous material, stopping at the first 'sense break' after the word count limit has been exceeded.

Q1.

(*Vivir en una época distinta.*) This essay was generally well done, with appropriate range of speculative/hypothetical tenses, expressions.

Q2.

(*Pub-discooteca.*) A very popular question, which was, in the main, well done, especially where the interview format was exploited. Unfortunately, too many candidates omitted the conclusion (recommendation).

Q3.

(*Secreto.*) Again, a popular question, producing some excellent, often hilarious, answers. Some racy language was produced, especially by native speakers.

Q4.

(*Éxodo de profesores.*) Quite a popular question, producing some mature and well-argued (balanced) answers. Sympathy for teachers was quite strong!

Q5.

(*Organizaciones ecologistas.*) A very popular question. There was a marked range in the quality of answers, but too many pre-learned or 'done-in-class' environmental issues essays were submitted.

Q6.

(*Servicio social.*) Not too popular a question, but some very thoughtful, mature answers were produced, which scored high marks.

Q7.

(*Multiculturalismo.*) The runaway winner discursive question this year! However, the word was often misspelt. Essays ranged from the theme itself, to racism (incl. *racialismo*), immigration, etc. Many answers were excellent, but too many simply 'humdrum'.

Q8.

(*Pulseras.*) Answers to this TBA were not too well done, though it was a popular question. Candidates often had little idea about currencies, amounts to order or charge / be charged.

Q9.

(*Wigan FC.*) The most popular question of all. There were some excellent answers. Consistency of register and/or tone was often a problem. Do candidates know where Wigan is? Letters were addressed from London, North Wales, even Northern Ireland, suggesting that 'Antonio can catch a bus to training'!

Again, it is pleasing to note an improvement in use of the subjunctive (*para que / querer / si* clauses, where appropriate), but as on many previous occasions, too many candidates do not take enough care over agreements and verb forms.

Statistics GCE Spanish 2006

Unit 1 Listening and Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	33	29	25	21	17
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

Unit 2 Reading and Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	80	60	53	46	39	32
Uniform boundary mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

Unit 3 Prepared Oral Topic

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	60	45	39	34	29	24
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

Unit 4.1 Oral Discussion of Issues

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	60	47	42	37	32	27
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

Unit 4.2 Interpreting

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	60	45	40	35	30	25
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

Unit 5.1 Topics and Texts

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	90	60	54	48	42	36
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

Unit 5.2 Coursework

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	135	106	94	82	70	59
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

Unit 6 Listening and Writing, Reading and Writing & Writing in Registers

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	69	61	54	47	40
Uniform boundary mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

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