

Examiners' Report Summer 2007

GCE

GCE Spanish (8590/9590)

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Unit 1 (6811/01): Listening and Writing

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Extract 1 was a radio announcement about disposing of out-of-date medicines, with a True/False/Not in the Text exercise. Few candidates scored low marks here but statement (b) produced the most errors. Clearly, the material was understood by most candidates.

Extract 2 involved a news item about Spanish travellers stranded at Heathrow because of technical and staff problems. There were two questions set on it. Question (a) was an information gap-fill exercise. This was generally done very well, although in (i) many candidates did not get *un centenar* but heard the later overall figure of *miles* and offered that instead; for (ii) it was necessary to get *en el suelo* to get the second mark, rather than just in the airport or terminal. Most candidates did well on (iii), identifying the two types of flights correctly, but in (iv) some misunderstood and thought the luggage was with the passengers in the terminal rather than boarded on the planes that had not left. Generally candidates gave a good performance, although some weaker candidates tried to transcribe without understanding, eg. *vuelos con destino a* was understood as *vuelos clandestinos* and *nunca salieron* was sometimes transcribed as "nun casi leeron" or "no casilleron". Question (b) was a multiple-choice exercise. Candidates generally scored highly on this, with question (ii) being the only one that appeared to have offered any problem.

Extract 3, the interview with Amaya, a young Spanish dress designer, 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 done well. It was pleasing to see candidates perform effectively 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 still too much evidence of weaker candidates attempting to transcribe the material without really understanding it.

For (a), whilst many candidates understood that Amaya had been to *un internado*, others wrongly deduced that she had been to *un colegio de moda* and there was sometimes confusion in (ii), where candidates had to explain what the two uniforms were. Question (iii) generally caused few problems, although some candidates were not able to spell *estilo* correctly, writing "stilo" or "stylo" instead. Most candidates gave a good version for question (iv), but, again, some spelling problems occurred, particularly with *excéntrico*. In question (v) some language manipulation was required, with the need to change the subject of the sentence from Amaya to her mother. Straightforward 'lifting' of the information in the text could not get the mark. Question (vi) was probably the weakest answer with many candidates not

identifying *le ha costado poco*, and writing *acostado* instead, giving the impression that Amaya has slept her way to the top of the fashion world! In (vii), most candidates identified Amaya's indifference to her critics, but there were still too many candidates who could not manipulate a grammar change from first person to third person *no me importa* to *no le importa*. Similarly, in (viii), although most candidates identified her mother for one mark, many found it difficult to make the first to third person change from *es cosa mía* to a sensible answer such as *es cosa suya* or *se debe a ella misma*. Most candidates scored at least 1 mark for (ix), but spellings of *exporta* that were closer to 'sport' caused a problem, as did some candidates' inability to use *gustar* correctly.

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 fashion. For (i), candidates had to agree or disagree, with reasons, with Amaya's statement that all young people nowadays tend to dress in the same way. Whilst most made a good attempt to answer this and many wrote from personal experience, some candidates misunderstood the question and thought they were being asked whether young people 'ought' to wear the same clothes and then wrote an answer on the virtues of school uniform. This led to a 0 or very low mark for Content. The response could be answered with the present tense, but good candidates succeeded in including some more advanced language and subjunctives. Some common language errors included difficulty in conjugating *vestirse*, and *llevar* and *llegar* were often inter-changeable.

Question (ii) allowed candidates to give their opinions of the importance of fashion in the world today. A whole range of answers, from total agreement with its importance, to criticism of 'size zero' models and their influence on young people with bulimia, for example, criticism of overseas sweat shops, statements that there are far more important things in life, such as the environment and the third world, etc. It was interesting to see in both responses how many young people hate the peer pressure they feel about having to wear the right clothes, so as to fit in and not be excluded. Response (ii) gave good candidates the opportunity to use the language of opinions, which many did successfully, although some weaker candidates still confused *no me acuerdo* with *no estoy de acuerdo*.

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 man discussing the *Camino de Santiago*, with a guided English summary set on it. The material certainly seemed to be accessible and most candidates made a good attempt. Rather than comprehension of the Spanish material, however, candidates tended to lose marks because of awkward English expression that did not convey the information correctly. In (a) most candidates identified reasons for doing the walk, although some were a little vague about the nature of the spiritual benefits; in (b) the cultural and artistic elements were generally understood, but some candidates failed to comprehend *belleza*,

which was often understood as 'old age', *el paisaje* was sometimes understood as 'passage' and a common error was for *amabilidad* to be understood as 'mobility', so there were references to 'disabled walkers'. Most candidates identified the advice not to wear new shoes in (c), there was some guesswork about what shoes actually to wear and, in (d) most candidates gained a mark for correctly identifying plasters and antibiotic cream, but very few knew *tijeras* and there was confusion over whether or not to burst the blisters to guard against infection. Without doubt, however, the examiners were pleased to see an improved performance in this exercise than in previous years 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 *ha costado* as 'acostado', *ha sido su madre* as 'acido madre' and *desfiles* as 'des filles'.
- 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 examination is marked on-line, with the candidates' scripts scanned into the computer system. Some handwriting is very difficult to read. 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.

Unit 2 (6812/01): 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 - Question 1

A text about the use of debit and credit cards in Spain. Candidates had to decide whether 4 statements were true, false or were not mentioned in the text. Candidates are now very familiar with this type of question, but should be aware that close reading of the text is essential to gain full marks. It was evident this year that less candidates scored a maximum on this question than in previous years.

Text 2 - Question 2(a)

A text about personal hygiene, looking at differing attitudes and habits across Europe. Part one required candidates to identify 8 correct statements according to the sense of the passage. Many candidates found this passage very accessible and so scored high marks, with many gaining 7 or 8 marks. It was pleasing to see that virtually no candidates marked only 4 answers this year. Clearly candidates are much more aware of rubric wording. There were, however, still some candidates who failed to give all 8 answers, and so penalised themselves needlessly.

Text 2 - Question 2(b)

Candidates were required to find synonyms in the passage for 6 words. Although some candidates still find this type of question demanding, it was pleasing to see far less non-attempts or completely wrong answers. Candidates are clearly being drilled to look for a similar type of word and apply their grammatical knowledge to find answers even if they are unsure of the meaning of the target word or phrase. Candidates should remember the answers are in order, so those who chose 'cuidar' in (i) or 'lavado' in (vi) were looking in the wrong place. This is a fairly easy exercise to set up in a class situation and candidates will definitely improve with practice. The first 2 items were generally well done, the third less so, while the last 3 differentiated well between the different levels of performance.

Text 3 - Question 3

This was an article about the changing lifestyle of young women in Spain today. As always, candidates found this question challenging often simply because they could not manipulate fairly straightforward language or they were content to try and lift from the original text. Only minimal changes are required, but some change from the original is expected at this level. It is not enough to simply put quotation marks

around the original words. Very often of course a lift is bound to be wrong because the verb needs to be changed, perhaps from first to third person.

- (a) Too many candidates did not target the unwillingness of young people to marry and simply saying 'nadie se casa' was not acceptable. Those who read the text carefully and deduced that 'Sofia es muy / demasiado joven' were suitably rewarded. Simply being a student was not a valid reason.
- (b) The two key ideas of studies and lack of money were identified by many. Various renderings of these ideas were acceptable, but not references to other issues which were not the 'factores principales'.
- (c) Most identified staying at home with parents, although some referred to 'novios' and quite a number found problems with the possessive adjective where renderings such as 'nuestros' could not be accepted.
- (d) Probably the most testing questions which required candidates to work out how to explain the greater tolerance of today's society either by reference to religious attitudes or by the acceptability of living together unmarried. Merely lifting from the original text was not acceptable and candidates who confused the use of polite and familiar forms failed to score.
- (e) This required the idea of friends eating together and women doing the cooking - hence maintaining a tradition. Many candidates missed the first of these ideas and rather went for the fact that boys know how to do such things which had no relevance to tradition, rather the opposite.
- (f) Here the topic of sex was generally spotted, although candidates found the reasons harder to express, particularly with the manipulation of feeling embarrassed, where the inability to handle pronouns successfully was highlighted.

Text 4 - Question 4

This question required English answers to questions on a passage about a campaign to make young people more aware of the dangers of drink driving. Unfortunately, many candidates continue to lose marks because their English expression is too poor.

- (a) Orange jackets or similar was the targeted answer, but every conceivable article of clothing, with or without stripes etc. appeared, even in different colours.
- (b) Many identified the idea of the risks of drink driving or the responsibility behind the wheel, but some omitted the driving element and others failed to note that young people were being targeted.
- (c) In spite of the picture, many missed the idea of a breath-test. The idea of a computer test to check reflexes after drinking was identified by many, although reflections was a common unacceptable alternative to reflexes.
- (d) Quite a number simply referred to generalisations about drinking / accidents rather than the specific point that young people talked about their experience later in bars.
- (e) This posed few problems.

- (f) This posed few problems.
- (g) That so many did not understand driving licence was a surprise and led to answers involving meat and/or sangria. Good candidates were obviously aware of the issues and produced clear and succinct answers.

Text 5 - Question 5

Candidates were asked to respond to a stimulus about a problem caused by a chemical reaction at a swimming pool at a hotel in Spain, commenting on the reactions of the staff, their thoughts and impressions of how the emergency services reacted and what compensation they hoped to receive. Weaker candidates tended to lift too much from the stimulus material, which clearly cannot be credited. Some candidates thought the water supply in the hotel had been poisoned. The compensation should not already have been received and a comment on the emergency services reactions was needed. As in previous years, there was a wide range of performance. At the weaker end, verb forms in the preterite caused serious problems. At this level, at least an ability to use correct first person is essential, 'ir', 'tener' and 'decir' were again handled poorly. There were many examples of confusion between 'podia / podría', 'más / muy', 'hablar / decir', 'empleo / empleado', 'era / había'. 'Realizar' was often used wrongly and the variety of spellings of 'miedo' was legion. 'Ser' and 'estar' continue to be confused. The best candidates produced accounts in accurate, fluent Spanish showing good imagination with excellent use of idiom. Sadly, for some candidates, writing too much remains a serious problem. There is a word limit and examiners only mark up to this number of words. Therefore, candidates who write pages of Spanish will lose marks for content.

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. The use or rather misuse of pronouns continues to be a problem. 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.

Unit 3 (6813/13/15): Prepared Oral Topic

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

The majority of Centres had a good understanding of what was required for this unit. They presented candidates who had researched their topics well and had acquired sufficient information and opinion to deal confidently with the questions put to them by the examiner. Most of the performances were highly satisfactory, and there were some excellent presentations.

The range of topics presented, associated with Hispanic life, culture and history, was fairly wide. Although many candidates still opted for popular and familiar topics such as Bullfighting, Flamenco, Immigration and the Position of Women in Spain, it was very pleasing to note the growing diversification in the choice of topics. There is an increasing interest in the history, culture and politics of Latin-America countries. As always, the most successful candidates were those who had chosen a topic from within an area in which they had expertise and a strong personal interest. For example, students of History discussed significant events of the Spanish past; musicians spoke knowledgeably and sensitively about Spanish composers; students of Art demonstrated appreciation of Spanish and Latin-American painters; and sports enthusiasts appreciated the skills and achievements of Spanish and South American sports personalities.

Many candidates appeared to have followed the advice given in last year's report regarding the choice of topic. There were fewer instances this time of subjects that were too large to be dealt with effectively and in some depth in ten to twelve minutes. So, for example, rather than presenting "*la moda en España*", candidates opted for the work of a particular designer, instead of "*Venezuela*" we had the politics of Hugo Chavez. Candidates usually performed better when they had limited the scope of the topic.

Again this year there were many presentations concerning tourism in various parts of the Spanish-speaking world. Only some of these were entirely successful. 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.

Despite warnings in previous reports, there were still a few candidates who presented topics related to pre-Hispanic civilisations, such as the Aztecs, the Incas or the Mayas. Although some were able to establish the relevance of these civilisations 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.

Centres are reminded that the entire test should be based on a Spanish speaking country or community. Comparisons with the United Kingdom or with other non-Spanish speaking countries should neither be introduced by the candidate nor elicited by the examiner. For the purposes of this test, such material is considered irrelevant. There is no place either for discussion of personal matters, such as hobbies and interests or future plans.

Among the interesting topics presented this year, one could mention the following: *La Virgen de Guadalupe*; *La regeneración de Bilbao*; *Los surfistas en Costa Rica*; *La guerra civil española en el cine*; *El reguetón*; *Los vinos Torres*; *Rigoberta Menchú*; *REMAR*; *El fotógrafo mejicano Manuel Alvarez Bravo*; *La inquisición*; *Ferrán Adriá y su restaurante El Bulli*.

Oral forms were sometimes misused, and instead of headings, 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.

There were a significant number of tests this year in which the Teacher Examiner had failed to observe the appropriate timing. This was very unfortunate because in the case of short tests, pro rata deductions were made to the marks, and for this reason some candidates did not attain the grade that their performance would otherwise have merited. Where tests were too long, undue demands were made upon the stamina of the candidates, and they too were disadvantaged.

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.

With thorough preparation of the topic, 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 occasionally it overran. Teacher Examiners should be aware of the time allowed and should interrupt the candidates when this happens. Some candidates had clearly learnt the introduction by heart and recited it with little attention to appropriate phrasing, intonation and pronunciation. Such an approach should not be encouraged.

Candidates who obviously 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. Those who had acquired only sufficient knowledge to last for the duration of the test found themselves running out of material and started repeating themselves.

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-learnt 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 or the places that were the subjects of their presentation, *Gaudí*, *Dalí*, *Almodóvar* and *Guernica*. Anglicised pronunciation was not uncommon, particularly in words ending in *...ión* or starting with *gu...*

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 violation of examination regulations.
- The correct timing of the tests must be observed. Marks are deducted when tests

are significantly short. 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, using copies of the label reproduced in the handbook for centres, 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.

Unit 4, Paper 1 (6814/01): Oral Discussion of Issues

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

Many candidates chose familiar polemical topics, such as abortion, euthanasia, the death penalty, bullfighting, immigration, and homosexual marriages. Issues surrounding smoking, drinking and drug taking continued to be very popular, as did the current situation in Iraq. There were some novel issues this year: *Estoy a favor del bachillerato internacional*; *Estoy a favor de poner impuestos sobre la comida basura*; *El ateísmo no es una religión*; *El inglés es y continuará siendo la lengua más importante del mundo*; *El dinero hace la felicidad*; *La renovación de los misiles Trident*; *Disparar para matar*.

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 sufficient 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.

Unfortunately, too, there were some tests that were significantly short. In these cases, pro rata deductions were made to the marks awarded, and the candidates failed to achieve the grades that their ability warranted.

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, but there were some Centres where a small number of further issues were rotated around the candidates, and similar responses

were given by more than one person. It was impossible in these cases to award high marks for either Response or Justification and Debate. 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 were 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.
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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.

Unit 4, Paper 2 (6814/02): Interpreting

Candidates are required to carry out an interpreting task involving a speaker and a non-speaker of Spanish who wish to communicate with 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 Education and Business. One was a conversation between a Spanish and an English teacher regarding plans for an inter-school exchange. The other involved a discussion between a local councillor and a member of a South-American Trade Delegation about issues surrounding Fair Trade.

The majority of candidates coped well with the demands of the interpreting 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.

On the whole the interpreting situation was well understood by the candidates. They appeared quite clear as to the roles of the three persons involved and they were consequently able to follow the direction that the conversation was taking. However some candidates could make better use of the preparation period just before the test. They need to ponder the possible implications of the scenario and think their way into it, so that they will be ready to pick up some logical inferences.

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. Centres are reminded that repetition or clarification should only be given when requested audibly by the candidate, and when it occurs, the whole utterance must be repeated. Where there was a high incidence of repetition, the marks for Transmission were affected.

Candidates should be encouraged to avoid a word for word approach to interpreting. Candidates need to take in the meaning of a whole group of words before attempting to translate. Literal translation often resulted 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. The best candidates managed to get the detail right as well as the gist.

Although many candidates demonstrated a pleasing degree of accuracy both in their Spanish usage and their renderings in English of the Spanish original, there was a fairly high incidence of inaccurate language. Quite a number of candidates had only a very basic control of the tense, mood and person of the verbs they used. More marks were lost for incorrect verb forms than for any other weakness, but the correct use of pronouns and prepositions also caused difficulty.

Comments on individual tests

Test 1

Spanish to English

- 1 Generally correct.
- 3 This particular section was a very good discriminator. *Se enteró de* was not understood by many candidates and led to guesswork. There were major problems with *me pidió*, candidates often thinking the subject was *yo* or *ellos*.
- 5 *por desgracia* was often not known. Many candidates failed to transmit the idea of *tampoco*.
- 7 *ya que* was frequently not picked up. The pluperfect *habían dicho* was often transmitted wrongly.
- 9 *entramos en tiempo de ferias* baffled many candidates, who seemed not to be able to get their minds round this idea.
- 11 Generally well grasped, but the sense of *suponga* evaded many, and occasionally *región* was understood as *religión*.
- 13 Candidates who failed to get to grips with the content of the scenario had problems with this section. *financiación* was often misunderstood, and *programas* was rendered by 'projects'. Many candidates were unfamiliar with *con tal de que*.
- 15 Ignorance of *he hecho puente* was almost total. *vuelta* was confused with *vuelo*, and so some candidates had the Spaniard flying back home.
- 17 This was usually well done.
- 19 Mostly well rendered, but the candidates often translated *encantado de conocerle* by 'pleased to meet you' (rather than 'to have met you'), as if they were about to start the conversation. *¡hasta pronto!* sometimes became the literal 'until soon'.

English to Spanish

- 2 *bienvenido* was often the wrong gender.
- 4 An obvious subjunctive was often missed here, and *ser* was wrongly used for *estar*.
- 6 Ironically, hardly any candidates knew the word for 'interpreter'. Candidates seemed unable to manage the straightforward language of the question 'Has your school decided ...?'
- 8 *idea* was frequently made masculine. Surprisingly, some candidates did not know the word for 'Christmas', sometimes using 'Noel'.
- 10 The first part gave rise to multiple errors in rendering 'letter' (often *letra*), 'headteacher' and 'said' (often present or perfect tense).
- 12 Weaker candidates were unable to make much of this difficult section which acted as a major discriminator between good and very good candidates. Candidates were unfamiliar with ways of expressing 'to mean'; 'investigation' was a real challenge; they struggled with the conditional tense and the subjunctive in 'when they were in England' was hardly ever picked up.
- 14 The first part of this section was only rendered well by the very best candidates: 'suggest', 'staff' and 'meeting' were often not known. Most candidates missed the difficult subjunctive in 'who will take charge'; 'proposal' was rarely known.
- 16 Words and expressions for 'email' were on the whole successfully transmitted but, surprisingly, many candidates did not know 'address'.
- 18 This section was quite well done, apart from the subjunctive after 'we hope that'.

Test 2

Spanish to English

- 1 See comment on Test 1.
- 3 See comment on Test 1.
- 5 Generally understood.
- 7 The second part was often wrongly rendered by 'It's been as long while since our students ...', which showed a misunderstanding of this time phrase; *comparativo* was often misunderstood.
- 9 Generally well done.
- 11 In the second part, *concretar* seemed to confuse candidates, as did *Lo más indicado* in the third part. Weaker candidate became completely muddled by the arrangements for the two exchange weeks.
- 13 The meaning of *a tope* was generally understood but 'jam-packed' was a better translation than the limp 'very busy'. Otherwise the section was well rendered.
- 15 Mostly well translated.
- 17 Also well rendered apart from *muy enterados*, often 'very interested' rather than 'well informed'.
- 19 Average candidates made something of this section, but some did not know *becas*; they made a reasonable stab at *bien redactadas*.
- 21 Many candidates thought that the person had to leave on Monday rather than be back at school then.
- 23 See comment on Test 1.

English to Spanish

- 2 See comment on Test 1.
- 4 Same comment as for Test 1.
- 6 Candidates seemed unfamiliar with the meaning of intention implied in 'you are thinking of' (*piensa(s)*); *a mediados de* was often not known, and *diciembre* mis-pronounced as *deciembre* by some.
- 8 This section was quite well done, except for the use of *discutir* for 'discuss' and problems in conveying the syntax of 'to see how everybody is preparing for Christmas'.
- 10 A clear subjunctive was often missed in 'when we visit Spain'; the future tense was not well handled in the last part.
- 12 Apart from the incorrect use of *ser* instead of *haber*, this section was fairly well done.
- 14 In the first part, the translation of 'we are very keen' (*tenemos mucho interés en que...*) stumped most candidates; the second part was well done.
- 16 In this section, ignorance of some basic vocabulary, eg. 'theme' 'subjects', 'omelette', was worrying.
- 20 Some candidates substituted *que* for *si* in translating 'if', with a consequent loss of meaning.
- 22 Many candidates did not know how to say 'keep in touch'.

Test 3

English to Spanish

- 2 Well done
- 4 Candidates found the syntax very challenging, especially the linkage of 'happy' with 'welcome' in 'happy to welcome'. Incorrect agreement of *contento* or *feliz* was frequent.
- 6 A good proportion of candidates could not express this basic question accurately; *ser* instead of *estar* was commonplace; *Inglaterra* was thought by many to be synonymous with *Gran Bretaña*.
- 8 Not badly done, but agreement of the adjective *interesado(s)* was often lacking.
- 10 Quite well rendered generally.
- 12 Candidates often failed to translate 'can't' in 'That can't be easy'. *multinational* was not widely known, and when it was, the word was often thought to be masculine. Good translations of 'profits' were rare, candidates often resorting to *dinero*.
- 14 Many candidates could not deal with the straightforward 'a few years ago'. The remainder of the section was fairly well done, although *parecer* and *aparecer* were confused by some.
- 16 The word 'principles' was often incorrectly rendered by *principales*. This was surprising, in that they had just heard this word in Spanish, two sections previously.
- 18 Two problems with this section were the omission of the definite article before *discriminación* and the use of *ser* before *prohibida*.
- 20 Candidates often began this section by translating 'Since' incorrectly as *desde*, rather than *ya que* (see general point 6 above).

- 22 A good discriminator. Words for 'price' and 'cost' were often confused; the verb 'give' was often rendered by the infinitive of *dar* instead of the future.
- 24 Few candidates managed to find a suitable translation of 'achieve' (*conseguir*).
- 26 The words for 'Mayor' and 'speech' were often not known, even by good candidates; hardly any used the construction *estar a punto de* for 'to be about to'; 'again' was frequently omitted in translation.

Spanish to English

- 3 Well rendered.
- 5 As for 3
- 7 As for 3
- 9 Most candidates realised that the person represented coffee growers, but they often did not convey the detail of this section well. In the second part, the adjective *pequeños* was often displaced, their translation being 'small organisation' rather than 'small coffee-growers'. There were some inexcusable translations of *doscientos mil*, eg as 'two hundred'.
- 11 *pretendemos* was often erroneously translated, as was *fomentar*. Otherwise this section was translated quite well.
- 13 Generally quite good, but *éticas* was at times 'ethic' or 'ethnic'. The syntax of *no sólo... sino...* defeated some, *sino* being rendered by 'if not'.
- 15 Generally well transmitted.
- 17 Quite well grasped, but occasionally *horario* ('working hours') was 'timetable', which was the wrong word for the context.
- 19 The only major problem in this section was a misunderstanding of *contratar*, which most candidates appeared not to have heard in a work context.
- 21 The first two parts were quite well done, although *a su alcance* stumped a few. A major misunderstanding often occurred in the third part with the phrase *les van a pagar*, which candidates thought meant 'they are going to pay', rather than 'to be paid'.
- 23 Ignorance of *margen* and *invertir* was common. Candidates who were aware of the general language of business scored well here.
- 25 Quite well rendered.
- 27 Well rendered.

Test 4

English to Spanish

- 2 See comment on Test 3.
- 4 See comment on Test 3.
- 6 See comment on Test 3.
- 8 Not badly done, but 'continent' was often not known.
- 10 Fairly good, but 'representative' was often not known.
- 12 The first part was poorly done, 'advantage' not being known to many. Candidates who had an awareness of business language did well in the second and third parts.
- 14 Generally quite good.
- 16 There were many unsuccessful renderings of 'dependent on'. The second part was more successful.

- 18 A lot of problems with the translation of 'communities' and 'housing'.
 20 Most candidates were able to transmit the first part plausibly; in the second part, 'achieve' was not known by many.
 22 See comment on Test 3.

Spanish to English

- 3 See comment on Test 3.
 5 See comment on Test 3.
 7 See comment on Test 3.
 9 *una gira* was often misunderstood, as were *concejales* and *cámaras de comercio*.
 11 Quite well done, but as for Test 3, the number was at times incorrect.
 13 Quite well transmitted.
 15 Quite a few candidates did not pick up the meaning of *hasta* ('up to') before the percentage, and so missed the precise sense.
 17 A good discriminator: candidates who understood *a largo plazo*, *invertir*, *correr el riesgo de caer en deuda*, all words or expressions in a business register, fared well.
 19 A similar performance to section 17: *préstamos* and *promovemos* were beyond the lexical range of less able candidates.
 21 See comment on Test 3.
 23 See comment on Test 3.

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.
- Literal renderings affect authenticity of transmission.

Unit 5, Paper 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 mark 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.

Question 1 - La política española desde 1975 hasta 1996

This is a historical topic now and answers must be confined to the years in question. There were some very interesting answers produced on this topic. Overall, Q(a) on the Transition period was better done. Many candidates were able to give full responses about the major political steps during the crucial years, although weaker candidates did not address the second part of the question and failed to give an evaluation of the importance of the political parties during this time. Q(b) also produced some interesting answers, although some candidates did not focus on the role of the monarchy as laid down in the Constitution and spent too much time on the years 1975-81, or treated it as a lavish praise of the royal family, *Hola* magazine style.

Question 2 - La sociedad española de hoy

This topic requires serious study of the latest developments in Spanish society and needs thorough study of recent legislation. Unfortunately, too many candidates continue to see this as an 'easy option' and write from personal experience without providing any of the key essential facts and details. This year, the Examiners found many generalised essays without the necessary evidence of serious study. Q(a) on the

new educational reforms required very up-to-date knowledge and Q(b) on divorce produced some of the weakest answers on the paper.

Question 3 - Temas contemporáneos de Latinoamérica

This year, performance on both questions varied greatly. Q(a) on *movimientos políticos populares*, produced some excellent responses, particularly on Hugo Chávez and Evo Morales, but some candidates misunderstood what the term *movimientos populares* means, with examples ranging across the whole Latin American political spectrum from Fidel Castro to Pinochet. Good candidates succeeded in giving information about these new movements and evaluated the huge changes taking place in Latin America at the moment. Q(b) on *narcotráfico*, again, produced some excellent, informative answers, but weaker candidates relied on producing anecdotal stories and several relied on telling the story of the film *María, llena de gracia*.

Question 4 - Una comunidad autónoma de España

Most candidates chose Q(a) on agriculture. Andalucía was the most popular community, but there were examples of others. Some essays were very informative and evaluated the situation of agriculture, but some were too anecdotal. Fewer candidates chose to answer Q(b) and, unfortunately, some weaker candidates did not understand the term *elementos urbanísticos* and, therefore, produced some irrelevant answers.

Question 5 - El cine de Carlos Saura

Both question options produced some excellent answers. It is pleasing to see how many candidates have enjoyed studying Saura's films. The majority chose Q(a), examining Saura's political commentary with appropriate reference to when the films were made and the political background of the time. There were some very good answers on censorship and how Saura overcame it with symbolism. Q(b) was probably less well done. Some candidates did not go beyond mere description and were not able to analyse the meaning behind the various relationships.

Question 6 - El individuo y la sociedad en la obra de García Márquez

Both questions on this topic proved to be equally popular. Q(a), however, did give rise to some misunderstandings, as candidates sometimes wrote about church figures and corruption, rather than people's responses to religion. Q(b) yielded some interesting, good quality essays, mainly about the Coronel and Ángela Vicario, but there was also some interest in Bayardo as an outsider. The consequences were also well addressed, but only the more mature realised that being true to oneself was vital and costly.

Question 7 - El teatro de Lorca

Q(a) was by far the most popular choice on this literary topic and many candidates produced reasoned essays with full examples of character and social background. Some weaker candidates, however, could only answer the point about the inevitability of the tragedy by saying that it was inevitable. On the other hand, fewer candidates answered Q(b), but some excellent answers were seen. It does seem that the better candidates who answer this type of question can see that these works are plays (rather than books to be read for an exam) and that the dramatic elements are key to the works.

Question 8 - La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes

Fewer candidates seem to be studying this work now, but those that do generally succeed in producing good answers to the questions set. This year, both questions allowed candidates the opportunity to show detailed knowledge of the work. There seemed to be less 'story-telling' this time.

Question 9 - F. Fernán-Gómez: Las bicicletas son para el verano

In the second year of this work appearing in the Specification, it was pleasing to see how many centres have chosen to enter candidates for this text. Numbers have grown considerably. Of the two questions set, Q(a) about tensions in the family was more popular. Candidates chose appropriate examples and generally reached consensus that family unity can survive civil war. Far fewer candidates chose the second question and, unfortunately, some weaker candidates did not know what ideologies meant.

Question 10 - L. Esquivel: Como agua para chocolate

This is clearly the most popular text set on the paper and candidates show an obvious delight in having studied this work. Q(a) was also clearly the most popular of the two questions set on this novel. Most candidates made reference to magical realism and selected a variety of examples, though fewer were able to evaluate why this style is effective, rather than just say that they liked it. Fewer candidates answered Q(b), but there were some excellent answers. Good candidates examined Tita's legacy and the symbolism of the ending.

Question 11 - B. Atxaga: Esos cielos

This novel is clearly growing in popularity and far more centres entered candidates for it this year. Examiners saw some very good answers to both questions. For Qa) candidates described how we gradually become aware of Irene's past and why she is going to find it difficult to return to life in Bilbao and in Q(b) candidates produced full answers describing the various people that Irene meets during her journey, with some good evaluation of their significance and importance.

Question 12 - E. Mendoza: Sin noticias de Gurb

Again, examiners are seeing far more centres entering candidates for this new text. The two questions set were equally popular, with candidates showing clear evidence of having enjoyed this work. Weaker candidates, however, spent too much time re-telling much of the story without selecting examples and the evaluation aspect was often tagged on as an afterthought.

Question 13 - R. Sender: Réquiem por un campesino español.

This novel is highly popular with candidates. Most opted for Qb) describing the *desacuerdos* that existed between Paco and Mosén Millán, with the caves featuring highly. Some of these essays were very thorough, tracing the disagreements well and attempting an analysis of the inevitability given the two characters. Q(a) was not so popular, but there were some very good answers referring to the *romance*, the flashbacks and the omniscient narrator.

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.

Unit 5, Paper 2 (6815/02): Coursework

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. The very best was often outstanding. Moderators are pleased to report there are very few cases of topics and titles being unsuitable.

Centres performance including administration (eg, authentication, correct sample, accuracy of teacher assessment, timelines, etc) are to be commended. Almost all Centres follow the three discreet mark grids and their requirements (see the Edexcel Specifications) and accurate teacher assessment continues to impress. Teachers are to be thanked for their hard work and professionalism.

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.

If teachers have the opportunity to attend an INSET meeting during the year, they are encouraged to do so. Such an opportunity for feedback, question, shared concerns, continues to prove helpful.

Unit 6, Section A (6816/01): Listening and Writing

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 sports 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 the Spanish Sports Minister discussing the state of sport in Spain, with 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 scored one mark for understanding that Spain had won nineteen medals at the Athens Olympics (although even a misunderstanding of the number was displayed by some candidates), but most found it difficult to explain *se han cumplido las expectativas*, in order to secure the second mark available. The verb *conseguir* was often not known and some candidates gave anglicised versions of a verb 'expectar'. There were three marks available for (b), but candidates had to explain the Spanish phrases. It was not possible to gain the mark by simply 'lifting' material from the text. The three phrases that needed explanation were: *llevan ventaja desde tiempo inmemorial*, *se han volcado en el deporte* and *lo han vinculado a la educación*. This is a listening comprehension test, not a dictation and candidates must use their own words. Weaker candidates who did not comprehend the material produced such versions as 'son países que se hamburgado en el deporte' and 'son país que se ambol cado en el deporte porque lo ambigulado a la educación'. Most candidates understood the material to answer (c) correctly, although there was a variety of incorrect spellings of *medallas* and *medallistas* and many candidates wrote *ganar* as 'gañar'. Some candidates invalidated their answers here by saying that

Spain should try to win more medals than France or Italy. In general (d) was answered well and candidates scored two marks. Q(e) required an explanation of the Minister's words and many candidates deserve praise for doing this successfully, with good explanations in their own words. Many candidates scored two of the three marks available for (f), although few identified *detectar niños con talento* and *fondo* was often heard as 'fundo'. Explanation was again required to answer question (g), so a repetition about the elephant could not gain marks, however, many candidates made a good attempt to explain in their own words. An alternative answer referring to *obesidad infantil* was accepted by the Examiners, and, generally, candidates answered this better. It was clear, however, that some candidates did not understand the word *evitar* in the question and answered about what the Minister wanted to do, rather than what he wanted to avoid. The final question (h) was understood by most candidates and answered correctly. This type of exercise can be quite demanding in places and, overall, the examiner were pleased to see how 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, continuing the interview with the Sports Minister, but this time concentrating on his views about drug use in sports, 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 the Minister's attitude to drugs in such detail that they did not have enough words left to do justice to some of the other bullet points.

In terms of the candidates' comprehension of the material, this exercise was done well. Candidates appeared to be familiar with the vocabulary and concepts in the texts. Many used the appropriate English terminology with phrases such as 'zero tolerance', 'performance-enhancing', 'over the counter', etc. The one area of comprehension where candidates had problems was the fourth bullet point. Many did not understand *En España ha habido un clima muy permisible, porque tenemos una tendencia a la automedicación* or were unable to render this into suitable English. Another common error was to call a medical *receta* a 'recipe' or a 'receipt', rather than a 'prescription'.

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.

The Examiners were pleased to report that 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.

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 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.

Unit 6, Section B (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.

Candidates' performance

Examiners noted that candidates were much more able to show off their good language in response to Q1, especially 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 Q2 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 the Iberian lynx being and its endangered status.

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates were able to spot that both animals were protected species or the most threatened cats in the world. Poor language in this answer was reflected in the use of superlatives and genders. Also weaker candidates used 'es / son' at random.
- (b) There were lots of ways this idea could have been expressed from a simple infinitive to, pleasingly, frequent use of the subjunctive. Obviously the more complex the language attempted, the higher the language mark tended to be.
- (c) This was the first major problem, because although good candidates were able to state that 100 referred to the current population of lynxes and the level at which it becomes an endangered species, other candidates only noted one of these points or, for some reason, targeted 10,000 years. In this question, there was some confusion between 'nombre / número'.
- (d) The best answers used expressions that showed good understanding of 'atropellos' by mentioning cars or other vehicles as the threat to the lynx. Many candidates failed to convince that they really understood the meaning of 'atropellos'.
- (e) The idea of isolation from humans or the ability to pass unobserved were targeted. Many candidates were able to express one or both of these ideas, but simple lifts can never be accepted.
- (f) Good answers used 'cazar' or 'comida/alimento' to reflect good understanding. Weaker candidates clearly did not understand 'presas', "mortalidad", or even "lazos", "trampas" ("hombres sin hogar"), or "disparos".
- (g) Some candidates at this level make very basic grammatical mistakes which have to be taken into account when language is assessed.

Question 2

The standard again seems to be improving in this question, although quite good scripts are often spoiled by careless errors even with words that have already appeared in the stimulus passage, as required by the Specification. Common problems included the invention of words to mean to protect, the confusion of 'desaparecer' with 'disparar', the variety of spellings of 'habitat', 'extinción', 'proyectos', "imprescindible", "esencial" and "lejos". "Si no" and "a menos" often became one word. 'La UE' became 'Los Estados Unidos' or simply 'EEUU'. The agreement of adjectives and random use of gender were also common. At the top end there were many accurate and thoughtful renderings which scored high marks, even occasionally the perfect 10.

Unit 6, Section C (6816/03): Writing in Registers

Candidates are required to respond to **one question only** and 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:

- Content (with a separate grid for Task-Based Assignments);
- Accuracy of the Target Language;
- Range of Appropriateness of Vocabulary;
- Manipulation of the 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

Question 1 (*Inundaciones devastadoras.*)

Generally well done, with interview format. Very few answers.

Question 2 (*Vecinos - aeropuerto - debate*)

Generally well done; some answers were superb. Most popular creative.

Question 3 (*Fotocopiadora - examen*)

Some fairly basic answers, though the dialogue format is handled well by those who may well have practised using it before. Usually appropriate tone and register.

All four discursive essays were by far the most popular this summer:

Question 4 (*Inquietud ciudadana*)

Extremely popular (almost 700 answers) - some mature and well-argued (balanced) answers, but too many homed in on just one 'stimulus' word (usually *botellón*) and lacked range and width in their answers. Marks were lost if candidates failed to home in on 'exagerada por la prensa' or were simply anecdotal in their approach.

Question 5 (*Pobreza*)

Hugely popular (over 1000 answers). Whole range of quality of answers. Some homed in solely on Africa or beggars, for example, thereby producing answers which could not score highly on Content.

Question 6 (*Animales - investigación científica*)

Very popular. Produced some of the best discursive answers, with a wide range of vocabulary, and well handled attempts to put a moral viewpoint.

Question 7 (*Dinero - deporte profesional.*)

Very popular, but the least so of the Discursives. Some pretty run-of-the-mill answers. Nearly always referred to football (Beckham mentioned very often), when other sports could have been considered.

Question 8 (*Polyfone.*)

Not many answers, but generally well done. This Task Based Assignment required some 'technical' vocabulary, but candidates coped well.

Question 9 (*Niños desfavorecidos - Florida.*)

The more popular Task Based Assignment by far. High marks scored for good explanations of the financial difficulties and queries as to how the situation could be addressed.

Statistics

Unit 1 Listening and Writing

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	35	30	26	22	18
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	47	41	35
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	46	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	53	47	41	35
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	53	46	39
Uniform boundary mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

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