

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/01
Speaking

Key messages

For candidates:

- Candidates' own interests should play a part in the choice of the subject for the presentation. Clear reference should be made to Hispanic culture or society.
- It is important to structure the presentation to fit into the allowed time, and to express not only facts, but ideas and opinions.
- Focus on the questions asked and be sure to answer what is asked.
- Remember to ask the examiner questions in both conversation sections

For centres:

- The test consists of three distinct sections: (i) Initial presentation (maximum $3\frac{1}{2}$ minutes); (ii) Topic Conversation (7–8 minutes) on issues arising from the Presentation; (iii) General Conversation (8–9 minutes) on themes completely different from those raised in the Topic Conversation.
- Each section should be clearly identified on the recordings, and the prescribed timings observed.
- Candidates should ask the examiner questions in both conversation sections and be reminded to do so, if necessary. The examiner's replies to such questions should be concise: remember it is the candidate and not the examiner who is being marked.
- Interaction with the examiner is an important criterion in both conversation sections.

General comments

The majority of topics were well prepared, confidently presented and well organised. The best ones mixed facts and figures with plenty of clearly expressed opinions. Presentation was often lively and this managed to engage the listener's interest throughout.

Recordings were mostly clear and well-ordered and were correctly loaded onto Submit for Assessment with the working mark sheets. There were, however, examples of working mark sheets with arithmetical errors and some incorrect transfers of marks. Some scanning of the documentation was of poor quality and this meant that the actual marks awarded by the centre in the different sections of the mark scheme were difficult to read clearly.

Many candidates spoke naturally and spontaneously in response to the teacher/examiner's questions and were able to express their thoughts and ideas convincingly.

Most teacher/examiners conducted the tests assertively but sympathetically and judged when to allow the candidate to continue speaking, when to intervene to move things on and when to rephrase a challenging question if the candidate appeared to be struggling.

Teacher/examiners usually remembered to nudge candidates into asking questions in both sections if they forgot to do so. There were examples of different questioning techniques from candidates, from the predictable '*¿Cuál es su opinión?*' to more elaborate variations such as '*Quería preguntarle su opinión con respecto a este tema, entonces ¿cuál es su punto de vista?*' Teacher/examiners for the most part responded

appropriately to the questions asked of them by candidates and were aware of the need to be brief and put the onus back on the candidate by directing further questions at them.

Centres were generally aware of the importance of section timings; there were, however, examples of little regard for the prescribed timings and those conducting the tests are reminded that it is in the interests of all candidates that correct timings be observed.

Comments on specific questions

Part 1: Presentation

Guidance on topic areas for the Presentation and Discussion may be found in the syllabus. Topics must relate clearly to aspects of Hispanic life or culture. The content mark out of ten has to be halved where no specific reference to a Spanish-speaking country or context is made.

Centres are reminded that Presentations should be a formal and coherent introduction to the subject: pronunciation and clarity of delivery, as well as content, are assessed. It is important to show evidence of preparation, organisation and relevant factual knowledge. Presentations ideally provided a personal overview of the issue to lead to the basis of a debate in the topic conversation. Candidates who spoke in a casual or disjointed manner and who made little attempt to engage the examiner lost some credit here.

Many topics showed evidence of well-focused preparation, were convincingly organised and managed to cover quite a lot of ground in the allotted time. The best topics also had a lively element to them and, it would appear, were often selected by candidates on the grounds that they had an interest in the topic in the first place.

Section 2: Topic Conversation

The Topic Conversation provides the opportunity to develop points arising from the presentation. Interaction is a key criterion. This part of the test should not just be an invitation to the candidate to give a further series of mini presentations, though, as in previous series, a few centres were content to allow this. Candidates whose responses were confined to pre-learned answers, with little evidence of spontaneity, could not be awarded high marks for responsiveness. Candidates should actually take part in a discussion by including relevant information and specific examples, and by justifying or refuting a point of view.

Candidates should ask the examiner at least two substantial questions. Such questions should arise as far as possible within the discussion itself, rather than being isolated or all-purpose questions, unrelated to the topic. Marks could not be awarded for 'seeking information and opinions' where no questions were asked by the candidate, and teachers/examiners are reminded that candidates must actually ask questions to gain credit and that it is not sufficient in this mark criterion for the teacher/examiner merely to offer an opinion unbidden.

Centres might remind candidates that a repetition of simple questions along the lines of *¿Y tú?* will not score highly.

Section 3: General Conversation

The start of the section should be clearly announced on the recording. There were still some cases where no clear distinction was made between the two conversation sections: the General Conversation must not be a continuation of the candidate's chosen topic. Although there are no prescribed areas for the General Conversation, topics should be at an appropriate level. Common areas included current events or an item in the news, health, education, the arts, sport, the environment, the economy, politics and social concerns. In some centres, topics were not at the required depth and did not go beyond a litany of random elementary questions such as 'what is your favourite food', or even 'what is your favourite colour?', with little attempt, or opportunity, to allow a discussion to develop.

The range and style of questioning should likewise encourage candidates to use more sophisticated language and to show competence in structures at a suitably advanced level. When questioning remained at a low level candidates could not gain access to the higher mark ranges. As in the Topic Conversation, candidates should ask the examiner questions – and be prompted to do so as necessary – to gain credit for 'seeking information and opinions'. Such questions should arise naturally in the course of the conversation; it is not sufficient for the teacher to state an opinion without actually being asked.

SPANISH

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| <p>Paper 8685/21 Reading and Writing</p> |
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Key messages

- **Question 1:** seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question. Candidates should take care not to omit words or to include extra words.
- **Question 2:** rewrite the phrases to include the word(s) in brackets. A grammatical manipulation will be required, and care should be taken to ensure that the answer would fit back into the original text, retaining the same meaning.
- **Questions 3 and 4:** comprehension of texts. Candidates should attempt to answer in their own words. Direct copying of five or more words from the text will usually invalidate an answer.
- **Question 5(a):** summary of relevant details from both texts in answer to the question set. Introduction, conclusions and vague generalisations are not required. Specific, relevant details attract marks.
- **Question 5(b):** personal response. Candidates should give a point of view and, if possible, offer ideas which have not appeared in the texts.
- **Language:** when preparing for the exam, make sure to revise the basic agreements, tenses and verb endings.

General comments

The return to a relatively normal examining process after the pandemic was a rewarding experience for Examiners, as it should prove to be for most candidates.

The majority seemed quite well prepared in tackling most of the questions in the exam and many seemed to be of a native or near-native speaking standard. The two texts dealing with prejudice and stereotypes relating to women and ways of overcoming these were accessible to most candidates, and often led to some impassioned comments on machismo and women's roles and rights in **5b** – and even in answers to **Questions 3 and 4**, where candidates added more personal views rather than answering the question. The challenge of the exam was appropriate, and the spread of marks awarded reflected the varying levels of ability. Scripts were generally well presented, and there was hardly any evidence of difficulty with time management.

A small minority might have achieved higher marks if they had been better prepared for the exam in terms of examination technique. Some answered **Questions 1 and 2** by trying to re-word the phrases given using their own words, but then went on to do well in **Questions 3, 4 and 5**. In their answers to the comprehension questions most candidates attempted all questions and appeared to be aware that they should not copy more than four consecutive words of text. It was pleasing to note skilled attempts at paraphrase. On occasions, good candidates, who apparently had clearly understood the texts, did not pick up all the marks available when they answered too generally and omitted relevant details. Candidates should note the marks allocated to each question, as this is a good indication of the number of details being sought.

Some candidates still exceeded the 140 word limit in **Question 5**, thus reducing the number of marks they could score in **5(b)**. In **5(a)** a number of candidates wrote in general terms about women's rights and hardly included any examples from the two texts. However, on the whole, these summaries are improving as the message seems to be getting through that relevant, specific details taken from the texts score many more marks than vague generalisations.

Overall, candidates had a good communicative level of Spanish, with many coming from an environment where the language was commonly spoken. At the upper end of the ability range there were many excellent papers which were a pleasure to mark. The written language, although sometimes impaired by incorrect spelling and lack of accents, was generally well up to the required standard for this exam. Candidates across the range should be commended for their positive approach to the tasks.

Comments on specific questions

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

As stated in the Key Message above, candidates should seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question. Regardless of candidates' language skills, rather than offering the wrong phrase altogether, the main errors consisted of adding or omitting extra words at the beginning or at the end, thus invalidating otherwise correct answers.

- (a) This was done well, although a few began incorrectly with *que*...
- (b) Most candidates answered correctly. Some missed the mark by beginning with *siempre*... A few chose the wrong phrase: *esclavizada en el hogar*.
- (c) Common errors were to begin with *para*... or omit ...*económicamente*. Quite a few opted erroneously for *la clave del éxito*...
- (d) Most answers were correct, although the initial (*algo*) *a*... was occasionally omitted.
- (e) A number of candidates omitted the initial *no*... and some gave the full sentence from *Estos huertos*... but most candidates were successful in this question

Question 2

In addition to constructing the language manipulations required in this question, it is important to check that answers will fit back into the original text and retain the same meaning. A line number reference is given for candidates to check quickly that this would be the case.

- (a) There were mixed results, with approximately half the candidates realising that *cuenta* needed to be followed by *con*. Many either omitted the preposition or attempted to use other manipulations with *cuenta* which were not appropriate here.
- (b) Many candidates showed awareness of the need for a subjunctive after *hace que*... Those who did not tended incorrectly to use an infinitive or the indicative.
- (c) This was mostly well answered. Pitfalls were in many instances spellings of the verb *haber* (*a pasado a ayudarla*). Some candidates despite identifying the use of *en vez de*, conveyed the opposite meaning with answers such as *su marido ha pasado a criticarla en vez de ayudarla*.
- (d) Only strong candidates identified *ya que* as a conjunction, which required a verb phrase rather than a noun phrase. Some unsuccessfully tried to include the prepositional phrase *debido a* in their answers. Some candidates did not use the correct preposition after *depender*. Others who used the adjective sometimes did not make the correct agreement e.g. *son dependiente*, or misspelled *dependiente* as *dependente*.
- (e) This question caused problems for many as they did not know how to use *servido*. Common errors were not to make the verb agree and misspellings of the auxiliary e.g. *sus cultivos a servido*. Elsewhere marks were missed for the omission of *como* or *de* after *servido*.

Question 3

The text about women getting away from their houses to work in an urban agricultural project in Quito was well understood and candidates who gave clear, detailed answers in their own words achieved good marks. A number of candidates lost marks when they copied five or more words directly from the text.

- (a) Most candidates were able to state how women were discouraged to participate in the agricultural project by saying that it was a waste of time, that they could not leave their husband unattended and that their job was to look after the house. However, there was a lot of lifting of *era una pérdida*

de tiempo and some made the verb plural, incorrectly implying that the women were a waste of time. Better answers included good re-wording such as *era un desperdicio de tiempo, no valía la pena* or *debían atender los quehaceres domésticos*.

- (b) Two, and more often, three were common scores for this four-mark question. Most referred to *Fabiola* no longer being trapped in the house, but fewer candidates also identified her husband's help as an important positive aspect. Another point well scored was the fact that women started to value themselves, and most also scored well by stating that women had formed a support group – if they avoided copying directly *un grupo de apoyo entre mujeres*.
- (c) A number of candidates seemed not to understand *viable económicamente*, either taking it to mean that their products were *económicos* or that their business was good for the economy. There was also some confusion of *productos* for *productores*. Better answers included paraphrases such as *para que vaya bien económicamente*. Most managed the mark for cooperation in transporting goods, although the importance of *juntos* for the point about finding solutions was sometimes overlooked.
- (d) Candidates usually managed to mention the \$300,000, (a currency being needed to achieve the point) and express the importance of the money staying in Quito, though there were many inadvertent lifts of *el dinero se quede en Quito*. The third point was often not fully understood. Although most candidates understood that sales had gone up to 20 per cent many referred to *el consumo local* as opposed to *el consumo de productos locales*. Better answers included paraphrases such as *lograron ganancias de, Quito se quedara con las ganancias* and *subieron el consumo de productos locales de 5 per cent a 20 per cent*.
- (e) This was a very accessible question, with candidates simply needing to convert verbs and pronouns in the text from the first to the third person. Most candidates were able to state that *Fabiola* was now earning her own money and did not depend on her husband. A small number of candidates misunderstood the expression *me gano el pan* and thought it meant she had money to buy her own bread/groceries.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

In general candidates seemed to find this second text, concerning actions being taken in Segovia to counteract machismo and sexual stereotyping in advertisements, to be a little more challenging.

- (a) Most candidates mentioned that if women did not protest, no one would. However, many accidentally lifted *¿quién lo va a hacer?* The second point was sometimes confused. Some wrote that half of the population or all/most men did not respect women. Others missed the mark by writing that a minority did not respect the rest of the population. And many accidentally lifted five or more words such as *...que no respeta a la otra...* For the final point, most candidates mentioned that sexism was very common and that it was everywhere in the city, although Segovia was sometimes mistakenly expressed as *por todo el mundo*. A common lift was *el machismo está en todas partes*.
- (b) The most common outcome was two marks for the ideas of equality between men and women and respect for all, but not everyone managed to convey that the banning of inappropriate images of women in advertising in public places was being sought. There was often a reference to images in social media which was not mentioned in the text. Common lifts included *el respeto a la dignidad, la difusión de imágenes denigrantes* and *las mujeres y los hombres*.
- (c) This was a challenging question. The reference to public places or advertisements was often a missing essential detail. The phrase *Y no digo nada si son niños o adolescentes* was rarely understood in this context, with many candidates just rephrasing the sentence without conveying its meaning and some thinking that the teenagers were in the images. A good number of candidates understood that publicity encourages unrealistic ideas about what it is to be a woman and a man.
- (d) Most candidates scored at least two for this question. The first point about eliminating images where women are objectified was the most common correct detail noted. The majority of candidates stated that educational programmes on equality would be developed, although some miswrote that programmes on equal education would occur. The third point was usually missed

because not all candidates listed the people for whom the awareness programmes were designed, and some answers implied that the police and businessmen were leading these campaigns. The final point about the fact that citizens could report incidents of sexist advertising was generally well answered, although a common lift was *que no respeten el reglamento*.

- (e) Only better candidates realised that the lie mentioned in the text referred to the fact that advertising campaigns still use outdated sexist stereotypes, and many centred their answers around what the cliché ideas about men and women were. However, most saw that the effect was one of reducing women's status both professionally and socially. Common lifts were *la cosificación de las mujeres* and *les quita estatus profesional y social*.

Question 5

There were clear differences here in scores between those who had practised this summary question, and those who were not used to the demands of the test. Candidates who were unaware that higher marks would be scored by summaries containing specific details rather than generalisations, followed by personal responses with opinions and original ideas, rarely achieved outcomes which matched their level of Spanish.

A number of answers for **5a** were too long and prevented marks being given for **5b**. A few candidates, inadvisedly, began with a lengthy **5b** (marked out of 5), leaving very few words for **5a** (marked out of 10).

- (a) The following is a typical example of the sort of answer which, despite scoring well for quality of language (marked out of 5), will score next to nothing for content:

Los estereotipos nunca son buenos. En estos dos artículos se habla sobre las ideas que la sociedad está poniendo a las mujeres. En los dos artículos hay algo en común, el machismo. Muchas mujeres tienen que vivir con esto y no se lo merecen. Se puede luchar con haciendo protestas pasivas contra el gobierno o con haciendo lo que creen que no pueden hacer...

If the last few words are taken as a reference to the urban agricultural project there is a possibility of one mark being awarded. This is scant return for over one third of the words allowed for both (a) and (b).

By contrast, the first part of the following answer has already scored seven for content using far fewer words:

Algunos estereotipos dicen que la mujer debe trabajar en la casa, ✓ que si trabaja pierde tiempo ✓ o que no puede dejar tirado al marido. ✓ Se dice que a los hombres les gustan los carros ✓ y la mujer las lavadoras. ✓ El bricolaje para ellos ✓ y la cocina para ellas... ✓

Specific details not generalisations or opinions are what is required here.

- (b) Apart from a minority who had already exhausted their word allocation by the time they reached this point (and thereby scored zero), most candidates had something to say in response to the question. Candidates talked about women in politics, presidents and vice presidents, and women's roles in education and in medicine. The strongest candidates gave careful evaluation of how women combine their roles in the workplace with those at home in many instances, and how this has changed over time. A considerable number still considered that a woman's main role in life is being a mother. Some candidates drifted away from the question when they chose to discuss the women's fight for their rights in general, and a small number understood *papeles* as ID documents and tried to discuss that.

Quality of Language

In this cohort, there were few cases of very poor Spanish. Most seemed to have a native background in Spanish. As always, though, the lack of accents and misspelling of words (particularly v for b, or vice versa, y for ll, and c for s) as well as anglicisms was widespread. Unless they had been penalised for scoring zero in any of the comprehension questions, most candidates were awarded near maximum or maximum marks in all three quality of language assessments.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/22
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- **Question 1:** seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question. Candidates should take care not to omit words or to include extra words.
- **Question 2:** rewrite the phrases to include the word(s) in brackets. A grammatical manipulation will be required, and care should be taken to ensure that the answer would fit back into the original text, retaining the same meaning.
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- **Question 5(b):** personal response. Candidates should give a point of view and, if possible, offer ideas which have not appeared in the texts.
- **Language:** when preparing for the exam, make sure to revise the basic agreements, tenses and verb endings.

General comments

This year the candidates' knowledge and language skills were generally of a high standard, especially those taking 9719. There was clear evidence that most candidates had practised for this exam, and very few questions were left blank. Both texts, which dealt with positive and negative aspects of sports, were well understood with few misunderstandings or vocabulary which caused problems.

All scripts were generally well presented and there was little evidence of any difficulty with time management.

Most candidates appeared to be aware that they should not copy more than four consecutive words of text in their answers to the comprehension questions. On the occasions when this rule was breached, the transgressions often appeared to have occurred more by accident than by design. It was pleasing to note skilled attempts at paraphrase. On occasions good candidates, who apparently had clearly understood the texts, did not pick up all the marks available when they answered too generally and omitted relevant details. (Candidates should keep a careful eye on the number of marks allocated to each question and gauge the amount of detail to be included accordingly).

Only a very few candidates exceeded the 140 word limit in **Question 5**, thereby curtailing the number of marks they could score in **5(b)**. Summaries in **5(a)** are continuing to improve as the message seems to be getting through that relevant specific details score many more marks than vague generalisations.

The return to a relatively normal examining process after the pandemic was a rewarding experience for Examiners, as it should prove to be for most candidates.

Comments on specific questions

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

As stated in the Key Message above, candidates should seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question. Regardless of candidates' language skills, rather than offering the wrong phrase

altogether, the main errors consisted of adding or omitting extra words at the beginning or at the end, thus invalidating otherwise correct answers.

Common omissions or additions are listed beneath:

- (a) (very few incorrect answers)
- (b) ...los senderos
- (c) tendrán que...
- (d) salvo que...
tengan...
- (e) se acumulan...
los...

Question 2

In addition to constructing the language manipulations required in this question, it is important to check that answers will fit back into the original text and retain the same meaning. A line number reference is given for candidates to check quickly that this would be the case.

Despite the number of grammatical challenges a number of good candidates still scored maximum or near maximum marks.

- (a) This was done well, with many using *fueron* to successfully make a passive construction.
- (b) How to use *tanto/como* in combination was either known or unknown. The majority were familiar with the construction and accurately used one of the acceptable permutations.
- (c) It was essential to use a future tense in this manipulation, with *serán, estarán* or *se verán* all being suitable to use before *obligados* . Answers which used a present or conditional tense were not accepted, nor were those which added *lo* to *seguir* , (as this would no longer fit in the original text).
- (d) The need for a subjunctive was widely recognised and it was often successfully used. A few candidates used the negative *se prohibira que el numero de participantes no supere* , changing the meaning completely, or *superen* , which did not work either.
- (e) This caused more difficulty, with a common error being the omission of *de* after *se carece* .

Question 3

The text about environmental damage caused by sporting events in the Sierra de Guadarrama National Park was quite well understood and candidates who gave clear, detailed answers in their own words achieved good marks. A number of candidates lost marks when they copied five or more words directly from the text. Others, quite legitimately, used some of the alternative phrases from **Questions 1** and **2** to avoid certain lifts. In some instances, candidates lifted part of the text but they still managed to score the point as, disregarding the lifted words, their answer still made sense.

- (a) Although this question appeared straightforward to answer there were many pitfalls for the unwary, with the avoidance of lifts taking centre stage. Firstly, it was essential to say where the restrictions on sporting events would be imposed without copying more than four words of *en el Parque Nacional de la Sierra de Guadarrama* . Next, it was necessary to give full details of the way in which this would be financed without lifting from *invertirá 50 millones de euros en los próximos diez años* . Finally, a very common lift proved to be *los daños a la biodiversidad* . The upshot of this was that it was not uncommon for very good candidates to score 1 or even 0 for this question, with the latter score having a knock-on effect on the quality of language mark.

A few candidates who were less familiar with exam overlooked the fact that each question clearly indicates the paragraph where the answer is located. Items from other paragraphs *erosión, amenaza a la flora* etc. were sometimes redundantly included in this answer.

- (b) Better marks were scored here. A number of candidates omitted to point out that *Roberta Ferrero* was against the total prohibition of races, or gave an opposite meaning, such as *hay que prohibir absolutamente estas carreras* .

Common lifts were (*en contra*) *de la prohibición total de* and (*luchar*) *por la educación de los*.

- (c) Candidates could anticipate the the sort of answers which would be needed here, although some difficulty was found in supplying the precise details. It was necessary to state where the effects of erosion were being felt, without copying *las cumbres de la sierra*. A number of candidates confused flora and fauna e.g. *los pisoteos son una amenaza para la fauna* – which also carried over to 5a. The idea of the tranquility of the fauna being disturbed was sometimes a bit muddled but many candidates still scored the point by mentioning that *muchas personas llegan a zonas alejadas*.
- (d) Most candidates scored at least one mark for noting that the number of participants in future events should not exceed four hundred. Many scored a second point for stating that the routes which events take should not *afectar a las aves en la época de cría*, although *itinerario* sometimes caused problems, with a few referring to it as *horario* and others rephrasing it with another word not related at all e.g. *material*.

The first point, that the event should have been held in successive previous years was more challenging. The omission of *sin interrupción* was not uncommon, and a few even unsuccessfully copied the original word as *interrumpidamente*.

A common lift was *las aves cuando están criando*, although better candidates realised that a neat way to avoid this was to use the subjunctive *estén*.

- (e) This question caused some difficulty, principally because marks could not be given to candidates who wrongly attributed the arguments of those against holding races in national parks to those in favour, and vice versa. A zero scored here affected the language mark.

A common lift was *la conservación de la naturaleza*.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

In general candidates seemed to find this second text, concerning positive benefits of sport, to be more accessible. Answers contained fewer lifts and more appropriate manipulation.

- (a) Candidates who confined their answers to the three indications given in the first paragraph of the success of the rugby programme in Argentinian prisons – *se ha extendido a 15 provincias/50 prisiones, hay 1800 jugadores de rugby* and *ha llegado a otros países* – scored well. A number were tempted to include positives from other sections of the text – *se reinsertan en la sociedad* or *no reinciden* – which could not be accepted here.
- (b) This was generally done well. Most showed understanding of the sort of background which the *Centuriones* came from, and even if they lifted *crecieron rodeados de delincuencia y*, they managed to score the mark with *solo aprendieron a robar*. Not all were able to state that the prisoners' training routine kept them active all the time, but most candidate noted the feeling of freedom that they derived from this.
- (c) The majority of candidates noted the life-mirroring resilience to be experienced in the game of rugby – *aprenden a levantarse cuando se cae*. Many marks were also awarded if *se dan cuenta de todo lo que pueden conseguir* could be paraphrased to avoid copying five or more words. Although there may have been some doubt as to whether *les están dando una salida* had been fully understood, it was often successfully re-worded with *ofreciendo/les dan una salida* etc.
- (d) There were many good answers to this question. Candidates showed good skill in converting direct speech to indirect. *Rodrigo's* feeling of belonging, thinking more, and not about committing crimes, and appreciation of new values were often successfully noted.
- (e) This was a bit more problematic with a number of candidates finding difficulty with the statistics. The use of the right preposition sometimes made a crucial difference – *el índice ha bajado a(l) 5 per cent* scored the mark, whereas *el índice ha bajado (un) 5 per cent* did not. Sometimes, apparently in order not to lift from the text, candidates wrote about *el índice delictivo*, which was not the same thing.

A common lift was *están* trabajando en 57 empresas.

Question 5

The majority of candidates appeared to be aware of the techniques required for this part of the examination. Those who were unaware that higher marks would be scored by summaries containing specific details rather than generalisations, followed by personal responses with opinions and original ideas, rarely achieved outcomes which matched their level of Spanish.

Most paid careful attention to the overall number of words allowed for this question. A few, inadvisedly, began with a lengthy 5b (marked out of 5), leaving very few words for 5a (marked out of 10).

- (a) Although considerable improvement has been made in answering this part of the question, it is worth a reminder of the sort of answer which, despite scoring well for quality of language (marked out of 5), will score next to nothing for content:

Quiero empezar con el texto 1 'Correr en la Sierra de Guadarrama'. En este texto podemos encontrar la información sobre las actividades deportivas en el Parque Nacional. Al acabar de leer este texto, encontré que las carreras tienen los elementos positivos y negativos de deporte...

These opening lines use up nearly one third of the words allowed for both (a) and (b) and the answer has yet to score any content marks.

By contrast, the first part of the following answer scores five for content using fewer words:

El deporte puede causar daños a la biodiversidad. ✓ Aunque se puede disfrutar de los paisajes ✓ las carreras dañan la flora, ✓ y la calma de la fauna es perturbada ✓ cuando miles de personas llegan a zonas apartadas... ✓

Specific details not generalisations are what is required.

- (b) Apart from a tiny minority who had already exhausted their word allocation by the time they reached this point (and thereby scored zero), most candidates had something to say in response to the question. There were very few countries where sport was not considered to be important, especially football. Many commented upon the unifying qualities of sport, especially at national level. Reference was also made to how sport was incorporated in education, and how it contributed to the mental and physical well-being of individuals.

Quality of Language

The quality of the majority of non-native speaking candidates' Spanish, here and throughout the paper, was generally up to the standard required by this examination. Marks were usually in the Sound to Good range. Unless they had been penalised for scoring zero in any of the comprehension questions, native speakers were awarded maximum marks in all three quality of language assessments.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/23
Reading and Writing

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

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| <p>Paper 8685/31 Essay</p> |
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Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- select the title with which they feel most comfortable;
- write a response that is clearly relevant, well-illustrated, coherently structured and well-informed;
- use Spanish which is accurate and of a suitably advanced nature, as well as demonstrate a good use of idiom and appropriate topic-related vocabulary;
- use sentence patterns which show some evidence of complexity in a style which is easy to follow.

General comments

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As for the quality of the language used by candidates, many clearly understood the need to show evidence throughout their essays of the use of complex sentence patterns with a decent range of advanced grammatical structures and tenses where appropriate. This, alongside the effective handling of topic-based vocabulary that related to the actual topic under discussion, is always going to be successful when judged against the mark scheme. The importance of meaningful and focussed preparation in centres in this regard cannot be overstated.

There were a number of common language errors to report and, as always, there were few surprises. Candidates would do well to be aware of these errors for future sessions in order to avoid them in their own writing. A really common language error this year was the tendency to omit accents for the vast majority of words that required them. In some cases, of course, the lack of accents affected comprehension. This was particularly so when candidates attempted to vary their use of tenses with examples such as *toco/tocó* and *comprará/comprara* where the correct accentuation alters the meaning of the conjugated verb. Adjectival agreement also caused widespread difficulty with examples such as *la tecnología moderno* [sic] and *las redes social* [sic]. There was also a surprisingly high number of basic spelling mistakes that involved confusion between the letters 'b' and 'v', 'g' and 'j', 'cc' and 'c' and the use of 'll', 'dd' or 'cc' with words that did not need them – for example *addiccion* [sic], *en general* [sic], *acceptar* [sic] and *vamos a ber* [sic]. Equally common was the use of 'qu' instead of 'cu' in examples such as *como consecuencia* [sic], *con frecuencia* [sic] and *la delinquencia* [sic]. Singular and plural verbs being confused was also a common issue with utterances such as *mis padres y yo tengo buenas relaciones* [sic] and *la gente en España prefieren tener muchos pasatiempos* [sic] very much in evidence. Equally common again during this session was the omission of the letter 'h' when using the perfect tense in sentences such as *...pocos jóvenes an ofrecido mucho a la sociedad* [sic] and *las mujeres an sufrido a causa de la falta de igualdad de oportunidades* [sic]. The Spanish word for 'technology', namely *la tecnología*, also caused much concern with many candidates preferring to use *la technología*, mistakenly inserting the letter 'h'.

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Examples of good use of the language included:

- the correct use of tenses, all correctly conjugated.
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Common errors included:

- inconsistent use of punctuation and, on occasions, no punctuation at all.
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Comments on specific questions

Question 1 – *La juventud*

Nunca ha habido un mejor momento para ser joven que ahora. ¿Está usted de acuerdo?

This was a very popular title. Most essays argued convincingly that this is a particularly good time to be young. Unsurprisingly, many used their own personal experiences to back up the points they were making. There were some reservations expressed, however. Some felt that the pressure on young people to succeed academically and in their chosen careers is greater now than ever before whilst others pointed to the obsession with social media profiles and how these can lead to young people doubting themselves and feeling insecure with their own image. There was also some discussion about how it is often the case that society in general does not always credit young people for their achievements and prefers instead to concentrate on the negative aspects of the lives of some young people (crime, drugs and so on).

Question 2 – *Los medios de comunicación*

¿Tiene todavía la televisión una influencia significativa en la vida diaria de su país?

This was also quite a popular title and was, on the whole, well dealt with by candidates. There was much agreement that television still plays a significant role in the daily life of many people. The point was also made that parents often rely on the television as a way of keeping their younger children entertained at home. The influence of television news programmes was also mentioned in many essays as being one of the many reasons for the popularity of television across the world regardless of the economic stability or otherwise of certain countries. Inevitably, social media was seen by many candidates in their essays as the main threat to the popularity of the television.

Question 3 – *La igualdad de oportunidades*

En la mayoría de los países existen leyes contra la discriminación sexual. ¿Son estas leyes la mejor manera de lograr la igualdad de oportunidades?

This title provided a reasonable range of responses although the most commonly held view was that society should not require the law to achieve gender equality. Many essays argued that the situation is improving with regard to equal opportunities in the workplace but that we still need to continue to make improvements and not take our collective eye off the ball. Cultural and religious issues were also discussed as part of the bigger picture with regard to gender equality and the need to eradicate gender discrimination.

Question 4 – *El tiempo libre*

Una manera excelente de aliviar el estrés es no hacer absolutamente nada en el tiempo libre. ¿Hasta qué punto está usted de acuerdo?

This title proved to be quite popular with candidates. There was unanimous agreement that both relaxing in one's spare time by doing nothing and relaxing by having some form of pastime can be of equal importance. Some argued that sitting at home in a favourite armchair and doing absolutely nothing is very good for the soul and indeed necessary in today's hectic world. Others felt that, whilst doing nothing is a perfectly acceptable way of spending one's spare time, there is nothing better for the mind than to have a hobby or an activity to do when free time is available.

Question 5 – *Los avances científicos y médicos*

Hoy en día, la donación de órganos debería ser obligatoria en todos los países. ¿Qué opina usted?

This was a less popular title with candidates. There was, however, much agreement regarding the importance of organ donation both to support the individual in need of a new organ and the advancement of medical research. There were also many essays that argued that to make organ donation obligatory could be considered an attack on the rights of the individual. Those who responded to this title tended to take one view or the other but managed to argue their case with a degree of conviction and maturity.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

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| <p>Paper 8685/32 Essay</p> |
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Key messages

In order to perform well in this paper, candidates should:

- select the title with which they feel most comfortable;
- write a response that is clearly relevant, well-illustrated, coherently structured and well-informed;
- use Spanish which is accurate and of a suitably advanced nature, as well as demonstrate a good use of idiom and appropriate topic-related vocabulary;
- use sentence patterns which show some evidence of complexity in a style which is easy to follow.

General comments

Overall, the level of ability on display from candidates for this session was good. There were very few examples of essays that simply offered a few random thoughts on the overall topic in the hope that this would suffice. It has been the case for several years now that candidates have embraced the importance of writing essays that respond very clearly to the title set on the paper. Many essays were produced that managed to convince the reader with their tight structure and their ability to support the points being made with evidence and examples in order to make a series of intelligent and articulate points. Such essays will always attract marks in the 'good' or 'very good' sections of the mark scheme for both language and content. As always, centres deserve well-earned praise for preparing their candidates in such a thorough and professional manner so that they are able to produce interesting and mature pieces of writing under examination conditions.

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Comments on specific questions

Question 1 – *La juventud*

Los jóvenes ofrecen muy poco a la sociedad porque todavía les falta madurez. ¿Hasta qué punto está usted de acuerdo?

This was a very popular title on the paper. Many responses pointed out that the majority of young people nowadays tend to contribute a great deal to society in terms of their original thinking and their collective desire to create a better world. It was felt by the majority of candidates who responded to this title that it is unfair to presume that all young people are the same and that they have no commitment to self-improvement. The ability to make a significant contribution to society does not, it was claimed, always depend on high levels of maturity.

Question 2 – *Los medios de comunicación*

Mucha gente se informa de lo que pasa en el mundo a través de las redes sociales en vez de leer periódicos. En su opinión, ¿es esto algo bueno o malo?

This was also quite a popular title and was dealt with well by many candidates. Most felt that using social media instead of newspapers was an inevitable part of modern life and went on to point out the environmental benefits of moving away from newspaper production altogether. Many expressed concern about the unmoderated nature of a lot of content on various social media platforms but also felt confident that most people were able to distinguish between real and fake news. Some essays even sang the praises of newspaper journalism and were keen to flag up the comparative depth of news coverage that tends to be found in newspapers as opposed to online outlets.

Question 3 – *La igualdad de oportunidades*

Todavía existe mucha discriminación contra las personas con discapacidades físicas. ¿Cómo y por qué deberíamos combatir esto?

This title was quite popular with candidates and there was very little doubt that such discrimination still exists and needs, as a matter of urgency, to be stamped out wherever and whenever it arises. There have been improvements in the way disabled people are treated by the authorities but almost every essay felt quite strongly that a lot more needs to be done across all countries. Raising people's awareness of disability generally was considered to be the most important factor when it comes to challenging discrimination.

Question 4 – *El tiempo libre*

Tener un pasatiempo es lo mejor que se puede hacer en el tiempo libre. ¿Comparte usted esta opinión?

This title also proved to be quite popular with candidates. Most were convinced that having a pastime is, indeed, the best way to spend any spare time that one has. There was much support for taking up a sport in order to keep body and mind fit but some essays also backed the idea of relaxing fully in one's free time and doing very little indeed, except perhaps reading or listening to music. It was clear that candidates fully appreciated the need for people to do something during their free time but that it is very much a personal choice as to what one is inclined to do.

Question 5 – *Los avances científicos y médicos*

Donar sangre debería ser obligatorio en todos los países. ¿Qué opina usted?

This was a less popular title with candidates. However, those candidates who responded to this title tended to have a lot to say in favour of making blood donation a compulsory part of everyday life. Some argued that it is very much a moral obligation to do so whilst others felt it should be an individual's right to opt out or in to any system imposed by the authorities.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/33
Essay

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.