

SPANISH LANGUAGE

<p>Paper 8685/01 Speaking</p>

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:
 - **Section 1** Initial presentation (maximum 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes);
 - **Section 2** Topic Conversation (7–8 minutes) on issues arising from the Presentation;
 - **Section 3** General Conversation (8–9 minutes) on themes complete different from those raised in the Topic Conversation.
- Each section should be clearly identified on the recordings, and the prescribed timings observed.
- Candidates should be reminded if necessary to 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 – 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

Overall, candidates performed well in this speaking exam. The performance of candidates covered a large range, from the outstanding to the very basic. Some very good candidates were clearly native or near-native speakers, but occasionally the teacher/Examiner allowed the candidate to go over the required timings. On a few occasions the presentation was not related to any Spanish-speaking country.

The range of samples followed correct procedure with a range from top to bottom, with some Centres even supplying recordings of all candidates entered.

While most Centres carried out the necessary administration efficiently and correctly, an increased number of Centres this series showed errors arising from the incorrect addition of marks, or through errors in transcribing marks to the final mark sheet. It is very important for Centres to carry out administrative tasks meticulously, so as to not to have a detrimental effect on candidate's marks.

Most Centres, however, conducted the tests in accordance with the syllabus and instructions, and as a result candidates had the opportunity to gain access to the full range of marks and to perform to the best of their ability. We thank colleagues in those Centres who made every effort to comply with the instructions.

We remind Centres that it's imperative to keep to the required time for each of the sections in the speaking test, as specified in the syllabus requirements.

Most candidates were well prepared for the examination. They showed their interest in the chosen topics and could speak for the required time. Candidates generally had sufficient information to respond to questions in the Topic Conversation and offered ideas and opinions. Most candidates remembered to ask the Examiner questions, but occasionally needed prompting to do so. Teachers conducting the test are reminded that they should, if necessary, prompt the candidate to ask at least two questions relevant to the issues being discussed.

The General Conversation section was variable in standard and, as always, could be more challenging, owing to the variety of topics that can arise. Teachers conducting the tests are reminded that they, and not the candidate, determine the issues to be discussed. Although many candidates took this opportunity to excel, some were less forthcoming and were more hesitant in this section, especially when dealing with ideas and opinions. There was a marked difference in candidates' ability to deal with and unexpected questions. Furthermore, we advise Teachers conducting the tests to ask challenging questions, rather than basic ones, to provide for an adequate scope for discussion of ideas.

Most candidates were able to ask the Examiner at least one question in both conversation sections. However, a simple *¿y tú?*, for example, did not meet the requirement for seeking information and opinions. In a few cases, the teacher/Examiner had awarded marks when a candidate had declined to ask any questions, even when prompted, which does not meet the criteria for earning marks.

There was considerable variation in the quality of language, but the quality of pronunciation was generally satisfactory. However, issues with some more difficult sounds occasionally impeded communication. We remind both candidates and teachers that it is not recommended to rely on prepared material, as this can lead to flat or inaccurate intonation and stressing. Nevertheless, many candidates made real efforts to sound authentic.

It is important that the working mark sheets are fully completed and submitted for all candidates – including those whose test may not have been formed part of the recorded sample – and enclosed with the recording. Please ensure that samples submitted reflect the whole of the candidate range. We again remind Centres that their marks cannot be confirmed or moderated unless the complete columns of marks under each assessment criterion are shown.

Most Centres recorded the tests on CDs. We again remind the person conducting the tests should announce the centre number and candidate name and number at the start of each test. The test of each candidate should be a separate track or file.

Comments on specific sections

Part 1: Topic Presentation

Guidance on topic areas for the Presentation and discussion may be found in the syllabus. We remind candidates and teachers that topics must relate clearly to aspects of Hispanic life or culture and it is important that candidates make this relevance explicit in their Presentation. No specific reference to a Spanish-speaking country or context, in the presentation, can hinder the achievement of full marks.

Presentations should be a formal and coherent introduction to the subject: pronunciation and clarity of delivery are assessed. It is important to show evidence of preparation, organisation and relevant factual knowledge. Excellent presentations ideally provided a personal overview of the issue which lead to a debate in the topic conversation.

Part 2: Topic Conversation

The Topic Conversation provides the opportunity to develop points arising from the presentation and should not be a further series of mini presentations. Interaction is a key criterion. Candidates are reminded that their responses should expand outside of pre-learned answers, and should be spontaneous, in order to be awarded high marks for responsiveness. Candidates should take part in a discussion, including justifying or refuting a point of view, as well as giving relevant examples or information.

Candidates should ask the Examiner at least two substantial questions in order to gain marks for 'seeking information and opinions'.

Part 3: General Conversation

The General Conversation must be a separate section from the Topic Conversation and it should be clearly announced on the recording when this section starts. It is important that different issues from those addressed in the Topic Conversation should be discussed. Although there are no prescribed areas for the General Conversation, topics covered should be at an appropriate level. Common areas included current affairs, something in the news, the arts, sport, the environment, the economy, politics and social concerns.

The level of sophistication in the discussion of issues in the General Conversation is important. We strongly suggest that Examiners remember to ask questions which are at the A Level, rather than IGCSE Level. Although the conversation could start with some basic, personal or factual questions, candidates must be moved on to more complex issues and have the opportunity to show they can give and justify opinions on more advanced topics. All conversations should discuss more than just descriptions of experiences. The range and style of questioning should allow candidates to use sophisticated language and to show competence in structures at an advanced level, in order to be awarded higher marks.

As in the Topic Conversation, candidates should ask the Examiner questions to seek information and opinions and be prompted to do so if necessary. Questions should follow naturally in the course of the discussion and be phrased appropriately.

Language

Quality of language is assessed in all sections. Centres are again reminded to encourage candidates to use as wide a range of language as possible, and those conducting the tests should take care that candidates have the opportunity to do so. An appropriate level of vocabulary and structure is required.

To gain access to the higher ranges of the mark scheme, candidates needed to show competence in dealing with hypothetical and abstract situations as well as factual or descriptive areas. It's imperative to achieve accuracy in basic structures such as in numbers, verb endings and tenses, use of *ser/estar*, genders and noun/adjective/verb agreements, in order to attain high marks.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/21
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.
- **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 paper provided an appropriate challenge across the ability range. Candidates were much better prepared for the exam this year and were much stronger in technique and following the rubrics. At the upper end there were again many excellent papers which were a pleasure to mark. Nevertheless, equally satisfying were the answers from candidates with more modest linguistic skills who made praiseworthy attempts at tackling the questions. All scripts were generally well presented and there appeared to be little evidence of difficulty with time management.

The two texts dealing with ways of tackling street gangs and their effect on young people and the neighbourhood were accessible to most candidates, often enabling them to make a connection to their own experiences or to those of their friends. Comprehension was generally clearly demonstrated. Apart from a number of instances in **Questions 1 and 2**, most candidates attempted all questions and appeared to be aware that they should not copy more than four consecutive words of text in their answers to the comprehension questions. It was pleasing to note skilled attempts at paraphrase.

Although techniques have improved, we strongly remind candidates to take care in not exceeding the word limit in **Question 5**, as this could hinder the number of marks they could score in **5(b)**. Furthermore, please be aware that the summaries in **5(a)** should be specific to the texts at hand and not over-generalised. Candidates seemed very aware that they are not allowed to copy more than four words directly from the texts, and a number circumvented it by removing an '-s' from plurals, or changing a preposition. In many instances the language still made sense, although occasionally it hindered the quality of language mark.

Overall, candidates had a good communicative level of Spanish. Their written language, although sometimes impaired by incorrect spelling, lack of accents and occasional incorrect register, (an extreme example of this would be a sentence such as: *La vida va hacer difisil pa ellos*), was generally well up to the required standard for this exam. Candidates across the range were to be commended for their positive approach to the tasks in hand.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

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, and take care not to omit words or to include extra words – a feature which often invalidated answers which were otherwise correct.

- (a) This was generally answered well. A number of candidates thought that the equivalent was *gracias a la orquesta Don Telmo*, having been misled by the prompt phrase starting with *gracias*. Some otherwise correct answers were invalidated by the addition of *de Japón*.
- (b) There was another set of good answers here. Incorrect versions commonly omitted *pretende* at the beginning of the answer.
- (c) As long as candidates were aware that to preface their answers with *que...* would not allow them to match the prompt phrase, most were successful. The alternative meaning of *banda* led a few candidates away from *pandilla* and towards phrases involving *música* or *orquesta*.
- (d) This answer was also identified by the majority of candidates. A few candidates omitted *...que no escogieron*.
- (e) This gave rise to the best set of answers. Incorrect versions were extremely rare.

Question 2

Although this is a demanding exercise, candidates often appeared more comfortable in manipulating language structures than they had been in searching for matching phrases in **Question 1**.

In addition to performing 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) Those candidates who recognised that *alegra*, being in the singular, had to be part of a reflexive verb, usually went on to score the mark, with prepositions *de*, *con* or *por* all being accepted. Some attempted to change the cue word *alegra* to *alegre* or *alegran* which, regardless of whether the Spanish is correct or not, is not permissible.
- (b) A good proportion of candidates tackled this question correctly. However, there were a few cases where the candidates wrote *de noche* at the end, not allowing *barrio* to go with *en particular*, and changing the meaning of the sentence in the original text. Some candidates lost the mark when they tried to link *al* with *barrio*, or when they misspelt *atravesar*.
- (c) The majority of candidates were able to manipulate the structure successfully using *suelen*, but some neglected to include the infinitive *usar*.
- (d) More difficulty was encountered here than with any of the other language manipulations. Candidates either omitted the initial *tienen* or, commonly, attempted to use *hay* which, although it works grammatically, does not fit the sense of the original sentence. Some also lost the mark when they forgot to include either *de* before or *a* after *acceder*.
- (e) Most candidates recognised that a subjunctive would be required after *para que* and there were many correct answers. The mark was missed when candidates attempted to use *estén* rather than *sean*.

Question 3

The text about young people seeking refuge in music from gang violence was generally well understood and candidates who gave clear, detailed answers in their own words achieved good marks. A few candidates lost marks when they copied five or more words directly from the text. A small minority disregarded the reference given to the paragraph where the information for each specific question was to be found. Candidates should also always remember that the marks allocated to each question – (2), (3) or (4) – are a reliable guide as to how many pieces of information are being sought. The use of bullet points, instead of writing in complete sentences, will reduce the number of marks available for quality of language.

- (a) Nearly every candidate was able to supply the age element required by this answer but, of these, a considerable number copied at least five consecutive words from the text in doing so. For example, just writing *entre 12 y 20 años* constitutes 5 consecutive words and candidates need to be very careful when dealing with figures in particular. Most candidates got the third point although, again, many could not avoid copying *de barrios dominados por pandillas*. The mark that differentiated here was *se refugiaron en la música*.
- (b) The mark scheme required some indication of the number of young people whose self-esteem would be lifted, and many were unable to indicate that correctly, with quite a few writing *miles* or *500 mil* or just *jóvenes* without any indication of number. Most candidates scored the mark for *alejarnos de las pandillas*, although some copied literally *caigan en manos de las pandillas*. Many candidates also rephrased the idea of hidden talents correctly, but only the very best candidates were able to show clearly that they understood the difference between *descubrir talentos* and *hacerles descubrir talentos*.
- (c) The maximum score of two marks was not always achieved in this question. Most candidates understood that the neighbourhoods were dangerous and there was the risk of attacks, but many omitted the detail of being attacked at night which was necessary for the mark. Some confusion was apparent amongst less able candidates who could not rephrase the idea of the absence of communication links with gangs, and resorted to copying word for word *se han roto las vías de comunicación con las pandillas*, which could not be credited.
- (d) This four mark question was generally handled well. The point that not so many candidates scored on was the orchestra being an alternative to selling drugs or rehearsing in the hours when the gangs were selling drugs, with a lot of candidates writing *ofrece una alternativa* without mentioning to what. ‘Young people being occupied in their free time’ was usually successfully mentioned, (provided that *ocupados después de la escuela* was not copied word for word), and a mark was usually scored for either that they received musical instruction free of charge or that the orchestra gave them instruments instead of guns. Moderate success was achieved in noting that the orchestra also offered a more positive outlook for the youngsters’ futures.
- (e) The question worked well and challenged candidates adequately. The majority were able to state that countries in *Centroamérica* should fight violence with the help of developed countries and that they should have programs to prevent violence or similar projects to the orchestra, (although *programas para la prevención de la violencia* was copied word for word in several occasions). The final point, too, was often attempted, but at times was lacking an important element such as *locales* or *que ayuden a la población*.

Section 2

Question 4

The second text, about the rehabilitation of former gang members, provided a similar challenge to the first. Candidates performed equally well here.

- (a) This was a relatively accessible question, with candidates being able to express the idea of former gang members becoming their own bosses, provided that they managed to avoid directly copying *jefes de sus propios negocios*. There was some ambiguity to be avoided when noting the other two points. Answers such as *graban hits de artistas conocidos* could mean that ex-gangsters actually are the performers, and awareness of the difference between the masculine *guía* and feminine *guía* was not apparent from *hacen guías turísticas* or *ofrecen / dan guías a los turistas*.

- (b) This question presented far greater challenge. Difficulty was apparent in understanding use of *ola* in this context. Many reproduced *ola restauradora* and *ola de desplazamientos* in answers which showed minimal comprehension and lacked further explanation. Only the best candidates managed to express themselves clearly here and score full marks.
- (c) Most candidates understood the way in which the programme *Esperanza* works and the first two points in this answer were almost always mentioned. There was some, possibly involuntary, direct copying of *la confianza del jefe de la pandilla*, although others substituted *jefe* for *líder* and *pandilla* for *banda*. Candidates found it slightly more challenging to understand that it was the ex-gang leaders who were the ones who came up with the idea of a business they wanted to develop, with many inserting *surgen* into their answers in an incorrect way showing that they had not really understood its meaning. The last point was usually attempted, although if the element of *negocio* was absent it failed to score.
- (d) This question was one of the better answered in this section, where the idea of financing programmes was clear, and those who understood the meaning of *capacitación profesional* were able to state that training schemes were being available. Candidates sometimes struggled to rephrase the idea of a gun amnesty, and inaccurate phrasing occasionally seemed to suggest it was the government willingly handing arms to the gang members.
- (e) This question allowed the majority of candidates to score some marks. Most candidates could express the idea of Pacheco's life being less dangerous, and the fact he no longer runs risks to earn money, although some unclear phrasing often led candidates to blur these two ideas into one, and they could only be credited for one idea. Fewer candidates grasped the full meaning of the phrase *haciendo cosas dentro de la ley también se puede llevar sustento a casa* and there were numerous instances of direct copying.

Question 5

Although there is still room for improvement, it was pleasing to see that candidates are showing increased awareness of how best to approach this final question in the exam.

- (a) 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 paid careful attention to the question which had been asked, and focused their attention on specific details of how gang culture is being tackled in San Salvador and Panamá had little difficulty in noting many of these and scored good marks. Those who scored lower marks generally did so by wasting precious words in a number of ways, including: irrelevant introductions; attempting to summarise everything in the texts; adding their own points of view; copying entire sentences from the texts. Apart from the small minority who exceeded the word limit sufficiently in **5(a)** to render their **5(b)** (personal opinion) ineligible for consideration, candidates either repeated their answers from **Questions 3** and **4**, copied big portions of the original text, or wrote relevant summaries comparing the texts; the latter candidates achieved the highest scores.

An example of how to score 6 marks in fewer than 50 words reads as follows:

Debido a la orquesta Don Telmo, ✓ varios jóvenes de San Salvador, provenientes de zonas dominadas por pandillas, se han refugiado en la música. Aumentando su autoestima ✓ haciéndolos descubrir talentos ✓ y evitando su unión a una pandilla, ✓ al mantenerlos ocupados ✓ les da una visión distinta para su futuro ✓...

- (b) Many candidates scored high marks, particularly those who expressed a new idea and/or gave an opinion, rather than relying on ideas from the source texts. Most addressed the question correctly and candidates who were less able linguistically often offered some very good answers. Some less successful answers did not go much beyond saying that yes there was, or no there was not, crime in their area; better answers gave opinions on the causes of crime in their area, or how the authorities prevented it.

Quality of Language

The quality of the majority of candidates' Spanish, here and throughout the paper, was generally up to the standard required by this examination. Marks were frequently in the Good to Very Good range.

At the top end, there were candidates who not only had a high level of grammatical awareness but the skills and vocabulary to express themselves very well. Unless they had been penalised for scoring zero in any of the comprehension questions, such candidates were awarded maximum marks in all three quality of language assessments.

Other candidates had major difficulties with verb formation, and particularly use of the singular or plural verb forms. These candidates sometimes struggled to perform in **Questions 3 and 4**, but their Quality of Language mark often improved greatly in **Question 5** when their writing was more free-style.

Finally, there was a large number of candidates who wrote as they speak, with varying degrees of success. A lack of accents and misspelling of words particularly *v* for *b*, or vice versa, *y* for *ll*, and *c* for *s*, was widespread.

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.
- **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 paper provided an appropriate challenge to candidates across the ability range. At the upper end there were many excellent papers which were a pleasure to mark. However, equally satisfying were the answers from candidates who attempted to show off more modest linguistic skills to the best advantage. All scripts were generally well presented and there appeared to be little evidence of difficulty with time management.

The two texts dealing with technological and medical innovations were accessible to most candidates, and comprehension was often clearly demonstrated. There appears to be a growing awareness of the specialised techniques required for scoring well in this exam. Most candidates attempted all questions and appeared to be aware that they should not copy more than four consecutive words of text in their answers to the comprehension questions. It was pleasing to note skilled attempts at paraphrase.

Despite good, overall understanding, full marks were on occasion not achieved when additional relevant details were not included in answers. We recommend that candidates pay close attention to the number of marks allocated to each question, in order to gauge the amount of detail to be included accordingly. Very few candidates exceeded the 140 word limit in **Question 5**, thus reducing the number of marks they could score in **5(b)**. Summaries in **5(a)** are improving as the message seems to be getting through that relevant specific details score many more marks than vague generalisations.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Question 1

As stated in the Key Messages above, candidates should seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question, and take care not to omit words or to include extra words - a feature which often invalidated answers which were otherwise correct.

(a) and **(e)** were almost universally answered correctly.

(b) and **(d)** were invalidated when correct answers were prefaced by *todo* and *also* respectively.

(c) was occasionally answered incorrectly by the omission of *están*.

Question 2

This proved to be the customary demanding exercise and maximum or near maximum marks were more often the exception than the rule.

In addition to performing 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) This was generally done well, with a variety of constructions and vocabulary being allowed. Most candidates opted for the imperfect subjunctive, although the preterite was equally permissible. Acceptable variations on *después de que Vidal viajara / viajase / viajó* included *después de que el viaje de Vidal terminara / terminase / terminó / acabara / acabase / acabó* and *después de que Vidal hiciera / hiciese / hizo realizara / realizase / realizó su viaje / llegara / llegase / llegó de su viaje*. Further acceptable variations were also possible.
- (b) Less variety was acceptable here. It is important that candidates check to see that their answers would fit back into the text in place of the original phrase. Here, this would have ruled out the use of the preterite or the reflexive *situarse*. Many candidates were successful.
- (c) It appeared that *carecer* was not so well known amongst non-native speakers, and a number of candidates struggled with this manipulation. Unnecessary prepositions were often added.
- (d) There were many correct answers to this, with candidates availing themselves of the number of different variations on a correct answer: *(a / por) la (buena / gran) reputación que tiene / posee nuestra comunidad / de nuestra comunidad*.
- (e) Most candidates recognised that a subjunctive would be required after *posible que*, and native speaker candidates invariably answered correctly. Other candidates at times found difficulty in constructing the subjunctive of *producir*, or offered the singular when only the plural would do.

Question 3

The text about developments in 3D printing was generally well understood and candidates who gave clear, detailed answers in their own words achieved good marks. A few candidates lost marks when they copied five or more words directly from the text. A small minority disregarded the reference given to the paragraph where the information for each specific question was to be found. Candidates should also always remember that the marks allocated to each question – (2), (3) or (4) – are a reliable guide to how many pieces of information are being sought. The use of bullet points, instead of writing in complete sentences, will reduce the number of marks available for quality of language.

- (a) The first two points – that Vidal's company would enter the market and that all the machines would be designed in Spain – were clearly understood by the vast majority of candidates. To score these marks it was necessary to clarify the market in question or identify the machines, i.e. 3D printers. A number of candidates neglected to do this. The third point – that the company would be the leaders in this product – was sometimes overlooked.
- (b) There were many good answers to this question, as candidates readily identified the superior speed and resolution of the new printers as being pertinent details. A small minority of candidates were attracted to the sentence in the text containing the word *avance*, and mistakenly gave details which related to the old models. The third point concerning reduced costs was generally clearly stated.
- (c) This was another question which was generally answered well. The excellence of Spanish engineers, the good reputation of Spanish scientists and the attractive quality of life in that country were commonly correctly noted. Many candidates scored maximum marks.

- (d) This four mark question proved to be a little more challenging. For the first point it was necessary to stress that the *centros de innovación* encouraged the development of local businesses, and for the second that the new companies that were starting up were based around technology. Candidates sometimes inverted the concept, i.e. creating local business and developing technology companies. The collaboration with universities was mostly identified correctly. The last point, whether by oversight or otherwise, was a popular direct copy of *la innovación en el sector público*. Paraphrasing this idea often proved to be challenging and some candidates lost the idea of *innovación*.
- (e) The maximum of two marks was a little harder to come by here. It is sometimes an indication that comprehension is proving difficult when lifting becomes more prevalent. This was often the case with *series cortas de objetos a (precios)* and *(crecerá) a tasas del 20% (anual)*. The final point concerning the annual growth rate in the market for 3D printing was challenging for many candidates.

Section 2

Question 4

The second text, about the development of a revolutionary new vaccination to aid lung cancer patients, provided a similar challenge to the first. Candidates performed equally well.

- (a) Although this was a fairly straightforward question referring to a relatively accessible section of the text, not every candidate performed as well as they might have done. Details were important, especially the numerical ones, and those who took pains to include them sometimes transgressed the lifting rules. Possibly the most popular lift in the whole exam was *de los últimos 10 años*. We remind candidates that numbers count as words in lifts –direct word for word copying– and that writing *diez* in place of 10 is not considered a paraphrase. The second point also had some word for word copying, with either *el número de personas que* or *vivir dos años tras el...* often being repeated. The final point about the availability of this vaccination for patients was sometimes overlooked.
- (b) This question was answered well. The benefits of the treatment for patients were clearly identified. A few candidates missed the first mark by stating that there were fewer side effects rather than none. The vast majority were able to point out that no hospital stay was necessary. Provided that fewer than five words were borrowed directly from *un costo similar al resto de los tratamientos* when paraphrasing the benefits for the health systems, many candidates went on to score the maximum.
- (c) The first point, that the vaccination encourages the patient's immune system to fight the illness, was successfully noted by many. Comprehension of *tarde más en recaer* was not so apparent, and so maximum scores were not so common for this question.
- (d) This was a challenging four-mark question and only the best candidates achieved full marks. The text contained a number of details about the importance of the vaccination and the key was to tease out which of these amounted to it being revolutionary. The first point, about it breaking moulds beyond those of science was rarely mentioned. Far more success was achieved with the point about the vaccination demonstrating that Latin America is capable of developing innovatory products. Also, if copying more than 4 words from the text was avoided, the fact that this particular product was travelling from the south to the north of the planet was often noted. The fact that Latin America was actually manufacturing the vaccination was often overlooked.
- (e) The final question also posed some challenges. Some answers concerning the fact that science is beginning to bring benefits to Latin American economies did not make it clear who was benefitting from whom. The second point about the change in the way science is being funded was generally well understood. Provided that the lift *del gobierno y de las empresas privadas* could be avoided, the third point about collaboration was often clearly stated.

Question 5

As stated earlier, it was pleasing to note that many candidates now appear to be aware of the techniques required for this part of the examination. The vast majority paid careful attention to the overall number of words allowed for this question. Most summaries gave specific details rather than generalisations, and the better personal responses contained opinions and original ideas.

- (a) Candidates who paid careful attention to the question which had been asked, and focused their attention on the benefits of scientific and technological innovations, had little difficulty in noting a number of these and scored good marks. Those who scored lower marks generally did so by wasting precious words in a number of ways, including: irrelevant introductions; attempting to summarise everything in the texts, (not just the benefits); adding their own points of view; copying entire sentences from the texts.

An example of how to score 5 marks in approximately the first 40 words reads as follows:
Los beneficios son que los pacientes de órganos pueden obtenerlos sin donaciones. ✓ También hay un avance en productividad ✓ y los costes de manufacturación son reducidos. ✓ Además, ayudan a desarrollar nuevas compañías tecnológicas ✓ y también impulsan la innovación en el sector público ✓...

- (b) Good explanations of a choice of technological innovation were often given. Better candidates went on to give their opinion on how this innovation was of benefit to the world. A few thought they had to choose between the innovations described in the two texts, (an acceptable interpretation of the question), although this often gave difficulty in finding anything new to say.

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 generally 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

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 paper provided an appropriate challenge across the ability range. Candidates were much better prepared for the exam this year and were much stronger in technique and following the rubrics. At the upper end there were again many excellent papers which were a pleasure to mark. Nevertheless, equally satisfying were the answers from candidates with more modest linguistic skills who made praiseworthy attempts at tackling the questions. All scripts were generally well presented and there appeared to be little evidence of difficulty with time management.

The two texts dealing with ways of tackling street gangs and their effect on young people and the neighbourhood were accessible to most candidates, often enabling them to make a connection to their own experiences or to those of their friends. Comprehension was generally clearly demonstrated. Apart from a number of instances in **Questions 1 and 2**, most candidates attempted all questions and appeared to be aware that they should not copy more than four consecutive words of text in their answers to the comprehension questions. It was pleasing to note skilled attempts at paraphrase.

Although techniques have improved, we strongly remind candidates to take care in not exceeding the word limit in **Question 5**, as this could hinder the number of marks they could score in **5(b)**. Furthermore, please be aware that the summaries in **5(a)** should be specific to the texts at hand and not over-generalised. Candidates seemed very aware that they are not allowed to copy more than four words directly from the texts, and a number circumvented it by removing an '-s' from plurals, or changing a preposition. In many instances the language still made sense, although occasionally it hindered the quality of language mark.

Overall, candidates had a good communicative level of Spanish. Their written language, although sometimes impaired by incorrect spelling, lack of accents and occasional incorrect register, (an extreme example of this would be a sentence such as: *La vida va hacer difisil pa ellos*), was generally well up to the required standard for this exam. Candidates across the range were to be commended for their positive approach to the tasks in hand.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

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, and take care not to omit words or to include extra words – a feature which often invalidated answers which were otherwise correct.

- (a) This was generally answered well. A number of candidates thought that the equivalent was *gracias a la orquesta Don Telmo*, having been misled by the prompt phrase starting with *gracias*. Some otherwise correct answers were invalidated by the addition of *de Japón*.
- (b) There was another set of good answers here. Incorrect versions commonly omitted *pretende* at the beginning of the answer.
- (c) As long as candidates were aware that to preface their answers with *que...* would not allow them to match the prompt phrase, most were successful. The alternative meaning of *banda* led a few candidates away from *pandilla* and towards phrases involving *música* or *orquesta*.
- (d) This answer was also identified by the majority of candidates. A few candidates omitted *...que no escogieron*.
- (e) This gave rise to the best set of answers. Incorrect versions were extremely rare.

Question 2

Although this is a demanding exercise, candidates often appeared more comfortable in manipulating language structures than they had been in searching for matching phrases in **Question 1**.

In addition to performing 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) Those candidates who recognised that *alegra*, being in the singular, had to be part of a reflexive verb, usually went on to score the mark, with prepositions *de*, *con* or *por* all being accepted. Some attempted to change the cue word *alegra* to *alegre* or *alegran* which, regardless of whether the Spanish is correct or not, is not permissible.
- (b) A good proportion of candidates tackled this question correctly. However, there were a few cases where the candidates wrote *de noche* at the end, not allowing *barrio* to go with *en particular*, and changing the meaning of the sentence in the original text. Some candidates lost the mark when they tried to link *al* with *barrio*, or when they misspelt *atravesar*.
- (c) The majority of candidates were able to manipulate the structure successfully using *suelen*, but some neglected to include the infinitive *usar*.
- (d) More difficulty was encountered here than with any of the other language manipulations. Candidates either omitted the initial *tienen* or, commonly, attempted to use *hay* which, although it works grammatically, does not fit the sense of the original sentence. Some also lost the mark when they forgot to include either *de* before or *a* after *acceder*.
- (e) Most candidates recognised that a subjunctive would be required after *para que* and there were many correct answers. The mark was missed when candidates attempted to use *estén* rather than *sean*.

Question 3

The text about young people seeking refuge in music from gang violence was generally well understood and candidates who gave clear, detailed answers in their own words achieved good marks. A few candidates lost marks when they copied five or more words directly from the text. A small minority disregarded the reference given to the paragraph where the information for each specific question was to be found. Candidates should also always remember that the marks allocated to each question – (2), (3) or (4) – are a reliable guide as to how many pieces of information are being sought. The use of bullet points, instead of writing in complete sentences, will reduce the number of marks available for quality of language.

- (a) Nearly every candidate was able to supply the age element required by this answer but, of these, a considerable number copied at least five consecutive words from the text in doing so. For example, just writing *entre 12 y 20 años* constitutes 5 consecutive words and candidates need to be very careful when dealing with figures in particular. Most candidates got the third point although, again, many could not avoid copying *de barrios dominados por pandillas*. The mark that differentiated here was *se refugiaron en la música*.
- (b) The mark scheme required some indication of the number of young people whose self-esteem would be lifted, and many were unable to indicate that correctly, with quite a few writing *miles* or *500 mil* or just *jóvenes* without any indication of number. Most candidates scored the mark for *alejarnos de las pandillas*, although some copied literally *caigan en manos de las pandillas*. Many candidates also rephrased the idea of hidden talents correctly, but only the very best candidates were able to show clearly that they understood the difference between *descubrir talentos* and *hacerles descubrir talentos*.
- (c) The maximum score of two marks was not always achieved in this question. Most candidates understood that the neighbourhoods were dangerous and there was the risk of attacks, but many omitted the detail of being attacked at night which was necessary for the mark. Some confusion was apparent amongst less able candidates who could not rephrase the idea of the absence of communication links with gangs, and resorted to copying word for word *se han roto las vías de comunicación con las pandillas*, which could not be credited.
- (d) This four mark question was generally handled well. The point that not so many candidates scored on was the orchestra being an alternative to selling drugs or rehearsing in the hours when the gangs were selling drugs, with a lot of candidates writing *ofrece una alternativa* without mentioning to what. 'Young people being occupied in their free time' was usually successfully mentioned, (provided that *ocupados después de la escuela* was not copied word for word), and a mark was usually scored for either that they received musical instruction free of charge or that the orchestra gave them instruments instead of guns. Moderate success was achieved in noting that the orchestra also offered a more positive outlook for the youngsters' futures.
- (e) The question worked well and challenged candidates adequately. The majority were able to state that countries in *Centroamérica* should fight violence with the help of developed countries and that they should have programs to prevent violence or similar projects to the orchestra, (although *programas para la prevención de la violencia* was copied word for word in several occasions). The final point, too, was often attempted, but at times was lacking an important element such as *locales* or *que ayuden a la población*.

Section 2

Question 4

The second text, about the rehabilitation of former gang members, provided a similar challenge to the first. Candidates performed equally well here.

- (a) This was a relatively accessible question, with candidates being able to express the idea of former gang members becoming their own bosses, provided that they managed to avoid directly copying *jefes de sus propios negocios*. There was some ambiguity to be avoided when noting the other two points. Answers such as *graban hits de artistas conocidos* could mean that ex-gangsters actually are the performers, and awareness of the difference between the masculine *guía* and feminine *guía* was not apparent from *hacen guías turísticas* or *ofrecen / dan guías a los turistas*.

- (b) This question presented far greater challenge. Difficulty was apparent in understanding use of *ola* in this context. Many reproduced *ola restauradora* and *ola de desplazamientos* in answers which showed minimal comprehension and lacked further explanation. Only the best candidates managed to express themselves clearly here and score full marks.
- (c) Most candidates understood the way in which the programme *Esperanza* works and the first two points in this answer were almost always mentioned. There was some, possibly involuntary, direct copying of *la confianza del jefe de la pandilla*, although others substituted *jefe* for *líder* and *pandilla* for *banda*. Candidates found it slightly more challenging to understand that it was the ex-gang leaders who were the ones who came up with the idea of a business they wanted to develop, with many inserting *surgen* into their answers in an incorrect way showing that they had not really understood its meaning. The last point was usually attempted, although if the element of *negocio* was absent it failed to score.
- (d) This question was one of the better answered in this section, where the idea of financing programmes was clear, and those who understood the meaning of *capacitación profesional* were able to state that training schemes were being available. Candidates sometimes struggled to rephrase the idea of a gun amnesty, and inaccurate phrasing occasionally seemed to suggest it was the government willingly handing arms to the gang members.
- (e) This question allowed the majority of candidates to score some marks. Most candidates could express the idea of Pacheco's life being less dangerous, and the fact he no longer runs risks to earn money, although some unclear phrasing often led candidates to blur these two ideas into one, and they could only be credited for one idea. Fewer candidates grasped the full meaning of the phrase *haciendo cosas dentro de la ley también se puede llevar sustento a casa* and there were numerous instances of direct copying.

Question 5

Although there is still room for improvement, it was pleasing to see that candidates are showing increased awareness of how best to approach this final question in the exam.

- (a) 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 paid careful attention to the question which had been asked, and focused their attention on specific details of how gang culture is being tackled in San Salvador and Panamá had little difficulty in noting many of these and scored good marks. Those who scored lower marks generally did so by wasting precious words in a number of ways, including: irrelevant introductions; attempting to summarise everything in the texts; adding their own points of view; copying entire sentences from the texts. Apart from the small minority who exceeded the word limit sufficiently in **5(a)** to render their **5(b)** (personal opinion) ineligible for consideration, candidates either repeated their answers from **Questions 3** and **4**, copied big portions of the original text, or wrote relevant summaries comparing the texts; the latter candidates achieved the highest scores.

An example of how to score 6 marks in fewer than 50 words reads as follows:

Debido a la orquesta Don Telmo, ✓ varios jóvenes de San Salvador, provenientes de zonas dominadas por pandillas, se han refugiado en la música. Aumentando su autoestima ✓ haciéndolos descubrir talentos ✓ y evitando su unión a una pandilla, ✓ al mantenerlos ocupados ✓ les da una visión distinta para su futuro ✓...

- (b) Many candidates scored high marks, particularly those who expressed a new idea and/or gave an opinion, rather than relying on ideas from the source texts. Most addressed the question correctly and candidates who were less able linguistically often offered some very good answers. Some less successful answers did not go much beyond saying that yes there was, or no there was not, crime in their area; better answers gave opinions on the causes of crime in their area, or how the authorities prevented it.

Quality of Language

The quality of the majority of candidates' Spanish, here and throughout the paper, was generally up to the standard required by this examination. Marks were frequently in the Good to Very Good range.

At the top end, there were candidates who not only had a high level of grammatical awareness but the skills and vocabulary to express themselves very well. Unless they had been penalised for scoring zero in any of the comprehension questions, such candidates were awarded maximum marks in all three quality of language assessments.

Other candidates had major difficulties with verb formation, and particularly use of the singular or plural verb forms. These candidates sometimes struggled to perform in **Questions 3 and 4**, but their Quality of Language mark often improved greatly in **Question 5** when their writing was more free-style.

Finally, there was a large number of candidates who wrote as they speak, with varying degrees of success. A lack of accents and misspelling of words particularly *v* for *b*, or vice versa, *y* for *ll*, and *c* for *s*, was widespread.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/31
Essay

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

The essay titles for this session once again appeared to differentiate well and there was a reasonably equitable distribution of the questions attempted with some titles proving more popular than others. It would be fair to say that many candidates were able to perform with a good degree of success and the way in which they tackled the essay writing task with maturity, good sense and structural integrity was impressive. The best essays showed more convincing depth and greater levels of analysis. Centres can be justifiably pleased with the way in which their candidates approached this essay paper and it is somewhat obvious to examiners that there is a good understanding of the mark scheme and, more generally, of the demands of the examination itself.

Most candidates wrote essays that were relevant to the title. Nevertheless, there were still a few essays that were too general or too vague. Those candidates who managed to keep their focus by responding directly to the title will have been appropriately rewarded in the content section of the mark scheme. We remind candidates and Centres that the answers must be directly related to the question set out in the paper.

The quality of written Spanish used by candidates ranged from outstanding to unsatisfactory. Numerous essays showed a reasonably confident use of complex sentence structures and a wide range of vocabulary. A good grasp of Spanish grammar was evident and often resulted in essays that were articulate, relevant and coherently argued. Coherent structure is one crucial element of good essay writing and this was dealt with successfully by many candidates. However, this session appeared to produce a high number of essays whose success was limited by poor use of punctuation. We remind candidates that it is imperative for an Examiner to be able to follow the argument and for this it is crucial to use basic punctuation correctly (full stops, commas, capital letters to begin sentences and so on) in order to achieve marks in the higher range of the mark scheme.

There were very few cases in this session of essays that exceeded the stipulated word limit of 250–400 words. As has been mentioned in previous reports, we stress that candidates need to ensure that they keep to the word limit and Centres are advised to highlight the importance of this.

Examples of good use of the language included:

- a clear understanding with regard to the use of tenses, in particular the differences between the imperfect, the perfect and the preterite.
- the use of a wide range of appropriately topic-related vocabulary and idiom.
- adjectives and adverbs used well to enrich the variety of language offered in the essay.
- the ability to avoid repetition of key phrases.
- the subjunctive mood, both present and past, used to good effect.
- the careful use of expressions designed specifically to enhance structure (eg *por otra parte*, *no obstante*, *sin embargo*, *a decir la verdad*, *al fin y al cabo* etc.)
- the sensible use of connectives in order to lengthen sentences and give them more complexity whilst not sacrificing clarity.
- being able to use Spanish accents in a consistently fit and proper fashion.

Common errors included:

- the use of *'porque de'* [sic.] to translate 'because of'.
- Confusion between the letters 's' and 'c' (eg. *'internasional'* [sic.] and *'convensional'* [sic.]
- incorrect spelling of key words such as *'el desarrollo'* [sic.], *'desafortunamente'* [sic.], *'el problema'* [sic.] and *'problamente'* [sic.].
- misunderstanding of the differences between *'hay'* and *'es/tiene'*.
- a misunderstanding of the use of the personal *'a'* in Spanish.
- Writing Spanish as it sounds. For example *'la jente'* [sic.], *'alludar'* [sic.], *'aci'* [sic.] and *'asta'* [sic.].
- Use of gerunds for infinitives in utterances such as *'En la vida, jugando a los deportes es importante...'* [sic.]

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 – La gastronomía

Hoy en día, con la tentación universal de la comida basura, mantener una dieta sana resulta imposible. ¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo?

This was a very popular and generally well answered question with a predictably wide variety of approaches to the issue. Most essays suggested that junk food is perfectly acceptable if consumed occasionally as opposed to all the time. Some essays went on to criticise the suppliers of such products and their targeting of young people (with the appeal of a free toy with a burger and so on) although there was also some praise for the appearance on fast-food menus of more healthy items such as salads and wraps.

Question 2 – La igualdad de oportunidades

Si aceptamos que la discriminación racial todavía existe en varios países del mundo, ¿qué podemos hacer para combatirla?

This was a slightly less popular title on the paper. There was, however, little doubt amongst candidates that racial discrimination still needs to be tackled in our contemporary society. Many suggestions were made in terms of passing new laws to clamp down on racist behaviour but most essays concluded that educating people at a very young age about the need for racial harmony was crucial as a way forward.

Question 3 – Los deportes

Ganar no importa. Lo que importa es participar. ¿Qué opinas tú?

This was another very popular title indeed. Candidates argued somewhat convincingly, it has to be said, that whilst winning is clearly important, it is so much more important to participate and, furthermore, to learn from any given defeat in order to improve for next time. Both team sports and individual sports were used as examples of the importance of enjoying the nature of sporting participation. A small number of essays did,

however, argue very well that winning is indeed the whole point of sporting endeavour and that it matters so much more than simply taking part.

Question 4 – El desarrollo social y económico

Un país con buen desarrollo social y económico es un país feliz. ¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo?

This was a less popular title amongst candidates. Those who attempted to respond did so in a fairly convincing manner. The best essays often pointed out that economic and social development are crucial to a country's success but that happiness is a more subtle element in a country's identity and requires more than just material well-being in order to be widespread. The avoidance of political conflict together with successful regional diplomacy were also mentioned as important features that can contribute to a country's happiness.

Question 5 – La conservación

Hay que aceptar que, a veces, la conservación de la naturaleza tiene que sufrir como consecuencia del progreso. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

A reasonably popular and generally well answered and well-illustrated title. Many essays agreed with the statement in the title but argued that the protection of nature cannot be ignored except at our collective peril. Industrial and technological progress were considered to be crucial elements in a country's success but it was argued that much more respect is needed in every country towards caring for the environment and being aware of its delicate nature.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/32
Essay

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

The essay titles for this session once again appeared to differentiate well and there was a reasonably equitable distribution of the questions attempted with some titles proving more popular than others. It would be fair to say that many candidates were able to perform with a good degree of success and the way in which they tackled the essay writing task with maturity, good sense and structural integrity was impressive. The best essays showed more convincing depth and greater levels of analysis. Centres can be justifiably pleased with the way in which their candidates approached this essay paper and it is somewhat obvious to examiners that there is a good understanding of the mark scheme and, more generally, of the demands of the examination itself.

Most candidates wrote essays that were relevant to the title. Nevertheless, there were still a few essays that were too general or too vague. Those candidates who managed to keep their focus by responding directly to the title will have been appropriately rewarded in the content section of the mark scheme. We remind candidates and Centres that the answers must be directly related to the question set out in the paper.

The quality of written Spanish used by candidates ranged from outstanding to unsatisfactory. Numerous essays showed a reasonably confident use of complex sentence structures and a wide range of vocabulary. A good grasp of Spanish grammar was evident and often resulted in essays that were articulate, relevant and coherently argued. Coherent structure is one crucial element of good essay writing and this was dealt with successfully by many candidates. However, this session appeared to produce a high number of essays whose success was limited by poor use of punctuation. We remind candidates that it is imperative for an Examiner to be able to follow the argument and for this it is crucial to use basic punctuation correctly (full stops, commas, capital letters to begin sentences and so on) in order to achieve marks in the higher range of the mark scheme.

There were very few cases in this session of essays that exceeded the stipulated word limit of 250–400 words. As has been mentioned in previous reports, we stress that candidates need to ensure that they keep to the word limit and Centres are advised to highlight the importance of this.

Examples of good use of the language included:

- a clear understanding with regard to the use of tenses, in particular the differences between the imperfect, the perfect and the preterite.
- the use of a wide range of appropriately topic-related vocabulary and idiom.
- adjectives and adverbs used well to enrich the variety of language offered in the essay.
- the ability to avoid repetition of key phrases.
- the subjunctive mood, both present and past, used to good effect.
- the careful use of expressions designed specifically to enhance structure (eg *por otra parte*, *no obstante*, *sin embargo*, *a decir la verdad*, *al fin y al cabo* etc.)
- the sensible use of connectives in order to lengthen sentences and give them more complexity whilst not sacrificing clarity.
- being able to use Spanish accents in a consistently fit and proper fashion.

Common errors included:

- the use of *'porque de'* [sic.] to translate 'because of'.
- Confusion between the letters 's' and 'c' (eg. *'internasional'* [sic.] and *'convensional'* [sic.]
- incorrect spelling of key words such as *'el desarrollo'* [sic.], *'desafortunamente'* [sic.], *'el problema'* [sic.] and *'problamente'* [sic.].
- misunderstanding of the differences between *'hay'* and *'es/tiene'*.
- a misunderstanding of the use of the personal 'a' in Spanish.
- Writing Spanish as it sounds. For example *'la jente'* [sic.], *'alludar'* [sic.], *'aci'* [sic.] and *'asta'* [sic.].
- Use of gerunds for infinitives in utterances such as *'En la vida, jugando a los deportes es importante...'* [sic.]

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 – La gastronomía

Hoy en día, hay demasiados aditivos (por ejemplo el azúcar y la sal) en nuestra dieta. ¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo?

This was a very popular and generally well answered question with a predictably wide variety of approaches to the issue. Many essays suggested that food additives are indeed a remarkably common aspect of our daily diet and that many of them are essential in order to improve the taste and appearance of food. Most essays suggested that we would be likely to benefit from stricter controls over exactly what goes into our pre-packed food and that we should all endeavour to use less salt and sugar in our diet.

Question 2 – La igualdad de oportunidades

La igualdad social es un sueño imposible porque siempre habrá gente rica y gente pobre. ¿Qué opinas tú?

This was a slightly less popular title on the paper. There was, however, little doubt amongst candidates who selected this title that there is an unfortunate inevitability regarding wealth distribution in societies across the globe. Social equality, it was argued, should be an ambitious objective for governments but many felt that it would be more realistic to attempt to reduce it rather than to eradicate it entirely.

Question 3 – Los deportes

Muchos afirman que el deporte es una de las actividades más nobles y distinguidas de la raza humana. ¿Qué opinas tú?

This was another very popular title indeed. Candidates argued that sporting prowess is unquestionably a noble and distinguished feature of many contemporary societies. Notions such as team work and

cooperation were cited as important elements in sporting endeavour. The health benefits of sporting activity were also mentioned and some essays went on to suggest that fair play and mutual respect also make sport a very noble human activity.

Question 4 – El desarrollo social y económico

Los países con problemas económicos y sociales necesitan el apoyo de otros países. ¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo?

This was a less popular title amongst candidates. Many of the essays that were written in response to the title, however, were well structured and cleverly argued. The idea of poorer countries needing the support of more affluent countries was considered to be perfectly acceptable in today's world and some essays argued that every economically successful country actually should have a duty to support other struggling states in order to help them to improve. An ambitious and optimistic viewpoint indeed.

Question 5 – La conservación

La protección de los animales en peligro de extinción es una pérdida de tiempo. ¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo?

A reasonably popular and generally well answered essay question. The vast majority of essays disagreed wholeheartedly with the statement in the title and stressed the importance of maintaining the diversity of nature that surrounds us. Mankind's reliance upon animals was also discussed and there was a clear consensus that we could barely survive without them and that we should, therefore, consider it our duty to protect every single species as far as is humanly possible.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/33
Essay

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

The essay titles for this session once again appeared to differentiate well and there was a reasonably equitable distribution of the questions attempted with some titles proving more popular than others. It would be fair to say that many candidates were able to perform with a good degree of success and the way in which they tackled the essay writing task with maturity, good sense and structural integrity was impressive. The best essays showed more convincing depth and greater levels of analysis. Centres can be justifiably pleased with the way in which their candidates approached this essay paper and it is somewhat obvious to examiners that there is a good understanding of the mark scheme and, more generally, of the demands of the examination itself.

Most candidates wrote essays that were relevant to the title. Nevertheless, there were still a few essays that were too general or too vague. Those candidates who managed to keep their focus by responding directly to the title will have been appropriately rewarded in the content section of the mark scheme. We remind candidates and Centres that the answers must be directly related to the question set out in the paper.

The quality of written Spanish used by candidates ranged from outstanding to unsatisfactory. Numerous essays showed a reasonably confident use of complex sentence structures and a wide range of vocabulary. A good grasp of Spanish grammar was evident and often resulted in essays that were articulate, relevant and coherently argued. Coherent structure is one crucial element of good essay writing and this was dealt with successfully by many candidates. However, this session appeared to produce a high number of essays whose success was limited by poor use of punctuation. We remind candidates that it is imperative for an Examiner to be able to follow the argument and for this it is crucial to use basic punctuation correctly (full stops, commas, capital letters to begin sentences and so on) in order to achieve marks in the higher range of the mark scheme.

There were very few cases in this session of essays that exceeded the stipulated word limit of 250–400 words. As has been mentioned in previous reports, we stress that candidates need to ensure that they keep to the word limit and Centres are advised to highlight the importance of this.

Examples of good use of the language included:

- a clear understanding with regard to the use of tenses, in particular the differences between the imperfect, the perfect and the preterite.
- the use of a wide range of appropriately topic-related vocabulary and idiom.
- adjectives and adverbs used well to enrich the variety of language offered in the essay.
- the ability to avoid repetition of key phrases.
- the subjunctive mood, both present and past, used to good effect.
- the careful use of expressions designed specifically to enhance structure (eg *por otra parte*, *no obstante*, *sin embargo*, *a decir la verdad*, *al fin y al cabo* etc.)
- the sensible use of connectives in order to lengthen sentences and give them more complexity whilst not sacrificing clarity.
- being able to use Spanish accents in a consistently fit and proper fashion.

Common errors included:

- the use of *'porque de'* [sic.] to translate 'because of'.
- Confusion between the letters 's' and 'c' (eg. *'internasional'* [sic.] and *'convensional'* [sic.]
- incorrect spelling of key words such as *'el desarrollo'* [sic.], *'desafortunamente'* [sic.], *'el problema'* [sic.] and *'problamente'* [sic.].
- misunderstanding of the differences between *'hay'* and *'es/tiene'*.
- a misunderstanding of the use of the personal 'a' in Spanish.
- Writing Spanish as it sounds. For example *'la jente'* [sic.], *'alludar'* [sic.], *'aci'* [sic.] and *'asta'* [sic.].
- Use of gerunds for infinitives in utterances such as *'En la vida, jugando a los deportes es importante...'* [sic.]

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 – La gastronomía

Hoy en día, hay demasiados aditivos (por ejemplo el azúcar y la sal) en nuestra dieta. ¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo?

This was a very popular and generally well answered question with a predictably wide variety of approaches to the issue. Many essays suggested that food additives are indeed a remarkably common aspect of our daily diet and that many of them are essential in order to improve the taste and appearance of food. Most essays suggested that we would be likely to benefit from stricter controls over exactly what goes into our pre-packed food and that we should all endeavour to use less salt and sugar in our diet.

Question 2 – La igualdad de oportunidades

La igualdad social es un sueño imposible porque siempre habrá gente rica y gente pobre. ¿Qué opinas tú?

This was a slightly less popular title on the paper. There was, however, little doubt amongst candidates who selected this title that there is an unfortunate inevitability regarding wealth distribution in societies across the globe. Social equality, it was argued, should be an ambitious objective for governments but many felt that it would be more realistic to attempt to reduce it rather than to eradicate it entirely.

Question 3 – Los deportes

Muchos afirman que el deporte es una de las actividades más nobles y distinguidas de la raza humana. ¿Qué opinas tú?

This was another very popular title indeed. Candidates argued that sporting prowess is unquestionably a noble and distinguished feature of many contemporary societies. Notions such as team work and

cooperation were cited as important elements in sporting endeavour. The health benefits of sporting activity were also mentioned and some essays went on to suggest that fair play and mutual respect also make sport a very noble human activity.

Question 4 – El desarrollo social y económico

Los países con problemas económicos y sociales necesitan el apoyo de otros países. ¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo?

This was a less popular title amongst candidates. Many of the essays that were written in response to the title, however, were well structured and cleverly argued. The idea of poorer countries needing the support of more affluent countries was considered to be perfectly acceptable in today's world and some essays argued that every economically successful country actually should have a duty to support other struggling states in order to help them to improve. An ambitious and optimistic viewpoint indeed.

Question 5 – La conservación

La protección de los animales en peligro de extinción es una pérdida de tiempo. ¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo?

A reasonably popular and generally well answered essay question. The vast majority of essays disagreed wholeheartedly with the statement in the title and stressed the importance of maintaining the diversity of nature that surrounds us. Mankind's reliance upon animals was also discussed and there was a clear consensus that we could barely survive without them and that we should, therefore, consider it our duty to protect every single species as far as is humanly possible.