

SPANISH

Paper 8673/04

Texts

General comments

Examiners reported that the majority of candidates had been well prepared for this examination, with a good knowledge of the texts. It was pleasing to note a rise in the number of candidates choosing the poetry text, otherwise all questions attracted many answers, as in previous sessions. The main difference in awarding marks was the way in which each candidate tackled the question set – how well they were able to use their knowledge of the text to substantiate an answer and put across an argument showing considered reflection of the text.

Comments on individual questions

Sección Primera

Question 1 Azuela: *Los de abajo*

- (a) This was well answered, with candidates generally making good use of the extract to show the poverty of the way of life, but the generosity towards guests. In answering **part (iii)**, candidates needed to give detailed answers to explain Demetrio's sadness, heralding the outcome of the struggle.
- (b) Most candidates agreed with the proposition put forward in the question. Few were able to show much historical knowledge of the revolution but, concentrating on the attitudes of the different characters, found plenty to say. Some essays showed more subtlety in assessing Demetrio's motives.

Question 2 Isabel Allende: *Eva Luna*

- (a) All candidates were able to answer **part (i)** though some answers were very brief; **part (ii)** proved more difficult, with a variety of evidence taken from the extract, and a few candidates not really being able to see the humorous aspect of the description. Disappointingly, no candidates thought of commenting on why the author might have wanted to include the comic touches. **Part (iii)** was often dealt with rather briefly, simply referring to the incident quoted. The best essays showed how politics played an increasingly large part in Eva's life, both personal and professional.
- (b) The many stages of Eva's life provided a wealth of material for candidates to draw on in answer to this question. There were also a lot of observations made about the 'meaning' behind them. Virtually all candidates were, therefore, able to come up with an answer at some level: the weaker ones did not get much further than listing the events of Eva's life chronologically; the better ones could achieve an overview, and the best were able to speculate about Allende's intentions. It is important to emphasise that candidates cannot score highly simply by listing events from a text. They must analyse such incidents or experiences within the context of the question.

Question 3 García Márquez: *Los funerales de la Mamá Grande*

- (a) All three parts of this question attracted reasonably full answers. Generally, candidates showed that they knew the story, but there were different interpretations of the priest's reaction for **part (ii)**, suggesting some did not really understand the author's intentions. Weaker candidates were hazy about picking out examples for **part (iii)**. Many candidates referred to one or two other stories in their answers to this part of the question, the most popular being *La prodigiosa tarde de Baltazar*.
- (b) This was well answered and candidates had no difficulty finding two or three stories to draw on.

Question 4 Buero Vallejo: *Hoy es fiesta*

- (a) There were many lengthy and excellent answers to this question. Candidates at all levels could find plenty to say and showed detailed knowledge of the text.
- (b) Again, there were many good answers to this question. The more confident candidates pointed out that there were other themes too. The best candidates could see that the theme of '*dinero*' was a device and was symbolic, and could use this as a way of further analysing character and motive within the text.

Sección Segunda**Question 5** Ruiz Zafón: *La sombra del viento*

- (a) Considering this text is long and complicated, it seems to be surprisingly popular. Weaker answers tended to be overly descriptive (consisting of a list of all the bad things Fumero does), while better candidates described these events as a progression that build up the reader's opinion of the character. Many candidates could also point to Fumero's childhood as causal in his personality.
- (b) Here again, weaker answers spent too long enumerating the negative (so remaining too descriptive), while better answers balanced this by pointing to the positive elements.

Question 6 Lope de Vega: *Fuenteovejuna*

- (a) All candidates were able to respond with plenty of material. The better ones were able to describe a development (i.e. the community *became* united; it was not so at the start) and key moments in this, emphasising the role of the women. The best candidates commented that the revolutionary connotations of the quotation did not really apply to the inhabitants of Fuenteovejuna as loyal subjects of the monarchy, happy to serve a just Comendador.
- (b) Even weaker candidates could distinguish between different kinds of '*amor*', and this question attracted full answers showing good knowledge and understanding of the play.

Question 7 García Lorca: *La casa de Bernarda Alba*

- (a) As with other questions, the weaker candidates tended to simply agree with the proposition put forward in the question and list evidence to support it, while stronger responses tended to give more qualified agreement. Some Centres seemed to have prepared answers on Bernarda which did not quite 'fit' the question set and involved a degree of extrapolation beyond the text.
- (b) Some candidates fell into the trap of spending too much time on generalisations about the present day and failed to balance this with sufficient material from the play. There was a general tendency for answers to consist of a list of themes (freedom, place of women, etc.), that were discussed one by one, resulting in a fragmented essay; only the better candidates achieved a flowing structure.

Question 8 Rubén Darío: Una selección de poemas

- (a) This question worked well with candidates able to focus clearly on the three elements in the poems.
- (b) There were fewer answers to this question, but candidates approached the critical analysis well.

Concluding remarks

Examiners would like to remind candidates of the importance of legible handwriting. Some scripts were extremely difficult to decipher and if the work cannot be read, it cannot be awarded marks.

It was encouraging to note that there were few instances of candidates losing marks by answering both alternative questions on the same text, or by choosing all their questions from one section of the examination paper only.