

OCR Report to Centres

January 2013

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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Advanced GCE Spanish (H477)

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F721/01, 02, 03 Speaking (AS)

General Comments

Candidates were generally well prepared for the test and the overall performance was good.

For the role play, an exchange with appropriate interaction should develop. The exercise should go beyond a series of questions and answers and the candidate should be given the opportunity to explain, convince or reassure as necessary.

Candidates coped well overall with conveying the factual information contained in the stimulus material. Performance was less consistent in the response to the examiner. Many candidates remembered to show initiative and were imaginative to anticipate the needs of the examiner, in the role of the client. Some candidates remained highly dependent on the examiner to set the pace and frequently needed specific or closed questioning to elicit points of detail.

In a few cases, Teacher/examiners invited a candidate to give a summary or a line-by-line translation of the stimulus page with little or no intervention. This technique did not give candidates sufficient opportunity to show imagination – or indeed an ability to persuade or reassure through response to the examiner – and limited their potential performance accordingly.

Candidates still had problems with formulating their opening questions idiomatically: many were content to use the wording on the prompt in the candidate's sheet with little manipulation, resulting in an unnatural phrasing – sometimes without a main verb, for example, *¿Qué detalles del artículo perdido?* More practice in asking questions would be advantageous.

The majority of candidates had used their preparation time suitably and gave some thought to the extension questions: they were reasonably forthcoming with opinions and examples.

Candidates' choices of topics for Section B were largely appropriate and in accordance with specification requirements: topics must be taken from the AS topic list; overlap with the A2 topics should be avoided.

Candidates generally had sufficient factual information to cope with the bullet points they had listed on the topic forms. Most had taken some care to include some ideas and opinions – one of the key elements for grid D of the mark scheme.

There remained a tendency for a number of candidates to be invited or permitted to give a series of mini presentations. Significant interaction with the examiner is required to allow the development and exploration of ideas and opinions. Some candidates were not sufficiently challenged to go beyond a basic statement and this limited their score for grid D. Nevertheless, there were examples of genuine discussion, with candidates being able to sustain a point of view and give relevant examples, allowing them – when combined with fluency and spontaneity – access to the higher ranges of grids D and E1.

Quality of language is assessed in both parts of the test. The standard of accuracy varied, though to their credit many candidates tried to extend the range used. Teacher/examiners play a key role in providing suitable opportunities for candidates to show competence at the required level. In the role plays there was some inconsistency in the use of *tú/usted*, second/third-person forms.

Candidates generally had the appropriate vocabulary to cope with factual information in their topic discussion but there were gaps in some basic areas for the role plays and some candidates attempted to make up for this by the inclusion of (not always appropriate) all-purpose phrases. There were also cases of unconvincing rhetorical remarks in the guise of scripted pseudo-discussion in the topic section.

Pronunciation was, for the most part, at least adequate; quality of intonation continued to be an effective distinguishing feature of the better candidates in this respect. There were several examples of candidates who had made a real effort to sound authentic.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A (Role play)

It is important to keep in mind the balance of grids A and B of the mark scheme. Candidates need to convey the information given in the stimulus materials but this should be in the form of a dialogue with the examiner rather than a monologue translation.

The majority of candidates performed well for grid A, but there were some cases where the stimulus materials were skimmed through and points were overlooked and not queried by the teacher/examiner. In a few cases, candidates were asked about extra generally-related issues, while leaving essential content points unaddressed.

Readiness to respond and attempts to convince or take control of the situation are rewarded on Grid B: those who rely heavily on the teacher/examiner and just read out prepared answers or literal translations from the text do not score highly.

The two more general questions on themes relating to the role play were handled reasonably competently by most candidates. Those operating at a higher level showed imagination or gave appropriate examples in a natural/conversational manner: in a few cases, answers were rather stilted, sounding like extracts from a written essay.

Role play A

Role play A dealt with recovering property lost on the train. Candidates needed to explain the system for keeping the items safe and how and where to claim lost property.

The essential points were covered by most candidates, though not all were clear that the items were logged so they could be traced readily. Most candidates referred to the time scale of three months, though a few said that this was a maximum period rather than the “at least” in the information. Nearly all made reference to what happened to credit cards, though *carta* was frequently used for *tarjeta*. Not all candidates conveyed clearly what happened to money; some struggled with *purses/wallets*. Most candidates coped with *apagar* but “embasía” was a clear winner over *embajada*. Office opening hours caused little difficulty, though a number of candidates either omitted “not public holidays” or said simply (and incorrectly) *todos los días*. There was uncertainty with the correct preposition *de/en/por* for time of the day.

The open questions on the candidate’s own experience of losing something and views on public transport provided suitable scope for differentiation across the range.

Role play B

Role play B invited candidates to commend the virtues of visiting Scotland. A tendency for this role play was to try to translate the stimulus information literally, rather than paraphrasing or conveying the spirit of the message in a coherent manner. This said, the essential points were communicated fairly readily, though, surprisingly, many candidates did not know *Edimburgo*, and some hesitated over *Escocia*. Nearly all candidates mentioned spending the first night there but some omitted the guided tour. A few enterprising candidates supplied some imaginative details concerning the “traditional dinner”.

The visit to the castle was mentioned by most (with occasional confusion of *castillo/castilla*). A discriminator here was the fact that the entrance fee was not included: many left this out. Most of the remaining itinerary was conveyed, though a few candidates suggested that the ferry to Skye left at 6 am. As in role play A, *de la mañana* was a linguistic hurdle. A few candidates failed to see that the price of the tour was from £399, and there was the usual juggling of *libras/libros* for “pounds”.

Although most candidates mentioned the website, some were not clear about its content. The tour guide was almost exclusively feminine.

The open question about the candidate’s best holidays provided a suitable range of replies. The UK as a tourist destination was perhaps less inspiring.

Role play C

Role play C required the candidate to promote the services of an employment agency. In this option, some points of detail tended to escape candidates. Essentially the agency’s strengths were in helping would-be students and young people from other countries to find a job to help finance study. Although the examiner’s role covered both these criteria, only better candidates seized on this link as part of their effort to persuade.

Points of content overlooked generally included advice on work permits and legal restrictions, help with CVs and letters of application. Apart from these, most other points were mentioned fairly consistently, though sometimes further prompting from the teacher/examiner was required for details of the money-back guarantee. Not all candidates were clear that the basic fee was paid by prospective employers, or that details of those seeking work were posted on the website.

Linguistic items that sometimes led to ambiguity included “full-/part-time work” and “earning” (“gañar” instead of *ganar*). Commendably, candidates who did not know the exact terminology were quite adept in paraphrasing “catering and hospitality industry”; a few went further to give examples of “domestic services”.

The open questions on working/looking for work and how best to prepare oneself to get a job, again provided suitable scope across the range of candidates.

Section B (Topic discussion)

There were very few cases of topics beyond the specification areas. Occasionally, candidates strayed into areas more suitable for A2, but candidates were generally well prepared and usually had plenty of essential information.

The headings on the topic forms indicate the outline the discussion should take. Interaction with the examiner is important and the discussion should be encouraged to develop: all candidates, in their own interests, should be given the opportunity to respond to the unexpected to gain access to the full range of marks available for grid E1.

Grid D assesses relevant ideas and the candidate’s ability to put the information to good use to develop or substantiate a point of view. Most candidates took care to include a point of view or a personal stance on the issue. There was sometimes a tendency for over emphasis on factual content or description, to the detriment of a more discursive approach. Readiness to deal with more abstract concepts was an important differentiator between candidates.

Some candidates focused too much on biographical content or plot or visual description where literary or artistic matters were chosen, without relating the information clearly to the AS topic areas, or explaining the relevance to these. There is guidance on the OCR website (Frequently Asked Questions) on the approach to take with such topics.

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The pronunciation of many candidates was good or very good, but intonation suffered when candidates gave memorised or over-prepared answers.

Quality of language was generally competent, though some candidates would benefit from a focus on accuracy in basic language: genders and agreements, verb endings and numbers.

F722 Listening, Reading and Writing 1

General Comments

All sections of this final January examination were accessible to candidates of all ability levels. An appropriate level of challenge was provided by a range of tasks drawn from texts in both Iberian and Latin American contexts, covering the topic areas of sport, transport, communication technology, tourism and the environment, family, work and education. Candidates took full advantage of the opportunities offered to show how able they were to meet the different challenges of the various parts of the paper. Overall, questions which were designed to discriminate between candidates worked well; the finer details were missed by candidates who either did not fully understand the sentence or had not been sufficiently trained in exam technique to provide all relevant information.

Most candidates managed their time allocation well, with only a very few seeming to be rushed and, as a consequence, not writing enough for Task 7, (which carries over one third of the marks available for this unit). Occasionally questions were left unanswered, especially in Task 6. Instances of not complying with instructions, such as answering Task 3 in Spanish, were rare.

For the most part the presentation of the papers was good. Unclear handwriting, inaccurate spelling and punctuation could sometimes give rise to ambiguity and spoil the overall impression of an answer. Most candidates wrote their answers in the area indicated on the paper, although examination pressure inevitably led to instances of crossings out and the use of asterisks or arrows to point to answers in the margins or outside the scanned area. Sometimes brackets or a forward slash were used to offer alternative answers, which could not be accepted. Again, during this series, it was pleasing to see that a number of candidates had made a quick plan or jotted a few notes to help them construct their answers to Task 7b.

An impressive number of candidates were eager to show their knowledge of the subjunctive and other complex structures, and often took full advantage of the opportunities provided in Tasks 4, 6 and 7. Most attempted to answer in their own words, and copying directly from the text in Tasks 6 and 7a was not so prevalent.

Many candidates appeared to have benefitted from training in exam technique and had been prepared for the skills needed for each task. However, there was still a significant number, mostly those who appeared to come from a Spanish speaking background, who would have benefitted from more practice in the techniques required, especially in answering Task 7.

Only a very few candidates had been entered for an examination for which they clearly were not yet ready.

Comments on Individual Questions

TAREA 1

This item was tested in the familiar multiple choice format, and the report about the rescue of a snowboarder proved to be a good differentiating task. Mistakes were often made in (d) and (h) as several did not seem to recognise *a las 15 horas* or *con mucha sed*. Most errors were made in (j) where perhaps the recognition of *una camilla de rescate* was harder, and it was more difficult to understand that the rescue team had to take the snowboarder up to the ski station.

TAREA 2

The matching exercise based on the report about the use of mobile phones while driving was done well. Careful reading of the beginnings of the sentences and their possible endings was required, and some candidates noted in the margin which answers could only be possible grammatically, helping them to eliminate impossible answers. Apart from a tendency to offer 2 for (i) instead of the correct answer 7, there was no apparent pattern in errors made.

TAREA 3

The task based on the radio report about the effects that tourism is having on Machu Picchu was answered very well. The questions gave good pointers as to which sections of the report were being tested and candidates displayed a high level of listening comprehension skills. Although this is a test of listening comprehension of Spanish, precision in English is necessary in expressing the answers. On occasion, despite there being some probability that the candidate had understood, lack of clarity in the answer invalidated the answer.

- (a) Comprehension was good here, with many candidates getting at least one of the two marks on offer. The specific detail that Machu Picchu was one of the most visited tourist destinations in Latin America was sometimes missed.
- (b) This question was done well. A few candidates missed the mark by failing to note that the fame has changed the lives of local inhabitants.
- (c) Most candidates understood that tourism generated money which could then be used to provide services and facilities for the local community. However, recognition of *orgullo* proved to be a good discriminator, and although candidates noted the huge interest in the site, only a few were able to state correctly that this was a source of pride among the local community.
- (d) Many candidates got full marks for this question. Occasional lapses usually revolved around not clearly stating that it was the land surface which was being eroded.
- (e) This was also done well. Those candidates who did not get both marks often did so more as a result of imprecise English than an error in comprehension.
- (f) Sometimes marks were lost here by incorrectly stating that benefits should be kept for tourists, or not noting that the way of life of local inhabitants should be preserved.
- (g) Some candidates generalised the first question and referred to a historical site, and also it was sometimes overlooked that the Peruvian Government might place a limit on visitors.
- (h) This last question was done well, with most candidates noting the possibility of making a virtual visit to Machu Picchu, rather than going there in person.

TAREA 4

Candidates are now quite skilled in the techniques required by this question and it was good to see so many having a go at transferring the meaning from English into Spanish with absolute confidence. Any potential pitfalls were usually avoided with an appropriate paraphrase and many got good marks for communication. The differentiation was greater when it came to the quality of language mark.

The message offered opportunities for candidates to use more complex structures, and many took advantage of this. It was pleasing to see the majority attempt a subjunctive with *es importante que la gente visite*, and there was a certain amount of awareness and success with *si el gobierno les cobrara un impuesto a los turistas*.

Although expressions such as *me encantaría* or *me gustaría mucho* were well known, it was disappointing when these appeared alongside *nunca ha visitado*. There was a variety of answers such as *ver y sentir* or *revivir la historia* to communicate the sense of experiencing history. The phrase 'isn't the same' caused some difficulties but *no es igual*, *no es lo mismo*, or *no es la misma cosa* should have been known. Phrases such as '*navegando el internet*' worked well for conveying the meaning of 'looking at the computer'.

Aunque could have been used more widely by candidates, so too the reflexive form or the true passive form, (*el dinero se podría usar/podría ser usado*) for the passive. Items that caused difficulty seemed to be:

- the use of the definite article in a general statement (*es importante que la gente visite* or *es la única manera de experimentar la historia*)
- the translation of 'the tourists' [*las turistas/touristas/turísticas* were commonly being offered].

Candidates should be encouraged to express an idea by a paraphrase so that they do not invent incorrect Spanish, such as *proteger/er*, *el taxo*, or *el interese*.

TAREA 5

The task of matching the questions to the answers given by the mother of a very large family differentiated well and a range of marks was awarded. Candidates made errors with (h), the question for which no answer had been given.

TAREA 6

Although the protagonist of the text was pursuing a somewhat uncommon career most candidates were able to demonstrate good comprehension. Many attempted all the answers and for the most part in their own words, understanding the need for manipulation of language or to use a verb in the correct tense. Although very short answers such as *49 años*, *muy poco éxito* or *estaban enfermos* expressed comprehension perfectly, when the opportunities presented themselves candidates frequently offered enhanced answers, as with *vende sus productos en un mercado internacional* or *espera que haya nuevas demandas*.

- (a) Many candidates were able to communicate the correct answer to this first question, but there were a surprising number of linguistic errors. The most common were *cuando era un niña*, *cuando estaba una niña* and *cuando eras una niña*.
- (b) This question differentiated well. Candidates needed to state that neighbours would come to Antonia's house because they were not feeling very well. Candidates who were not familiar with the verb *acudir* often tried incorrectly to form answers from it.
- (c) Some candidates misread the plural verb in the question and wrote their answer about Antonia. Many who had partially understood were able to pick up a mark with answers such as *porque las plantas tenían propiedades medicinales*.
- (d) Both parts of this question were generally answered well. Many successfully stated that *Antonia recolectaba las plantas*, and, in many different ways, candidates avoided copying long chunks of text when stating why the time of day was important.
- (e) There were a number of different ways to answer this question. Incorrect responses stated that Antonia was interested in purchasing products from the pharmacies.
- (f) Three details were given about the ways in which Antonia prepared her products before selling them, and at least two were required in order to get the mark.

- (g) Those who heeded the *inmediatamente después de montarse* in the question were able to answer very briefly *muy poco*. Those who overlooked this offered incorrect answers which referred to twenty-five years later.
- (h) Incorrect answers often referred to *Montoya Natural's* increase in acreage and plant varieties rather than the overseas expansion which the text points to as the reason for it being *muy diferente*.
- (i) This question was generally done well, with most candidates able to communicate that the company's plants were cultivated without the use of pesticides.
- (j) The phrase *a punto de cumplir los cincuenta años* proved to be a good differentiator. *Cincuenta años* was accepted but only if it was prefaced by an expression such as *casi*.
- (k) Most candidates recognised the meaning of *siguen sus pasos*, and were able to successfully communicate the answer in their own words.
- (l) The simple one word answer to *¿Qué dejó de hacer Antonia durante un mes?* was *comer*. Answers such as *dejó de hacer huelga de hambre* were incorrect.
- (m) The reason for the collaboration with hospitals was often successfully communicated by many candidates. Marks were sometimes lost when it was not stated that it was the medicinal effect of plants that was being researched.
- (n) A good discriminating final question. The changes that Antonia is expecting in the market are that there will be *nuevas demandas*.

TAREA 7

Most candidates seemed to be aware of the techniques required by this fifty mark question: part (a) a paraphrase of those parts of the stimulus text which answer the question, and part (b) a range of ideas and viewpoints which answer the second question. Some candidates from a first language Spanish background appeared to be less aware of the requirements and directed too much of their effort into the ten mark part (a) at the expense of the twenty mark part (b).

- 7 (a) The text about a teachers' strike in Costa Rica appeared to have been clearly understood by most candidates and most of the vocabulary and structures were accessible. As in the case of Tarea 4, candidates were awarded marks for successful communication of the ideas in the text, if their response could be understood.
The first paragraph of the text was well understood and candidates were successful in noting the required points. Marks were sometimes lost when details were not given with sufficient precision, for example:
 - it was holiday pay which was under threat
 - teachers came from all over the country
 - the letter was delivered (not sent) to the Minister
 - correct time frames to indicate who the Minister had/had not spoken to.
- 7 (b) Whether teachers should go on strike or not seemed to be a topic about which candidates did not hold strong opinions or ideas. Some candidates ignored the instruction to assume the role of a teacher and some responses focused on the wider issue of the worker's right to withdraw his or her labour. Candidates benefitted from taking a few moments to make a plan of both sides of the argument before starting to write. Arguments in favour of teachers being allowed to go on strike included: withdrawal of labour is a universal human right; teachers deserve fair pay for the long hours that they work; the nature of their work often puts a strain on family relationships; a teachers' strike can result in improved conditions and facilities for pupils; going on strike attracts attention from the media.

Arguments against were more numerous and included: schools have to close when there are no teachers; this harms the education of pupils and by extension the next generation who are the future of the country; pupils can get up to no good when out of school; younger pupils need to be looked after by parents who need to take time off work; teachers should act responsibly and be role models for their pupils and striking sets a bad example; if teachers show themselves to be anti-authority it encourages pupils to adopt similar attitudes; strikes and demonstrations can lead to violence and cause disruption to the public at large; we are in a recession, lots of people have not got jobs and teachers should be glad that they have one.

A common conclusion was that a brief, non-violent strike should be held in response to a genuine grievance, but only as a last resort after all other forms of negotiation have been exhausted.

As long as they were able to communicate with sufficient clarity, candidates were able to access the twenty marks available for developing ideas and opinions in their personal response. Differentiation by language skills occurred with the twenty marks available for quality of written language, which was assessed for accuracy and range over both 7(a) and 7(b).

In question 7(b) candidates had the opportunity to show the full extent of their skills in written Spanish. Candidates who had clearly practised writing personal responses in preparation for this examination were adept at introducing structures and vocabulary which were appropriate for developing, linking and sustaining arguments, for example, – *además de lo dicho anteriormente, si yo fuera a la huelga, tendría que...* . As ever, errors such as *professor*, *heulga*, *habeces* and *sinmigo* could have been avoided if candidates had found the time to check their work.

Candidates from a Spanish background often wrote as they might speak, with scant regard for punctuation, for example: ... *en la otra mano no pienso que es una buena idea estar protestando porque se nosotros no estamos en el colegios eso quier dizer que los alumnos están perdiendo tiempo de colegio y aqui estamos...* .

Overall these pieces of extended writing were pleasing to read, with candidates from across the ability range making the most of the opportunity to display their prowess.

F724 Listening, Reading and Writing 2

General Comments

The paper proved effective in offering candidates the chance to show their differing knowledge and skills. A majority of candidates seemed to be familiar with the format and demands of the paper; there was no evidence of candidates running out of time. Performance in the three sections of the paper (Listening, Reading and Writing) often varied within one candidate's work; a majority of candidates had the necessary language skills for the first two sections. A smaller proportion of candidates had the knowledge and essay writing skills needed to perform well in the Writing section. These were the candidates who knew they had to address the question set, rather than write generally on the topic area, and who wrote with specific reference to a Spanish-speaking country; they knew that a non-discursive essay needed to include an imaginative element, based on the task set in the question.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A: Listening and Writing

TASK 1

This listening exercise on modern Spanish technology was generally well done. In most cases the quality of written English was sufficient for answers to be rewarded. The best answers included these relevant details:

- (a) plastic bags no longer used for waste;
 - (b) no longer a need to transport the waste, as well as no need to put it in containers;
 - (c) the idea of a rubbish collection point in each house;
 - (d) transporting the rubbish underground and pushing it along by air pressure;
 - (e) where the lorries took the rubbish, ie another treatment centre;
 - (f) the number referred to houses not individuals;
 - (g) it was specifically this technology that was being installed elsewhere, not simply the company's involvement elsewhere;
 - (h) the relative importance of this project in Córdoba on the European stage.
- Questions (c), (d), (e) and (g) proved to be challenging at a higher level; (a), (f) and (h) proved challenging at a lower level.

TAREA 2

This listening exercise, on a topical environmental subject in Spanish America, gave candidates the chance both to show understanding and to manipulate the language they heard. Some questions were answered satisfactorily by transcription while others were not. There was a specific mark for the Quality of Language. Specific points in the answers required were:

- (a) an explanation that it is our ancestors who have given us our cultural heritage;

- (b) the elements of the cultural heritage, or the loss of identity;
- (c) the secrets which archaeological remains can reveal;
- (d) the destruction of heritage by the car rally;
- (e) a challenging question; Dakar was the end point of the rally until 2008. Past reference was crucial;
- (f) another challenging question; the change in 2012 was that the rally took place in Peru as well. Past reference was crucial;
- (g) most candidates reported correctly that tourism was changing;
- (h) most understood that Chile was now seen as capable of organising large-scale sporting events;
- (i) at the top end of the range, candidates identified correctly that the damage was done by vehicles not following the roads, or driving across the countryside;
- (j) most candidates were able to explain the statistical reference to half the historical sites in the area being damaged by the vehicles of the rally;
- (k) some candidates struggled to see that the spectators caused damage as well;
- (l) almost all answered correctly about understanding the past and the present;
- (m) a challenging question where the relevant details were that the remains were fragile and on the surface;
- (n) the tombs were underground or under the sand; the word *arena* caused problems for some candidates;
- (o) most candidates realised that the tombs dated from before the arrival of the Spaniards;
- (p) almost all candidates realised that a study was done last year;
- (q) a more challenging question, because of the need to put the word *desesperados* in an understandable way and to realise the reason: that the specialists were not invited to take part in the study.

Section B: Reading and Writing

Text A dealt with the current issue of nuclear energy in Spain.

TAREA 3

This reading task required candidates to identify and transcribe the exact equivalents of the four phrases given in the text. Most candidates identified correctly the words for (b) and (c), but it was often only the stronger candidates who identified correctly (a) and (d) without adding extra words. The task discriminated effectively between candidates.

TAREA 4

This task required candidates to fill the blanks in sentences with one or more words, providing the correct meaning according to the original text and respecting the syntax of the sentence given in the question. Most answers given were verbs or verbal phrases; a few answers used longer phrases, which was acceptable provided that the answer met the criteria mentioned previously. The issue of the tense of the verb was important.

Most answers were correct to **(a)**, **(b)** and both parts of **(f)**. Questions **(c)**, **(d)** and **(e)** were more challenging, requiring more manipulation of language in order to respect the syntax of the paraphrase.

TAREA 5

This task was a non-verbal exercise. Candidates who read the text and the questions carefully had few problems in arriving at the right answers.

TAREA 6

Candidates answered questions in Spanish, using their own language where appropriate or necessary.

- (a)** Most candidates saw that operating the plant or renewing the licence would be illegal.
- (b)** Extra training was identified by most, with some finding elegant alternative ways of expressing *formación*.
- (c)** Candidates in the middle of the range and above realised that they owned two more plants.
- (d)** A challenging question: stronger candidates realised that the CSN started to count the accidents.
- (e)** A challenging question which stronger candidates completed with ease and elegance, explaining that the three plants represented less than half the number of nuclear plants in Spain, yet accounted for more than half the accidents.
- (f)** Most realised they were united in their opposition to the plants.
- (g)** A challenging question which required the detail that the radioactive water fell onto the workers.
- (h)** Many candidates understood the point that less electricity has been generated than expected; some struggled to express this concept in accurate Spanish.
- (i)** The article was precise in saying that only some of the nuclear plants have malfunctioned; it did not say that they are all malfunctioning.

Text B dealt with current trends regarding crime in the underground railway in Buenos Aires

TAREA 7

This was the Transfer of Meaning exercise from Spanish into English. There was little vocabulary in the paragraph to surprise candidates at this level who have read around this social sub-topic from the specification. This first paragraph contained phrases ranging from the straightforward to the challenging. Some candidates wrote excellent responses; they understood the Spanish text; they seemed to have practised the techniques for transferring meaning across the languages; they were able to produce an accurate and comprehensive English version of the meaning of the text.

TAREA 8

It is always a challenging exercise to explain in your own words a number of phrases from the text. The answers were well done by candidates who appreciated the meaning in the original text (where the phrases were underlined for candidates' convenience) and who expressed those meanings without reusing the words they were explaining. As with Task 7, it appeared that candidates who had practised this kind of task produced better outcomes.

TAREA 9

This task required candidates to finish the sentences, providing the correct information from the text and completing the given stem with grammatically correct Spanish

- (a) Generally well done with candidates noting that there were more police on the rail system.
- (b) Stronger candidates realised that the prohibition related only to the police and only to sending text messages.
- (c) The text was clear that Línea B was not equipped with video surveillance; candidates needed to refer to this issue when answering the question. Transcription was not sufficient here.
- (d) The text was clear that, in the rush hour, fewer criminals were caught because the sheer number of passengers prevented the police from doing their job. Most candidates identified the first idea (although a few thought that more criminals were apprehended); fewer understood the second point, with some saying that “the passengers prevented the arrest of the criminals”, which changed the meaning of the original text completely.

TAREA 10

Candidates answered questions in Spanish, using their own language where appropriate or necessary. There were better answers here than on previous occasions, which is promising; however some candidates sometimes gave no response.

- (a) Most candidates realised that passengers complained.
- (b) Middle range and stronger candidates were able to answer that he was robbed; transcription was not an option here.
- (c) Most candidates spotted that no one helped the man.
- (d) Transcription was not an option here; the man's error was to show his phone in public, while the text talked in general terms about showing *equipos electrónicos*.
- (e) This was a challenging question. Since the government planned to keep young people in school and combat unemployment, it followed that – if the plans were successful – young people would be in school or in work. Point of view and tense were critical for this question which was intended to discriminate.
- (f) Another challenging question, but candidates who read the text and the question carefully had no difficulty here. The charitable organisations were sending volunteers to help fight unemployment among the young.
- (g) The two answers in this question were accessible to most. The first required adjectives to be made from *inteligencia* and *rapidez*; the second needed candidates to provide an interpretation of the lack of *un futuro digno*.

Section C: Writing

Linguistically candidates tended to have the knowledge and skills to achieve a reasonable mark or better; however a few candidates struggled to make themselves understood or to write with any degree of accuracy or variety of vocabulary and structure.

From the point of view of the content, good candidates showed specific knowledge of a Spanish-speaking country and wrote answers that were relevant to the title. These questions on this paper are intended for candidates who have studied the sub-topics as in the specification; they are not intended as titles for general essays. The best answers revealed candidates with an interest and enthusiasm for their topic, such as the environment, the situation of migrants, science and technology, or the victims of crime.

Although there was no expected, set response for each question in terms of precise content, examiners were looking for responses which satisfied these requirements:

11. An awareness of at least one group which tends to fall victim to crime in Spain, for example immigrants, women or gipsies.
12. An awareness of some major issues facing immigrants in Spain, presented in the form of a personal report to classmates after a period of volunteering with an immigrant support group.
13. An awareness of actions taken in Spain to protect the environment, both by individuals and by government, with an assessment of which scale of action is more useful.
14. A personal article written for the school magazine about one specific pollution issue, assessing causes and solutions.
15. An awareness of the gains and losses in society with regard to changes in technology.
16. An awareness of whether scientific progress in Spain is something to be feared or encouraged, presented as a campaigning speech in a debate.
17. An awareness of a current political topic in Spain.
18. Knowledge of at least one work by one Spanish artist, writer, cinema director or actor, in the form of an interview with that person.

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