

# **OCR Report to Centres**

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**June 2012**

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of candidates of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, OCR Nationals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

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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.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

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## F721/01, 02, 03 Speaking

### General Comments

The performance of candidates across the range was generally similar to that in recent series.

In the role play section, teachers should allow and encourage a real exchange to develop so that the task goes beyond a series of comprehension questions and answers.

The topic discussion section differentiated well across the range and was at least handled competently. Topics must relate to a Spanish-speaking country or context and be taken from the topic areas for AS listed in the Specifications. Pleasingly, there were few instances of topics that did not comply.

Quality of language is assessed in both sections. Many candidates made a real attempt to use more complex structures. Accuracy was rather mixed, with unexpected errors in simpler expressions. Some candidates tended to use all-purpose phrases, not always judiciously – (*Que yo sepa, es muy barato; Es de suma importancia ver la página web, etc.*)

Pronunciation was generally reasonable, with some room for improvement in authentic intonation.

### Comments on Individual Questions

Section A (Role play)

Candidates should be given every opportunity to transmit the information included in the stimulus materials (Grid A of the mark scheme), and to show initiative, persuade and explain (Grid B). A weakness in some cases was to leave hazy information in need of clarification.

Readiness to respond and attempts to convince or lead the conversation are rewarded on Grid B. This grid rewarded those candidates who managed to develop the role play with meaningful interaction with the teacher / examiner, whereas those who merely recited prepared answers or attempted literal translations of the material did not score highly.

Most candidates responded satisfactorily to the two extension questions on themes relating to the role play. Most candidates used their preparation time well to think about opinions or examples, though a few candidates read out over-long prepared statements.

#### Role play A:

The main bullet points were details of the IT company, its services and prices and where it operated.

Many candidates worked through the information sequentially and covered a high proportion of the content points.

Most candidates gave details of the nature of the company (small, experienced) and that it would come to the client at work or at home. Although most made reference to the large range of makes, less clear was the ability to give advice on choice or purchase and whether it would be better to repair a computer or replace it or that the company could help with problems with existing computers. A number struggled with (or did not mention) the possibilities for broadband.

Free installation was widely transmitted and nearly all candidates mentioned discounts; better candidates used this information to refer to the client's own status as a student to qualify. "Credit cards" were frequently *cartas*, rather than *tarjetas*.

A good differentiator was the ability to give clear details of the rental packages available. Some candidates confused *alquiler* / *alquilar*.

The extension questions were handled quite well: most offered some opinions on preference to buy online or in a local shop. The question on the benefits (or otherwise) of IT produced a range of generally appropriate responses.

### **Role play B:**

Key points were the nature of the organisation and its offerings (adventure holidays), details about accommodation and meals and the particular relevance for visitors from overseas.

The nature of the company was generally understood. Although the organisation started in Scotland thirty years ago, a number of candidates appeared not to realise that now it operated throughout the British Isles and not just in Scotland, even when quizzed by the examiner. Most candidates correctly referred to the professional competence / recognition of instructors and gave sufficient information about the activities on offer.

The general quality of the accommodation was reasonably well transmitted – a number of candidates either knew or guessed "cabins", or offered variants on *casas* / *casitas*; Surprisingly, many struggled with "centrally-heated", and spoke of *cabinas calientes*. Camping / tents in remote areas, etc. caused problems, though most tried to get round this by vaguely referring to more basic accommodation (most used *alojamiento* from the candidate's sheet) or "in the country".

Although most candidates referred to traditional (local) sports, not all linked this and the ability to have English-language lessons to the fact that the client was coming from abroad. Social activities were sometimes overlooked.

Collecting the client from a local station or airport caused linguistic difficulties for some – *colectar* frequently being coined somewhat optimistically.

The extension questions on sport and visits abroad (group or alone) provided a range of interesting and valid responses.

### **Role play C:**

Key points included details of the letting agency, the types of accommodation available, services available or at extra cost, the reliability of the company and how to get further information.

Virtually all candidates conveyed the fact that they were dealing with an accommodation agency (though few actually used *agencia*). A number of candidates appeared not to know *piso* / *apartamento* and spoke indiscriminately about *habitaciones*. That the accommodation was in easy reach of the centre and colleges caused few problems, though "walking distance" was a linguistic challenge that defeated some. Rental periods – minimum / maximum – were clearly transmitted and most candidates found a way to get round "private facilities" or "shared".

Although some of the extra services (meals, cleaning) were mentioned, many candidates made *limpiando* the noun of choice, though more wily candidates paraphrased – a few even knew *limpieza*.

Most candidates were able to say why the agency was reliable, though *letras* fairly frequently was used for *cartas* in “letters (of recommendation)”. Prompting was sometimes needed for the fact that the agency regularly inspected properties. Details of information available on the web site were readily given.

The extension questions worked well. Candidates were forthcoming on why it would be better to live in a flat or with a family; answers to the question on the benefits or otherwise of living in another country varied in quality to reflect the candidature.

### **Role play D:**

This role play dealt with an outing on a heritage railway. Candidates captured essential information by following the sequence of the bullet points on the candidate’s sheet.

Some candidates trying to translate literally had difficulty with time phrases (“forty years ago”), distances and numbers (*cuarenta, setecientos*) that often feature in the role plays. These cause problems and are worth revising. “Miles” produced the customary variants on *millas* such as *miles, milas, milos*. Some basic vocabulary was troublesome – “country(side)” and “mountain” included. On the other hand, most candidates either knew, or could paraphrase “drive an engine”, “return ticket” or “refreshments”. Candidates who did not know the word *túnel* missed out that point. “Motorway” was treated similarly.

Candidates found worthy, sometimes ingenious ways to use the stimulus’s “sight, sound and smell... stir memories... excite younger visitors” to convey the universal appeal of the visit (one of the bullet points).

Group fares and discounts were readily conveyed, though the need to book in advance was sometimes overlooked. Some struggled to make clear that with a return ticket you could travel as much as you wanted on the day.

The first extension question (*ideas para organizar el día*) required some imagination on the part of candidates, but most managed some suggestions. Answers to the second (*opinión sobre los ferrocarriles*) either focused on railways in general, or restored / heritage railways as in the stimulus; either was acceptable and a valid response.

### **Section B (Topic discussion)**

Candidates were generally well prepared. It was noticeable that most centres had realised the importance of ideas and opinions for Grid D and even quite weak candidates had apparently been drilled to include an “*en mi opinión*” from time to time.

There were some shortcomings: headings on the topic forms indicate the framework of the topic discussion, but candidates were sometimes invited (or permitted) to give mini presentations. Interaction with the examiner is important to score well in Grid E1, and all candidates should be given the opportunity to respond to the unexpected to gain access to the full range of marks.

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. In some cases and at some centres, there was overemphasis on factual content or description. A candidate’s ability and readiness actually to discuss material or to deal with more abstract concepts had an important bearing on the mark awarded.

Quality of language was generally competent. Very few candidates fell into the lowest category and most were in the middle or upper bands. Candidates made real efforts to extend the range of structure – sometimes with rather convoluted or unnatural, carefully prepared expressions. As in so many cases, errors tended to occur in basic language: verb endings, agreements and genders could bring down otherwise quite good candidates.

# F722 Spanish Listening, Reading and Writing 1

## General Comments

This summer's examination contained tasks constructed around the topic areas of tourism, communication technology, food, cultural life, work and the media. The challenge was appropriate and a wide spread of marks awarded reflected the varying levels of ability of candidates. As always, at the upper end of the spectrum there were many excellent papers which were a pleasure to mark. However, no less satisfying were the answers from candidates who were determined to show off their more modest linguistic skills to the best advantage.

Although this was a demanding paper, there were very few signs of difficulty with time management. Candidates were clearly aware that just over one third of the marks available are allocated to Task 7 and, almost without fail, made certain that they left themselves an appropriate amount of time. Elsewhere in the paper the occasional question left unanswered was almost certainly more a result of oversight than pressure from the clock.

The presentation of the papers was generally good, although occasionally poor handwriting and spelling (English as well as Spanish) made answers difficult to read. It was encouraging to see the number of candidates who found the time to do a little rough work and planning to help them construct their answers.

In Tasks 6 and 7a there were fewer instances of blatant lifting of the text than in previous years. This was replaced by a tendency towards the copying of key words (in Task 6 especially), sometimes resulting in answers which did not follow on coherently from the question and left the examiner to supply the missing tense, person or linkage.

However, the overall impression left by marking this paper was one of confidence and competence. Candidates rose to the challenge and made full use of all the linguistic skills in their possession.

## Comments on Individual Questions

### TAREA 1

The multiple choice objective test type was a familiar format to candidates who generally responded well to the listening text singing the praises of an adventure tourism agency. In this sort of task it is always advisable to read through the possible answers before listening. The majority of candidates scored in excess of half marks, and several achieved the maximum or near maximum. The most accessible answers proved to be **(a)**, **(f)** and **(g)**, and candidates found most difficulty with **(d)**, **(h)** and **(j)**.

### TAREA 2

The matching exercise based on a teacher's reflections on the digital classroom proved to be a stiff test. Every mark from maximum to minimum was awarded, with candidates meeting the challenge in their stride, partially coping or experiencing difficulties. 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. There was no clearly discernible pattern in answers which proved more accessible or difficult, although perhaps **(e)**, **(h)** and **(j)** caused most problems. A few candidates reduced their chances by not giving a number for each letter. There is no negative marking for incorrect answers and so, if in doubt, it is always advisable to have a guess.

### TAREA 3

Questions on this food based topic were generally well answered with some excellent marks attained. As well as being a test of listening comprehension of Spanish, precision in English is necessary in expressing the answers. On occasions, although there was some probability that the candidate had understood, lack of clarity in the answer invalidated the answer.

- (a) Most candidates gained the mark for noting that Mónica wanted to stop eating meat completely. To score the other mark it was necessary to recognise the value of *apenas*, which proved to be a stumbling block for many.
- (b) Two marks were commonly scored for noting that if she didn't eat properly it might affect her studies. Not so many scored the third mark which was available for stating either that she was in the middle of her university course or that this required a lot of effort.
- (c) By including both adjectives, the majority of candidates scored the mark here.
- (d) This was another fairly straightforward question with many candidates scoring the two marks for saying that she was still unclear despite having read several articles.
- (e) The mark for noting the possible lack of protein was commonly scored, although not so many picked up the second mark by linking this with being vegetarian.
- (f) With two marks available for three possible answers, many candidates were successful here. All answers - eating a little of everything, a balanced diet and not overcomplicating things - were often correctly stated.
- (g) This proved to be more of a challenge, with not so many candidates answering that Mónica was advised to take a packet of nuts with her whenever she went out, and even fewer recognising the value of *por si acaso*.
- (h) Surprisingly, a *dieta* was not recognised by a number of candidates. Many answers gave the impression that this had been misheard as *idiota*.

### TAREA 4

Candidates are now becoming quite skilled in the techniques of transfer of meaning and were generally successful in communicating the contents of the message. Any potential pitfalls from a translation point of view were usually avoided with appropriate paraphrase. The differentiation was far 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. Good candidates recognised that what was really meant by 'my parents are happy for me' was *a mis padres no les importa que*, rather than expressions containing *felices*. Awareness of uses of the subjunctive was widespread, with many correct examples after 'if only', 'happy' and 'important'.

However, there was also a poor level of accurate, everyday Spanish by a good number of candidates: 'chicken', 'meat', 'vegetables' and 'salads' should be vocabulary known at this stage. Many thought *carne* was a masculine noun with the ensuing error of an agreement of adjective. *Aunque* often caused problems, as did *me gustan* and, although most knew *demasiado*, only a minority were able to make it agree with *ensaladas*. Many candidates struggled to express "What does everyone else think?" in natural Spanish.

## TAREA 5

The multiple choice reading comprehension based on a miner's experiences proved to be quite a stiff challenge, with questions **(a)**, **(c)** and **(f)** attracting most wrong answers.

## TAREA 6

This task had as its source a very accessible text and demanded good linguistic skills, with careful language manipulation needed for all questions, so that any tendency to straightforward lifting just did not work. In terms of both understanding and conveying the meaning of the source text, candidates did well but perhaps not always as accurately as they might have. Some had problems with vocabulary, which was apparent in the somewhat improbable antics of the *mosca* and *araña*. The use of past tenses in many answers was well done by most, and it was pleasing to see a minority of candidates who were competent in the conditional perfect, required by (i).

- (a)** Most candidates got off to a good start. Marks were sometimes lost by confusing *mayores* with *mejores* and answering the question about Ainhoa and not *los otros cantantes*.
- (b)** Again most candidates scored the mark by noting either that she went to an opera for the first time or that her parents took her to an opera.
- (c)** The meaning of *a la vez* defeated a few, but this was again another mark which was scored by most.
- (d)** Although there were four routes by which the three marks could be scored only better candidates scored the maximum. Successful verbal manipulations to form the preterite third person singular caught the eye when assessing quality of language. The word *municipio* was sometimes misinterpreted to mean education.
- (e)** It is important that candidates remember that this is not an exercise in paraphrase. They are quite free to manipulate the vocabulary in the text to form an answer. Here interpretive answers such as '*su vida sería muy triste*' lost the communication mark, when the true to text '*no puede imaginar(la)*' was all that was required.
- (f)** Although they usually scored the communication marks for noting two of three possible answers a surprising number of candidates were unsure of how to express *me gusta* and *me encanta* when talking about another person.
- (g)** Those who knew the meaning of *mosca* and recognised how *introducirse* was being used in this context sometimes fell at the last hurdle by overlooking *intentos*.
- (h)** Better candidates rose to the vocabulary challenges and were able to form the preterite third person singular of *dar*.
- (i)** Good candidates were able not only to demonstrate understanding but also to perform the tricky verbal manipulation require by the answer.
- (j)** Most candidates were rewarded for noting that Ainhoa worked with many different people and made lifelong friends, although marks were sometimes lost for not mentioning the enduring nature of the friendship.

## TAREA 7

The techniques required by this fifty mark question - in part (a) a paraphrase of those parts of the stimulus text which answer the question, and in part (b) a range of ideas and viewpoints which answer the second question - were successfully adopted by most.

- 7(a)** The text was accessible and candidates were able to score well on content. There were numerous essential points to communicate about '*la prensa rosa*' (or indeed '*la prensa roja*' as it became on more than one occasion). Candidates who gave full and accurate information in their answers scored well. The majority of candidates scored more than half marks, with several scoring the maximum or near maximum. As with Tarea 4, less able candidates could still communicate their understanding of the text, despite linguistic shortcomings.
- 7(b)** The question gave candidates the opportunity to express their thoughts about celebrity culture and, irrespective of linguistic ability, most rose successfully to the challenge. There was often evidence of thoughtful planning, with many answers being well structured in providing both the positive and the negative aspects. Occasionally candidates strayed from the question which had been asked and wrote about the desirability or otherwise of being famous, rather than considering our fascination with celebrities' lives.

Arguments in favour of being interested in the lives of the stars included: you read about the work they do for good causes and you want to do the same and contribute to society and help other people; we give celebrities their money and fame, so therefore we have a right to know about them; some celebrities work very hard to succeed and they are role models for young people to work hard and be successful in their careers; the more fascination there is, the more magazines are sold and therefore more journalists and people are employed to produce this sort of press, and also more money is made and it is better for the economy of a country; it is something to talk about with families and friends and just laugh about it.

Counter-arguments included: in some cases young people copy things that their favourite star, singer or footballer does, for example, drinking and taking drugs; girls look at these magazines to see the fashion and want to be thin like the models they see, which can affect their health; young people should use their time more profitably by studying, reading literature and good newspapers; journalists often write lies about famous people and this is not fair; singers and others lack privacy because they are followed everywhere, and their children and family suffer as well.

In amongst all these pros and cons, or more often in a conclusion, good candidates always gave and justified their own personal viewpoint on this issue.

Quality of written language was assessed for accuracy and range over both (a) and (b). In **(a)** candidates have no choice in what to write about. The best candidates wrote competent and coherent paraphrased summaries, whereas less able candidates were frequently influenced by their mother tongue, for example, '*el futuro de la prensa rosa no está mirando muy bueno*'.

Question **(b)** offered candidates the opportunity to show the full extent of their skills in written Spanish. It was rewarding to see how mid-range candidates and above continued to demonstrate an appreciation of how the quality of expression can be enriched by the addition of more complex structures, the use of the subjunctive being the most obvious example. There were many accurate and appropriate uses of '*es importante / necesario que*', conditional clauses after '*s*' etc. and suitable vocabulary and phrases for developing, supporting and linking arguments.

Occasionally, pre-learnt phrases, especially in the opening paragraph, did not always blend easily with the standard of writing which followed. Candidates with a bilingual background often wrote as if they were chatting and showed a lack of understanding of the need to use a variety of structures. Many candidates would benefit from reading through their answer to eliminate careless mistakes, such as incorrect spelling of *fascinación*, *las periodistas* etc. and by writing less, but with greater accuracy. Candidates often invented words for 'privacy' and 'stalking' rather than trying to express the meaning.

Amongst the more common errors *gusta* continued to occur. 'People like celebrities' was often rendered as '*gente les gusta los famosos*', with many candidates often unsure as to whether the pronoun should be *les* or *le* or even omitted altogether. However, on the plus side, it was pleasing to note that those who have mastered the construction were able to apply the principle to other impersonal forms like *encantar*, *hacer falta*, *interesar* and *parecer*.

There was widespread evidence of the lack of understanding of the distinction between *ser* and *estar*, in particular when used with the past participle. The use of the prepositions *por* and *para* was often incorrect, for example, '*es malo por su educación*' or '*esto es normal por la gente*'.

Sadly, the ubiquitous '*(no) es vale la pena*' appears to be contagious, and it should not be used. Nevertheless, the majority of writing produced in response to both these demanding tasks was very satisfying to read, with candidates acquitting themselves well at their respective ability levels.

## F723/01, 02, 03 Speaking

### General Comments

As has been the case for several years now, most centres entering candidates for this examination carried out the A2 Speaking Tests with exemplary efficiency and professionalism. All centres complied with the requirement to record the tests digitally on to CD or via the OCR Repository. There were very few problems uploading tests on to the Repository and only a very small number of centres encountered technical difficulties with transfers onto CD. A small number of centres struggled with the production of clear recordings, often because of a badly positioned microphone. As has been mentioned before in such reports, it is always worth carrying out a brief check on the quality of recording for each candidate before sending the materials to the appointed examiner.

The smooth administration of this challenging speaking test was clear for all to see. It would be accurate to say that the vast majority candidates were well briefed on the tasks to be confronted in both sections of the test. The same also applies to the teachers charged with conducting these tests.

The standards achieved this year were similar to those of last year. Candidates now appear to be much more comfortable with the notion that they should comment on the article and paraphrase the original text in Section A given that that marks are available for the quality of the response to, and understanding of, the text. Merely lifting from the text is unlikely to score well in Grid K. It is good examining technique for teacher/examiners to encourage candidates to develop their responses and opinions in order to reveal more convincing understanding of the stimulus material.

Some centres appeared to misunderstand the advice in the Specification on selecting and presenting topics for discussion in Section B of the test. Candidates' topics must "...relate to the contemporary society, cultural background and heritage of one or more countries or communities where the language is spoken." A number of candidates opted to discuss a topic that was historical in its nature (eg the Cuban Revolution) but then elected not to mention any impact or influences such an historical event has had on contemporary Cuban society. It is worth repeating here that the FAQs on the OCR website relating to this unit are well worth reviewing in preparation for next year's A2 Speaking Test and, in particular, the choice of topic for discussion.

Last year's report mentioned that most centres have now realised how important it is for candidates to shun the belief that a series of mini presentations in response to pre-set questions from the teacher/examiner will be enough to get through the second section of the test. This year, there were fewer examples of this practice and given that Grid E.2 awards marks for spontaneity as well as fluency and responsiveness, examiners would like to emphasize once again the need for centres to continue to avoid this style of approach.

The administrative requirements for this test were understood by all but a few centres. Each recording of each test for each candidate must have **two** accompanying documents, namely the Working Mark Sheet (WMS), duly filled in with the candidate's details, and the topic sheet (Form OTF) with a list of **two** possible topics for discussion. As is always the case, examiners are very grateful to centres for checking that such documentation is in the script parcel prior to dispatch or for scanning them and uploading them onto the OCR Repository (including the attendance register).

## Comments on Individual Questions

Textos A, B and C

The three stimulus texts were, once again, accessible to all but the very weakest candidates. Texto A, B and C all offered plenty of opportunity for discussion of the issues under the spotlight. Examiners can report that there were no cases in this session of topics in the Section A texts clashing with the candidate's topic/s for discussion in Section B of the oral test.

As mentioned in the General Comments section above, those candidates who can demonstrate an ability to explain and fully develop the issues under discussion in this section will score high marks in this part of the speaking test. Candidates who respond promptly and thoughtfully to the questions asked on the themes of the text will also score well. It is worth pointing out here that there is no penalty for candidates who ask for a question to be repeated, provided this does not happen with every question asked.

The linguistic challenge of all three texts was even and most candidates dealt well with the inevitable complexities involved in such textual analysis. There were few common misinterpretations of any of the texts although in Texto A, some candidates seemed unaware that that it was Soraya's sister who had been refused entry into her school. Other than this, the texts served their purpose well and the response from candidates was positive.

## General Conversation

Many candidates scored well in this section, especially in Grid M, given that they had put plenty of effort into their research and general thinking about the topic/s selected. Clearly, research skills amongst MFL Advanced level candidates are well honed. The majority of topics complied with the requirements of the Specification. It is difficult for examiners, however, to award high marks in Grid M if the topic selected by the candidate comes from the AS list of topics rather than the A2 list. Equally, candidates who discuss, for example, the issue of alternative energy but who neglect to mention the impact of this issue in Spain/Latin America are likely to lose for marks in Grid M.

Linguistically speaking, the areas of Spanish grammar that caused the most consternation amongst candidates were the familiar ones. Singular subjects with plural verbs (“...*mucha gente prefieren ir en autobús que en coche...*” [sic.] and vice-versa “...*los españoles piensa que es importante...*” [sic.]) were not uncommon utterances. As was the case last year, the verb *gustar* was a bridge too far for many candidates.

However, complex ‘if clause’ sentences with the correct combination of imperfect subjunctive and conditional continue to be much in evidence. Centres would do well to advise candidates that ending sentences with “*creo que.*” [sic.] or “*pienso que.*” [sic.] is unlikely to gain approval. Nevertheless, the overall standard of spoken Spanish was good and for this both candidates and teachers can feel a justifiable sense of satisfaction.

## F724 Listening, Reading and Writing 2

### General Comments

The listening and reading tasks in Sections A and B offered diverse material from the Spanish-speaking world that allowed candidates to show the wide range of their abilities with regard to comprehension. The essay titles in Section C provided opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their sustained linguistic ability, their examination and essay writing skills and, importantly, the knowledge they had gained from study of the topic and sub-topic areas in class. It was, quite rightly at this level, a challenging paper which was nonetheless accessible by all; the marks achieved varied from the very low to the very high and performance in the different skills varied. Most candidates seemed to manage their time allowance well. Examiners were pleased to see so many scripts from candidates who produced positive responses to the tasks set.

The majority of candidates appeared to have thought about their answers before putting pen to paper. Most therefore avoided asterisks and arrows, crossings out and writing above the line, in the margins or outside the scanned area. Most wrote their answers precisely in the area indicated on the paper. Almost all candidates presented their answers in legible handwriting and were careful with the spelling of words and endings, especially those that differentiate between feminine and masculine. Also, they avoided presenting the examiner with unacceptable alternative answers, using brackets or the forward slash.

In Sections A and B, many candidates saw the importance of reading the question carefully and realised that extensive transcription of the original text or of the question would not answer that question. Candidates were often keen to show their knowledge of the subjunctive and other structures and wrote complex sentences, especially in Section C. However, in Sections A and B, often a simple phrase or a one word answer was sufficient to earn the full mark or marks. Linguistic accuracy varied but in only a few cases did it interfere with communication

In Section C candidates clearly thought about the question in order to respond to it appropriately. They drew on previous essays, no doubt practised in class, rather than reproducing them. They were able to plan a coherent essay, arguing a point of view, with clearly constructed paragraphs and credible information; where necessary, they were able to incorporate an element of imagination and passion.

### Comments on Individual Questions

#### Section A: Listening and Writing

##### TASK 1

Question and answer in English is a familiar format. It required understanding of the listening text and the ability to render the meaning in unambiguous English, avoiding inappropriate transfers between the languages, such as 'the actual border' for *la frontera actual*. This task was well answered by the majority of candidates; the best identified the relevant details to obtain the marks.

- (a) This answer was frequently correct. The best candidates provided the correct spelling of border (not boarder) or frontier; if they qualified the frontier, they referred to it as the *current* border.
- (b), (c), (d) and (e) Generally correct answers although the answer to (e) was challenging to weaker candidates.

- (f) Most candidates realised that it was a question of how much energy was generated, but a few gave answers referring incorrectly to physical size.
- (g) Good answers here referred to an energy shortage or crisis and avoided answers such as energetic crisis, or there is a lack of energy.
- (h) Most candidates were able to recognise the comparison between the amount of money paid annually now and in the future for the energy generated by the dam.

## TAREA 2

In this task, sometimes transcription or just one word achieved the aim; however, depending on the question, sometimes manipulation of the Spanish was required in order to obtain full marks. It was encouraging to see that so many candidates could both understand specific points and infer opinions or ideas which they could then express succinctly in their own words. This interesting interview related well to Spain's present situation and gave a good spread of marks from very low to very high.

Quality of Language was assessed under a separate heading for this question. Good examples of candidates' own language in these answers were '*en el ámbito de la investigación, mediante la creación de trabajos fijos, incrementar la cantidad de investigadores, las mujeres logran licenciaturas científicas, se fijan en lo espectacular, cobran un salario..., unas pocas son líderes en la investigación*'.

- (a) The best answer was a transcription of just *recientemente* with the correct spelling, or a phrase such as *hace poco* (transcribing *hasta recientemente* was not correct).
- (b) Many candidates correctly expressed the idea that communication was not part of the work of a scientist;
- (c) Most answered correctly here, although there were inappropriate spellings of *espectaculares* and *se centran*.
- (d) and (e) The simple answer to (d), that the new service would give science news to everyone, was the best. Most candidates answered (e) well.
- (f) The issues here were to understand correctly *tan poco* (as opposed to *tampoco*), and to identify that there was a lack of funds specifically for scientific research.
- (g) This question was aimed at stronger candidates, who recognised that something changed 20 years ago. The original information and language required reworking.
- (h) Generally good answers; depending on the candidate's turn of phrase, a verb was usually (but not always) needed for the second answer to make sense.
- (i) Candidates were required to make a contrast: that Spain has to employ scientists from overseas, because the good Spanish scientists could not find work in Spain and/or had left the country.
- (j) The answers were generally good, with the majority being able to cope with the spelling of *reconocimiento*.
- (k) The first part was generally well answered, with many re-working the idea of "a student's pay" into low pay. In the second part, most understood that "putting

scientists out on the street” meant they lost their job, but some struggled to understand that it was at the age of 40, as opposed to after 40 years’ work.

- (l) The two parts were often well answered by students who knew the vocabulary from the AS topic of education, *se licencian*, and who appreciated the meaning of *algunas pocas*. Handwriting sometimes meant that candidates appeared not to specify that the second answer related to women (*algunos están...*).
- (m) This was a challenging question. What mattered was the quality of the researcher, not the urgent necessity for researchers or their gender (an idea expressed with the phrase *con independencia de*). The best answers were simple - (i) *que sea buen investigador*, (ii) *el género*.

## Section B: Reading and Writing

### TAREA 3

This is a well established type of test that provided a good range of marks, with many candidates achieving full marks. Good answers clearly depended on comprehension skills gained from practice in this type of test, concentrating on the meaning rather than the form of words; therefore good candidates avoided selecting *estratégicamente* as a synonym for *simultáneamente*.

### TAREA 4

This task was slightly more challenging than in previous sessions and, perhaps as a result, provided a wider range of marks than in the past. Again it was a good test of reading comprehension skills and many candidates achieved full marks.

### TAREA 5

This task required candidates to show their ability to manipulate the original text to match the sentences provided in the questions. Linguistic accuracy was not assessed here, although ambiguity caused by language issues prevented candidates from demonstrating clear comprehension.

Most candidates answered well **(a) and (b)**. Issues arose concerning, in **(c)**, correct forms of the verb *caer* which was sometimes confused with *callar*; in **(d)**, whether passengers would be waiting more or less time in the rush hour; and in **(e)**, whether, at those times, there would be more, fewer or the same number of trains.

### TAREA 6

This task was answered best by those who read the passage and questions carefully and avoided writing or transcribing unnecessarily long answers.

- (a) This was generally answered well. It was necessary to specify that *automation* was to be applied to the relevant part of the metro, whereas the original text referred simply to the new system with an object pronoun (*...la aplique*).
- (b) Candidates expressed the idea of a video link in a variety of correct ways.
- (c) The question focused on the operators of the control centre; manipulation of the information referring to the passengers (*...recibirán mensajes...*) was therefore required.

- (d) Both parts of the question offered opportunities for candidates to answer in their own words with simple sentences such as *habrá temperaturas más agradables* and *habrá menos ruido*.
- (e) Both parts of this question proved challenging to some candidates who did not appreciate that the lifts were simply *fast* and who missed the idea of the lifts (as opposed to other vehicles) being tied to the arrival of trains on the new line. The idea of *sincronizarlos* in itself seemed to be understood by all.
- (f) This was nearly always answered well.

### TAREA 7

There were many candidates who achieved a pleasing degree of success with this task. It was encouraging to see so many demonstrating a grasp of good, natural English. For some candidates, though, this was a challenging task. Marks were awarded from the minimum to the maximum

The main challenge to candidates was to understand not so much the range of vocabulary, which should be within the scope of Advanced level candidates, but the syntax. The time structure in the first phrase should be known at this stage of learning. Candidates needed the reassurance that comes from practice to know that *la vida real* corresponded to *real life*, not *the real life* or *reality* or *reality TV shows*. Advanced level candidates should be able to appreciate that *actores no profesionales* does not equate to *unprofessional actors*; nor does it correspond to making a film *with actors, not professionals*. Tenses needed to be transferred appropriately, as in *a film can owe so much...* The Spanish turn of phrase in *la pantalla se llena* should have appeared in English as *the screen is filled with...* rather than *fills itself*.

### TAREA 8

This task required candidates to complete the sentences. This needed to be done in such a way that the added words corresponded grammatically with the stem in each question. It was encouraging that many candidates successfully completed the sentences according to the sense and the pattern of the syntax.

The majority of candidates appeared to have practised this kind of task, although some wrote extensive notes or transcribed long phrases after each stem. Quality of Language was assessed under the global mark for Section B.

- (a) Most candidates answered well reporting the two aspects: that the performance of the play involved the gypsies as actresses.
- (b) Careful reading of *En Sevilla...* at the start of the stem usually enabled candidates to gain a mark.
- (c) Candidates who read the first word of the sentence (*Mañana...*) were usually able to manipulate the original text appropriately in simple Spanish, rather than inventing words such as *testigará*.
- (d) It was clear from the text that the presentation had already taken place; some manipulation of the original was needed. A mark was awarded for reporting either what was said in the talk or who said it.
- (e) On the whole this was answered well, with most candidates realising that this question required manipulation of the last sentence of the third paragraph.

## TAREA 9

Candidates were asked to explain a phrase from the text in their own words. The three phrases presented different degrees of difficulty. Many candidates gained marks with good explanations which avoided repeating key words from the phrase without significant manipulation. The first two questions were designed to be more approachable and were generally answered better than the third.

Only the best candidates seemed to manage to use *el drama* or even the title of the play to express *la obra*. *Similar*, *realidad* and *representan* also figured in many answers (as well as in the question), when they could have been replaced by other words without too much difficulty.

## TAREA 10

The task required good comprehension and manipulation skills to obtain the marks. Most candidates understood most of the passage. Good candidates appreciated the need for manipulation of tenses.

- (a) This was generally well answered, with good manipulation, such as *significa que su valentía valía la pena*.
- (b) Most answers were appropriate.
- (c) Almost all answers were correct, provided they made it clear that it was the gypsies who could not enter the bar. *Entrar el bar* instead of *entrar en el bar* was common.
- (d) This turned out to be a challenging question, with few realising that the organisation was running or set up workshops then. Inappropriate lifting from the text was common for this answer.
- (e) This was generally answered well, often with good manipulation of the original text.
- (f) The best answers referred to enthusiasm and related it specifically to the gypsies; lifting from the text led to an ambiguous *su entusiasmo*.
- (g) Good answers were able to deal appropriately with the phrase *mucho menos* as a negative, telling the reader that none of the gypsies could read or write, as opposed to *many* or the *majority*.
- (h) Answers were accepted with either a reference to improvisation or to not using the texts.
- (i) This answer was generally well expressed in a variety of ways.
- (j) This was a challenging question to which the best candidates responded well, with good attempts to explain the irony of the situation, as in ... *aprovechar la ironía de que le aplauden a esas mujeres cuando no pueden ni encontrar trabajo (sic)* , or *para mostrar que es una maravilla que la gente rica aplaude a las mujeres (sic)*.

## Section C: Writing

The range of essay questions proved to be accessible by all candidates. Many candidates appreciated that here was an opportunity to show their knowledge of a sub-topic, of the Spanish language and frequently of recent events in Spain; they should be congratulated on their achievement. Many made a real attempt to address clearly and effectively the question with ample relevant support in the form of credible statistics or specific reference to Spanish examples. It was encouraging to read interesting essays with relevant, detailed vocabulary and appropriate tenses and structures. Several essays were of an impressive length and showed real insight.

Candidates who read the question carefully were usually able to do justice to their knowledge. They avoided writing generally on the topic area and consistently addressed that essay title, rather than making only a passing reference to it. They showed that they had read widely on the subject and were able to justify their ideas and opinions with facts.

While most candidates' essays reflected their specific knowledge or interest and areas of study and/or research, weaker scripts tended to rely on vague generalisations. Better essays avoided questionable statistics (e.g. *hay 1200.000 millón de personas con cancer (sic)*; *un 50 millón de especies mata cada año debido a la contaminación (sic)*; *47 de cada 100 españoles van a la cárcel cada año*; *hay 58 centrales nucleares en España*). They also avoided supporting such statistics by reference to apparently spurious websites.

There were some essays written in very good or excellent Spanish, but which gave little or no evidence of studying the sub-topic and provided no facts to defend their ideas and arguments.

- 11** This was a popular title. However some overlooked the sub-topic stated on the question paper and interpreted *paz y seguridad* in a economic sense, writing generally about Spain's economic problems, rather than law and order.
- 12** Candidates often wrote well about the situation of certain social groups, frequently immigrants, but also gypsies and women. The best essays made sure to answer the question by analysing the benefits of integration and by presenting this in the format of a direct address to an audience on television.
- 13** This was a popular choice and was best answered by candidates who followed the instruction to choose just one initiative and to evaluate it. In some cases an environmental initiative was chosen; in other cases the essay focused on how awareness was raised; either approach was accepted.
- 14** There were some heartfelt answers here, as candidates argued passionately – usually against the nuclear dump near their town, even if they favoured nuclear energy overall. Good answers emphasised the personal and the local, which they balanced with an appreciation of the nation's energy needs.
- 15** This was a popular choice. Candidates usually had facts to back up their ideas and did not just deal in generalities. Good answers made sure to answer the question and say who had benefitted from technology in Spain. That analysis provided the structure of the best pieces of writing.
- 16** Again there were good answers here in terms of facts to back up ideas, as opposed to generalities. It was only the best answers which addressed the question by putting that answer in the framework of *experiencias profesionales*.

- 17** This was a popular question which was well answered by those who addressed the question by identifying a political decision and evaluating it, rather than describing a particular government or period of history.
- 18** The best answers here used the imaginative format to relate the film(s) to the personal circumstances of the recipient of the letter; they avoided listing Spanish films or film stars, preferring to provide real analysis and insight.

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