

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/01
Speaking

Key messages

For candidates:

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

For Centres:

- The test consists of three distinct sections: **(i)** Initial presentation (maximum 3½ minutes); **(ii)** Topic Conversation (7-8 minutes) on issues arising from the Presentation; **(iii)** General Conversation (8-9 minutes) on themes different from those raised in the Topic Conversation.
- Each section should be clearly identified on the recordings, and the prescribed timings observed.
- Candidates should be reminded, if necessary, to ask the Examiner questions in both conversation sections. The Examiner's replies to such questions should be concise.
- Interaction with the Examiner is an important criterion in both conversation sections.

General comments

Most candidates had been well prepared for the examination. They were interested in the topics they had chosen and could speak for the required time.

Candidates generally had sufficient information to respond to questions in the Topic Conversation and offered ideas and opinions. They were usually aware of the need to ask the Examiner at least one question, but occasionally needed prompting to ask a second question. Teachers conducting the test are reminded that they should prompt the candidate to ask questions if necessary. In some cases, however, these questions were of a rather general nature and had little real relevance to the issue actually being discussed.

The General Conversation section, as in previous sessions, frequently proved more challenging, owing to the unseen nature of topics that can arise, and was variable in standard. Although many candidates rose to the occasion fairly readily, some were less forthcoming and were more hesitant in this section, especially when dealing with ideas and opinions. There was a marked difference in candidates' ability to deal with expected, versus unexpected questions. Candidates were not always called upon to operate at a sufficiently advanced level: some of the issues raised in the General Conversation were rather basic and did not provide adequate scope for the discussion and probing of ideas.

Most candidates remembered to ask the Examiner at least one question, but as in the Topic Conversation these sometimes seemed rather contrived and did not relate naturally to the matter being discussed. A simple *¿y tú?*, for example, cannot score highly for credit in seeking information and opinions. Many candidates, including those of otherwise quite a high standard, had difficulty in formulating questions.

There was considerable variation in the quality of language. In many cases, accuracy was very good and candidates showed their willingness and ability to handle an advanced range of structures and vocabulary. On the other hand, some weaker candidates were hampered by faulty syntax and a lack of basic vocabulary.

The quality of pronunciation was generally acceptable. Problems with some more difficult sounds occasionally impeded ready communication. An over-reliance on prepared material sometimes led to flat or inaccurate intonation. Nevertheless, many candidates made real efforts to sound authentic.

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

Regrettably there was still a minority of Centres that failed to provide the necessary documentation or that conducted the tests in contravention of the syllabus requirements, either by failure to observe prescribed timings or the appropriate instructions for the three distinct sections of the test, or whose recordings were not clearly labelled. Centres are reminded of their responsibility to adhere to requirements as outlined in the syllabus.

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

It is important that the working mark sheets are fully completed and submitted for all candidates - including those whose test may not have formed part of the sample for moderation - and enclose these working mark sheets with the recording. Please ensure that samples submitted reflect the whole of the candidate range. Samples submitted for moderation must include recordings of candidates at the highest and lowest mark. We again remind Centres that their marks cannot be confirmed or moderated unless the full break down of marks is shown.

Some Centres did not make a clear distinction between the Topic and General Conversations. In some cases, candidates had insufficient opportunity to discuss a variety of issues or offer a suitable range of higher-level language. Marks cannot be awarded for a General Conversation if this has not been conducted.

Comments on specific sections

Part 1: Topic Presentation

Guidance on topic areas for the Presentation and discussion may be found in the syllabus. Topics must relate clearly to aspects of Hispanic life or culture and it is important that candidates make this relevance explicit in their presentation. As in previous years, candidates scored no more than 5 marks out of 10 for content if there was no specific reference to a Spanish-speaking country or context.

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

Part 2: Topic Conversation

The Topic Conversation provides the opportunity to develop points arising from the presentation, and should not be a further series of mini presentations. Interaction is a key criterion. Candidates whose responses were confined to pre-learned answers, with little evidence of spontaneity, could not be awarded high marks for responsiveness. Candidates should take part in a discussion, including justifying or refuting a point of view, as well as giving relevant examples or information.

Candidates should ask the Examiner at least two substantial questions. Marks could not be awarded for "seeking information and opinions" where no questions were asked by the candidate.

Part 3: General Conversation

This must be a separate section from the Topic Conversation and the start of this section should be clearly announced on the recording. It is important that different issues from those addressed in the Topic Conversation should be discussed. Although there are no prescribed areas for the General Conversation, topics covered should be at an appropriate level. Common areas included current affairs, something in the news, the arts, sport, the environment, the economy, politics and social concerns. As long as items allowed scope for a sufficiently high level of discussion and language, almost any topic likely to spark a discussion was acceptable.

The level of sophistication in the treatment of issues in the General Conversation is important. Although the conversation may start with some basic, personal or factual questions, candidates must be moved on to more complex issues and have the opportunity to show they can give and justify opinions on more advanced topics. All conversations should go beyond the descriptive. The range and style of questioning should further allow candidates use to show competence in structures at a suitably advanced level. Without this, candidates could not attain the higher mark ranges.

As in the Topic Conversation, candidates should ask the Examiner questions to seek information and opinions and be prompted to do so if necessary. Questions should follow naturally in the course of the discussion and be phrased appropriately. Limited, all-purpose or rhetorical questions did not gain much credit. At least two substantial questions should be asked by the candidate.

Language

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

To gain access to the higher ranges of the mark scheme, candidates needed to show competence in dealing with hypothetical and abstract situations as well as factual or descriptive areas. As has been frequently reported, accuracy was often lacking in basic structures such as numbers, use of *ser* versus *estar*, genders, and agreements (nouns, adjectives, and verb endings).

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/21
Reading and Writing

Key Messages

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

General Comments

Presentation of the scripts was generally good and only one or two papers showed evidence of poor time management. Overall, candidates had a good communicative level of Spanish, but this was often impaired by incorrect spelling, lack of accents and occasional incorrect register. Able candidates showed clear understanding of the two texts dealing with differing factors which encourage obesity and longevity.

Although performance was generally good, a number of candidates might have achieved higher marks if they had been better prepared for the exam in terms of examination technique. Quite a few tackled **Question 1** as an exercise in making their own phrases to equate to those given in the questions, instead of looking for them in the text. Also, some did not manipulate the sentences in **Question 2** using the given words or phrases. A few candidates used bullet points to answer **Questions 3 and 4**, thereby restricting their access to the full range of marks for quality of language. This year there were, on the whole, fewer instances in answers to these questions of copying of five or more words from the texts but, when candidates had resorted to this, they tended to do so time and time again.

In respect of **Question 5(a)** several marks were lost as a result of lengthy introductions and conclusions to work either presented in the form of a generalised summary or pieces of free writing on the issues raised but without any concrete references to either text. A few candidates also lost marks by exceeding the stipulated total word count.

Comments on Specific Questions

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

This exercise encourages candidates to read the first text carefully. Many would have boosted their overall totals if they had been more aware of what was required. As stated in the Key Message above, candidates should seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question and take care not to omit words or to include extra words.

The paraphrase in the question is printed above the space left for the answer to be written. Therefore, it should be possible to check at a glance that the phrase from the text is a precise match, and contains no extra words or omissions.

- (a) Moderate success was achieved. A common error was to preface the correct answer with *que*.
- (b) This was generally done well. Occasionally, correct answers were invalidated when prefaced with *entre*.
- (c) Whether because of the shortness of the phrase, or *vínculo* not being widely recognised, candidates achieved less success here.
- (d) Many candidates successfully identified the target phrase, although the addition of *...de concienciación* was an occasional error.
- (e) Apart from a tendency to invalidate correct answers with *solo...*, this was generally done well.

Question 2

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

- (a) Not all recognised that the only way to work *posible* into this clause and retain the same meaning was by using a subjunctive, and there were unsuccessful attempts with infinitives such as *haber* or *tener*. Answers which would have otherwise been correct often contained misspellings of *haya* (*halla, haigan, etc.*).
- (b) This was tackled well by those candidates who were familiar with the use of *sober*. Unsuccessful candidates merely attempted to substitute *son* with *suelen*, and omitted *ser* altogether.
- (c) The required manipulation could be performed by using a *seguir + gerund* construction or the adjectival form of the past participle *asociada*, or by a combination of both. Quite a good proportion of candidates answered it correctly. A common mistake was the omission of *se*.
- (d) Candidates provided a great variety of correct answers. Quite a few used the present or the preterite tense rather than the imperfect, e.g. *es la preocupación de los nutricionistas*, which, although grammatically accurate, did not fit back in the text. Some candidates offered feasible alternatives such as *la preocupación era de los nutricionistas* but, as these would not fit back into the original text either, the mark could not be awarded. There were a number of possibilities regarding the verb used (*causaba, creaba, etc.*) and an appropriate preposition that were acceptable.

- (e) The majority of candidates understood that *es necesario que* is followed by the subjunctive, which they knew for *hacer (haga)*. A number came up with acceptable alternatives which did not require the subjunctive, e.g. *es necesario para el Banco Mundial hacer un / el esfuerzo* or *es necesario un / el esfuerzo (por parte) del Banco Mundial*.

Question 3

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

- (a) This was generally done well, with most candidates supplying the facts and figures required by the mark scheme. The majority successfully noted the year when the report was registered, 2005, and how many millions of obese people there were then. However, a number of answers were invalidated by the direct copying from the text of *un total de 60 millones de obesos en America Latina* or five consecutive words from within that phrase. Almost all candidates mentioned the forecast for 2030 and what that percentage increase would be.
- (b) Most candidates mentioned that the consumption of unhealthy food and its low cost were causes of obesity in Latin America. Many candidates referred to the influence of demographics, but did not elaborate on the specifics of migration from rural to urban areas and simply stated that many people live in cities. A great number of candidates pointed out that jobs in the city were less active or required less physical effort. General statements such as *la vida en la ciudad es más sedentaria* did not score any marks. Phrases which were commonly copied directly from the text included *el desplazamiento del campo a las ciudades* and *los altos precios de los alimentos saludables*.
- (c) Provided that it was clear which part of the American continent they were talking about, most candidates provided satisfactory answers for both points in this question: stating that rich people in the United States were now more conscious of what they eat and therefore look for quality with regards to their food, whereas their counterparts in South America were commonly obese. Unsuccessful answers provided information about poor people instead of rich people in the USA, stated that wealthy North Americans were not fat, (which although possibly implied, was not the correct answer), or said that they looked for quality, without adding that this was in food.
- (d) Most candidates provided satisfactory answers for at least two of the four points required to answer this question. A majority stated that more awareness or education campaigns were needed. Many identified the proposal of sending nutritious meals to schools, but sometimes omitted that these meals were to be sent to schools with low-income pupils, or asserted that the meals should be sent to poor schools, which was not the same thing. The other two answers required proved more challenging. Many candidates referred to the need to increase health services rather than to enhancing their role in promoting obesity awareness. A phrase which was commonly copied from the text was *augmentar el papel de los servicios*.
- (e) Good answers were recorded here. Most candidates were able to state the fact that politicians only dealt with the problem partially or that they only dealt with the problem of lack of basic food. Some answers left out 'politicians', which invalidated the point. The fact that only nutritionists worried about obesity and that no one paid them attention was well understood. A phrase commonly copied directly from the text was *la falta de alimentos básicos*.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

- (a) The majority of candidates mentioned that Spain was the third country worldwide in terms of life expectancy and the second in terms of healthy lifestyle. The third mark was more elusive for many candidates who often stated incorrectly that Spaniards (both women and men) had the longest life expectancy in Europe. It often proved tricky for candidates to communicate effectively without copying directly from the text, and common lifts included: *españolas son las que más viven*, *España es el tercer país*, and *la esperanza de vida más alta*.
- (b) Whilst many candidates managed to identify the right parts of the text to answer this question, they regularly failed to include the required detail to score full marks. In some cases, candidates scored zero for the whole question. The most common omissions were the free element of the health services, the family ties in fomenting community spirit and the fact that deaths from road traffic accidents were in decline (not simply low numbers as many candidates answered). A common lift was *muertes en accidentes de tráfico*.
- (c) This was a very accessible question, although sometimes candidates did not score the highest marks because of omissions or direct copying from the text. Many candidates did not include the specific figures concerning salary increases, life expectancy or literacy rates in Spain. The phrases *los ingresos brutos per cápita* and *la tasa de alfabetización en adultos* were frequently copied.
- (d) Many candidates scored at least three marks by mentioning the low level of participation in sporting or physical activity, the increase in the intake of unhealthy food and the stress caused by the financial situation in Spain. The information about cuts in benefits proved a bit more challenging as *prestaciones sociales* did not seem to be clearly understood.
- (e) Full details were needed to score the two available marks. Quite a few candidates omitted the fact that Spain is the preferred retirement destination, or they did not specify that this piece of information concerned European pensioners. Candidates also understood well that it was where British were happier, however, not all mentioned that this referred to expatriates. *Países donde los expatriados británicos son más felices* and *retiro para los jubilados europeos* were commonly copied phrases.

Question 5

Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks allocated. Most, but not all, candidates were aware of the need to keep to the limit of 140 words for both parts of the question. Anything in excess of this total is disregarded, and in extreme cases this can lead to no marks being awarded for part (b).

- (a) This question generally produced disappointing answers. Candidates who had achieved good or even excellent marks elsewhere often struggled to reach even half marks here. There was a tendency to give general summaries of the texts and point out how the two were linked. Many candidates wasted words by including elements from the texts, such as details about the World Bank initiatives or Spain being the preferred retirement destination for EU pensioners, which were irrelevant to the topic.

The principal problem appeared to be a lack of familiarity with the recommended technique for this form of summary writing. To achieve a good mark, candidates need only to note, in the very limited number of words available, details from the texts which answer the question. Generalisations, often required by other forms of summary writing, are usually too vague to score. It is the relevant specific details which score the marks.

In this exercise, candidates are not penalised for copying directly from the text(s). It should be remembered, however, that any copied material will not be considered in the Quality of Language mark. Candidates should also refrain from offering personal opinions in this part of the question.

Answers such as *En 'El secreto de una vida larga', el autor habla sobre la esperanza de vida en España. El autor habla de los factores que causan estos datos de vida. Igualmente habla sobre los hechos que pueden afectar la esperanza de vida como el estrés o la obesidad en la juventud*, waste 50 words and score 0 marks. In contrast, an answer which includes *En América Latina, se*

estima que en el 2040 la tasa de obesidad se triplicará. Esto se debe al aumento del consumo de comida chatarra. También se debe al desplazamiento a las ciudades, donde la gente es más sedentaria, y a los altos precios de las comidas sanas, scores 4 marks in 48 words by giving relevant specific details.

- (b) Many candidates scored high marks. Most addressed the question correctly and candidates who were less able linguistically often offered some very good answers. Everybody had something to say about health habits and trends in their country. Better answers included issues not mentioned in the texts. Fewer marks were awarded for answers limited to personal habits and preferences.

Quality of Language

The quality of candidates' written Spanish, here and throughout the paper, was generally well up to the standard required. Less able candidates sometimes struggled to perform in **Questions 3** and **4**, yet their Quality of Language mark often improved greatly in **Question 5** when their writing was more free-style.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/22
Reading and Writing

Key messages

- **Question 1:** seek a phrase in the text which matches perfectly the one in the question. Candidates should take care not to omit words or include extra words.
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- **Question 5(b):** personal response. Candidates should give a point of view and, if possible, offer ideas which have not appeared in the texts.
- **Language:** when preparing for the exam, revise the basic agreements, tenses and verb endings.

General comments

The two texts dealing with environmental changes in Latin America and Spain were accessible to most candidates, and comprehension was often clearly demonstrated. Most candidates attempted all questions and appeared to be aware that they should not copy more than four consecutive words of text in their answers to the comprehension questions. There were skilled attempts at paraphrase. Despite good, overall understanding, marks were lost when specific relevant details were not included in answers. Candidates should look at the number of marks allocated to each question, and gauge the amount of detail to be included accordingly.

Only a very few candidates exceeded the word limit in **Question 5**, thereby curtailing the number of marks they could score in **Question 5(b)**. Occasionally, there were vague generalisations in the summary for **Question 5(a)**, rather than specific details which answered the question.

Comments on specific questions

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

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

Questions (a) and (e) were generally done well.

Instances of additional or omitted words which invalidated otherwise correct answers were most likely to be found in:

- (b) the addition of ...*de perforación*
- (c) the omission of ...*de tierra*
- (d) the addition of ...*energético*
- (d) many candidates opted incorrectly for *es necesario hacer estudios*.

Question 2

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

- (a) Many candidates kept the *se* construction of the original but a lot forgot to add a verb like *usar* or *gastar*, or a singular noun phrase that would fit such as *el uso de*. Others added the *n* to *requiere* to make the sentence grammatically correct keeping the original *grandes cantidades de agua*. However, candidates are not permitted to change the word(s) provided in brackets on the question paper.
- (b) Most candidates scored a mark for this question as there were many possibilities to render this phrase correctly.
- (c) Again, most candidates managed to find a way of re-phrasing this sentence due to the many possibilities available.
- (d) A good deal of candidates realised that the trigger word *creados* needed a passive construction in order to render the phrase correctly. However, many thought they could do so using a *se* construction which, unfortunately, did not work without taking off the final *s*. Some weaker candidates thought *creados* was instead of *llamados* and wrote *se han puesto en marcha los creados Bancos...*
- (e) This proved perhaps the most difficult question in this exercise with many candidates being unable to find a way of coming up with an appropriate sentence in which the infinitive *comprar* could be used. Many used incorrect prepositions (e.g. *permiten a las grandes corporaciones de comprar*) whilst others chose verbs like *querer* which would not fit the original sense of the phrase (e.g. *Dejan que las grandes corporaciones quieran comprar*).

Question 3

The text about fracking provided a fair level of challenge and candidates who gave clear, detailed answers in their own words usually achieved high marks. Some candidates lost marks when they copied more than four words directly from the text. A small minority of candidates wrongly thought that just one detail would be sufficient to answer each question, instead of being guided by the marks allocated, which indicate how many pieces of information are being sought.

- (a) The vast majority of candidates scored the first point for this question, managing to communicate the idea that that fuel sources were running out. However, many failed to score the second point by omitting to convey the fact that other fuel reserves that were available could not be extracted using conventional methods.
- (b) This was usually very well answered, with a lot of candidates scoring three or four marks. The most commonly omitted detail was the pollution of drinking water (it was important to distinguish this from the large quantities of water used in the fracking process). Also, many candidates lost marks for lifting five consecutive words, such as *grandes cantidades de agua y or las resevas de agua potable*.
- (c) The details required to answer this question appeared to be more difficult for most candidates to fully extract or convey sufficiently well to score points. The first point was perhaps the most successfully conveyed, although many communicate the idea of Argentina depending more on fossil fuels. The second point was often lost by the inclusion of a five-word lift (*el uso de energías renovables*), and the third point usually missed a reference to people or communities and was often rendered *las zonas se verán afectadas*.
- (d) Most candidates scored two of the available three marks. Usually, they managed to portray the idea that companies acquire the right to harm the environment and that this damage cannot be reversed. However, the second point proved more elusive and many candidates often failed to convey that the money might not be spent on improving the area.
- (e) While the first point in this question was often answered correctly, about half of all candidates did not manage to make the comparison between the cost of Fracking and conventional methods,

giving answers like *es barato* or *su bajo coste*. Similarly, for the second point, there were three important details needed and many candidates omitted at least one of them. Usually, it was the reference to Spain that was missing. However, the final point was often made, although there was sometimes a lifting of *generar unos 10 000 empleos directos*.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

The second text, dealing with roof gardens in Mexico appeared to be well understood on the whole. However, there seemed to be more lifting of at least five consecutive words from the text, leading to many candidates scoring fewer marks overall than for the previous question.

- (a) In part (i), most candidates understood the two points needed but *los efectos del cambio climatic* was very commonly lifted from the text, thus losing the mark.

Part (ii), proved more problematic in terms of including all the detailed required for the marks. In the first point, many candidates either missed the introduction of a law or that the law was for the creation of roof gardens (and not, as many put, for *espacios verdes*). The second point was rarely conveyed successfully as usually one of the essential details required (see mark scheme) was missing. Also, many wrote that it was the first roof garden in México which did not fully translate the idea of the region of Latin America. Finally, here too, lifts were not uncommon. In particular, *primer jardín botánico de azotea*.

- (b) At least one mark was achieved by the majority of candidates who managed to get across the idea the gardens improve the appearance of the city. Many managed to convey the second point too, but a great deal of candidates could not avoid lifting *el efecto 'isla de calor'*. In some cases, it appeared that candidates might have made the incorrect assumption that sections from the text in inverted commas are exempt from the rule about copying. This is not so.
- (c) Almost everybody referenced air conditioning (or similar electronic systems) but many maintained that their use is reduced rather than eliminated, as stated in the text. Others wrote that electronic devices were not needed, without referring to the lowering of temperatures. However, most candidates did manage to show how these roof gardens helped people to save money (on energy costs). Some candidates were unclear about air quality being improved, referring to *el nivel del aire* as opposed to *la calidad del aire*. Most, however, managed to convey the last point unambiguously.
- (d) While most candidates understood the problem for buildings to support the added weight of a roof garden, many became a little tangled up in explaining how creating the correctly angled slope to allow for effective drainage was also a problem for consideration. Typically, many candidates mentioned the slope but not the drainage or vice versa. There were also many who lifted *un sistema de drenaje eficaz* directly from the text. The point about obtaining planning permission was also often omitted. As a result, only a minority scored full marks on this question.
- (e) Although there were only two points to explain in this final question, answers again tended to be incomplete, even amongst the better candidates. Many mentioned that roof gardens were expensive, but did not make reference to their installation. Similarly, although a good number of candidates stated that roofs needed to be a minimum of 100 m², they failed to explain that this ruled out a majority of the population.

Question 5

Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks allocated. Most, but not all, candidates were aware of the need to keep to the limit of 140 words for both parts of the question. Anything in excess is disregarded by Examiners, and in extreme cases this can lead to no marks being awarded for part (b).

- (a) Candidates seemed to understand that they needed to identify ten examples of how fracking (text 1) and roof gardens (text 2) have impacted on the environment. Some candidates demonstrated good technique by going straight to the point without writing a long introduction which would have wasted valuable words. However, there were still some candidates who had a tendency to give fairly broad generalisations and omit the key details needed to score the marks.

To score good marks candidates should note only details from the texts which answer the question. Generalisations, often required by other forms of summary writing, are usually too vague to score. It is the relevant specific details which score the marks.

Therefore, answers beginning *En el primer texto se habla de cómo en Argentina se ha optado por crear el fracking que se trata de una forma más barata de extraer combustibles fósiles de la tierra. Podría generar 10 000 empleos y otros países como España lo están adoptando...* use up forty-five words, and score nothing (apart from contributing to the Quality of Language mark). By contrast, an answer which begins *El fracking supone un tremendo coste medioambiental causado por la contaminación del agua, la actividad sísmica producida o las grandes cantidades de agua usadas. Al contrario, las azoteas tienen un impacto positivo sobre el medioambiente. Mejoran la calidad del aire y disminuyen el efecto del calor en las ciudades...* (49 words) scores six marks by giving relevant specific details.

Candidates should write concise statements of relevant facts in complete sentences – not bullet points, which are usually too short to show the clear meaning. They should also refrain from offering personal opinions in this part of the question.

- (b) In the two or three sentences available for this last part of the examination the vast majority of candidates wrote good answers. Everybody had something to say about the measures taken in their country to protect the environment. The question provided ample opportunity to include ideas which had not already been suggested by the texts. Better answers included originality and an opinion on why these changes were occurring.

Quality of Language

The quality of candidates' written Spanish, here and throughout the paper, was generally well up to the standard required by this examination, with most marks in the Sound, Good, or Very Good bands.

SPANISH

Paper 8685/23
Reading and Writing

Key messages

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- **Language:** when preparing for the exam, revise the basic agreements, tenses and verb endings.

General comments

The two texts dealing with environmental changes in Latin America and Spain were accessible to most candidates, and comprehension was often clearly demonstrated. Most candidates attempted all questions and appeared to be aware that they should not copy more than four consecutive words of text in their answers to the comprehension questions. There were skilled attempts at paraphrase. Despite good, overall understanding, marks were lost when specific relevant details were not included in answers. Candidates should look at the number of marks allocated to each question, and gauge the amount of detail to be included accordingly.

Only a very few candidates exceeded the word limit in **Question 5**, thereby curtailing the number of marks they could score in **Question 5(b)**. Occasionally, there were vague generalisations in the summary for **Question 5(a)**, rather than specific details which answered the question.

Comments on specific questions

SECCIÓN PRIMERA

Question 1

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

Questions (a) and (e) were generally done well.

Instances of additional or omitted words which invalidated otherwise correct answers were most likely to be found in:

- (b) the addition of ...*de perforación*
- (c) the omission of ...*de tierra*
- (d) the addition of ...*energético*
- (d) many candidates opted incorrectly for *es necesario hacer estudios*.

Question 2

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

- (a) Many candidates kept the *se* construction of the original but a lot forgot to add a verb like *usar* or *gastar*, or a singular noun phrase that would fit such as *el uso de*. Others added the *n* to *requiere* to make the sentence grammatically correct keeping the original *grandes cantidades de agua*. However, candidates are not permitted to change the word(s) provided in brackets on the question paper.
- (b) Most candidates scored a mark for this question as there were many possibilities to render this phrase correctly.
- (c) Again, most candidates managed to find a way of re-phrasing this sentence due to the many possibilities available.
- (d) A good deal of candidates realised that the trigger word *creados* needed a passive construction in order to render the phrase correctly. However, many thought they could do so using a *se* construction which, unfortunately, did not work without taking off the final *s*. Some weaker candidates thought *creados* was instead of *llamados* and wrote *se han puesto en marcha los creados Bancos...*
- (e) This proved perhaps the most difficult question in this exercise with many candidates being unable to find a way of coming up with an appropriate sentence in which the infinitive *comprar* could be used. Many used incorrect prepositions (e.g. *permiten a las grandes corporaciones de comprar*) whilst others chose verbs like *querer* which would not fit the original sense of the phrase (e.g. *Dejan que las grandes corporaciones quieran comprar*).

Question 3

The text about fracking provided a fair level of challenge and candidates who gave clear, detailed answers in their own words usually achieved high marks. Some candidates lost marks when they copied more than four words directly from the text. A small minority of candidates wrongly thought that just one detail would be sufficient to answer each question, instead of being guided by the marks allocated, which indicate how many pieces of information are being sought.

- (a) The vast majority of candidates scored the first point for this question, managing to communicate the idea that that fuel sources were running out. However, many failed to score the second point by omitting to convey the fact that other fuel reserves that were available could not be extracted using conventional methods.
- (b) This was usually very well answered, with a lot of candidates scoring three or four marks. The most commonly omitted detail was the pollution of drinking water (it was important to distinguish this from the large quantities of water used in the fracking process). Also, many candidates lost marks for lifting five consecutive words, such as *grandes cantidades de agua y or las resevas de agua potable*.
- (c) The details required to answer this question appeared to be more difficult for most candidates to fully extract or convey sufficiently well to score points. The first point was perhaps the most successfully conveyed, although many communicate the idea of Argentina depending more on fossil fuels. The second point was often lost by the inclusion of a five-word lift (*el uso de energías renovables*), and the third point usually missed a reference to people or communities and was often rendered *las zonas se verán afectadas*.
- (d) Most candidates scored two of the available three marks. Usually, they managed to portray the idea that companies acquire the right to harm the environment and that this damage cannot be reversed. However, the second point proved more elusive and many candidates often failed to convey that the money might not be spent on improving the area.
- (e) While the first point in this question was often answered correctly, about half of all candidates did not manage to make the comparison between the cost of Fracking and conventional methods,

giving answers like *es barato* or *su bajo coste*. Similarly, for the second point, there were three important details needed and many candidates omitted at least one of them. Usually, it was the reference to Spain that was missing. However, the final point was often made, although there was sometimes a lifting of *generar unos 10 000 empleos directos*.

SECCIÓN SEGUNDA

Question 4

The second text, dealing with roof gardens in Mexico appeared to be well understood on the whole. However, there seemed to be more lifting of at least five consecutive words from the text, leading to many candidates scoring fewer marks overall than for the previous question.

- (a) In part (i), most candidates understood the two points needed but *los efectos del cambio climatic* was very commonly lifted from the text, thus losing the mark.

Part (ii), proved more problematic in terms of including all the detailed required for the marks. In the first point, many candidates either missed the introduction of a law or that the law was for the creation of roof gardens (and not, as many put, for *espacios verdes*). The second point was rarely conveyed successfully as usually one of the essential details required (see mark scheme) was missing. Also, many wrote that it was the first roof garden in México which did not fully translate the idea of the region of Latin America. Finally, here too, lifts were not uncommon. In particular, *primer jardín botánico de azotea*.

- (b) At least one mark was achieved by the majority of candidates who managed to get across the idea the gardens improve the appearance of the city. Many managed to convey the second point too, but a great deal of candidates could not avoid lifting *el efecto 'isla de calor'*. In some cases, it appeared that candidates might have made the incorrect assumption that sections from the text in inverted commas are exempt from the rule about copying. This is not so.
- (c) Almost everybody referenced air conditioning (or similar electronic systems) but many maintained that their use is reduced rather than eliminated, as stated in the text. Others wrote that electronic devices were not needed, without referring to the lowering of temperatures. However, most candidates did manage to show how these roof gardens helped people to save money (on energy costs). Some candidates were unclear about air quality being improved, referring to *el nivel del aire* as opposed to *la calidad del aire*. Most, however, managed to convey the last point unambiguously.
- (d) While most candidates understood the problem for buildings to support the added weight of a roof garden, many became a little tangled up in explaining how creating the correctly angled slope to allow for effective drainage was also a problem for consideration. Typically, many candidates mentioned the slope but not the drainage or vice versa. There were also many who lifted *un sistema de drenaje eficaz* directly from the text. The point about obtaining planning permission was also often omitted. As a result, only a minority scored full marks on this question.
- (e) Although there were only two points to explain in this final question, answers again tended to be incomplete, even amongst the better candidates. Many mentioned that roof gardens were expensive, but did not make reference to their installation. Similarly, although a good number of candidates stated that roofs needed to be a minimum of 100 m², they failed to explain that this ruled out a majority of the population.

Question 5

Good examination technique is extremely important in this question and can often make a significant difference to the marks allocated. Most, but not all, candidates were aware of the need to keep to the limit of 140 words for both parts of the question. Anything in excess is disregarded by Examiners, and in extreme cases this can lead to no marks being awarded for part (b).

- (a) Candidates seemed to understand that they needed to identify ten examples of how fracking (text 1) and roof gardens (text 2) have impacted on the environment. Some candidates demonstrated good technique by going straight to the point without writing a long introduction which would have wasted valuable words. However, there were still some candidates who had a tendency to give fairly broad generalisations and omit the key details needed to score the marks.

To score good marks candidates should note only details from the texts which answer the question. Generalisations, often required by other forms of summary writing, are usually too vague to score. It is the relevant specific details which score the marks.

Therefore, answers beginning *En el primer texto se habla de cómo en Argentina se ha optado por crear el fracking que se trata de una forma más barata de extraer combustibles fósiles de la tierra. Podría generar 10 000 empleos y otros países como España lo están adoptando...* use up forty-five words, and score nothing (apart from contributing to the Quality of Language mark). By contrast, an answer which begins *El fracking supone un tremendo coste medioambiental causado por la contaminación del agua, la actividad sísmica producida o las grandes cantidades de agua usadas. Al contrario, las azoteas tienen un impacto positivo sobre el medioambiente. Mejoran la calidad del aire y disminuyen el efecto del calor en las ciudades...* (49 words) scores six marks by giving relevant specific details.

Candidates should write concise statements of relevant facts in complete sentences – not bullet points, which are usually too short to show the clear meaning. They should also refrain from offering personal opinions in this part of the question.

- (b) In the two or three sentences available for this last part of the examination the vast majority of candidates wrote good answers. Everybody had something to say about the measures taken in their country to protect the environment. The question provided ample opportunity to include ideas which had not already been suggested by the texts. Better answers included originality and an opinion on why these changes were occurring.

Quality of Language

The quality of candidates' written Spanish, here and throughout the paper, was generally well up to the standard required by this examination, with most marks in the Sound, Good, or Very Good bands.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/31

Essay

Key messages

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

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

General comments

The majority of candidates performed well in this essay paper. For the most part, essays written were relevant to the titles set and there were only a very few examples of candidates writing pre-learnt essays that failed to respond to the actual title set.

The levels of linguistic ability demonstrated by many candidates were very good indeed. Most of the essays showed a confident use of complex, well-constructed sentence patterns together with an extensive yet appropriate range of vocabulary. The amount of grammatical control in evidence was impressive and many candidates were able to produce essays that showed a clear, in-depth understanding of the topic under discussion.

Some candidates, however, did produce essays in excess of the 400 maximum word allowed by the rubric. Such essays tended to be less well-structured and tended to result in fewer marks being awarded for linguistic accuracy given that there is more likelihood of grammatical errors being made. Ensuring that candidates have a genuine awareness of the stated word limit (250 – 400 words) is vital to success on this paper.

Examples of good use of the language included:

- good control of the use of tenses in a way that was appropriate to the discussion in the essay.
- adverbs used well to enrich the variety of language offered in the essay.
- ideas expressed articulately and in well-ordered fashion, especially through the use of paragraphing.
- the subjunctive mood, both present and past, used to good effect as a way of enhancing the complexity of linguistic elegance.

Common errors included:

- the omission of “h” in utterances such as “*la sociedad a decidido que...*”
- incorrect spelling of key words such as “*el desarrollo*”, “*el problem*” and “*problamente*”
- misunderstanding of the differences between “*hay*” and “*es/tiene*”.
- inaccuracies in the use of accents which leads to a loss of marks
- the use of singular verbs for plural subjects in statements such as “*... los avances científicos y médicos es muy importantes...*” and “*... existe muchos problemas...*”
- the use of “*la jente*” instead of “*la gente*”.
- very basic punctuation errors: for example, adjectives of nationality having a capital letter when not needed and sentences often beginning with no capital letter.

With regard to the five essay titles on offer, there was a balanced distribution of titles attempted. Candidates were able to deal with the issues to be considered with sound knowledge and an ability to develop arguments and, rather importantly, draw sensible conclusions. There was some evidence in the essays

written by the weaker candidates of a limited capacity to argue a particular case. However, on the whole, ideas were discussed with maturity and intelligence. There was a wide variety of different approaches to the titles set. Stronger candidates were often able to produce an essay that showed more analytical depth and intellectual insight into the issues under the spotlight.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *La vida diaria*

En la sociedad moderna, ir de compras ha llegado a ser una obsesión. ¿Ves esta situación como algo positivo o negativo?

This was generally well answered, with a variety of approaches detailing the advantages of a healthy retail industry in terms of a strong economy as well as the disadvantages of the almost addictive nature of shopping, particularly for clothes, amongst certain sectors of modern society. The weaker essays simply listed the types of shopping we can all indulge in if we feel the need but with no comment or analysis of its effects on society, positively or negatively.

Question 2 *La justicia y el orden público*

Mantener el orden público es más fácil si la policía lleva armas. ¿Qué opinas tú?

This was a very popular title on the paper. There was little doubt amongst candidates that the statement in the title was true although there were some very convincing arguments against the police carrying weapons. Most essays mentioned the absolute necessity for the police to be able to respond robustly to criminals who carry weapons themselves. The contentious nature of the title seemed to suit many candidates as they were able to offer their own personal opinions as well as those most commonly held throughout society at large.

Question 3 *La salud*

El alcohol debería ser considerado como una droga dura. ¿Sí o no?

This was another popular title. Candidates argued that the effects of alcohol abuse can be as devastating as drug abuse and how, therefore, it would be wise to label alcohol as a hard drug. However, many essays also argued the popularity of alcoholic drinks, especially wine and beer, amongst many people who tend not to abuse alcohol and who therefore would be disadvantaged by having their predilection for what many called a social habit considered as a drug to be controlled.

Question 4 *El empleo y el desempleo*

Tener un trabajo mal pagado es mejor que estar desempleado y recibir dinero del gobierno para vivir. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

This was a less popular title amongst candidates. However, some of the essays produced were of a very high quality indeed. Points made were backed up by specific references and it was often suggested that the psychological benefits of having a job are far more important for some people than the monetary benefits. Some essays made reference to the need for a civilized society to ensure that its most vulnerable citizens are in receipt of financial support from the state but that this support should be offered in a well-considered, but temporary, manner as opposed to for evermore.

Question 5 *Los avances científicos y médicos*

¿Es justo decir que, en general, los avances médicos y científicos han mejorado la calidad de la vida humana?

This was a generally well-answered and well-illustrated title examining the effects of such advances on modern living and comparing the present situation with that of a few decades ago. Only the very best essays managed to consider the potentially negative effects of certain advantages in scientific technology, especially in terms of weaponry for use in conflicts.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/32

Essay

Key messages

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- use sentence patterns which show some evidence of complexity in a style which is easy to follow.

General comments

The majority of candidates performed well in this essay paper. For the most part, essays written were relevant to the titles set and there were only a very few examples of candidates writing pre-learnt essays that failed to respond to the actual title set.

The levels of linguistic ability demonstrated by many candidates were very good indeed. Most of the essays showed a confident use of complex, well-constructed sentence patterns together with an extensive yet appropriate range of vocabulary. The amount of grammatical control in evidence was impressive and many candidates were able to produce essays that showed a clear, in-depth understanding of the topic under discussion.

Some candidates, however, did produce essays in excess of the 400 maximum word allowed by the rubric. Such essays tended to be less well-structured and tended to result in fewer marks being awarded for linguistic accuracy given that there is more likelihood of grammatical errors being made. Ensuring that candidates have a genuine awareness of the stated word limit (250 – 400 words) is vital to success on this paper.

Examples of good use of the language included:

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Comments on specific questions

Question 1 *La vida diaria*

A pesar de lo que dicen muchos, la presión de la vida moderna puede ser algo positivo. ¿Hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo?

This was a well answered question but it proved to be less popular than the other titles on the paper. Candidates were able to take account of both positive and the negative effects in their essays. The weaker essays simply agreed with the title and tended to be repetitive in nature, finishing the essay with little or no analysis of the surrounding issues.

Question 2 *La justicia y el orden público*

Si no respetamos las leyes, no tenemos una sociedad civilizada. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

This was a very popular title on the paper. There was little doubt amongst candidates that the statement in the title was indeed true and that the best societies are the ones where freedom is given but within certain limits. Some also pointed out that, on occasions, laws need to be broken or at least challenged in order for society to develop in a healthy, open fashion.

Question 3 *La salud*

Hacer ejercicio físico cada día debería ser obligatorio en los colegios. ¿Qué opinas tú?

This was another popular title. Candidates argued that physical exercise and its health implications need to be promoted more vigorously in Schools as well as in society generally. There was a widespread agreement that physical exercise every day of the week in Schools was somewhat over the top. Candidates were able to argue for a sensible compromise, considered alongside the desirability for academic pursuits in order to achieve success in later life.

Question 4 *El empleo y el desempleo*

Un individuo desempleado debería hacer un trabajo escogido por el gobierno a cambio de recibir dinero del estado para vivir. ¿Estás de acuerdo?

This was a less popular title amongst candidates although it did create some degree of controversy. Many essays argued that, in economic hard times, unemployment needs to be tackled by governments and that if this leads to people doing jobs that are considered to be 'beneath them', then this is an inevitable consequence of an economic recession. Others argued that it is the duty of governments to create jobs for every citizen rather than spending money on foreign aid, for example, or major projects such as the Olympics or the World Cup.

Question 5 *Los avances científicos y médicos*

¿Representan las modificaciones genéticas en la agricultura una intervención peligrosa para la naturaleza?

This was a less popular title on the paper but, when answered, the results were well illustrated and mature in their content. The majority view was that, despite the perceived dangers of genetic modification, in order to combat hunger around the globe, agricultural production needed the support of scientific development in order to yield sufficient quantities of food. Most added that there was a clearly stated need for vigilance, however.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Paper 8685/33

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