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FOREIGN LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 0530/01

Listening

General comments

As always a wide range of performance was seen by Examiners. On the whole, candidates had been well prepared for the demands of the examination and rubrics were generally understood and followed.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-8

Most candidates could cope with all the questions in this exercise. Surprisingly, **Questions 4 and 5** were sometimes answered incorrectly: Examiners had hoped *vasos* and *pan* would be items of vocabulary familiar to all candidates.

Exercise 2 Questions 9-13

The majority of candidates had little difficulty understanding this advertisement for tourist activities in Córdoba, Argentina. The only question to cause any particular difficulty was **Question 13** where a number of candidates ticked the picture of the swimmer instead of the picture of the horse, perhaps because they understood *natación* instead of the correct *equitación*.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 14-21

The majority of candidates were well able to identify the true and false statements. **Question 16** caused most difficulty: weaker candidates did not understand that the form was only available at railway stations though it required a teacher's signature. Examiners also felt that some candidates were not familiar with *gratis* which was required to answer **Question 18**.

Exercise 2 Questions 22-27

This exercise, which required candidates to produce short answers in Spanish, was more challenging. In **Question 24** a number of candidates did not understand that the boys only met at weekends because they were at different schools. In **Question 25**, many candidates did not recognise the word *alojamiento* and were therefore only able to give one of the items for which the boys needed more money. Likewise in **Question 27**, while weaker candidates were able to pick out individual words like *cine* or *discoteca* they were not able to explain that the boys had started to go out together.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 28-35

This exercise, based on an interview with a Spanish actress, produced a range of marks. The gist of the interview was understood by most and the majority of candidates could cope with **Questions 32, 33 and 34**. However, **Questions 28 and 29**, which required candidates to think more carefully about what they were hearing, were usually only answered correctly by the more able.

Exercise 2 Questions 36-40

As intended, this proved to be the most challenging exercise on the question paper and a good discriminator. In general, it was handled reasonably well by the stronger candidates.

The most accessible questions proved to be **Question 37**, which required candidates to understand that exotic animals are handed over to other organisations, and **Question 38**, requiring them to understand that it was possible to adopt/search for dogs via the Internet.

The most challenging was perhaps **Question 40** where only stronger candidates were able to explain how the owner mistreated the dog, e.g. feeding her very little, giving her dirty water to drink, hitting her with a stick, tying her with a short rope that prevented her from moving (any two of which were accepted). It was also only stronger candidates who were able to answer both parts of **Question 39**.

Paper 0530/02
Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

This year's paper was successfully tackled by a large majority of candidates. **Sections 1** and **2** were particularly well dealt with; a considerable number of candidates obtaining full marks in one or both of these sections. **Section 3** was, as usual, more demanding, but even here most of the candidates put in a respectable performance. Nearly all the Centres are to be congratulated on doing an excellent job in preparing the candidates so thoroughly for this paper.

Comments on specific questions**Section 1****Exercise 1 Questions 1-5**

This exercise was well done by nearly all candidates, with most obtaining full marks. Where errors occurred this was usually in **Question 3** (where candidates thought *mariscos* were *carne* and opted for A instead of C) and **Question 4** (where some candidates seemed not to know *uvas*).

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

This exercise was again very well done, with a predominance of candidates scoring full marks. The only question to cause any particular difficulty was **Question 9** where a few candidates thought that 10 persons were required for a guided tour to take place.

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

This was extremely well done. Practically the only errors were in **Question 12** where a few candidates opted for **E** instead of **D**, perhaps thinking that the ballerina's skirt was some kind of plaster cast.

Exercise 4 Question 16

The postcards were generally well done, with many candidates scoring 5 out of 5 and few scoring fewer than 4 marks. There were 3 marks available for communication: in **(a)** it was vital to mention that the place was mountainous, either directly or by naming a famous resort (e.g. Aspen or Bariloche) or a mountain range (e.g. the Alps); in **(b)** it was necessary to specify that the weather was sunny or at least warm; in **(c)** an expression of enjoyment was sufficient to gain credit. There were also 2 marks available for appropriateness of language. Verbs had to be in appropriate tenses for both marks to be awarded, but minor errors were tolerated.

Section 2**Exercise 1 Questions 17-23**

Once again a high proportion of candidates scored full marks. The main errors occurred in **Question 17**, which was completely misread or misunderstood by some; in **Question 18**, where some candidates in their search for a time reference wrote two years instead of ten days; and in **Question 22** where some thought that sleeping in tents was disliked when in fact it was cleaning them that was unpopular.

Exercise 2 Question 24

The letters were usually very good, and most of the candidates completed all of the tasks they were set. The most common omissions were in **(b)** and **(e)(ii)**, that is in the two tasks where candidates had to explain why they liked something. There were 10 marks in all for communication, and they were awarded as follows:

- (a)** Thanking the friend for the present (1 mark)
- (b)** Saying why you liked that present (1 mark)
- (c)** Mentioning other presents received (1 mark)
- (d)(i)** With whom did they spend the day?
- (ii)** What did they do? (2 marks)
- (e)(i)** What aspect did they like the most?
- (ii)** And why? (2 marks)

Up to 3 further marks were available for details relevant to the above points. No marks were awarded for irrelevant details.

In addition there were 5 marks for accuracy of language. Examiners awarded a tick for each correct unit of language and these ticks were then converted into marks. Full details are provided in the mark scheme for this paper.

Section 3

Although there was a high proportion of very strong performances in this final section of the paper, weaker candidates, as intended, found the exercises demanding and sometimes struggled to score marks.

Exercise 1 Questions 25-30

Some very good performances from candidates and it is not possible to single out any question as causing particular problems. Some candidates confined themselves to ticking the boxes to identify which statements were true and which false, but refrained from writing down any corrections to the statements they disagreed with. This may have been a deliberate choice, but may have resulted from careless reading of the rubric.

Exercise 2 Questions 31-39

The final exercise was, as usual, the most difficult one in the whole paper. In spite of this even the weakest candidates managed to score 2 or 3 marks out of 10, usually in **Question 32**, **Question 35** and the final two multiple-choice questions. A number of candidates simply lifted chunks from the original text without trying to manipulate it into a sensible answer, e.g. by altering the person, altering the tense of the verbs or by lifting judiciously rather than adopting a scatter-gun approach and hoping the Examiner would pick out the required elements. The two most demanding questions proved to be **Questions 31** and **37**, which both required candidates to identify emotions/attitudes and draw conclusions from the text.

<p style="text-align: center;">Paper 0530/03 Speaking</p>

General comments

To be read in conjunction with the Teacher's Notes for Paper 3.

Recorded sample for moderation

Nearly all Centres sent the correct sample size for moderation. Centres are asked to select six candidates covering as wide a range of ability as possible. It is helpful if Centres are able to include their highest and lowest scoring candidates in the sample. The overall quality of the recordings was very good. To ensure good quality recordings, Centres should test their equipment in advance and where candidates are softly-spoken ensure that they are audible by re-positioning the equipment and making the necessary adjustments. Centres should also ensure that the test is conducted in a quiet room in order to exclude unnecessary background noise. This year some Centres failed to label their cassettes clearly. Each cassette should have the Centre name and number and candidates' name and number. It would be helpful if Centres noted the role play card numbers on the Working Mark Sheet and cassette label. Where Centres fail to forward the Working Mark Sheet it is not possible to give specific feedback regarding assessment. Candidates must not identify themselves on the tape and Centres should indicate the end of a recording by stating 'end of sample'. Once the speaking test has begun, the cassette should run without interruption.

Comments on specific questions***Role Plays***

Moderators were pleased to note the many instances of good examining technique. The vast majority of Examiners were familiar with the role play situations and had prepared the situations carefully ensuring that the candidates' tasks followed on naturally from their responses. Careful preparation is particularly important where the Examiner has to initiate the dialogue as confusion created by the Examiner at this stage can lead to the candidate underperforming. It is also important to avoid over-elaboration of the situations as this can confuse candidates already nervous in an exam situation. Examiners are reminded that where a task or element of a task is omitted they should try to guide the candidate back to the task in as natural a way as possible. It does not matter to Moderators that this may lead to tasks occurring in a different order, as long as they are all attempted.

Role Plays A***At the campsite***

These tasks proved straightforward for the majority of candidates and were completed successfully. In Task 5 there was sometimes confusion between the use of *ser* or *estar*.

At the restaurant

Candidates coped well with the specified tasks. In Tasks 3 and 4 the pronunciation of some food and drink items was strongly influenced by the candidates' first language.

At the post office

Candidates communicated the necessary information. There were minor errors of gender and quantity. Some candidates attempted to convey all the information in the first four tasks without a pause for the Examiner to respond and sometimes this led to elements of tasks being completely omitted.

Role Plays B

These role plays were more challenging and candidates overall responded well to the open-ended nature of the tasks.

Talking with a doctor

Most candidates managed to communicate all the information required, although the language used was not always appropriate. In particular, candidates encountered difficulties with the correct use of tense in Tasks 3 and 4.

Enquiring about a holiday job

Candidates carried out the tasks well.

In Task 2 some candidates seemed unfamiliar with the words *edad* and *apellido* and consequently gave incomplete information. In most cases the Examiner was able to elicit the missing information or clarify the information communicated. This is acceptable provided that the candidate is not over-prompted, e.g. the Examiner must not provide the answer, which the candidate merely has to repeat.

Phoning a friend

The majority of candidates managed to communicate all the information required, though the language used was at times inaccurate. In particular, candidates encountered difficulties with the correct use of tense in Task 2 and arranging a meeting place and time in Task 5.

Topic/Discussion

Many interesting topics covering a wide range of subjects were prepared. While candidates are free to choose their own topic, they should be guided in their choice and it should be explained to them in advance that the mark that is awarded is determined by their ability to manipulate their prepared material. Candidates should show quality of preparation in the presentation, but should not be allowed to resort to pre-learnt material in the discussion of the topic. This section of the test should last approximately five minutes. The Examiner should allow the candidate to speak for one or two minutes uninterrupted and should then ask specific questions. Some Examiners did not observe the recommended time limit. Where timings fall short of five minutes, candidates will not be able to produce enough Spanish to score highly; where tests run on for too long, candidates will tire and performance will suffer accordingly.

General Conversation

Examiners should make a clear distinction between the **Topic/Discussion** and **General Conversation**. The **General Conversation** section of the test should last approximately five minutes. The supportive and sympathetic manner of the vast majority of Examiners allowed candidates to develop their responses and perform to the best of their ability.

Assessment

Overall assessment of candidates was fair and close to the agreed standard. Where differences occurred, it was usually because Examiners were overgenerous in their assessment on Scale (b) linguistic content in the two conversation sections.

Paper 0530/04 Continuous Writing

General comments

The standard achieved by the majority of candidates in this paper was not quite as high as in recent years. This was due to some candidates not identifying precisely enough what was required in each question to score well on relevant communication. Candidates should be reminded to read the rubric carefully, making sure they cover all the relevant communication requirements fully in order to obtain the maximum marks. The total marks for the paper (out of a maximum of fifty) covered the full mark range.

On this paper candidates are expected to produce two pieces of extended writing in which they have the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of written Spanish by communicating as accurately as possible and making use of a variety of idiom, vocabulary, structure and appropriate tense. A system of positive marking is used in order to reward both accuracy and ambition. Each question is marked out of twenty five, of which five marks are awarded for relevant communication, fifteen for accuracy of language and five for general impression. No credit is given for anything beyond the 140th word since the rubric stipulates 110-140 words. The first stage in marking for Examiners is to count up to the 140th word and cross out the remainder. Anything written after the 140th word does not score for relevant communication nor does it contribute to the mark awarded for accuracy.

Centres must impress on candidates that the word limit is real and advise them to write 140 words or just under in each of the two questions. Candidates should do a preliminary word count and keep a running total to avoid losing marks through either verbosity or brevity.

Marking for relevant communication in each question**Question 1**

(a) There were five marks available as follows:

- *dónde y cuándo estabas de vacaciones* [1]
- *un problema que tuviste* [1]
- *otro problema que tuviste* [1]
- *cómo reaccionaste (una reacción)* [1]
- *lo que esperas de la agencia de viajes* [1]

Some candidates omitted to say when they went on holiday, thus failing to score a mark for communication. While the vast majority of candidates described at least two problems they had encountered, many omitted their reactions.

(b) There were five marks available as follows:

- *lo que hiciste al dejar el colegio (¿estudiar? ¿viajar?)* [1]
- *dónde vives y tu opinión sobre el lugar* [1 + 1]
- *tu trabajo* [1]
- *tu familia (¿estás casado/a?)* [1]

Some candidates wrote far too much and consequently lost marks for relevant communication.

Question 2

There were five marks available as follows:

- *opinión sobre las facilidades deportivas* [1]
- *opinión sobre los profesores* [1]
- *opinión sobre la ropa que llevan los estudiantes al colegio* [1]
- *opinión sobre la idea de continuar estudiando* [1]
- *opinión sobre lo que te gustaría cambiar* [1]

Marks for relevant communication were lost through failure to provide opinions, particularly with regard to the sports facilities where candidates sometimes described facilities without providing an opinion. This was also true, though to a lesser extent, with regard to school uniform. Some candidates seemed uncertain of their opinion on the subject of continuing in education and omitted this element.

Marking for accuracy

Common errors included the following:

In **Question 1 (a)**, inappropriate use of register, wrong gender for *problema*, misuse of perfect for preterite, failure to accent certain verbs (for example, *había*), preterite tense of verb *decir*, use of subjunctive after *esperar*.

In **Question 1 (b)**, incorrect use of tense (imperfect/preterite), incorrect rendering of 'ago', *ir* followed by *en* instead of *a*, agreement of adjectives, *ser* + profession, use of *ser/estar*.

In **Question 2**, use of *ser/estar*, confusion between the use of *bien* and *bueno*, agreement of adjectives, use of *gustar*, use of subjunctive after *para que*.

As in the past, special attention was paid to verbs. Strong candidates varied tenses and were able to use them appropriately, while weak candidates frequently lapsed into the present tense. Candidates of middling ability experienced difficulties manipulating tenses; a common defect being the incorrect use of the perfect or the imperfect when only the preterite was appropriate. It was common to omit vital accents on verb endings. All verbs score for accuracy, but only if used correctly and accented if necessary. Credit was also given to interrogatives (which had to be accented); to negatives; to prepositions; to adverbs, except for the common *muy*; to conjunctions, except for the very common *y* and *pero*; to adjectives correctly positioned and agreeing; to pronouns other than subject pronouns and reflexives; to pronouns correctly joined onto a verb. In all these cases a tick is awarded when a unit is correct. Four ticks are worth one mark up to a maximum of fifteen marks.

Marking for general impression in each question

A further five marks were available for each answer for the quality of language used: use of idiom, vocabulary, structures and appropriate tenses. In order to score the full five marks the writing had to display the features mentioned and read fluently like good Spanish.